

Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway From Gender Perspectives

(السيدة دالواي) لفرجينيا وولف، من منظور النوع الاجتماعي

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Abstract:

During the Victorian era, women did not have rights neither to work nor to vote, they were only addressed to be mothers and wives. Virginia Woolf experienced this repression in that era. Thus, she tackled the issue in her novel Mrs. Dalloway where she envisions the city of London from a feminist perspective to unveil the oppression of women by introducing different characters, situations and events. This study aims at exploring feminism, gender roles and stereotypes in the novel and how Woolf sees the identity of women at that time. The analysis of gender roles and stereotypes represented in the novel was carried out based on the new critical school's concept of 'distant reading'. Also the analytical approach was used to interpret the characters' gender roles and stereotypes Woolf depicts in the novel. The different female characters like Sally, Clarissa, Miss Kilman and Elizabeth are used to declare that gender roles and social attitudes can be changeable, women and men are not necessary different, feminine features are not limited to females only and vice versa.

Keywords: Victorian era, Gender roles, Gender stereotypes, Virginia Woolf.

ملخص البحث

خلال العصر الفيكتوري ، لم يكن للنساء الحق في العمل أو التصويت ، بل كانت موجهة فقط لتكون أمهات وزوجات. عانت فيرجينيا وولف من القمع كغيرها من النساء في تلك الحقبة. وهكذا، تناولت هذه القضية في روايتها السيدة دالواي إذ تصور مدينة لندن من منظور نسوي

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وتكشف النقاب عن اضطهاد المرأة من خلال توظيف شخصيات واستخدام مواقف وأحداث مختلفة. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف النسوية وأدوار الجنسين والقوالب النمطية في الرواية، وكيف ترى وولف هوية المرأة في ذلك الوقت. تم تحليل الأدوار والقوالب النمطية الجنسانية الممثلة في الرواية بناءً على مفهوم المدرسة النقدية الجديد "القراءة عن بعد". كما تم استخدام المنهج التحليلي لتفسير أدوار الجنسين والصور النمطية التي تصورها وولف في الرواية. تُستخدم الشخصيات النسائية المختلفة مثل سالي وكلايسا وميس كيلمان وإليزابيث لتبيان أن أدوار الجنسين والمواقف الاجتماعية يمكن أن تتغير، وأن النساء والرجال ليسوا بالضرورة مختلفين، وأن السمات الأنثوية لا تقتصر على الإناث فقط والعكس صحيح.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العصر الفيكتوري، أدوار الجنسين، الصور النمطية للجنسين، فيرجينيا وولف.



1. Introduction

The Victorian age represents males' domination as well as women's emancipation. Queen Victoria's reign is considered as an 'Age of Novelists' as many scholars and writers suggest. Particularly, female writers and their works were more taken into consideration in Victorian era and the twentieth century's society and values. The common situations and ideologies that were prevailed during that era affected the Victorian novelists in general and Virginia Woolf in particular since she was raised into a Victorian family and these values were reflected in many of her works such as *Mrs Dalloway*, *The Light House* and *The Waves*. During the twentieth century, literary works aimed to depict reality as it is. Her writings aim to reveal the concerns of women as a woman and as an individual in society by showing them how to gain meaning in life and construct their own identities. The novel *Mrs Dalloway* was written by Virginia Woolf and published in 1925. It is a literary work about the preparation of a special party by Clarissa Dalloway as a description of one night in June 1923, wherein Woolf tried to examine the traditional gender roles and that it had changed very little in post war world. But she

could at the same time show that men and women can be both equal and that emotional qualities are not necessary restricted in the novel. This study tends to tackle the gender roles, mainly women's roles and the stereotypes that were prevalent in the English society at that time by depicting their aspects from the novel. A research question was raised that is how and what are the gender roles and stereotypes presented in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*?

1.1. Gender Vs Sex

1.1.1. Sex

Sex refers to the biological characteristics of a person as to be a female or a male, yet the notion gender refers to what male and female are expected to do in the society. According to Reeves and Baden (2000) 'Sex refers to the biological characteristics that categorize someone as a female or male; whereas gender refers to the socially determined ideas and practices of what is to be female or male' (p. 30). Sex is identified as biological and physiological aspects that men and women adopt naturally but gender denotes social construction of differences among men and women.

