People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher

Education and Scientific Research

University of Mohamed Khider – Biskra

Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages

Department of English Language and Literature

Feminist Perspective on Victorian Women in Virginia Woolf's *To the LightHouse*(1927)

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Master Degree
In Literature and Civilization.

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June 2023

Dedication

To my beloved Father, Mother and the departed soul of my grandmother.

To my soulmate Hibatallah Moulai, my furry companion Pumpy, and to myself.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest gratitude and heartfelt appreciation to my exceptional supervisor, **Ms. Herzallah Selma**, and the esteemed committee responsible for evaluating and refining my dissertation. My sincerest thanks also go to all of my extraordinary teachers and classmates who have accompanied me on this exhilarating academic voyage

Abstract

The advent of feminism has sparked a formidable resistance against prevailing patriarchal practices and ideologies. With individuals from diverse backgrounds and expertise spanning various domains, the feminist movement has united in its mission to challenge the status quo. Throughout the realm of literature, novelists have emerged as powerful voices, illuminating the realities of patriarchal societies through their literary works. In this academic dissertation, the focus turns towards Virginia Woolf's renowned novel, *To the Lighthouse (*1927). The primary objective of this study is to unravel the intricate portrayals of two pivotal female characters, Mrs. Ramsay and Ms. Lily Briscoe. By delving into the narrative, we aim to shed light on the pervasive influence of patriarchy within the Victorian community and examine how Woolf deftly articulated her own feminist perspectives. Additionally, this work employs a feminist approach, using descriptive analytical and qualitative research methods. Furthermore, this research offers insightful feminist perspectives on the portrayal of Victorian women in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*.

Keywords: Feminism, patriarchy, *To the Lighthouse*, New woman, Victorian Woman.

Declaration

I hereby declare that all material in this assignment is my own work, except where there is clear acknowledgement or reference to the work of others.

I understand the nature of plagiarism. I have read and I agree with the English department's statement on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity on the University website. https://univ-biskra.dz/index.php/en/

[**June2023**]

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General Introduction

Since then, there has been an ongoing conflict between genders, with a noticeable power imbalance. Women have faced various obstacles and societal inequalities, yet they have shown remarkable strength and determination in their pursuit of equal rights. On the other hand, men have consistently exerted their authority over both other men and women, as well as the environment, establishing a system commonly known as patriarchy.

Feminism arises as a powerful response to the imbalances prevalent in society, championing the cause of gender equality and bravely questioning the entrenched norms of patriarchy. Its influence resonates across diverse dimensions of culture and literature, as it strives to magnify the voices of women and confront the unique challenges they face head-on.

Virginia Woolf, the well-known English writer of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, holds a prominent place in feminist history. She boldly tackled societal issues surrounding women's lives during a time when such discussions were often silenced. One of her most memorable works, To the Lighthouse, serves as a captivating exploration of her feminist viewpoints.

To the Lighthouse, the literary marvel penned by Virginia Woolf in 1927, graced the literary stage with its timeless brilliance. Published by Hogarth Press, this captivating masterpiece enchanted readers and garnered critical acclaim, solidifying Woolf's place among the literary giants of her time. Within the pages of the novel, readers are transported to a world brimming with intricate layers of human experience, as Woolf's prodigious talent unfolds across three enchanting parts, each unveiling a distinct facet of the narrative tapestry.

In the aptly named first part, "The Window," set against the breathtaking backdrop of Skye Island, Professor Ramsay, his beloved wife, their children, and kindred spirits find respite amidst a vibrant house-party, while an eagerly anticipated excursion to the lighthouse sets young James Ramsay's heart ablaze. However, fate, manifested through his father's weather predictions, delays their pilgrimage, adding an element of anticipation to the unfolding tale.

In the haunting second part, "Time Passes," Woolf weaves a tapestry of war-torn years, whispered secrets, and the decay that befalls once-vibrant abodes. As the narrative progresses, Ramsay's cherished haven succumbs to the ravages of time, yet a flicker of hope persists, resonating with the resiliency of the human spirit.

Finally, in the resplendent culmination of *The Lighthouse*, readers are immersed in the radiant glow of its guiding beacon. Within this ethereal realm, the enigmatic Mrs. Ramsay reigns, her presence a sublime parallel to the indomitable Clarissa Dalloway of "Mrs. Dalloway." As the characters converge upon the lighthouse, the passage of time intertwines with profound truths and resplendent epiphanies, illuminating the transformative power of self-discovery.

In this novel, the individuals in this narrative face the challenge of finding purpose and structure amidst the complexities of their lives. Woolf deliberately selected an unidentified narrator who communicates in the third person and presents subjective portrayals of the characters and their endeavors. Through this narrative technique, we gain valuable insight into the emotions experienced by the characters. The storytelling frequently transitions from one character's perspective to another, creating a dynamic and engaging experience. Woolf's prose exudes a poetic, rhythmic, and imaginative quality. The novel takes place on the Isle of Skye, part of the Hebrides, a group of islands to the west of

Scotland. It is set during the years just before and after World War I, which adds to the significance of the events.

This paper delves into the two central female characters of the story, examining Virginia Woolf's portrayal of their contrasting personalities and their captivating connection. One of these characters is Mrs. Ramsay, embodying the traditional values of the Victorian era, while the other is Lily Briscoe, representing the emerging "New Woman" archetype. Through an exploration of their similarities and differences, this paper aims to shed light on the intricate nature of their relationship. Furthermore, it will discuss how Lily's character embodies certain feminist theories prevalent during that period. By analyzing aspects such as attitudes, behaviors, and the characters' interactions with their environment, we can gain a deeper understanding of how these women navigate their roles and challenges. It is worth noting that Woolf's use of the stream-of-consciousness technique allows readers to intimately explore the characters' innermost thoughts, providing valuable insights into their perspectives and motivations.

Consequently, the research problem at hand is to explore and analyze the extent to which Virginia Woolf's depiction of the Victorian Ideal and the New Woman in her works reflects her own feminist beliefs and perspectives. The study aims to investigate the ways in which Woolf's portrayal of these societal constructs and female characters aligns with or challenges prevailing gender norms of the time. Therefore, the main question to be addressed is: How does Woolf's depiction of the Victorian Ideal and the New Woman reflect her feminist beliefs and perspectives?

It hypothesized that:

- In Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse,* Mrs. Ramsay represents the traditional, controlled, and oppressed woman of the Victorian era, while Ms. Briscoe embodies the new, independent, and rebellious woman who rejects societal norms and rules.
- Woolf's portrayal of Mrs. Ramsay as the embodiment of the Victorian Ideal and Ms. Briscoe as the representation of the New Woman reflects her feminist beliefs by critiquing traditional gender roles and advocating for women's liberation and autonomy.

To address the main question of this study, the researcher will break it down into four sub-questions, which will be explored and answered in three dedicated chapters. These sub-questions are as follows:

1. How did Victorian societal expectations shape the roles of women as wives, mothers, and members of society?
2. How did changing cultural attitudes challenge traditional gender roles, creating new opportunities for women and marginalized groups?
3. In *To the Lighthouse*, how do Mrs. Ramsey and Lily represent different ideals of women during the Victorian era?
4. Who are the victims in *To the Lighthouse* and how do their experiences contribute to the theme of victimhood in the novel?

The aim of this study is to analyze Virginia Woolf's depiction of the Victorian Ideal and the New Woman, exploring how they reflect her feminist beliefs and perspectives. It examines her critique of patriarchal norms, her representation of the changing roles of women, and the literary techniques she employs to convey her feminist ideas. Additionally, the study contextualizes Woolf's work within the broader feminist movement, comparing her portrayal with other feminist writers and thinkers of the time. Overall, it aims to illuminate Woolf's feminist beliefs and contributions to the feminist discourse of her era.

The methodology of this study intertwines feminist theory as a guiding thread, weaving through the qualitative research approach. By employing descriptive and analytical methods, the research endeavors to unravel how Woolf's portrayal of the Victorian Ideal and the New Woman intricately reflects her feminist beliefs and perspectives. Primary sources, such as Woolf's literary works, and secondary sources, encompassing scholarly articles and critical analyses, form the foundation of data collection. The analysis harmonizes close reading techniques, literary analysis, and contextual interpretation to unveil the profound layers of meaning embedded in Woolf's portrayals. The findings aspire to illuminate a comprehensive comprehension of the interplay between Woolf's depiction and her feminist ideology, meticulously threaded within the tapestry of historical and social contexts.

The opening chapter of this study focuses on the intricate journey of feminism. It begins by unpacking the term "feminism" and its multifaceted meanings, providing a foundation for understanding this influential movement. The chapter then delves into the historical progression of feminism, tracing its evolution and highlighting pivotal moments along the way. Key concepts such as gender equality, women's rights, and the dismantling of patriarchal structures are explored, showcasing the fundamental principles of the movement. Furthermore, the chapter examines the various waves of feminism, from the early suffrage movement to the contemporary emphasis on intersectionality. This analysis offers insights into the diverse objectives and strategies employed by feminists throughout history. Additionally, the chapter delves into different theories of feminism, ranging from liberal perspectives advocating for equality within existing systems to radical perspectives seeking transformative societal change. By studying these theories, readers gain a deeper understanding of the complexities and debates within feminist discourse. Lastly, the chapter focuses on British feminism, shedding light on the specific contributions and challenges

faced within the British context. From the suffragette movement to contemporary activism, this section explores the unique dynamics of feminist progress in Britain.

The second chapter delves into the profound influence of the Victorian ideal on society, specifically focusing on gender roles and societal expectations. It examines the enforcement of submissiveness and conformity within this ideal, particularly in the roles of wives and mothers, while highlighting the constraints placed on individual autonomy. Virginia Woolf's redefinition of these roles and her ability to inspire change through her literary works are also thoroughly explored within this chapter. As part of the analysis, Woolf's literary odyssey is examined, emphasizing her significance as a feminist writer. The chapter narrows its focus to Woolf's novel, To The Lighthouse, and meticulously uncovers the symbolism employed throughout the narrative, decoding its meanings and implications.

Chapter Three delves into the captivating characterizations and underlying themes of two pivotal female figures in Virginia Woolf's To The Lighthouse: Mrs. Ramsey and Lily Briscoe. Mrs. Ramsey, known as "The Victorian Woman," is examined in terms of her dominance within the household, the influence of patriarchal norms on her life, and her complex role as a mother. In contrast, Lily Briscoe embodies "The New Woman," symbolizing the emergence of a new female identity. The chapter explores Lily's characteristics as a New Woman, her artistic expression through painting, and her experiences of victimhood and agency. By analyzing these characters, the chapter sheds light on the dichotomy between the Victorian ideal and the evolving role of women in society, offering insights into the complexities of female identity and the challenges faced during this transformative period.

Chapter One: Theoretical Framework

1.0 Introduction

Feminism has returned to the headlines after a long period of time, and there has been an intellectual explosion surrounding it. Feminist discourse has primarily been confined to social media platforms and webs. However, the majority remain ignorant of its history. This chapter seeks primarily to introduce the term "feminism" and its history, which is worthy of remembrance, recognition, and understanding. In addition to the main concepts of feminism, which are gender equality, patriarchy, intersectionality, and women's agency. It also aims to familiarize readers with its various movements, including the first, second, and third wave and excluding the latest developments of nowadays. On the other hand, it encompasses theories of feminism or its types if one may say so. Secondarily, Secondarily, it aims to provide a concise overview of the history of British feminism and its influential trailblazers.

1.1 The Term "Feminism"

The term 'feminism' was first used in 1894 to describe the movement for gender equality and women's rights. It comes from the Latin word 'femina,' which means 'woman.' As well as Simone de Beauvoir, who suggests that the terms "masculine" and feminine" are often used interchangeably on legal documents, primarily for formal purposes. (Raina 3372).

Feminism, according to scholarly sources, is a set of beliefs that seeks to promote equality between genders in different societal domains, including politics, economics, and social structures. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, feminism is "a belief system that strives for equality between the sexes in social, economic, and political contexts" (Brunell and Burkett). On the other hand, the Oxford Companion to Philosophy embodied feminism in the essence of its concept as "the advocacy for women's rights based on the principle of

gender equality" (Mendus 291-294). Correspondingly, Merriam-Webster defines feminism as "a theory promoting equal political, economic, and social rights for both men and women" ("Merriam-Webster"). Likewise, this holds true for the esteemed the Cambridge Dictionaries presents feminism as "the belief in achieving equality between genders, ensuring that women have the same rights, power, and opportunities as men" ("Cambridge Dictionaries"), When it is coming to feminism's discussion, it is vital to acknowledge these differences in definitions.

The definition of the term 'feminism' differs from person to person. As stated by Bell Hooks in her book "Feminism Is for Everybody: Passionate Politics" (2000), she presents feminism as follows: "Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression." (hooks 2). She offers her perspective on feminism, which endeavors to confront and eradicate diverse types of prejudice and subjugation. Hooks' definition of feminism goes beyond the traditional notion of fighting for women's rights and empowerment. She highlights the importance of questioning and dismantling the ingrained social structures and beliefs that contribute to gender discrimination and prejudice. It aims to achieve a more extensive objective of securing fairness and equality for all genders within society.

