

Reappraising Patriarchy and Matriarchy in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* : A Feminist Study

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Abstract:

This study investigates Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, which develops a kind of analysis of human values and reality, examines and criticises the complex workings of the inner life. In her narrative, Woolf portrays life itself through the positions of patriarchy and matriarchy in the family. The main concern of this study is to explore *To the Lighthouse* in relation to the concepts of patriarchy and matriarchy. This study suggests, therefore, that in order to understand those concepts more fully, an attention is needed to be paid Feminist theory since Woolf's understanding of history and narrative is intimately bound up with ways of thinking about women. Moreover, she intended her fiction to address the great problem of the true nature of women. In this novel, she uses her skills to good account: making many literary techniques such as the contrast of 'fact' to 'vision' and the stream of consciousness in order to invest in the inner personae of her characters.

Keywords: patriarchy, matriarchy , *To the Lighthouse* .

إعادة تقييم النظام الأبوي والنظام الأمومي في رواية فرجينيا وولف "الى الفئار"
: دراسة نسوية

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الخلاصة:

تبحث هذه الدراسة في رواية فرجينيا وولف "الى الفئار"، والتي تهتم بنوع من تحليل القيم الإنسانية والواقع، وتفحص وتنتقد الأعمال المعقدة للحياة الداخلية. تصور وولف في روايتها الحياة نفسها من خلال مكانة النظام الأبوي والنظام الأمومي في الأسرة. وان الرئيس لهذه الدراسة هو استكشاف "الى الفئار" فيما يتعلق بمفاهيم النظام الأبوي والنظام الأمومي. لذلك تشير هذه الدراسة إلى أنه من أجل فهم هذه المفاهيم بشكل أكمل، نحتاج إلى الاهتمام بالنظرية النسوية لأن فهم وولف للتاريخ والسردي يرتبط ارتباطاً وثيقاً بطرق التفكير في النساء، ومحاولة حل / كشف مشكلة الطبيعة الحقيقية للمرأة من خلال رواياتها. ففي هذه الرواية تستخدم وولف تقنيات أدبية عديدة مثل على النقيض من "الواقع" الى "الرؤية" وتيار الوعي من أجل الكشف عن دواخل شخصياتها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: النظام الأبوي ،النظام الأمومي ،رواية الى الفئار.

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Introductionⁱ

This study endeavours to provide the guidance necessary to understand Mrs. Woolf's importance by focusing on the positions of patriarchy and matriarchy in the family, a topic that commonly poses a special challenge. The study also offers insights into the author's experiments with the narrative voice, the treatment of characters, and the narrative. This means that characters in *To the Lighthouse* can reveal the complex workings of the inner life, not to mention life itself. But there is also a broader concern with Woolf's interest in the function of story-telling in the individual life. Those components of the novel can cause the two concepts, patriarchy and matriarchy, are subject to useful investigation. This study shows how far Mrs. Ramsay succeeds in fulfilling her domestic role and demonstrates the intricate connection between Mrs. Ramsay and the leading position in the family. However, the scene of 'the dinner party', which is the heart of the novel, proves that Mrs. Ramsay fails to deliver her task and falls short of being the matriarch that she promised to be.

To the Lighthouse has ideas in it strong enough to withstand quite a lot of enriched criticism. In this study, Virginia Woolf's conception of patriarchy and matriarchy is examined in the context of themes and topics of central contemporary relevance and interest, and her significance for, and contribution to feminist debates are explored. This study engages with Woolf's own cultural contexts, exploring, for example, her responses to the role of woman in a family in terms of the transition from Victorianism to modernity. The researcher's feminist approach has revealed Woolf's attitudes towards historical concerns of British feminism. It is demonstrated, through close investigative textual readings, how Woolf's understanding of history and narrative is intimately bound up with ways of thinking about women, writing and social and human relations.