Moreover, according to the prominent feminist author Simone de Beauvoir, feminism entails advocating for women's rights, equality in terms of sexual orientation, and overall human rights. In essence, her interpretation of feminism pertains to championing women's rights, striving for gender equality, and standinginism' has different interpretations in various dictionaries. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, it refers to embracing femininity and womanhood. On the other hand, Webster's Dictionary defines 'feminism' as the belief that women should possess political rights equal to those of men. Toril Moi highlights that the terms "feminist" or "feminism" are political labels that demonstrate support for the goals of the Women's Movement, which emerged during up for the rights of every individual. Efforts towards ensuring fair treatment, equal opportunities, and social recognition for

women form an essential aspect of striving for all-encompassing human rights for every member of society (de Beauvoir 254). Her vision encompasses championing women's rights within the broader context of advocating for equality and justice for all individuals.

Meanwhile, Feminism encompasses various social and political movements and ideologies with the goal of achieving equality between genders in politics, economics, personal life, and society (Beasley 3-11). Hence, it asserts that societies privilege the male perspective and that women are subject to inequitable treatment in these societies (Gamble VII).

In a different light, Judith Butler examines feminism through her exploration of gender as a socially constructed and expressive notion. Rather than perceiving gender as an inherent or immutable characteristic of individuals, Butler challenges this notion and proposes that it is molded through repetitive behaviors and expressions within a specific cultural framework. According to Butler, gender is more of a performative act rather than a fixed attribute one possesses (Butler 2). She criticizes the idea that we have a fixed and unchanging sense of who we are. According to her, terms like "female" or "male" are not something we're born with or predetermined, but they're influenced by the expectations and power imbalances in society. She suggests that gender is an ongoing source of conflict, adaptation, and discussion (2). Her view emphasizes that gender is an ongoing site of contestation and negotiation, rejecting the idea of it being a fixed attribute. Similarly, the Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie expresses in her own words: "Feminist: the person who believes in the social, political, and economic equality of the sexes." (Adichie 7). Her articulation powerfully conveys the fundamental principles that underpin the feminist movement.

1.2 The History of Feminism

The history of feminism is intertwined with the development of Gothic city life and medieval civilization during the early Middle Ages. It was during this time that the concept of gallantry emerged, encompassing various forms and ideas. One notable aspect was the creation of a refined form of literature called the "discourse on the excellence of noble women," produced by both men and women. This literature aimed to provide models of female behavior and enhance the self-esteem of noblewomen, highlighting their contributions to the creation of gallantry in the ruling classes. However, this discourse faced opposition from misogynistic literature, often promoted by clergy and lay authors, which emerged from distant origins and persisted until the Baroque era (Valcárcel 7).

While the former celebrated feminine virtues and presented women as examples, the latter relentlessly emphasized the supposed shortcomings and inherent stupidity of the female sex. Despite their differing views, both discourses shared the belief that women should be subordinated to men, albeit with varying degrees of respect. Misogynistic debates, tracing their origins back to Churchmen and Aristotle, continued without reaching a consensus (7).

During the Enlightenment era, feminism emerged as a distinct political ideology that stood in stark contrast to the prevailing "excellence of women" discourse. It aimed to emphasize the idea of equality as the foundation of discussions within this school of thought (8). Mary Wollstonecraft's groundbreaking work, "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman," played a pivotal role in contesting the exclusion of women from political and property rights espoused by Jean-Jacques Rousseau's political theory (8).

The practical nature of Enlightenment thought seeks to imagine an ideal world and find ways to make it a reality. However, it is important to note that Enlightenment thinking itself is not inherently feminist. In fact, feminism can be seen as an unintended consequence

of the Enlightenment. Rousseau, a prominent Enlightenment thinker, recognized that many differences between the sexes are a result of societal habits and lifestyles rather than innate differences (9).

Rousseau held democratic beliefs that were biased towards exclusion. He asserted that men's equality stemmed from their dominance over women and envisioned a society where all men could be recognized as citizens and patriarchs, while females were stripped of their citizenship and liberties, regardless of their social status or skill sets. Rousseau's views on gender roles greatly influenced the feminist discussions of the eighteenth century. Despite his extensive knowledge, he did not support the notion of women's liberation and perceived women as a subservient gender whose education should solely equip them for their roles as spouses and mothers. While it may be conceivable that in ancient times, males and females held equal status, the practice of living together resulted in the development of profound emotions such as marital and parental love (11). Rousseau's perspective was that families were like miniature civilizations thriving on shared values of reciprocal obligation and autonomy.

1.2.1 Main Concepts of Feminism

Before going any further, it is important to tackle some core aspects of feminism. First and foremost, what are the key feminist concepts? Feminism is a diverse field of thought and ideology, but there are several fundamental concepts typically linked with this movement:

1.2.1.1Gender Equality

Dale Spender debunks common misunderstandings surrounding feminism by emphasizing its peaceful essence and the valuable impact it has had. According to her, feminism has not resorted to warfare, assassinations, concentration camps, or acts of

brutality. Instead, she highlights the fact that feminism has fought for numerous crucial issues, such as education, suffrage, better working conditions, safety in public areas, child care, social support, rape crisis centers, women's shelters, and changes in the law: "Feminism has fought no wars. It has killed no opponents. It has set up no concentration camps, starved no enemies, practiced no cruelties. Its battles have been for education, for the vote, for better working conditions, for safety in the streets, for child care, for social welfare, for rape crisis centers, women's refuges, reforms in the law. If someone says, 'Oh, I'm not a feminist', I ask, 'Why? What's your problem?'" (Spender, Goodreaders).

In a clever fashion, she contests the unfavorable portrayals linked to feminism and highlights it as a cause dedicated to promoting fairness, righteousness, and societal transformation. Spender poses a thought-provoking question, "What's your problem?" to those who claim they are not feminists, urging them to reflect on their rationale for rejecting the ideology. This implies that the goals of feminism are centered on equity and enhancing societal conditions.

1.2.1.2Patriarchy

In her work "Understanding Patriarchy," bell hooks discusses the concept of patriarchal ideology and its impact on society. She famously stated, "Patriarchy is the single most life-threatening social disease assaulting the male body and spirit in our nation." This quote highlights the belief that men, under patriarchal systems, hold greater authority, control, and societal advantages compared to women. Patriarchy refers to a social structure where men dominate positions of political power and wield primary authority. This happens both in an individual's personal life and in their professional environment (Guy_Evans).

According to my understanding of Bell Hooks' notion, Feminism aims to analyze and confront patriarchal structures, norms, and values that sustain gender inequality. This

emphasizes the impact of male dominance on several areas of society, such as government, finances, interpersonal relationships, and traditional customs. Feminism aims to deconstruct patriarchy through the opposition of male entitlement, advocating for equal treatment of all genders, and eliciting women's empowerment in reclaiming their entitlements and abilities

1.2.1.3 Intersectionality

The concept of intersectionality, coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a renowned legal activist and scholar, explains the intricate interconnection and overlapping of different social categories like gender, race, class, sexuality, and disability, leading to the emergence of distinctive discrimination and disadvantages faced by individuals from multiple marginalized groups (Steinmetz). Crenshaw introduced the term during the latter part of the 1980s in order to address the inadequacies presented by conventional feminist and anti-racist models, which frequently fell short in comprehensively representing the encounters of Black women.

Crenshaw proposes that intersectionality acknowledges the possibility of individuals facing multiple and interconnected types of discrimination, which cannot be comprehended by focusing solely on one aspect of their identity. A Black woman can encounter prejudice that isn't solely dependent on her ethnicity or sex separately, but rather because of the intersection of those characteristics, leading to particular difficulties and disparities.

Crenshaw's research highlights the significance of acknowledging and dealing with the interweaving structures of dominance and suppression that mold individuals' experiences. The concept of intersectionality offers an approach to comprehending and contesting diverse kinds of inequality, and advocating for policies and practices that incorporate greater inclusivity and fairness (Steinmetz).

1.2.1.4Women's Agency

Women's ability to make autonomous decisions, pursue goals, and exercise authority over their bodies and lives is known as women's agency. Feminism acknowledges and promotes the independence, empowerment, and ability of women to make decisions. It opposes condescending views that diminish women's autonomy and advocates for the idea that women should have the liberty to chase their goals, make decisions regarding their physical selves and relationships, and engage actively in every aspect of life (Hosken 1-10).

1.2.2 Waves of Feminism

There have been three waves of feminism. Whether we are currently witnessing a fourth one is being discussed in order to characterize the novelty of the #METoo movement. According to Marilou Niedda, in her article "Feminist and Queer Studies: Judith Butler's Conceptualizations of Gender," first wave feminism is the genuine period of concerted feminist activity during the 19th and early 20th centuries. It focused on political gender inequalities, primarily that of the right to vote, but also promoted, among others, property rights for women. First-wave feminists were also opposed to ownership of married women by their husbands. The suffragette movement was particularly active in the UK and used civil disobedience as an important political strategy, as well as law-breaking actions. Emmeline Pankhurst and Millicent Fawcett were key figures of that movement (Niedda).

Furthermore, she argues that the second wave concerning women's rights, which happened between 1960 and 1980, was literally distinct because women wanted more than just the legal rights they already had. Women talked about "women's liberation" because they want to be free from men dominating " paternity " everything in society. Feminists asked for easier ways to get abortion and birth control, and they also wanted to be able to have sex

without judgment. During that period, some groups of feminists, including African American feminists, began to form organizations to advocate for their beliefs and values. Women wanted a change in culture more than a change in politics (Niedda). Prominent figures include Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem, and Simone de Beauvoir.

The term "third-wave" refers to a period of time in history that came after the second-wave of feminism and is marked by a focus on intersectionality and inclusivity. Third-wave feminism (1990s) is also quite heterogeneous in terms of demands. Women were no longer advocating for the elimination of gender distinctions; rather they were highlighting their unique characteristics. Certain factions aimed to gain acknowledgement for marginalized demographics, such as the sexual minority community encompassing individuals who identify as gay or lesbian, while others sought representation for racial minorities, specifically Chicanas or Latinas. Kimberlé W. highlighted the flaw of second-wave feminists in concentrating only on gender-based harm, without considering the intersectionality that women of different races, social classes, and sexual orientations face. This criticism stemmed from the fact that these women encounter more complex forms of oppression in society (Niedda). The inclusion of Marilou Niedda's insights adds scholarly support to the discussion, offering a deeper understanding of the different waves and their respective focuses.

1.2.3 Theories of Feminism

Feminist theory represents a vast and intricate body of philosophies and perspectives. This summary highlights several significant forms of feminism that warrant discussion, such as liberal feminism, radical feminism, socialist/Marxist feminism, postcolonial feminism, and ecofeminism;

1.2.3.1 Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminism, also called mainstream feminism (Maynard 259). It is a belief system that focuses on achieving fairness between genders in today's society. It's about making sure that everyone, regardless of whether they're a man or a woman, has the same chances and rights. Liberal feminists want to change traditional ideas about what men and women should do and be, so that nobody is treated unfairly because of their gender. They want everyone to have the same opportunities to learn, work, and participate in politics, without being discriminated against. Liberal feminists work to remove the barriers that hold people back because of their gender, and they want to create a society where everyone, no matter their gender identity, has the same rights and opportunities (Rosser 1-23).

Liberalism believes in freedom and the just state, and liberal feminists advocate for women's freedom. There are two types of liberalism: classical liberalism, which focuses on freedom from interference, and egalitarian liberalism, which emphasizes personal and political autonomy. This distinction also applies to liberal feminism. Egalitarian-liberal feminists see the state as an ally and support measures like anti-discrimination laws and welfare programs. Classical-liberal feminists believe that gender-based discrimination is largely resolved and oppose such measures. Some classical-liberal feminists prioritize cultural change, while others reject it (Baehr).

1.2.3.2 Radical Feminism

Radical feminism is a belief system within feminism that advocates for a complete transformation of society. It calls for the eradication of male dominance in all areas of life, not only socially but also economically. Radical feminists understand that women's experiences are shaped by more than just gender; they are also influenced by factors such as race, class, and sexual orientation. This perspective and movement emerged during the 1960s,

and its goal is to bring about profound changes for gender equality and social justice (Willis 91).

Radical feminists perceive society as fundamentally structured around a system called patriarchy, where men hold power and oppress women. They strive to dismantle this patriarchal system in order to liberate women and girls from an unjust society. To achieve this, radical feminists challenge existing social norms and institutions (Firestone 1). Their goal is to dismantle this patriarchal system and strive for a more just society. To achieve this, they challenge existing social norms and institutions. Their efforts include opposing the objectification of women, raising awareness about issues like rape and violence against women, questioning traditional gender roles, and criticizing a capitalism that they see as both racialized and gendered. Their ultimate aim is not only to eliminate male privilege but to transcend the concept of sex distinction itself, where the cultural significance of physical differences between individuals would no longer exist (Firestone 16).

1.2.3.3 Postmodern Feminism

Postmodern feminism is a blend of different ideas like post-structuralism, postmodernism, and French feminism (Sands 489). Its aim is to challenge the deeply rooted patriarchal norms in society that have resulted in gender inequality (Ebert 886). Instead of adhering to fixed beliefs and universal truths, postmodern feminists emphasize the uniqueness and diversity among women (886).They reject the notion of essentialism and embrace the differences that exist among women. Postmodern feminists argue that applying a universal truth to all women disregards individual experiences (904). They caution women to be critical of societal norms that may be influenced by masculine perspectives on how women should be perceived (Wallian 27-43).