However, the meaning of patriarchy and matriarchy in *To the lighthouse* is directly related to Mrs. Woolf's concepts of human values and reality. She considered that the most important thing about any person is his/her quest for the meaning of life, and for identity. Individual identity and the means by which identification with others is achieved are difficult to perceive and practically impossible to convey, according to Virginia Woolf. This in itself suggests that a successful family can be led by either a patriarch or matriarch. Besides, Elizabeth Andrews McArthur notices that although Mrs. Ramsay lacks the language to debate her husband's assertions of truth or fight for what she believes to be human decency, Woolf gives her feminine-maternal representative strong interior voices, extensive imaginative vision, and creative agency.ⁱⁱ

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To the Lighthouse is notably concerned with developing the co-existence of the two concepts in one family which may cause a sort of disruption of harmony and even human values. Amid the domestic and emotional imbalance, the lighthouse, especially after Mrs. Ramsay's death, in *To the Lighthouse* unifies not only the themes of the opening and closing scenes of the novel, but also its beam provides emotional warmth and further meaning of a poetic force to the novel. Perhaps the reader can easily recognise that the lighthouse is a symbolic figure for the two opposing attitudes of patriarchy and matriarchy towards life represented by Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay respectively: Woolf employs the antitheses embodied in life and reality. The lighthouse metaphorically represents human harmony and emotional freedom.ⁱⁱⁱ

Readers may fail to be impressed with how many distinctive traits Virginia Woolf's narrative encompasses such as the elegance and delicacy of style, poetic impressionism, carefully selected themes, and deliberate subjectivity. These traits may personally pose a challenge to her as she seeks to obtain a clear and positive awareness of other kinds of human achievement which can be presented in her writing. However, Mrs. Woolf's strongest memories from childhood were the basis of her art. She created a lifelong resistance to certain forms of masculine authority. This resistance can be clearly seen in her most famous novel, *To the Lighthouse* (1927), which is based on her childhood memory.^{iv}

Virginia Woolf: Novelist and Critic

Virginia Woolf occupies a central place in twentieth-century literature. Her fiction was successful in the public mind of the day: 'By this time a great many people had discovered that Virginia Woolf was a novelist who must be tackled if one were to lay any claims to intellectual alertness' and 'her manner of writing was still unfamiliar'.^v

In establishing the extent of Woolf as a novelist and a critic, it is useful to adopt a modern critical perspective which highlights the following account:

Woolf, for example, was as notable as a professional literary critic in her lifetime as she was a novelist, and wrote widely on her own processes of writing and reading. She had begun in 1904, under the name of Virginia Stephen (she married Leonard Woolf in 1912), writing light essays for the clerical weekly *Guardian*, and biographical reviews for the *Cornhill Magazine*, where her father Sir Leslie Stephen had been an editor [. . .] she also began to write for other major literary journals and magazines, notably the *Nation* and *Athenaeum*. The range of material that she dealt with across these pieces, from the Elizabethan period to the present day, provided the foundation for her revisionary thinking on literary history and essay-writing, and many were subsequently revised for *The Common Reader*, the two volumes of essays on the processes of reading, writing and criticism that were published by the Woolfs' Hogarth Press in 1925 and 1932.^{vi}

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Evidently enough, Woolf is an important figure, not only in literature and criticism, but also in journalism. It is a part of her process of creative heritage.

In spite of the time passing, Virginia Woolf is still considered one of the central figures in the development of literary modernism, and her achievement is particularly associated with her experiment with 'the potential freedom of the novel from commonly received understandings of plot, time, and identity':

As Virginia Woolf's fictional style developed beyond the relatively conventional parameters of *The Voyage Out* (1915) to the experimental representations of consciousness in *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), and *The Wave* (1931), specific characterisation recedes and the detailed exploration of the individual identity tends to melt into a larger and freer expression. [. . .] Her novels attempt both to 'dissipate' character and to reintegrate human experience with an aesthetic shape or 'form'. She seeks to represent the nature of transient sensation, or of conscious and unconscious pattern and rhythm.^{vii}

Mrs. Woolf was in the forefront of modernist writing. She was also a prolific journalist and active publisher. The analysis of one of her major novels, *To the lighthouse*, helps to trace the development of her experimental techniques and evolving sense of language. Woolf's narrative methods are 'variously punctuated by clock-readings and clock-soundings, by the measurement of tides and the altitude of the sun, by history and archaeology, by ageing and dying'.^{viii} In contrast, Virginia Woolf

stresses the nature of passage of time and explores the processes of ageing and experience. In her notes for the novel, Woolf drew an "H" shape and wrote above it: 'two blocks joined by a corridor'. The first part of the novel, describing a summer evening before the First World War, is separated from the last part by the section called 'Time passes'. Woolf described this section 'an interesting experiment, giving the sense of 10 years passing'.^{ix}

Woolf needed to express her own peculiar feeling about these islands of time in which we live and her own nostalgia for those indefinable abstractions, beauty and truth: 'She was able to become more sociable and even to explore new territory [. . .] Virginia believed that she was too much in Bloomsbury and that it would be good for her to measure herself against the standards of another milieu'.^x

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This section names Woolf as the first critic of her literary work such as *To the Lighthouse*. She explores the presence of the women characters in particular to inform their aesthetic propensity. It also suggests new insights into literature since she insures that there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, and no love interest in her narrative, but rather the focus is on a potent parenthetical reference in the 'Time Passes'.