Postmodern feminists are individuals who examine ideas that have contributed to unequal treatment between genders in society. They scrutinize these ideas and strive to achieve gender equality by challenging the dominance of logic, encouraging the acceptance of diverse viewpoints, breaking down written works to reveal underlying meanings, and advocating for individual experiences and perspectives. These feminists are recognized for highlighting the divisions in society and showing how language plays a role in shaping how genders are treated differently (Sands 489).

1.2.3.4 Socialist or Marxist Feminism

Socialist feminist or Marxist Feminism, came about in the 1960s and 1970s as part of the feminist movement and the New Left. It's all about how the patriarchy (a system where men dominate) and capitalism are all tied together. The way we think about women's roles in society, whether it's in their homes or out in public, can be traced back to the ideas of Mary Wollstonecraft and William Thompson from a long time ago, in the late 1700s and 1800s (Lapovsky).

One important thing that socialist feminism talks about is how women can join forces and talk about their personal problems to fight against the patriarchy. This idea got popularized by Carol Hanisch in her essay from 1969, where she said "the personal is political." At the same time, the second wave of feminism was picking up steam, and it had a big influence on socialist feminism (Ehrenreich).

Socialist feminists believe that if we want to truly liberate women, we need to tackle both the economic and cultural reasons behind their oppression. It's not just about changing the way women are treated in society, but also changing the way the whole system works(Ehrenreich).

1.2.3.5 Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism is a cool blend of feminism and environmental awareness. It's all about looking at how men and women relate to nature. This term was thought up by a French writer named Françoise d'Eaubonne in her book Le Féminisme ou la Mort back in 1974. Ecofeminist theory believes in a world where everyone is equal and works together, without any single group being in charge. Nowadays, ecofeminism comes in different flavors, like liberal ecofeminism, which focuses on individual rights, spiritual/cultural ecofeminism, which explores the connection between spirituality and nature, and social/socialist ecofeminism (or materialist ecofeminism), which looks at how economic systems affect gender and the environment. Ecofeminism isn't just about theory either; it's applied to all sorts of things like art, social justice, philosophy, religion, modern feminism, and even poetry (Merchant 193- **221).**

Ecofeminist analysis explores how women and nature are connected in different areas like culture, economy, religion, politics, literature, and art. It looks at how both women and nature are oppressed and treated as things that can be owned. It also talks about how men are seen as the ones who control culture, while women are seen as the ones who take care of nature. The analysis shows that men have power over women, just as humans have power over nature. Ecofeminism says that we need to respect both women and nature equally (Adams 1-8).

1.3British Feminism

According to prevailing consensus across the United Kingdom, it is widely held that the propagation of feminist ideology commenced with the pivotal contributions of Mary Wollstonecraft. This belief emanates from Wollstonecraft's seminal work entitled "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman" in 1792. Within the pages of this influential treatise,

Wollstonecraft articulates a compelling appeal to society, urging against the provision of deficient education to mothers and the confinement of women solely to the role of wives (Wollstonecraft 1792 as cited in "The History of Feminism in the UK").

She was not the only one, but the book was in such high demand that bookstores rushed to supply readers with the book (Taylor 2003 as cited in "The History of Feminism in the UK") .Her influence on other writers of the time made Wollstonecraft very distinctive. She attacked the view of female education propounded by Rousseau and countless others who viewed women as innately weak creatures and underestimated their ability to think effectively (Sofia Rothschild 2009 as cited in "The History of Feminism in the UK")

1.3.1Women's Suffrage Advocacy in the Late 19th Century

The Pankhurst's and the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) - "suffragettes with bombing and arson campaigns. Attacks on MPs' homes, railway stations and post offices armed with guns and bombs" (Kinght) followed in the men's violent footsteps believing this would do the trick. But they wouldn't have gotten the vote if it weren't for the Suffragettes.

Interestingly, the term "suffragette" was originally intended as an insult, but Emmeline Pankhurst, the leader of the movement, embraced it. Emmeline herself was imprisoned more than ten times, embodying the group's motto of "Deeds Not Words." The Pankhurst family played a significant role in the movement, with Christabel Pankhurst, Emmeline's eldest daughter, enduring numerous imprisonments. Sylvia Pankhurst faced imprisonment and was even manhandled by Winston Churchill in public. Emmeline Pankhurst, a founding member of the WSPU, advocated disruptive tactics and civil disobedience. One notable example was the rush on Parliament in October 1908 when they gathered 60,000 people to invade Parliament, effectively drawing attention to the suffrage movement (Parliament, Undated).

One event that gained widespread attention was Emily Wilding Davison's act of throwing herself in front of King George V's horse at the 1913 Epsom Derby. Davison, known for her militant behavior within the WSPU, had even hidden overnight in the Palace of Westminster. Her legacy in the history of feminism is solidified by her tragic death as she sought to make a statement for suffrage. Whether she intended to harm herself or merely draw attention to the cause remains unknown. The following year, World War I erupted, bringing significant changes to the social and political landscape.

After the war, in 1918, women over the age of 30 who owned property or lived in a property worth more than £5 (equivalent to roughly £275 in 2018) were granted the right to vote. By this time, women had already gained voting rights in countries such as Australia, Finland, and New Zealand. Some argue that women would have achieved voting rights earlier if the war had not broken out. In 1928, the right to vote was further extended, granting full voting rights to women from the age of 21 with no property restrictions. Following the acquisition of voting rights, Sylvia Pankhurst continued her advocacy for social issues and a stronger communist community in the UK. Adela Pankhurst remained in Australia and made significant contributions to Australian politics. Christabel Pankhurst, deeply affected by her mother Emmeline's death in 1928, eventually relocated to the United States.

Nearly half a century later, in 1851, Harriet Taylor Mill published The Enfranchisement of Women. Her second husband, the radical MP John Stuart Mill, went on to publish The Subjugation of Women in 1869. In doing so, he carried on the literary tradition that advocated for change and hoped to be as influential as Wollstonecraft (Knight).Mary Wollstonecraft's literary impact ignited a feminist revolution that continues to burn brightly in the United Kingdom's history.

1.3.2 The 1930s-1960s

It is often argued that feminism in the UK faced a great decline after the 1920s (Smith, 1996). However, it is important to take into consideration the social situation of the time. The Great Depression and post-war period solidified anti-feminist notions (Smith, 1996). Nonetheless, feminists during this period were persistent and played a waiting game until government finances recovered. In 1934, a coalition of 31 women's groups sponsored a rally to garner public support for equal pay (Smith, 1996, p. 101). Eleanor Rathbone advocated for equal pay, emphasizing the fairness of men receiving higher pay in the case of a family allowance, but faced hostility from advocates of fair play (Smith 1996 as cited in "The History of Feminism In The UK"). The feminist claim for equal pay as a matter of justice for women failed to persuade Parliament, especially during a decade when male employment became a focal point of political debate (Smith, 1996, p. 102). During a fortnight in 1931, the unemployment rate rose from 494,798 to 774,620 (The Guardian, 1931 as cited in " The History of Feminism").

Despite the challenging economic crisis, feminists achieved successes. In 1936, 156 Members of Parliament (MPs) voted for equal pay, while 148 MPs voted against it. Only when the government threatened to resign did more MPs side with the proponents of equal pay in a second vote (Smith, 1996 as cited in "The History Of Feminism In The UK).

This demonstrates that the belief in the decline of feminism is a myth. In the event that this shows anything, at that point within the to begin with it shows that the belief in woman's rights may be a myth. Amid World War II, ladies confronted enrollment for the primary time, which too took over men's occupations in manufacturing plants, cities, and towns. But after the war, the dispatch of the National Wellbeing Benefit (NHS) engaged

ladies, giving broad get to wellbeing protections, already as it were accessible to men(Knight).

Feminist literature in the UK during the 1940s and 1950s was not extensively developed compared to the wider international community (Birmingham Feminist History Group, 1979 as cited in "The History of Feminism in The UK). Simone de Beauvoir's controversial work, "The Second Sex" (Vintage Classics), published in France in 1949, challenged traditional gender roles and advocated for the position of the Independent Woman. In contrast, the literature published in the UK during that period largely accepted the primacy of women's roles as wives and mothers (Birmingham Feminist History Group 1979, p. 50 as cited in "The History of Feminism In The UK). It is possible that our understanding of feminism may be out of line with the aspirations of women in the 1950s. The Birmingham Feminist History Group (1979) argues that feminism in the 1950s was primarily concerned with the integration of femininity into a masculine world.

Feminism was criticized from the 1930s to the 1960s for seemingly disappearing, with the perception that women's only goal was to achieve voting rights. Nevertheless, the actual situation reveals a different story (Knight). This is the so-called calm before the storm, which laying the groundwork for the second wave of the women's movement to emerge with an impulsive, well-planned force from the feminist movement.

1.3.3 The 1960s to the 1990s

In the previous reliable reference, the history of feminism in the UK has been extensively documented that from 1960s onwards, the period of feminism is often referred to as the Second Wave. One significant aspect that differentiates this period from others is the wave of political and social rights that women acquired. In 1961, the contraceptive pill became available. Initially, the pill was prescribed to older women who already had children.

The government was concerned about being seen as endorsing "free love" during the time of the "summer of love" in the 60s. However, in 1974, the pill became available to single women (Cafe 2011 as cited in " The History of Feminism "). Its widespread availability created the perception of women becoming sexually liberated. This remains a contested theme among feminists today, particularly regarding the relationship between women's liberation and sexual freedom. In 2011, it was estimated that 70% of all women in Britain had used the pill at some stage (Cafe 2011).

In 1964, women gained the right to own and inherit property, which was previously legally entitled to husbands. This change made sense since women who could choose when to have children should also have the right to control their own finances. In 1967, the Abortion Act was passed, initially restricting access to cases where harm was thought to come to either the baby or the mother. Progress was being made in the realms of home, reproduction, and work (Knight).

Women continued to employ protest tactics, similar to those of the first wave. In 1968, women at the Ford factory in Dagenham went on strike for equal pay. Ford classified their work as "unskilled," which allowed them to be paid less than their male colleagues. This strike triggered the passage of the Equal Pay Act in 1970. In the 1970s, feminists threw flour bombs at the 1970 Miss World contestants as a protest against objectification. Women from the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) chanted, "We're not beautiful, we're not ugly, we're angry." The following year, the first women's refuge opened in Chiswick, providing a safe place for women and children to escape abusive situations and paving the way for future refuges (Knight).

Following World War II, the UK experienced waves of immigration, particularly from Asian, Caribbean, and African countries. By the 1970s, women in these groups began

organizing themselves. The Brixton Black Women's group, the Welsh National Women's Liberation Conference, the Organization of Women of Asian and African Descent (OWAAD), and the Southall Black Sisters were formed and protested against racism and discrimination. The activism of these groups led to the outlawing of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in 1985 (Knight).

Glass ceilings kept on falling down. In 1973, women were granted access to join the stock exchange. Although the exchange did not explicitly bar women, they were consistently denied opportunities beyond assistant or secretary roles. The 1980s brought about greater legal achievements for women, including the Sex Discrimination Act, the Employment Act, and the Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Act.

Whilst the previous period accused feminism of slowing down, this period accelerated progress. Through the hard work of women, numerous legal changes and new laws were implemented. Women expanded into careers they had never been admitted to before, and Britain not only recognized the grievances of minority women but also allowed women to regain control over their lives by enabling them to control reproduction. The next period would bring "girl power" and issues related to the objectification of women. Activism would move from the streets to the screens, and feminism would become part of popular culture.

1.3.4 From the 1990s to the Digital Age

The 1990s kick starts the Third Wave of feminism. The world has witnessed a growing interconnectedness as movies and music continue to globalize. This phenomenon has resulted in mutual influences between American and British artists, where American artists have impacted British girls and vice versa. This cultural exchange presented an interesting paradox(Knight). On one side, there emerged a significant wave of female empowerment embodied by iconic groups such as the Spice Girls, TLC, and Destiny's Child.

Simultaneously, there was a growing issue of the objectification and excessive sexual portrayal of the female physique, which was gaining momentum. The internet and social media further facilitated feminist activism, although there are debates about its long-term impact. Hashtags and online petitions have successfully pressured organizations to change their practices, but the effectiveness of online activism in bringing about lasting change remains uncertain. The sexualization of women in media and the beauty standards imposed on them have been widely discussed, with feminists holding various perspectives on the expression of identity and female exploitation(knight).

The global nature of movements has become more evident in the modern era, with examples like the international spread of the Slutwalk protests originating from the United States. In the United Kingdom, women are still fighting for full legal equality, particularly regarding workplace policies such as mandatory high heels for female employees. Despite progress in areas like LGBT rights, the debate surrounding the heel requirement demonstrates the need for continued advocacy to challenge gender-based disparities and address issues that disproportionately affect women. Efforts to change laws and regulations continue, as feminists strive to eliminate discriminatory practices and create a more inclusive society (Knight). The global nature of feminist movements highlights the ongoing fight for gender equality, exemplified by struggles such as the fight against mandatory high heels in the workplace, emphasizing the need for continued advocacy and change

1.4 Conclusion

Authentic feminism—feminism that aims to emancipate all women—inevitably leads to unity politics, collective economics, and r/evolution—a worldwide citizens movement, as depicted by the Great Transition Initiative. It is crucial for advocates of feminism, both females and males, to uphold this principle and embrace unity politics. Feminism must

embrace an r/evolutionary approach to be truly feminist. Furthermore, it is essential for all forward-thinking movements to remain vigilant regarding the challenge of intersectionality and pledge themselves to eliminating all forms of inequality—including male supremacy and gender subjugation—that they encounter within their organizations and in their efforts to bring about change.

The confluence of movements plays a significant role in a new global arena, although many remain unaware of its impact. We must continuously shift our perspective from resistance to constructive action, from opposition to advocacy, and find inspiration in the diverse examples of collective economies worldwide. A primary objective for feminists and progressive activists in this era is to make the r/evolutionary path forward visible, thereby motivating like-minded individuals to unite and align their efforts in synchronized synergy.

Chapter Two: Exploring Victorian Ideals and Symbolism in Virginia Woolf's to the LightHouse

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the focus is on delving into the lives of Victorian women, examining the emergence of the new woman and the redefinition of gender roles. The chapter also uncovered the societal expectations and gender constraints that weighed upon women during this era, stifling their autonomy and confining them to submissive and conforming roles.

Within this chapter, the focus is on shining light on the intricate complexities of being a wife and mother, revealing how these responsibilities shaped women's identities and limited their aspirations. Navigating through the gilded cages of societal norms that constrained their autonomy and explored the yearning for freedom that simmered beneath the surface.

However, amidst the shadows of the Victorian ideal, a wind of change begins to blow. Introducing the remarkable literary genius of Virginia Woolf, a trailblazing British novelist who defied convention and became a catalyst for transformation. Tracing Woolf's literary odyssey, witnessing her own journey of self-discovery and liberation as she broke free from the constraints of her time.

As the exploration continues, readers are captivated by the ethereal world crafted within Woolf's acclaimed novel, *To the Lighthouse*. Through careful analysis, the symbolism embedded in its pages, unearthing hidden depths of meaning and significance. Accompanying the characters on their quests for empowerment, navigating the tides of change as they seek to redefine their roles and challenge societal expectations. The chapter also explores the themes focuses on

of redefined roles and inspiring change, shedding light on the untold stories of Victorian women and the transformative power of Virginia Woolf's literary odyssey.

2.1 The Victorian Ideal

This chapter indulges in a plethora of films and immerses ourselves in novels depicting the lives of women during the Victorian era in 19th-century Britain, commonly referred to as the "Age of Victoria." Yet, our perception often becomes ensnared by the alluring façade of lace-trimmed draperies and fragrant pouches. Alas, the veritable reality of women's existence in Victorian England transcended the simplistic narrative we envisage. According to Dunn's declaration, "Don’t let the lace doilies and lavender sachets fool you—life for women in Victorian England wasn’t always how we imagine it" (Dunn, Introduction).

The position of women during the Victorian era highlighted a stark contrast between the United Kingdom's immense power and wealth and the deplorable social conditions that prevailed then and continue to be regarded as such today. This era, named after Queen Victoria, the reigning female monarch, witnessed a lack of basic rights for women, including voting, the ability to sue, and property ownership for married women. However, it is important to note that women increasingly joined the workforce, contributing their labor in significant numbers as a result of the Industrial Revolution (Buckner and Francis 109).

2.1.1 Gender Roles and Societal Expectations

In the captivating realm of the Victorian era, a grand tapestry of shifting roles unfolded for both men and women, crafting a vivid contrast unparalleled in the annals of history. Time-honored traditions crumbled as the veil of progress lifted, revealing a new order of existence. Once upon a time, women gracefully toiled side by side with their husbands and brothers, their nimble fingers entwined in the fabric of family business. The

bustling abode above the shop became their sanctuary, where they deftly served customers and meticulously managed accounts while dutifully attending to their domestic duties. A harmonious symphony of responsibilities danced effortlessly in their capable hands (Hughes).

But alas, the winds of change blew mightily across the 19th century. Men, like industrious wanderers, embarked on daily odysseys to faraway lands of factories, shops, and offices. The once bustling homes were now silent witnesses to solitude, as wives, daughters, and sisters were left behind, entrusted with the solemn duty of overseeing the domestic tapestry. And so, the roles diverged, like separate planets in a celestial dance, only converging fleetingly at breakfast and dinner, their worlds colliding in fleeting moments (Hughes).

Amidst this transformative landscape, the ideology of Separate Spheres took root, drawing upon the bedrock of "natural" gender characteristics. Women, blessed with a delicate grace and ethereal fragility, were deemed morally superior, their spirits destined for the sanctity of the domestic sphere. Their noble purpose, it was believed, lay in harmonizing the scales of virtue, countering the perceived moral contamination of the public domain where their husbands toiled tirelessly. Their nurturing souls became the guardians of tradition, molding the hearts and minds of future generations, preserving the tapestry woven by their ancestors (Hughs).

Ironically, it was this very influence that became a double-edged sword, wielded against women in the fight for suffrage. The power they held within the home, their voices resonating through the corridors of familial sanctuaries, became a point of contention. Critics argued that their significant sway within the household rendered them sufficiently represented, negating the need for political enfranchisement (Hughes).

2.1.2 Submissiveness and Conformity

During the Victorian era, there was a prevailing belief that women held a sacred role as the moral compass of the household. This idea originated from Coventry Patmore's 1854 poem titled "The Angel in the House." Women were expected to embody moral purity and were regarded by their husbands with deep reverence akin to religious devotion. This concept emerged amidst the backdrop of the Industrial Revolution, which brought about societal advancements but also instilled fears of moral decay. Consequently, people became increasingly vigilant in upholding moral values within the sanctity of their homes (McDonnell 1).

Girls were raised to embody traits of submissiveness, obedience, and docility. From Childhood they were taught to endure pain and suffering, as these qualities were considered desirable (Cumminghon 20). In their early years, girls were tightly bound and made to wear stays, which restricted their body's natural growth and confined them within narrow molds. As they matured, they transitioned to wearing tightly-fitted corsets. Women with small waists were regarded as attractive, elegant, and graceful, epitomizing the societal ideal of Victorian femininity. Clothing choices played a significant role in crafting the image of delicate and submissive women during this era (20).

The Victorian ideal of a woman was one of purity, modesty, and refinement, all reinforced by strict codes of etiquette and manners. This strictness even extended to a deliberate avoidance of discussing or acknowledging undergarments, often referred to as "unmentionables." Any conversation concerning these intimate articles of clothing was considered inappropriate, as it risked drawing attention to anatomical details. Victorian society went to great lengths to suppress discussions of this nature, with individuals

purposefully avoiding thinking or speaking about them. However, these efforts to suppress reality occasionally resulted in awkward and embarrassing situations (20).

In polite society, most words describing pants were forbidden. As a result, storekeepers were compelled to officially label them as "unnamed" or "ineffable." Men's trousers were meticulously tailored to obfuscate any anatomical hints and reveal only what was absolutely necessary. The front part of the trousers featured thick fabric panels, while exceptionally snug undergarments provided additional concealment. The restrictions on women's lower body were even more severe, necessitating the obliteration of any prominent contours. Massive underskirts, known as crinolines, were employed, allowing an ample 10-11 meters of fabric to cascade gracefully over a lady's skirt. The ensuing spectacle included discreetly padded cushions strategically placed to completely conceal the feminine form. Thus, Victorian ladies, compelled to maintain their modesty, gracefully walked while inadvertently trailing cascades of fabric adorned with prominent bows (Buckner 109).

Notably, the shoulders, neck, and chest were spared from excessive concealment for a considerable period. Necklines in the ballrooms of that era were daringly audacious. It was only toward the end of the Victorian era that societal mores caught up, prompting the emergence of high collars delicately fastened beneath the chin of elegant ladies, securing them with meticulous attention to each and every button (Warwick).

2.1.3 Wife and Mother

During the Victorian era, the prevailing belief in British society revolved around the idea of the "pater familias" – the husband as the esteemed head of the household and the moral guide for his family. Wives were expected to fulfill their marriage vows, which demanded them to love, honor, and obediently follow their husbands. While their position in the family hierarchy was deemed secondary to their husbands, it would be mistaken to

assume their role was insignificant. On the contrary, the Victorians recognized the vital importance of a wife's responsibilities. Attending to her husband's needs and ensuring the proper upbringing of their children were regarded as essential elements contributing to the very foundation of societal stability. The Victorians firmly believed that these duties held the power to uphold the harmony and equilibrium of their social fabric (Hoppen 316).

Furthermore, "The heart of the domestic ideal was the mother and her children," (Abrams 6) [..] Since early in the 19th century, the role of mother had been idealized, going beyond mere reproduction to encompass profound symbolic meaning. Motherhood became synonymous with emotional fulfillment for women, and many middle-class women regarded it as a 'sweet vocation,' a substitute for their productive role. As Adams further observes, "the childless single woman was a figure to be pitied"(6). According to Abrams , women of the middle classes in that era dedicated more time to their children compared to previous generations. They embraced activities such as breastfeeding, playing, and educating their children, integrating them fully into the daily life of the home. By mid-century, middle-class women found their true womanhood validated when they responded emotionally to their infants and formed a bond through breastfeeding and constant attendance (6). Abrams asserts that motherhood was seen as an affirmation of their identity. He also points out that while marriage represented a woman's maturity and respectability, it was motherhood that confirmed her entry into the realm of womanly virtue and fulfillment. Not becoming a mother often subjected a woman to labels of inadequacy, failure, or abnormality. The childless single woman was viewed with pity, with society often encouraging her to seek work caring for children as a means of compensation for her perceived loss, such as a governess or a nursery maid (6).

2.1.4 Autonomy Constraints

In the dazzling world of the Victorian Era, a time of opulence and refinement, the lives of upper-class girls shimmered with anticipation. Their destiny? Marriage. Education, it seemed, was an unnecessary ornament for these young ladies. Instead, they devoted themselves to perfecting their "accomplishments" — a magical medley of talents that included enchanting piano melodies, captivating vocal performances, and the artistry of arranging exquisite floral displays. Their mission? To captivate and entertain guests with their awe-inspiring skills (Bryce).

In order to assume the revered role of the "Angel in the House," women found themselves in need of a new form of education, one tailored to their domestic responsibilities. Instead of solely relying on their homemaking skills to attract a suitable husband, young women of the middle class were guided towards acquiring what was commonly known as "accomplishments." These refined arts were cultivated either through attendance at boarding schools or under the guidance of resident governesses. In Jane Austen's timeless work, Pride & Prejudice, the character Caroline Bingley, who epitomizes snobbery, enumerates the necessary skills expected of any self-proclaimed accomplished young lady:

"A woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages ...and besides all this, she must possess a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address and expressions ..." (qtd in "*Gender Roles in the 19th Century".).*

As emphasized by Miss Bingley, a well-rounded education for a young lady involved not only intellectual pursuits but also the cultivation of an elegant and feminine demeanor. The fear of being labeled a "blue-stocking" loomed over these educated women—an epithet bestowed upon those who dedicated themselves overly zealous to intellectual endeavors.

Blue-stockings were deemed unfeminine, and their assertiveness in challenging men's perceived intellectual superiority was considered off-putting. In fact, some doctors even claimed that excessive studying had detrimental effects on women's ovaries, transforming them from vibrant beauties into withered husks (Hughes).

Later in the Victorian era, when esteemed institutions like Oxford and Cambridge begrudgingly opened their doors to women, many families vehemently opposed the idea of sending their intelligent daughters to such establishments. They feared that an excessive focus on academia would render these young women undesirable in the marriage market, potentially sabotaging their chances of finding a suitable husband (Hughes).

The battle for women's education ignited passionate clashes among visionaries from diverse backgrounds, entwined with religious and political ideologies. The evangelical movement advocated self-denial, while "rational dissenters" like the Unitarians saw limitless potential in women's intellectual capabilities (Morgan 36). Debates swirled, fueled by a quest to prepare women for roles beyond the confines of domesticity. Critics of society sought solutions to republicanism, socialism, and the societal challenges of the "Condition of England," exploring women's impact on politics and social reform (36). In Leeds, a beacon of progress, educational opportunities for middle-class girls flourished. Pioneering female public schools in the town propelled advancements, as educational reformers in Leeds emphasized the importance of public service and usefulness (37).

On the other hand, opportunities for women in the workforce were limited, and certain professions were deemed suitable for their involvement. The teaching profession stood as a respectable choice for women seeking employment. While other avenues of work, such as domestic service or factory labor, seemed mundane, teaching offered a glimmer of hope. However, even within the realm of education, women faced challenges and gender

discrimination. Their pay was often inferior to that of their male counterparts. Yet, schools, facing financial constraints, found women to be a cost-effective solution. Adherence to moral standards was expected, including modest attire and the avoidance of distractions. Thus, teaching became a notable occupation for women during the Victorian era, despite the constraints and societal expectations placed upon them (Bryce).