Virginia Woolf: A Feminist Writer

It seems remarkable that discussions of Virginia Woolf's writing have undergone changes and expansions, a matter that has made her into a figure of extraordinary significance for feminist criticism. She has been cited as an example to think about such issues as women and writing, or women and language. But she has also been referred to in the discussions of feminism, battle of the sexes: patriarchy vs. matriarchy, sexuality, motherhood, masculinity, war and national identity - to name a few of many overlapping areas. Woolf herself has been nominated as 'an honorary and distinguished member of the feminist movement'.^{xi}

The feminist theory plays a good role in understanding Woolf's novels since Woolf had been repeatedly, rather than occasionally abused by her brothers because a controversial argument aroused debate not only about Virginia Woolf, but also about sexual abuse. Therefore, this study has noticed that one of her achievements in *To the Lighthouse* is to exercise the power over her parents.^{xii}

However, this research focuses on some of feminist elements of Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* offering new challenging ways of reading them by drawing on recent developments in modern literary theory. Feminism, in general, concentrates on the conditions of women's lives and identities in the society by which women can create their personality. In the light of feminist theory, one of the main goals of this study is to show the powerful impacts of the family on women writers. Each culture in the world has its own unique set of beliefs and values which produces its own distinctive feminist terminology:

Feminist criticism in the United State has paid much attention to the economic and social conditions of women writing; in France the emphasis has been on the relation between text and sexuality; in Britain there has been concern with the relation between class and the oppression of women.^{xiii}

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Obviously, there could be supposedly some overlaps between these concepts, but no two cultures believe in exactly the same things. Different cultures and different nations may even have opposing opinions when it comes to their own ideas towards the same concept, theory or methodology. What all feminist theories share is their attempt to put women under the microscope by looking at the images of women in literary texts.

The ready-made response to the definition of a feminist literary theory in Woolf's oeuvre is her own authorized version. It has been said that one of the more dominant traits of feminist theory is to define a relationship between a text and the world:

Texts can be coercive, representing and encoding proper behaviour and proper structures of beliefs. Texts can also be subversive, attacking dominant modes of understanding and offering alternative ways of living and thinking. If texts are related to the world, texts can change the world.^{xiv}

However, feminist criticism began to have an impact on how feminist scholars thought about their work and about the assumptions that inspired it. Further, feminist fiction about the world suddenly became a matter of interpretation.^{xv} In terms of the relation between the text and the writer, Woolf saw *To the Lighthouse* 'as a form of therapy: a text with peculiar relation to her own history, which functioned for her as a psychical and emotional release'; presumably in writing her novel, Woolf was impacted by the First World War and her agony was also linked to 'her mother's early death in 1895'.^{xvi}

It has been noticed that many contemporary critics tend to adopt fresh methods and radical new approaches in literary feminist criticism which help to analyse the author's own life, characters' motivations and behaviours, and the text's language and symbolism. Recently, however, studies of Virginia Woolf have focused repeatedly on contemporary feminist criticism that she has taken upon herself, as a woman writer, to support any and every position. This is especially true in the case of Virginia Woolf, and has directly affected readings of her novels:

[It] was an explicit attempt to increase understanding of both Virginia Woolf and her novels by relating them to the parts of [. . .] her diary, [which] shows how the project evolved from an initial idea about her father alone in a boat into something wider in scope, involving both her memories of her mother and her love for women friends.^{xvii}

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In this regard Reid invites the readers to consider that refocusing Woolf's novels within the representations of their author's memories. So, they can be read as Woolf's own stories: pure feminist stories.