2.2 The New Woman: Redefined Roles and Inspiring

The New Woman, an influential feminist concept, emerged during the late 19th century and continued to shape societal perceptions well into the 20th century. In 1894, Sarah Grand, an Irish writer, played a significant role by introducing the term "new woman" in a highly influential article. This term was used to describe women who sought independence and advocated for radical social change. The concept gained further traction when English writer Ouida (Maria Louisa Ramé) titled a subsequent article using the same term. These contributions sparked an important dialogue about the evolving roles and aspirations of women during that time (Nelson 6,9). The term gained wider recognition thanks to the renowned British-American writer, Henry James. James employed this term to capture the rise of a new breed of women – educated, independent, and pursuing careers – across Europe and the United States (Row Botham chapters 1-3).

Embracing independence went beyond just a shift in mindset; it encompassed tangible transformations in both activities and attire. The rising popularity of bicycling, for instance, expanded women's horizons and empowered them to actively participate in a broader world. This newfound freedom allowed women to engage in a more active lifestyle, breaking barriers and venturing into unexplored territories (Patterson 4). No longer confined to the domestic realm, these daring women stepped boldly into the public arena, casting aside societal expectations and embracing a world of limitless possibilities. Their presence in jobs,

politics, and the vibrant tapestry of culture outside their homes marked a seismic shift, challenging the established norms that had kept them confined for far too long (4).

Conservative forces, lurking in the shadows of society, fiercely opposed these winds of change. Churches and enigmatic groups like the Ku Klux Klan rallied against the audacity of women's new roles, fearing the erosion of traditional values (Cummings 2009). Even amongst those who championed progress, such as the reformers of the Progressive Era and the suffragists, dissent lingered. They voiced their concerns, questioning the new woman's apparent disinterest in politics and her inclination towards careers in the captivating realm of commercial entertainment. As the pages of history turned, women's empowerment grew from a collective effort. Countless brave souls ventured forth, etching their stories into the annals of time (Cummings 2009). They comprised a kaleidoscope of experiences, each contributing a unique hue to the portrait of the "new woman." Glamorous performers entranced audiences, female athletes defied boundaries, "working girls" toiled in bustling city factories and tranquil rural mills, middle-class daughters shattered glass ceilings to pursue education and previously uncharted professions, while compassionate reformers joined forces in women's clubs, settlement houses, trade unions, and the battle for suffrage. Their united spirit propelled progress, painting a vibrant picture of resilience, courage, and unyielding determination (Borden 2).

2.3Virginia Woolf's Literary Odyssey

In the realm of literature, there exists a luminous figure that defied conventions and pushed the boundaries of storytelling: Virginia Woolf. She, born on January 25, 1883, into a distinguished family, was an extraordinary woman who left an indelible mark on the literary world. She came into this world as Adeline Virginia Stephen, blessed with parents who nurtured her creative spirit. her father being Leslie Stephen, the mastermind behind the

Oxford Dictionary of Biography, and her mother, Julia Duckworth, a beacon of love and support. Nestled in the warmth of her father's vast library, Woolf's creative spirit blossomed, fueled by the literary treasures at her fingertips. However, life dealt Woolf a cruel hand. Tragedy struck with devastating force, as she experienced the profound loss of cherished family members in quick succession. Coupled with her enduring struggle with mental illness, these hardships cast a shadow over her existence. Trapped within the depths of her own anguish, Woolf tragically chose to end her life in 1941, leaving behind an infallible void in the literary world (Abaza & Keshk).

Yet, despite her untimely departure, Woolf's literary legacy endures as a testament to her indomitable spirit and artistic brilliance. She fearlessly ventured into uncharted territories, revolutionizing the craft of writing itself. Through her iconic novels like *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and *To the Lighthouse* (1927), Woolf mesmerized readers with her unparalleled storytelling prowess. But her creativity transcended traditional boundaries, as she effortlessly wove together essays, diaries, letters, and biographies, each bearing her distinctive mark (Abaza & Keshk).

Woolf's writing served as a mirror to a rapidly evolving world. Her words resonated with the shifting tides of society, exploring themes of gender fluidity, sexual liberation, social hierarchies, and the profound impact of technological advancements. Inspired by the vanguard of her time, she drew from the wellspring of creativity left by luminaries like Marcel Proust, Igor Stravinsky, and the Post-Impressionists. Through her work, Woolf delved into the depths of the human psyche, unraveling the mysteries of the unconscious mind, the fluidity of time, the complexities of perception, and the scars left by the ravages of war ("*Virginia Woolf*" The British Library).

But, Woolf's contributions extend far beyond her literary achievements. She possessed an unyielding spirit, refusing to be confined by societal expectations. Rejecting prestigious honors typically reserved for men, she forged her own path, resolute in her commitment to gender equality. Through works like: *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and "Three Guineas" (1938), Woolf championed the cause of women's rights, challenging the very foundations of a patriarchal society ("*Virginia Woolf*" The British Library).

Among her captivating literary endeavors, "Flush" (1933) deserves special mention. In this remarkable book, Woolf delved into the perspectives of a dog belonging to the renowned poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning, offering a fresh and enchanting outlook on the human-animal bond. Equally captivating was *Orlando* (1928), where Woolf transcended time and defied gender conventions, capturing the essence of her friend Vita Sackville-West in a character who traverses centuries, embracing an enduring spirit that defies traditional boundaries ("*Virginia Woolf*" The British Library).

Beyond her literary influence, Woolf's presence permeated the cultural landscape of her time. Alongside her spouse Leonard Woolf, she played a pivotal role in the vibrant world of the Bloomsbury Group, a collective of artists, writers, and thinkers. The Hogarth Press, their publishing house, became a beacon of artistic expression, showcasing the works of luminaries like T. S. Eliot, Sigmund Freud, Katherine Mansfield, E. M. Forster, and the Woolfs themselves (*"Virginia Woolf"* The British Library).

Regarding her feminist's perspective, Virginia Woolf emerged as a critical and influential figure within the Feminist Movement following the publication of her essays, notably "A Room of One's Own" in 1922. While some viewed her as a "Feminist" in a negative sense, she consistently clarified her perspective. Woolf did not advocate for women's dominance over men. Instead, she championed gender balance, advocating for equal

rights for women based on the belief that all human beings should be treated as equals (Pernas 9).

During the Victorian era, gender equality lagged behind. Women faced limited opportunities to express their views, educational opportunities were restricted, and discussions about sexuality were expected to remain hidden in order to conform to societal norms. These biases were often rooted in religious beliefs. Woolf tirelessly fought for women's rights, striving to promote gender equality and empower women intellectually by recognizing and valuing the unique qualities of both genders (10).

Rachel Bowlby's work, "Feminist Destinations," delves into how feminist critics perceive Virginia Woolf's writing in relation to women's writing, often influenced by patriarchal norms. Woolf initially started her career as an essayist before transitioning to become a novelist in 1905. Influenced by prominent figures such as Henry James and philosopher Henri Bergson during the Modernist Period, Woolf's exceptional talent was nurtured, providing her with inspiration (10).

Woolf departed from the dominant Realism style of the 1800s and embraced an innovative approach. Realistic novels focused on singular storylines, precise chronological sequencing, unchanging plot elements, and clear character development. In contrast, Modernist writers sought to introduce new and unconventional methods that diverged from the traditional approaches employed by Realist writers. Woolf's experimental career as a novelist took a significant turn with the release of her first novel, "Jacob's Room" in 1922. Her fame further soared with the publication of *Mrs. Dalloway* in 1925, solidifying her status as a prominent figure (10).

It is undeniable that one of Woolf's most remarkable and groundbreaking innovations was her use of the stream of consciousness technique, a prevalent aspect of Modernist

exploration. This technique effectively portrayed the characters' mental states and emotions, providing readers with profound insights. Woolf's renowned novel *To the Lighthouse* (1927) exemplifies her adept utilization of the stream of consciousness technique. Inspired by her own childhood, the novel is rich in imagery, symbols, and other characteristics commonly associated with Modernism, resulting in prose that evokes a poetic and melodic ambiance (12).

Woolf drew inspiration from the Modernist authors of her time and possessed exceptional skills that allowed her to infuse her writing with a poetic touch. Her use of symbolism elevated her to the status of a pioneering figure in the Feminist Movement. Her works such as *Orlando* (1928) and her essay *A Room of One's Own* (1929) further solidified her impact, advocating for women's social freedom and active involvement in the intellectual realm (12).

2.3.1 To the Lighthouse

It is stated that Virginia Woolf's novel, To the Lighthouse, falls within the genre of modernism and represents the pinnacle of the author's creativity, along with Mrs. Dalloway and The Waves. The novel is divided into three parts. The first part, titled "The Window," depicts a house-party taking place on Skye Island, where Prof. Ramsay, his wife, their children, and friends are vacationing. A planned trip to the lighthouse with their youngest son, James, is postponed due to unfavorable weather conditions predicted by the father. In the second part, "Time passes," the narrative explores the house's desolation and abandonment during the war years, with the family's return excluding Mrs. Ramsay and two of the children. Finally, in the third part, "The Lighthouse," the novel portrays the characters' visit to the lighthouse after the passage of time.

The characters within the novel grapple with the challenge of finding purpose and structure amidst the turmoil of their lives. Virginia Woolf employs an unidentified narrator who adopts a third-person perspective and provides subjective descriptions of the characters and their actions, offering us a glimpse into their emotions. The narrative constantly shifts between the viewpoints of different characters, creating a poetic, rhythmic, and imaginative tone. The story unfolds on the Isle of Skye, located in the Hebrides, a collection of islands west of Scotland, during the years leading up to and following World War I (Woolf 1-145).

2.3.1.1 Symbolism in the Novel

In the novel that we are currently delving into for analysis, To *the Lighthouse,* Virginia Woolf utilizes various symbols throughout the novel to convey deeper meanings and themes**.** The lighthouse is a significant symbol in the narrative, encompassing various concepts and desires. Within the narrative, representing unattainable goals, a longing goal that seems out of reach yet is ideal and desired a longing for unity and purpose, and the pursuit of truth and understanding ("Symbols1"). Secondly, the sea is a representation of the immense and unforeseeable nature of existence. This signifies the continual movement of time, alteration, and impermanence of human life. The sea tends to embody intricate connections with the characters, mirroring their individual challenges, aspirations, and anxieties (1). Also, the window symbolizes a barrier or a transition point between the inner existence of the characters and the external surroundings. This indicates the restrictions that exist in perceiving and communicating, emphasizing the difficulties in comprehending and establishing a rapport with others (1). About the light and darkness are recurring symbols in the novel. Light represents lucidity, knowledge, and disclosure, while darkness reflects ambiguity, inconspicuousness, and the unfamiliar. The interplay of light and darkness mirrors

the characters' emotional and psychological states (1). In addition the novel prominently features art, specifically painting and writing, as a significant symbol. This text cleverly delves into the conflict between the personal and impartial aspects of artwork, emphasizing the intricacies involved in perceiving and comprehending it (1).

2.4Conclusion

Dear fellow travelers, our journey through the chapters of redefined roles and inspiring change has led us to a profound realization. The Victorian era imposed restrictive gender roles and societal expectations upon women, confining them within gilded cages of submissiveness and conformity. However, amidst these constraints, a powerful wind of transformation blew.

Virginia Woolf, with her literary genius, became a beacon of hope, defying conventions and inspiring others to challenge the status quo. Within the pages of her masterpiece, *To the Lighthouse,* hidden symbolism illuminated the path to empowerment. As we accompanied the characters on their quests, we witnessed their defiance of societal expectations and the rewriting of their destinies.

This exploration has revealed the indomitable spirit of Victorian women and the transformative power of literature. It serves as a reminder of our collective capacity for growth and change. Let us carry the lessons learned and stories shared within our hearts, continuing to challenge the norms that confine us. Together, we can forge a future where equality and empowerment prevail**.** With gratitude and enriched minds, let us embrace the transformative power of this journey, embarking on new adventures that shape our lives and inspire those who follow. The tapestry of redefined roles and inspiring change will forever stand as a testament to the resilience and limitless potential within us all.

Chapter Three: Victorian Women vs New Women

3.0Introduction

Chapter three delves into the intricate portrayal of two central characters in the novel, Mrs. Ramsey and Lily Briscoe, and explores their distinct experiences within the framework of societal expectations and shifting gender roles.

In section one; we focus on Mrs. Ramsey as the embodiment of the Victorian woman. We analyze the dominance exerted over her by societal norms and the patriarchal structure. Additionally, we examine the expectations placed upon her as a wife and mother, and the challenges she faces in navigating her own self-discovery, which is revealed through her interior monologue.

Moving on to section two, we shift our attention to Lily as a representative of the New Woman. We investigate her transformative journey, marked by the death of the traditional mother figure and the emergence of a new identity. We explore the characteristics associated with the New Woman, such as independence, intellectual pursuits, and a rejection of conventional gender roles. Furthermore, we delve into the significance of Lily's artistic endeavors, particularly her painting, as a means of self-expression and empowerment.

Furthermore, I explore Mrs. Ramsey and Lily's victimhood experiences, delving into their struggles with societal expectations and internal conflicts. Through their journeys, we gain insights into how they navigate their roles and negotiate their identities within societal constraints, shedding light on the novel's exploration of gender, identity, and societal norms.

3.1 Mrs. Ramsey: "The Victorian Woman"

Step into the world of Mrs. Ramsey, a Victorian woman whose story unfolds in Virginia Woolf's "To the Lighthouse." With her magnetic presence and unwavering devotion, she leaves an indelible mark on the narrative. As a loving wife to Mr. Ramsey, a renowned intellectual figure, and a mother of eight children, Mrs. Ramsey embodies the essence of domestic bliss. Her warm smile and nurturing touch create a haven of love and stability within her household. She cherishes the precious moments spent with her family, finding joy in the simple pleasures of life.

Beyond her roles as a wife and mother, Mrs. Ramsey carries her own dreams and aspirations. In the quiet corners of her mind, she yearns for personal fulfillment and self-discovery. She craves recognition for her own talents and desires to leave her mark on the world in her own unique way.

Tragically, the journey of Mrs. Ramsey is cut short by her untimely death. Her passing leaves her in the lives of her loved ones, who cherished her wisdom and guidance. Her absence is deeply felt,as she was not only a source of love and support but also a beacon of strength and inspiration.

3.1.1 Dominance

From the very first word she utters in the novel— a resounding "yes" —we are immediately drawn into her world of affirmation, positivity and her Victorian submission.

Immersed within the pages of Virginia Woolf's literary masterpiece, *To the Lighthouse*, I found myself captivated by the enigmatic presence of *Mrs. Ramsay.* The peculiar nature of her name began to occupy my thoughts, leaving me intrigued and pondering the reasons behind Woolf's decision to withhold a distinct name for such a central

character. In this ethereal realm crafted by Woolf's pen, Mrs. Ramsay emerges as an enigmatic figure, beckoning us to unravel the deeper meaning concealed within her nameless existence. With her unparalleled storytelling prowess, Woolf presents us with a passage that unveils the subtle yet profound implications that surround the persona of Mrs. Ramsay.

Woolf's deliberate omission of Mrs. Ramsay's first name further strengthens her as a representative figure, encapsulating the limitations placed upon Victorian women. By denying her a distinct name, Woolf symbolizes the erasure of personal identity, swallowed by the expectations and conventions of her time.

> He had perpetually to be called to order. 'Is there anything to prevent our luncheon?' she would say. She had to remember her age, she said. She had to remember that she was married; she had to keep her dignity; he had nothing of the sort to keep, and dropped her hand as if it burnt him (Woolf 139).

Here, it reveals a power dynamic within the relationship of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay. Mrs. Ramsay takes on the role of maintaining order and reminding Mr. Ramsay of their responsibilities, such as having lunch together. Her statements about remembering her age and her marital status reflect the societal expectations placed upon married women to uphold their dignity and fulfill their duties. In contrast, Mr. Ramsay's response of dropping her hand as if it burnt him suggests his resistance to these reminders and his desire to assert his own autonomy.

On the other hand, it confirms the existence of gender roles and expectations in the novel. Mrs. Ramsay feels the need to constantly remind and assert herself, implying that her position in the relationship is one of subservience. And it highlights the power dynamics and challenges faced by women in maintaining their dignity and asserting themselves in a patriarchal society.

The Victorian woman was always prepared to sacrifice herself and her own independence in order to bring happiness to others. She appeared as nothing more than a secondary character in her own life, without distinction or fulfillment of her personal aspirations. Like a forgotten melody in the background, her own desires and dreams remained muted, overshadowed by the needs and expectations of those around her. Indeed, the following passage proofs that:

> She turned to her picture, looked at it with the air of one waiting, as if she expected someone to come in, the sound of a foot on the stair. The door opened. But it was only Mr. Carmichael, who had lost his way. 'It must be upstairs,' she said, pointing, and she gave herself a little shake, so that if there had been anything in the air, a moth or a fleck of soot, it would have fallen off." (134).

Here, Mrs. Ramsay's actions and demeanor convey a sense of anticipation and waiting, as if she is primed for the arrival of someone important, perhaps a man. However, her expectations are dashed when Mr. Carmichael enters, who is portrayed as a lost and inconsequential figure. Mrs. Ramsay quickly redirects his attention, asserting her knowledge of the location he is searching for, and discreetly removes any imperfections from her appearance. This scene reveals the societal expectation placed upon women to be passive and accommodating, always prepared to defer to the needs of others, even when their own desires and ambitions might be overlooked or dismissed. Mrs. Ramsay's subtle gestures and willingness to take a backseat demonstrate her lack of autonomy and the limited role she is expected to fulfill within the patriarchal structure.

3.1.2 Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a term used to describe a social structure where male are granted more privileges and opportunities than females (or women). Sociologists widely recognize

patriarchy as a social product—a construct that has been shaped and reinforced over time (Macionis 332).

Each character in the novel *To the Lighthouse* exhibits distinct gender roles, with Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay being the most notable examples. Mrs. Ramsay stands out in the story as a mother of eight children, exuding undeniable beauty. But as the analysis delves deeper into the narrative, we gradually uncover a stark contrast between her outward appearance and her inner thoughts and worries. Having grown up in a different era, Mrs. Ramsay's values and outlook on life are firmly entrenched in tradition. Her family holds paramount importance to her, and she sympathizes with those who lack a family and have to navigate life alone. Consequently, she actively tries to arrange marriages between her children and the guests who visit their summer house. According to her belief, a woman's ultimate happiness lies in marriage, as she perceives unmarried women as destined for unhappiness.

The dance of male and female roles continues, perpetuating subservience and embracing tradition. In the first chapter, she staunchly defends the detestable houseguest, Charles Tansley, who torments her youngest child, James. She acknowledges the necessity for women to appease and safeguard men, citing their "chivalry and valor, for the fact that they negotiated treaties, ruled India, controlled finance" (3). Despite finding Mr. Tansley as "odious little man", a repugnant, she somehow manages to excuse his behavior.

Virginia Woolf, in her exploration of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsey's marriage, presents a portrait of an unhealthy relationship, tainted by the power imbalance between the sexes and the male's reliance on the female's strength. For instance, Mr. Ramsey clings to the patriarchal belief that women are not on par with men intellectually. When he sees his wife engrossed in reading in the study, he encourages her to continue, “Go on reading...”, while secretly:" exaggerated her ignorance, her simplicity, for he liked to think she was not clever,

not book learned at all. He wondered if she understood what she was reading. Probably not, he thought. She was astonishingly beautiful." (85).

He takes delight in the notion that she lacks "cleverness" and "book learned" knowledge. He wonders if she truly comprehends what she reads, suspecting she does not, all the while captivated by her astonishing beauty. Despite perceiving her as intellectually inferior, he never ceases to impose his ceaseless demands upon her.

The Victorian era, marriage was seen as the pinnacle of accomplishment for women. It was often their only path to financial stability, as they lacked independent income. Unfortunately, this harsh reality affected Mrs. Ramsay, who longed to visit the lighthouse but was unable to do so due to her limited funds “the bill for the greenhouse would be fifty pounds” (42). The daunting expense of the green house, amounting to fifty pounds, served as a constant reminder of her unfulfilled wish. The lighthouse held a symbolic meaning for Mrs. Ramsay, representing her yearning for independence and recognition of her pivotal role within her family. Regrettably, these aspirations remained elusive. As she observed the societal emphasis placed on men's financial status, Mrs. Ramsay became fervent in her belief that happiness could be achieved through marriage.

In another instance, marriages often ended in disappointment due to unrealistic expectations and arbitrary matchmaking. In a particular story, Mrs. Ramsay questions the wisdom of arranging a marriage between Minta and Paul. She wonders: “was she wrong in this, … she had indeed put any pressure upon Minta, who was only twenty- four” (93). Into making such a momentous decision without taking into account her youth and inexperience.

Elsewhere, Mrs. Ramsay feels sorry for William Bankes, who is unmarried and childless. She assumes:"He had nobody to look after him. He was lonely. And so, and so, she had started to tell him he must marry"(73). She thinks that someone without a spouse or

children must be unhappy, and she strives to ensure that those around her are married and content with their own families. She frequently encourages people like Lily and Minta to enter into matrimony, firmly believing that this will bring them happiness.

Moreover, Mrs. Ramsay holds the belief that unmarried women have not accomplished anything of significance in their lives because "an unmarried woman has missed the best of life" (77). In the Victorian era, women who chose not to marry faced societal rejection and the stigmatizing label of "spinster." Paradoxically, many marriages during that time were unhappy precisely because of this fear and pressure to conform. Mrs. Ramsay becomes fixated on orchestrating matches between couples, believing that by doing so, she will become an angel in her household.

In simpler terms, during the Victorian era, people held misguided notions about marriage, resulting in many failed unions. Mrs. Ramsay, a character in the story, attempts to match people together without considering their age or personal desires. She firmly believes that marriage and starting a family are essential for achieving happiness and success. However, her convictions and actions do not always lead to positive outcomes.

3.1.3 Motherhood

Motherhood, as depicted in various books and literary works, encompasses the multifaceted experience of being a mother. Different authors may offer nuanced perspectives, but in general, motherhood is often portrayed as a profound journey filled with love, sacrifice, and the nurturing of a child. In the pages of Virginia Woolf's novel, *To the Lighthouse,* the character of Mrs. Ramsay emerges as a central figure, embodying the essence of motherhood. With her brood of eight children as I said before, she assumes the role of a

tender and nurturing mother, diligently tending to their every need and fostering an atmosphere of love and serenity within the household.

Mrs. Ramsay shines as a loving and attentive mother, with an innate understanding of her son's desires and emotions. Her response to James's request reflects her deep empathy and dedication to his happiness.

When James expresses his hopes for the next day, Mrs. Ramsay's immediate reply of "Yes, of course, if it's fine tomorrow" (1), shows her genuine support for his wishes. It's as if she instinctively knows how much it means to him, and she wants to make it happen. Her words carry a warm and caring tone, assuring James that his desires matter to her.

Furthermore, Mrs. Ramsay's mention of waking up early by saying, "But you'll have to be up with the lark" (1), highlights her commitment to creating something extraordinary for her son. It's like she's giving him a sneak peek into a secret adventure, building up his anticipation and excitement. Her thoughtful planning and attention to detail demonstrate her love and dedication as a mother.

The extraordinary joy that fills James upon hearing his mother's words is a testament to the strong bond they share. Mrs. Ramsay's unwavering support and understanding create a sense of security and happiness within James. It's as if she has a magical ability to bring joy to his heart, simply through her words and gestures.

When reflecting on her identity as a mother, Mrs. Ramsay expresses a sense of insignificance, stating, "She often felt she was nothing." When their children require attention, she selflessly puts their needs before her own. She displays empathy when necessary, going above and beyond to be there for them. Mrs. Ramsay attributes all of this to her femininity, as if it is the sole role expected of a woman. This belief is further reinforced in

her conversations with Lily and Paul regarding marriage. While she may harbor internal doubts about this philosophy, outwardly she embraces her role, stating, "they came to her, naturally, since she was a woman" (22), and she fulfills her responsibilities for them.

Mrs. Ramsay finds fulfillment and purpose in her role as a wife and mother, and men appreciate and adore her for embodying this role. When observing her as she fits stockings onto James' legs or reads him a fairy tale, Mr. Bankes is captivated by the extraordinary qualities of Mrs. Ramsay. He sees her in the most positive light, perceiving her as childlike and radiantly beautiful from within. He believes that if one simply views her as a woman seeking admiration, they are mistaken. In his eyes, she transcends such superficial desires. Her selfless nature elevates her to a higher plane, where her physical beauty is overshadowed by her desire to blend in with everyone else, to be "insignificant," and serve those around her. These seemingly simple acts of kindness demonstrate her inner essence

3.2 Self-Discovery: Interior Monologue

A monologue is all about a moment where a lone character shares their thoughts and emotions with the audience. The word itself has its roots in Greek, with "mono" meaning solitude and "logos" representing speech (Landow). Through a monologue, the character opens up their heart and mind, expressing their deepest feelings and ideas. It's an opportunity for them to connect directly with the audience, or even address another character on stage. Monologues are not just confined to plays and films; they can also be found in the artistic realm of poetry (Landow).

Although many sources consider "stream of consciousness" and "interior monologue" as interchangeable terms, the Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms offers a nuanced perspective (Cuddon 660-661). The dictionary highlights that there are distinctions between these terms both in psychology and in terms of literary technique. Psychologically, "stream of

consciousness" relates to the subject matter being conveyed, while "interior monologue" refers to the specific technique used to present it (Baldick 212).

In literature, an interior monologue exclusively presents a character's thoughts in a direct manner, without the apparent intervention of a summarizing and selecting narrator (212). However, an interior monologue does not necessarily mix these thoughts with impressions and perceptions, nor does it automatically defy the principles of grammar or logic. On the contrary, the stream-of-consciousness technique may include one or both of these elements within the narrative structure (212).

In the novel *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf, the character of Mrs. Ramsey is depicted using a narrative technique called indirect interior monologue. This technique enables readers to explore the thoughts and perceptions of a character more deeply. Woolf employs this technique specifically to offer a greater understanding of Mrs. Ramsey's intricate inner life and to expose her desires, fears, and emotional challenges.