Patriarchy and Matriarchy: A Brief Overview

In the short space available, a patriarchy is a form of social organization in which the father or eldest male is the head of the family and descent is reckoned through the male line whereas a matriarchy is a form of social organization in which the mother or eldest female is the head of the family and descent is through the female line. Rita Smith Kipp argues that the term 'matriarchy' first has been used by E. B. Tylor in 1896, who could find no instances of societies in which women rule, the concept existed only in imagination, so it became out of fashion in scholarship for over century, then it was originated as the logical opposite of patriarchy. Kipp continues that

many scholars through the years have reiterated this point, among them Schneider and Gough in their 1961 book, *Matrilineal kinship*, and Rosaldo and Lamphere in the 1974, influential feminist anthology, *Women, Culture, and Society*.^{xviii}

Russell Means defines patriarchy as 'a system that both completely lacks and completely fears the feminine', which is 'an imbalanced, fear-based, warlike and truly insane structure because only a patriarchy is on top, obsessed with control and completely inhumane to everything below'.^{xix} Means actually suggests a solution to this problem throughout a 'simply return to a matriarchy, based on the feminine. A matriarchy actually 'represents the origins of individual liberty through representative government'.^{xx}

Heide Goettner-Abendroth believes that modern matriarchal studies are concerned with investigating and presenting nonpatriarchal societies: those that have existed in the past and those that are, to some degree, still with us now. With matriarchies, equality does not mean a mere leveling of differences. The natural differences between the genders and the generations are respected and honored, but the differences don't lead to hierarchies. The different genders and generations each have their own value and dignity, and through a system of complementary activities, they are dependent on each other.^{xxi}

Patriarchy and Matriarchy in *To the Lighthouse*

Little attention has been paid to Virginia Woolf's general concern with the opposing perspectives of patriarchy and matriarchy. Patriarchy is represented by the role of Mr. Ramsay in the family whereas matriarchy is represented by Mrs. Ramsay. Practically, Woolf's literary writing was affected by her isolation from patriarchal culture and it reveals that she is topographically so hostile to patriarchy in the sense that 'the punishment of fathers for daring to trespass on their territory was instant dismemberment by wild horses'.^{xxii}

As feminist critic, Woolf sees as the only hope for society and individuals is to reconcile between the sexes:

although Mrs. Ramsay nourishes others she damages them by protecting them from the truth, as when she uses her shawl to conceal the skull in the children's room; and the hell of 'Time Passes' includes death from both childbirth and the war made by men.^{xxiii}

Having no solution to this issue Woolf had chosen suicide over exile since she was tormented deeply by this nightmarish figure or patriarchal tyranny. In contrast, Woolf's main concern of matriarchy might be revealed when Mrs. Ramsay begins to serve others including her husband and children during the dinner party.^{xxiv}

In her diary, Woolf mentioned that her plans for the novel move between the two poles of her father and her mother. Woolf's memories of her father affected her descriptions of Mr. Ramsay: she made him the type that we all hate to have in our lives. He is a tyrant of inconceivable selfishness whereas Woolf shaped Mrs. Ramsay out of her memories of her own mother and hence Mrs. Ramsay has been portrayed as beautiful as a painting.^{xxv}

It is fundamentally secured and interlocked with the idea of matriarchy, Woolf describes Mrs. Ramsay as she is around complex character assigned to play several roles in the novel. She strikes us as a loving mother who is deeply concerned about supporting and protecting her children. She is also a dedicated wife who offers her husband all the support, sympathy, and understanding he needs. Her good nature and her noticeable concern for human feelings and emotions enable her to ease the tension among the members of the family. She plays her role as a successful hostess who is able to comfort her guests demonstrating peculiar interest in their personal problems. At the end of the first part of the novel "The Window", in holding the dinner party expresses her personal interest in creating harmony, stability and, human solidarity. However, she is aware of the sorrows of life to the extent of being somewhat pessimistic.

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Her husband is a philosophical totally absorbed in his intellectual pursuits. In comparison with his wife's reverence of human feelings, Mr. Ramsay is fascinated with facts which for him represent the guiding principle in human lives. This is what he tries to implant in his children's minds. Like his wife, Mr. Ramsay loves his children, but his lack of consideration for human feelings in general colours his attitude towards them with some measure of cruelty. Mr. Ramsay's problematic relationship with his children derives partly from his harshness and selfishness which stand in sharp contrast with his wife's kindness and altruism.

Patriarchy and matriarchy are twain that shall never meet. If one takes a look at many societies, we will see the people think of their community in terms of an imaginative pyramid with the male on top. The politics and government of these societies are based upon a pyramid structure with the man on top. However, in *To the Lighthouse*, Mrs. Woolf made the woman on top. It has been noticed that Mrs. Ramsay has expressed her desire to be on top, so she lives in fear, fear of being displaced. Because she is afraid, she wants to control. She feels that she needs to control everything; including her family and even her spirituality. It has also been seen that Mrs. Ramsay herself tries to play God to justify her existence at the top of her family and the society in which she lives. Mrs. Ramsay's values show how life can be organised in such a way that it is based on needs; it is nonviolent and peaceful; it is simply human. This is very clear in the text, particularly during the dinner party when Mrs. Ramsay attempts to assert her superior position in the family, feeling entitled to, for instance, urging people on to marry, let alone her initiating circulation of look, food, and talk.