An instance of indirect interior monologue involving Mrs. Ramsey can be identified in Chapter one of Virginia Woolf's novel, *To the Lighthouse*. As the Ramsay and their companions partake in a meal at the summer house, Mrs. Ramsey engages in contemplation regarding her husband's intellectual pursuits and the subsequent ramifications for their relationship. The narrative subsequently shifts to Mrs. Ramsey's ruminations, thereby unveiling her uncertainties and aspirations:

> [...] her husband was in the habit of saying, making some claim which she contested [...] Mrs.
>
> Ramsey had done things for him [...] but it was not that; it was not that at all;

> she was thinking of something entirely different [...] the struggle, the effort, the perpetual anxiety to live up to her standards [...] to see things like that, feel things like that [...] [and] she wished her husband to see for himself."
> (Woolf 75)

In this passage, Woolf allows readers to see inside Mrs. Ramsey's thoughts, giving readers a glimpse of what she's thinking. Readers learn about the conflict she experiences internally, where she desires her husband's admiration but, feels frustrated because he doesn't appreciate her achievements. By using indirect interior monologue, Woolf helps us as readers better understand Mrs. Ramsey's emotions, her longing for validation, and the underlying power dynamics in her relationship.

In this excerpt, Woolf skillfully employs indirect interior monologue to encapsulate the introspective and apprehensive state of Mrs. Ramsey; "To want and not to have, sent all up her body a hardness, a hollowness, a strain. And then to want and not to have- to want and want- how that wrung the heart, and wrung it again and again!" (124).

The yearning, the ache of wanting something so desperately and yet not being able to attain it, consumed Mrs. Ramsey. It surged through her veins, hardening her body, leaving an empty hollowness within her, and creating a strain that weighed heavily on her being. The longing, the insatiable desire that persisted despite being unfulfilled, twisted her heart mercilessly, squeezing it with an unrelenting grip, again and again. Mrs. Ramsey's words convey the depth of her emotions, painting a vivid picture of the physical and emotional toll that unattainable desires can exact. Her introspective nature and her profound understanding of human longing and its accompanying anguish shine through, revealing the complex and tender facets of her character.

As Mrs. Ramsay observed the dinner party, she noticed that everyone appeared to be having a good time. They were "laughing and participating in animated conversations." However, despite the outward appearance of enjoyment, she sensed an underlying tension among the guests. She pondered whether they would ever "genuinely comprehend one another or if they would always be compelled to conceal their true selves behind the facade of social etiquette and politeness." (40). Mrs. Ramsay's observation reveals her introspective nature and her contemplation of the complexities of human interaction and the limitations of social conventions.

And here, within the depths of her selfless surrender, lies the true discovery of her own being. Amidst the intricate threads of her existence intricately woven throughout the novel, a paradoxical unease grips her psyche, compelling her to question her rightful place in the intricate tapestry of life. “But what have I done with my life?” (58). She finds herself both the casualty and the favorite, ensnared within the enigmatic confines of this dichotomy. “She is a giver, that is to say, she gives with no assurance that she will get back even some unexpected profit from what she puts out” (Cixous, 881). As a mother, she gives without expecting anything in return.

3.3 Lily: "The New Woman"

In Victorian literature, the figure of the orphan frequently assumes the mantle of the protagonist, tasked with embarking upon transformative quests and embodying heroic virtues, while serving as a symbol of resilience and survival (Lilienfeld 348). Let’s dive into the world of Lily and Mrs. Ramsay, shall we? Lily, a character whose voice resembles that of Woolf herself, sees Mrs. Ramsay as a motherly figure. It's worth mentioning that Lily is an orphan who lives with her aging father, so she finds solace in Mrs. Ramsay's presence.

Though Lily knows she can never fully emulate Mrs. Ramsay, she deeply admires her strength, beauty, determination, and cheerfulness.

Interestingly, the stark contrast between Lily and Mrs. Ramsay lies in the fact that Mrs. Ramsay can recognize her own flaws through Lily's perspective. Mrs. Ramsay represents the archetype of the submissive and traditional woman within a patriarchal society. On the other hand, Lily embodies Woolf's vision of the "new woman," an empowered and independent individual who challenges societal norms.

These two remarkable women possess a symbiotic relationship. They yearn for the qualities that the other possesses. Lily, for instance, adores how Mrs. Ramsay effortlessly embodies the heart of the household. Mrs. Ramsay, in turn, naturally identifies with Lily due to her artistic nature. Both women are creators in their own right, although their mediums differ. Lily expresses herself through her paintings, while Mrs. Ramsay's medium is human beings, and her art takes the form of human relationships.

3.3.1 Death of the Mother and Birth of the New Woman

In this novel by Virginia Woolf, several characters meet their demise. Aside from Mrs. Ramsay, who plays a significant role, two of her children, Prue and Andrew, also pass away. Prue's death is a result of complications after giving birth, while Andrew loses his life in World War I. It's worth noting that the book doesn't provide explicit details about how Mrs. Ramsay meets her end. The author briefly and in a minor way mentions her death clever, employs square brackets as a subtle technique to signify the disappearance of Mrs. Ramsay and her presence within the narrative: “Mr. Ramsay, stumbling along a passage one dark morning, stretched his arms out, but Mrs. Ramsay having died rather suddenly the night before, his arms, though stretched out, remained empty” (90).

By delivering the news of Mrs. Ramsay's death in a concise and unassuming manner, Woolf may actually be aiming to create a contrasting effect: to highlight the sheer dramatic impact of the event. Mrs. Ramsay abruptly vanishes from the scene, leaving behind nothing but a void, which is ironically significant considering her prior role as a seemingly influential figure. The revelation of Mrs. Ramsay's death shatters the illusion of the perfect Victorian marriage and leaves a haunting void. The section captures a profound darkness, an indescribable emptiness, and a tangible absence leading up to this announcement:" so with the house empty and the doors locked and the mattresses rolled round, those stray airs ...those alone kept the human shape and in the emptiness indicated how once they were filled and animated"(91).

Her unexpected departure disrupts the delicate balance carefully maintained within the Ramsey family and their social circle. Her absence reveals the fragility of human connections, forcing the characters to confront the transient essence of existence itself. Mr. Ramsey, in particular, bears the weight of this loss, as he drowns in a sea of uncertainty without the constant guidance of his wife. This symbolizes primarily the end of Victorian traditional values and Victorian family life.

The death of Mrs. Victoria gave a new spirit to another character. In the final chapter of the book, the motherless orphan *Lily Briscoe* e merges from among the ruins. Lily Briscoe, a significant character in Virginia Woolf's novel To The Lighthouse, embodies the feminist voice of the novelist Woolf and the essence of the New Woman that emerged during the early 20th century.

3.3.2 New Woman Characteristics

Virginia Woolf, as feminist writer associated with the first wave of feminism, delves into the theme of women's resistance in her literary works. Her essay, "A Room of One's

Own," and her novel, "To The LightHouse," serve as embodiments of her core ideas on resistance. In "A Room of One's Own," an integral part of her feminist perspective, Woolf argues that in order for a woman to thrive as an artist, she must attain financial independence and carve out a separate sphere for herself.

These notions find expression through the character of Lily Briscoe, the female protagonist in her novel. Lily's journey mirrors many aspects of Woolf's own life, making her a significant counterpart to the author. Lily grapples with numerous internal conflicts that ultimately lead to a transformative shift in her character. Through her arduous path filled with doubts and obstacles, Lily emerges as a new woman, no longer marginalized, interiorized, subordinated, or commodified. In this way, she becomes a guiding light for women to unlock their true potentials. By challenging patriarchal ideologies and presenting the complexities of gender issues through the feminist lens of Lily Briscoe, Woolf effectively criticizes and transcends prevailing societal norms.

But there is more to Lily than meets the eye. She is a character, representing an artist who feels restricted and limited by the expectations imposed by patriarchal society. In the story, male figures like Mr. Ramsey and Charles Tansley embody the influence of this patriarchal system, which dictates how women should behave according to a "universal law." Despite these pressures, Lily aspires to be a female painter.

Lily faces obstacles in her pursuit of art, particularly due to the interference of these male figures. However, she persists in her artistic endeavors as a form of rebellion against the external world and the limitations imposed on her. Her art becomes a means of expressing her defiance.

In the novel, it is emphasized that Lily appears "outwardly timid, awkward”, and unimpressive. However, she carefully conceals the true significance and meaning of her art

(93). This suggests that she guards her artistic passion as a secret, keeping it hidden from those who may not understand or appreciate it fully.

Based on the provided description, the analysis presented aligns with the principles of liberal feminism or individualistic feminism. Which passionate advocates against gender-based discrimination, fighting tirelessly for fair access to education, employment, and active participation in politics. They strongly support reproductive rights, firmly believing in a woman's autonomy and freedom to make choices about her own body (Maynard 259-281).

What sets Lily's character apart, perhaps from the other female characters in the novel, is her refusal of marriage and her perspective on it, she " need never marry" (122).

Lily's decision to reject marriage, speaks volumes about the feminist themes present in her character and the overall narrative. By refusing to marry, Lily symbolizes her quest for personal freedom and her rebellion against the societal constraints and patriarchal norms that confine women. It's a bold statement, suggesting that women should not be bound by traditional expectations or defined solely by their marital status.

Lily's choice resonates with various feminist perspectives. For instance, radical feminism _ is a feminist perspective that calls for a radical change in societies and for the dismantling and dismantling of entrenched systems of patriarchy and gender oppression (William 91 _ 118). _celebrates her refusal as an act of individual liberation from the pressures imposed by society and the dominance of men. It represents a rejection of the notion that marriage should define a woman's worth or limit her opportunities.

Similarly, liberal feminism recognizes Lily's decision as an assertion of her individual rights and autonomy. It underscores her right to make choices about her own life, free from societal expectations and gendered constraints.

Lily disregards Mrs. Ramsay's frequent reminders about the importance of marriage and instead chooses to remain unmarried, embracing the status of a spinster rather than succumbing to the patriarchal norms and expectations: "had been looking at the table-cloth, and it had flashed upon her that she would move the tree to the middle of her painting and need never marry anybody, and had felt an enormous exultation she had felt, now she could stand up to Mrs. Ramsay" (122). Lily finds solace in her art, viewing it as a means of liberation from the constraints of marriage. During a dinner gathering with the Ramsey's, Lily's thoughts reveal her desire to demonstrate to Mrs. Ramsay that she can assert her own identity and independence without relying on men.

Hence, Lily's negative perception of marriage stems from her observations of various relationships that she has encountered. She has witnessed the complexities and difficulties inherent in these unions, leading her to question the desirability and inherent power dynamics embedded within traditional marital structures.

3.3.3 Lily Briscoe's Painting

Noteworthy, Virginia Woolf, shared her life with both male and female painters. In a literal sense, she resided amidst artists, spending much of her time at Charleston, the home of her sister Vanessa Bell, a talented painter, and Vanessa's husband, Clive Bell, an art theorist. This vibrant environment also hosted the likes of Duncan Grant, a painter, Dora Carrington, a painter as well, and Roger Fry, a critic and painter who seemed to be frequent guests, if not permanent residents (Dunn 20-21).

Interestingly, Woolf was not only passionate about literature but also wrote numerous essays on painting. Her visits to Charleston presented her with ample opportunities to observe artists engrossed in their work, be it painting or sculpture. Undoubtedly, she must have had

many favorite existing works of art. However, what I aim to explore is her favorite piece, one that exists solely within the pages of her novel, *To the Lighthouse.*

Amidst the vibrant tapestry of characters, one protagonist stands out—Lily Briscoe. Engaged in the pursuit of her art, Lily is not hailed as an accomplished artist; rather, she is regarded by others as an amateur, with painting viewed merely as her pastime. This perception is further underscored by the prevailing sexist attitudes of the era in which the novel is set, somewhere between 1904 and 1910. The social circle that surrounds the Ramsay echoes these regressive notions, epitomized by the derisive words of Charles Tansley, another guest at their gathering: "Women can't paint, women can't write " (137).

This seemingly innocuous yet persistent sentence reverberates within Lily's consciousness throughout the story. Virginia Woolf, along with her sister Vanessa, must have encountered similar sentiments in various forms and iterations. However, both women managed to transcend these societal barriers. Virginia went on to craft one of the most extraordinary novels of the 20th century, while Vanessa, though not attaining the same artistic eminence in literature, carved out her own path as an excellent and widely acclaimed artist.

Lily's painting depicts Ramsey's house set against a garden backdrop. In the artwork, Mrs. Ramsey is abstractly portrayed sitting with her son, James, near one of the windows. The abstract style adds an intriguing element to the overall composition, capturing the essence of their connection in a unique way.

It is brought to life with a vibrant palette of colors. The artist has skillfully used shades of green and blue, along with accents of white, grey, red, and purple. These colors are strong, sharp, and garish, intentionally commanding attention; " The jacmanna was bright violet; the

wall staring white. She would not have considered it honest to tamper with the bright violet and the staring white, since she saw them like that, fashionable " (12).

Lily's painting is not meant to look like a realistic picture. Her friend, William Banks, who takes her art seriously, asks her: “What did she wish to indicate by the triangular purple shape, " (36). She says: "It was Mrs. Ramsay reading to James, she said. She knew his objection--that no one could tell it was a human shape. But she had made no attempt at likeness” (36). Lily explains that she wanted to create a contrast between brightness and darkness.