In depicting the relation between Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay, the critics point out two opposed views about Mrs. Ramsay depending on the Ramsays' marriage which is the eternal union of the patriarchy and matriarchy. According to the first view, Mrs. Ramsay 'has no flaws and is thus unable to ward off harassment by her desiccated husband, to whom she lovingly sacrifices herself... [whereas the second view is that Mrs. Ramsay] is actually the reason for her husband's unhappiness and her son's failure to reach the lighthouse'.^{xxvi}

In spite of these different ideas, however, Lilienfeld uses the tools of feminist criticism to examine Woolf's vision of the Ramsays' marriage: 'Woolf showed a marriage in so truthful a way she found the Ramsays to be male and female traits personified, and their marriage the best way for role mates to live together'. Lilienfeld attempts to prove that Woolf both celebrates and criticizes marriage while making clear the urgency for creating new modes of human love and partnership; 'this criticism shapes the third section of the novel, where Lily Briscoe and Minta

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Doyle break free of Mrs Ramsay's impositions of her own role restraints on their lives'.^{xxvii}

As social evolutions call for modifications in the Ramsays' marriage, a way had to be found to introduce these developments:

The model of marriage which Mrs. Ramsay wishes passed on to young people is composed of many silences, many withholdings. Mrs. Ramsay does not like, for example, her husband to see her thinking. [. . .] Mr. Ramsay's reaction to this self-withholding is to remember his times of solitude before marriage. [. . .] Her silence becomes physical rejection; instead of speaking, she turns her back on her husband and goes to the window to look at the sea.^{xxviii}

Lilienfeld further discusses the marriage offering a mature, sharp critical examination of Woolf's own parents' relationship and 'of the destruction wreaked by the Victorian social arrangement on human capacities for freedom and growth'. In terms of the examination of the Ramsays' marriage, Lilienfeld argues that the ideological persuasion of this family 'as structured by patriarchy is the bulwark of morality, the state and stable human character have not changed much since the 1850s'.^{xxix}

As the mother, Mrs. Ramsay, reads a newspaper aloud, thinking that they were happier now than they would ever be again (*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*). In so doing, Mrs. Ramsay feels that she does not only have a strong voice in the family, but is also responsible for the welfare of its members. Mrs. Ramsay secures a remarkable position in her family that makes her the hub of her own social circle, garnering admiration and good reviews from the start of the novel. In *To the Lighthouse*, Mrs. Ramsay is only pretending to fulfill her desire in recording 'the whole spectrum of a society in the process of change, through the accumulation of accurate factual detail'.^{xxx} In so doing Mrs. Ramsay's statistics of social evaluation bears witness to her own passions, desire, and half-narcissisticism as she plans to become a public figure rather than have a better understanding of social policy.

To the Lighthouse is a fiction based on reality, it may need to be interpreted before that truth can be grasped:

Lily Briscoe's complex resolution of her love for and dependence on Mrs Ramsay in Part III is a psychological paradigm for women who seek autonomy. In Lily's moving beyond Mrs Ramsay's mode of behaviour we see a major transition in women's use of the power of selfhood, as the comes to

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cherish in herself powers different from those that motivate Mrs Ramsay. [. . .] Once Lily has become autonomous she can imagine walking beyond the spear plants in Mrs Ramsay's garden, not alone anymore but arm in arm with somebody, either man or woman.^{xxx}

During the dinner party, the Ramsays presumably let the reader feel violently the tug of two opposite things at once: 'the contradictory nature, the exaltation and melancholy, of life itself'.^{xxxi}

Woolf believes that the limitations of Mr. Ramsay's thinking are reflected in the fact that he lacks the wisdom of an integrated vision of life while Mrs. Ramsay whose strong emotional warmth enables her to understand life and people. 'The lighthouse symbolises the essential isolation and independence of the individual, but the beams of the lighthouse crossing the dark waters at night represent the love of Mrs. Ramsay which unites all her friends and gives meaning to their lives'.^{xxxiii}