Lily focuses on the visual aspects of art, such as color and shape, rather than telling a narrative or story. This aligns with Virginia Woolf's views, as she believed that a picture that tries to tell a story is not as meaningful as one that focuses on visual elements.

Woolf even compared a story-telling picture to a trick performed by a dog, implying that it lacks depth and significance. In simpler terms, Lily defends her artistic choice, emphasizing the importance of visual elements and expressing her need for contrast. This approach aligns with Woolf's belief that art should focus on visual exploration rather than simply telling a story.

In my personal opinion, Lily's strategy in painting is used to express what Woolf herself does in the novel. Both of them focus on portraying characters and settings in a non-realistic way, without a conventional plot. Instead, Woolf delves deep into the thoughts and moods of her characters, capturing their subjective experiences and constantly shifting perspectives. Lily, as a painter, sees her art as a reflection of her own point of view, similar to how Woolf's writing reflects her own perspective. This approach allows them to defy societal expectations and hold onto their unique visions.

Consequently, Lily's artistic journey in the novel involves a significant temporal gap, commencing during her stay at the Ramsay and concluding a decade later, following Mrs. Ramsay's passing. This extended duration highlights the significance of memory and the passage of time in the creative process, an aspect shared by Woolf. Furthermore, Lily's decision to finish her painting in the exact location on the Isle of Skye where she initially started underscores a fundamental disparity between literature and painting. Unlike literature, which can be crafted in any setting, painting often necessitates a direct engagement with a specific place or viewpoint.

3.4 Victimhood

A contentious question that arises is: Who, between Mrs. Ramsay and Lily Briscoe, can be identified as the true victim in the novel, considering their experiences of isolation and internal struggles? In my personal opinion, both Mrs. Ramsay and Lily Briscoe can be regarded as genuine victims in the novel. They both confront profound psychological struggles and endure a sense of isolation, grappling with their inner battles without external assistance. Mrs. Ramsay faces the daunting task of adapting to a rapidly changing world, while Lily symbolizes solitude through her connection to the lighthouse. Their experiences of loneliness and internal conflict underscore their status as victims and illuminate the burdens they bear within themselves.

Woolf's portrayal of Mrs. Ramsay deviates from conventional norms, presenting her as a victim rather than a villain in the modern world. Like countless others, Mrs. Ramsay falls prey to the far-reaching impact of the Great War, which disrupts her traditional way of life and thrusts her into the bewildering complexities of the modern era. Her sudden exposure to a rapidly changing world renders her adaptation a formidable task, leaving her feeling disoriented and out of place.

Mrs. Ramsay's struggle to reconcile her deeply ingrained values with the shifting societal landscape is evident in her lack of enthusiasm for literature, much to her husband's dismay. Furthermore, she finds herself at odds with the fashionable trend among the younger generation to question the institution of marriage, a sentiment that perplexes her friend Lily. Additionally, Mrs. Ramsay struggles to comprehend the pervasive societal fragmentation, unwittingly overstepping boundaries as a consequence. Despite her efforts to navigate these new dynamics, she remains firmly entrenched in her roles as a wife and a mother, gradually rendering her own identity passive and subdued.

However, it is vital to recognize that Mrs. Ramsay is not the antagonist of the modern world; rather, she is a deeply conflicted and misunderstood character, whose presence in the narrative often goes unnoticed and underappreciated. Her voice goes unheard, her true self remains hidden from those around her. In this sense, she bears a striking resemblance to the lighthouse itself—lonely, isolated, and beyond reach.

Moreover, the other characters in the novel tend to attribute Mrs. Ramsay's worth solely to her physical beauty. She embodies the epitome of traditional feminine grace, captivating others with her enchanting allure, unwavering dedication to her husband, and her remarkable fertility in bearing eight children. Above all, she silently accepts the constraints of the patriarchal system that envelops her. While the passage of time leaves her hair gray and her cheeks sunken, her beauty still possesses the power to mesmerize profoundly, as observed in Mr. Tansley's admiration, filling him with an overwhelming sense of pride when he walks beside her.

However, as time inexorably advances, Mrs. Ramsay's beauty gradually loses its charm, fading almost entirely. A mere twenty pages later, the book declares her death,

implying that beauty exacts a price it arrives too readily, too completely, subsequently arresting life and stifling its natural progression

By portraying Mrs. Ramsay as a victimized feminist ensnared within the confines of traditional Victorian norms, Woolf invites readers to empathize with her internal conflicts, her unappreciated presence, and her yearning for autonomy in an evolving world. Through this portrayal, Woolf challenges prevailing societal expectations imposed upon women and sheds light on the detrimental effects of beauty as a defining attribute. Ultimately, Woolf's depiction of Mrs. Ramsay serves as a poignant critique of the patriarchal order and the restrictions it imposes on women's lives, advocating for a more inclusive and liberated future.

From another point of view, Virginia Woolf, on the other hand, presents Lily as an independent individual who finds joy in solitary activities like painting and reading poetry. She prefers seclusion over socializing, seeing it as a way to assert her power against men. However, this seclusion leads Lily to question her own desires and yearnings throughout the novel. These modern traits observed in Lily, combined with an undesired disdain for men, create a complex portrayal of a lonely woman who is both fearful of traditional male boundaries yet embraces her independence, despite her natural inclination towards heterosexual relationships.

Lily Biscoe, one of the most feminine characters in Virginia Woolf's novels, can be seen as both a radical and victimized feminist figure. She is sacrificed by a rigid patriarchal society that is influenced by aggressive radical feminist ideologies. These ideologies, which have shaped her existence, subject her to constant doubt and a dualistic mindset. Lily grapples with the question of who she truly is and how she can break free from the societal expectations placed upon her. The death of Mrs. Ramsay in *To The Lighthouse* marks a

turning point for Lily, allowing her to escape the role of the traditional "angel of the house" and assert her own identity.

Mrs. Ramsay, a product of the Victorian era, embodies delicacy and femininity. Woolf romanticizes her character and portrays her using passive language. Woolf's work, particularly her essay "A Room of One's Own," sheds light on her concerns with gender and the feminist politics enforced by patriarchal societies. She explores the idea of the male and female elements that exist within each person's mind, and the need for these elements to unite in order to achieve true satisfaction and happiness. Woolf uses Lily and Mrs. Ramsay, as well as the relationship between Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay, to illustrate these differences.

Consequently, Woolf believed that patriarchy consistently attempted to silence and suppress women and their experiences. She sought to challenge traditional notions of what it means to be a woman and to confront the expectations imposed by society. Lily, as a character, is caught between conforming to masculine norms and adhering to radical separatist feminist ideals that emphasize the rejection of men. To navigate these turbulent waters, Lily requires a rational and constructive feminist approach that transcends any form of hatred towards men or women. It is through this balanced approach that Lily can find her way to shore, free from the conflicting forces of masculine norms and radical separatism.

3.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the portrayal of Mrs. Ramsey and Lily in the novel highlights the complexities of their experiences as women within a society defined by shifting gender roles. Mrs. Ramsey embodies the traditional Victorian woman, while Lily represents the emergence of the "New Woman." Both characters grapple with societal expectations, face internal conflicts, and navigate their identities amidst the constraints imposed upon them. Through their respective journeys, we gain a deeper understanding of the multifaceted exploration of

gender, identity, and societal norms present in the novel. Their stories serve as a reminder of the ongoing challenges faced by individuals striving to define themselves within the ever-evolving landscape of societ

General Conclusion

In Virginia Woolf's novel, the portrayal of old women is depicted as solely nurturing mothers to men, which deprives them of their social rights. The novel also highlights the fact that women have provided men with what they needed despite their own responsibilities, but it was never enough for men. On the other hand, Victorian men attempted to strip women of anything they considered pleasurable or interesting. Men would object to a woman simply because she wanted to live life on her own terms.

Mrs. Ramsay, a character in the novel, supported men but never women. She did not encourage Lily to pursue her passion for painting. However, Lily manages to complete her painting of Mrs. Ramsay by the end of the novel. This act signifies that the "New Women" have confronted Victorian men, entered their domains, and excelled within them. By finishing the painting after Mrs. Ramsay's death, Lily symbolically challenges the Victorian beliefs and values. Lily's choice to pursue art as a profession also represents the rebellion of the new women against the patriarchal control of men, suggesting that art can be a means to challenge societal constraints imposed by patriarchy. Throughout the narrative, Woolf presents the character of Lily Briscoe as a symbol of rebellion against the traditional Victorian values, reflecting the author's feminist ideals.

Woolf aims to provide hope to women through Lily's character, showcasing the potential for change and a stronger role in life, free from societal limitations. By rejecting the oppressive ideologies of men and the traditional views on marriage, women can confront and challenge patriarchal norms. Woolf's portrayal of Lily promotes a feminist perspective, encouraging women to aspire to independence and freedom.

In Virginia Woolf's novel, Mrs. Ramsay and Lily Briscoe represent contrasting figures, each embodying different aspects of victimhood. Mrs. Ramsay, as the angelic woman, falls victim to societal expectations, confined to the role of a selfless mother and supportive wife, sacrificing her own aspirations. Meanwhile, Lily Briscoe becomes a disruptive force, challenging societal norms, but she also grapples with her own victimhood, facing self-doubt and marginalization as a female artist. This duality of victimhood in both characters provides a source of hope for other women and readers, inspiring them to gather the courage to break free from oppressive constraints. By showcasing these struggles, Woolf's novel serves as a powerful platform for feminist thought, offering insights into the author's own experiences and perspectives on the oppressive social conditions of her time, urging the need to challenge and transcend limitations on women's agency and potential.

This comprehensive dissertation is divided into three insightful chapters, each contributing to a deeper understanding of Virginia Woolf's novel. The first chapter delves into feminist theories and explores the different waves of feminism, analyzing their significance and impact. Additionally, it examines the British feminist movement, providing a comprehensive overview of the feminist ideas, arguments, and critiques prevalent during Woolf's time. The second chapter delves into the dichotomy of the "Victorian" and "New" women, shedding light on the societal expectations and limitations placed upon women during the era. It unravels the contrasting characteristics and roles assigned to these women, illuminating the tensions and challenges they faced within a patriarchal society. Finally, the third and pivotal chapter centers on the lives, actions, and beliefs of the novel's female characters, Mrs. Ramsay and Lily Briscoe. By analyzing the stark contrasts in their ideas and perspectives, this chapter reveals Woolf's deliberate characterizations of these Victorian women, drawing insightful connections to the author's personal life and viewpoints on patriarchy. Through the culmination of these chapters, this dissertation aims to provide a

comprehensive study of Woolf's novel, offering valuable insights into feminist theories, the societal dynamics of the Victorian era, and the profound characterization of women in literature.

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Résumé

L'avènement du féminisme a suscité une résistance formidable contre les pratiques et les idéologies patriarcales dominantes. Avec des individus issus de milieux divers et possédant une expertise dans différents domaines, le mouvement féministe s'est uni dans sa mission de remettre en question le statu quo. Dans le domaine de la littérature, des romancières ont émergé en tant que voix puissantes, éclairant les réalités des sociétés patriarcales à travers leurs œuvres littéraires. Dans cette dissertation académique, l'attention se tourne vers le célèbre roman de Virginia Woolf, Vers le phare. L'objectif principal de cette étude est de dévoiler les portraits complexes de deux personnages féminins essentiels, Mme Ramsay et Mlle Lily Briscoe. En plongeant dans le récit, nous cherchons à mettre en lumière l'influence prégnante du patriarcat au sein de la communauté victorienne et à examiner comment Woolf a habilement exprimé ses propres perspectives féministes. De plus, cette recherche s'efforce de mettre en évidence la dichotomie contrastée entre ces personnages, montrant la femme victorienne traditionnelle contrainte par les attentes sociales et la nouvelle femme émergente qui embrasse la liberté et l'indépendance.

Mots-clés : Féminisme, patriarcat, Vers le phare, nouvelle femme, femme victorienne.

ملخص

ظهور النسوية أثار مقاومة قوية ضد الممارسات والأيديولوجيات البطركية السائدة. مع أفراد من خلفيات متنوعة وخبرات تغطي مجالات مختلفة، اتحدت حركة النسوية في مهمتها لتحدي الوضع الراهن. في مجال الأدب، ظهر الروائيون كأصوات قوية، مستنيرين واقع المجتمعات البطريركية من خلال أعمالهم الأدبية. في هذا البحث الأكاديمي، يتحول التركيز نحو رواية فرجينيا وولف الشهيرة "إلى المنارة". الهدف الأساسي لهذه الدراسة هو كشف التصوير المعقد لشخصيتين أنثويتين حاسمتين، السيدة رامزي والآنسة ليلي بريسكو. من خلال الغوص في السرد، نهدف إلى إلقاء الضوء على التأثير السائد للبطاركة داخل المجتمع الفيكتوري واستكشاف كيف عبرت وولف بمهارة عن وجهات نظرها النسوية الخاصة. علاوة على ذلك، تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى إبراز الانقسام المتناقض بين هاتين الشخصيتين، حيث تظهر المرأة الفكتورية التقليدية المقيدة بتوقعات المجتمع والمرأة الجديدة الناشئة التي تتبنى الحرية والاستقلال.

الكلمات الدالة :النسوية، البطاركة، إلى المنارة، المرأة الجديدة، المرأة الفيكتوري.