Woolf attempts to differentiate between vision and fact or visional and factual worlds by portraying male and female characters in her novel. Kelley's study edges the reader closer to an understanding of Virginia Woolf's factual response to a world. In 'The Lighthouse', Virginia Woolf has 'wrestled with the problem of how to imagine and how to present a world that combines finite and infinite truth—that recognizes limitation and isolation'.^{xxxiv}

Kelley traces Woolf's own use of the terms 'fact' and 'vision' and explores this binary in *To the Lighthouse*. Woolf got started on exploring the symbolic possibilities of her characters, in *Mrs. Dalloway*, by making them represent various aspects of fact and vision whereas in *To the Lighthouse* Woolf combines 'these themes and techniques to present the marriage of two vast personalities who stand for factual and visionary approaches to the reality of life'.^{xxxv}

Vision and fact can be traced in many of Woolf's works. Woolf attempts to differentiate between vision and fact or visional and factual worlds by portraying male and female characters in the novel. It means that the visional world be represented by women in the novel whereas men represent the factual one. Alice van Buren Kelley opines that 'For Virginia Woolf the world of fact is the world of physical isolation and limitation; the world of vision is the spiritual world of unity and pattern'. Kelley believes that vision needs fact and the opposite is true because they complete one another. In addition, vision denies limitations but Mrs. Ramsay attempts to impose limitation on it so that she would not have to tell her husband that 'I love you'. As such, Mrs. Ramsay protects her vision, bathing her husband in it in return for his support: 'Fact is strong, but, during her lifetime at least, vision prevails'.^{xxxvi}

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In *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf uses the stream of consciousness as a technique designs to create the illusion that readers have direct access to the mental processes of the characters. This technique might uncover the essential personalities of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay and the intricacies of their relationship with one another. In this regard, Woolf tries to examine the structures of human life, from the nature of relationships to the experience of time. David Daiches argues that Woolf uses her particular form of stream of consciousness to explore characters in depth and to enable the readers to individualise actions of other characters in their symbolic meaning.^{xxxvii}

Conclusion

This research paper has attempted to reveal its own short conclusion that the patriarchal-matriarchal problem between Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay is ethical caused by motive and desire rather than evidence and certainty. Mrs. Ramsay is in fact most unwilling to give up her privacy, which she regards as a central constituent of her selfhood and her being a matriarch. Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay do not gain knowledge by any kind of unity. One of the distinctive features of their relationship is a cautious respect for that which the other wishes to conceal. As such, Mrs. Ramsay thinks a good deal of his academic insecurity and his sense of incomplete achievement.

One of the basic but important conclusions to draw from this study is that it is impressed as the possible question can be raised is: Are men and women different? So, why? The novel's characters represent aspects of the text's subjectivity especially in the scene of the dinner party. Woolf attempts to come closer to life and gives the readers an implied answer to the above question. A feeling of melancholy descends upon Mrs. Ramsay as she takes her place at the head of the dinner table in front of her husband sitting at the other end: she has been identified as a woman in a patriarchal symbolic culture. Mrs. Ramsay wonders what she has done with her life. When the party starts, Mrs. Ramsay's thoughts of failure sharply contrast with her determination to counter the flaws in her own marriage by arranging marriages for her friends. However, there was desirable tradition in Woolf's mindset that she worked very hard to transform it into a source of resistance to patriarchy: 'What Woolf depicts in Lily and Mrs. Ramsay is not a feminist political program, but the acts of everyday resistance that enable women to carry on under patriarchy'.^{xxxviii}

This study has tried to evidence how Woolf tries to reveal that patriarchal and matriarchal social systems rely on repressing desire to achieve social ends. In *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf presents her own interpretation of history of mid-Victorian culture to show how the Victorian middle classes prospered when the Victorians were tackling issues. Woolf critically examined problems of contemporary political and

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social life of the day and provided her own alternative to the conceptions of reform. Probably, the main aim of the novel was to explore the absence of the social influence of the patriarchal power on the condition of the family. Perhaps, administratively, Mrs. Ramsay failed to lead the family since she 'has no systematic grasp of facts or the practice to shape them into logical structures'.^{xxxix}

Professor Kelley uncovers the paramount importance of Woolf's writing and she plants in the mind seeds of thought and sends readers back to Woolf's novels with a greater understanding of what they are all about: 'the novel treats symbolically the marriage of opposing and discusses art as another means of combining opposing attitudes toward life'. Kelley considers the way in which the creative tension between the concepts of fact and vision informs the novel by exploring the dualistic theme of fact and vision in the plot, characterisation, and choice of imagery.^{xl}

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