1.1.2. Gender

The term gender differs from the term sex. Gender refers to the characteristics that differentiate between masculinity and femininity. Gender means the different social, biological, and cultural constructions. These constructions focus on how femininity and masculinity are different and how their meaning is able to change depending on the various constraints surrounding them. In other words, gender refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes roles, behaviours, expressions and identities. Thus, a person's gender is a result of social experiences; in contrast, sex is considered as a result of natural and biological differences. The distinct use of terms 'sex' and 'gender' signifies a consciousness of the cultural and the geographical differences that refer to gender inequality as a result of social processes.

1.2. Gender Roles

During the socialization process, children learn how to behave from those around them. They are introduced to certain

roles that are typically linked to their biological sex. Thus, gender roles are the roles that men and women are expected to do based on their sex. Many societies have the traditional view of the feminine gender roles which prescribes that women should behave in ways that are nurturing. The main traditional feminine role that women might engage in upbringing her family by working full time at home. However, men are typically seen with masculine gender role such as head of the house hold, providing financial supports, and making important family decisions. According to Blackstone (2003)

‘Gender roles are based on the different expectations that individuals, groups and societies have of individuals based on their sex and based on each society’s values and beliefs about gender. Gender roles are the product of interactions between individual’s cues about what sort of behavior is believed to be the appropriate for what sex. Appropriate gender roles are defined according to a society’s beliefs about differences between the sex’ (p. 335)

As revealed earlier, women are anticipated to be responsible for running the household. Mothers have to cook meals, clean and to do other house activities such as taking care of the children and their needs. Unlike men, who are seen as responsible for the family financially and the main providers of the family’s requirements, as well as guiding their families and making final decisions. Gender roles are learned not natural, they are passed from generation to generation. From childhood people start to distinguish between a boy and a girl and the different roles they are assigned to. For example, girls start to imitate their mothers as they are females and the same thing for boys who began to play the role of the father.

Stereotyping is one factor that attributes in the division of gender roles which have a negative effect on gender roles. For example, women are not seen as strong and powerful enough to take leading positions. Such stereotypes led to gender inequality as Marinova (2003) claims ‘There is a need to combat persistent gender stereotyping, which had led to insufficient sharing of tasks and responsibilities by men for giving within families, households

and communities and unequal power relationships between women and men.’(p. 5). One point to emphasize on is that gender roles differ across societies and cultures as well as they can be changed overtime.

1.3. Stereotypes

Stereotypes are formed in social context through a combination of observing others, learning and mental process. Stereotypes are general beliefs about groups that highlight the differences between them. These differences vary from one group to another, stereotyping covers racial groups. Gender is influenced by stereotypes that is defined as the over generalization about the features of an entire group based on gender such as the idea of women being inferior, weak and lack the traits of leadership compared to men. These beliefs can be falsified by providing examples of women from different ages, races, and cultures that held high leading positions. Women are also generalized as subservient which gives them the role of a mother who takes care of the house but that does not necessary mean that men lack nurturing traits. In this respect, ‘ A gender stereotype is a generalized view or preconception about attributes, or characteristics that are or ought to be possessed by women and men or the roles that are or should be performed by women and men. Gender stereotypes can be both positive and negative. For example women are nurturing or women are weak’ (United Nations Human Rights, September, 2014). The significance of stereotypes to each individual depends on the way they look at stereotypes. Gender stereotypes and gender roles are interlinked. And these stereotyped roles output the males’ dominance over females patriarchy.

1.4. Patriarchy

The concept of patriarchy has evolved from women’s struggles all over the world. It covers the multiple structures of males’ domination and exploitation that affect women’s life. There have been attempts to explain the oppression of women in biological terms they suggest that men are naturally more competitive than women because of their high level of Testosterone, which makes them aggressive and power-hungry, consequently they occupy

high status positions in society, leaving women to the subordinate roles. If we consider that there had been no non-patriarchal society before, which leads to the assumption that patriarchy must be somehow related to biology. However, if it is proved that there had been non-patriarchal societies the nit is more likely to assume that patriarchy is man-made. Patriarchal society gives absolute priority to men and some extent limits women's human rights also. Patriarchy refers to the male domination both in public and private spheres.' (Sultana, 2011, p. 1). As she claims women were and still exploited by men whether at home or at work. First at home, she was not allowed to make decisions and most of them could not leave their homes without a permission from the father or the husband. Second in public sphere, men have control of the most key positions in social entities lie governmental and corporational positions. According to Walby (1990), 'Patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women' (p, 20). Patriarchal conditions could vary between cultures and classes such as women of upper class were given more credits than women in middle and lower classes (Sultana, 2011, p. 13).

2. Results and Discussion

2.1. The Presentation of Feminism in Mrs. Dalloway

Feminism can be defined as the belief of having equal rights to men by constructing a movement that celebrates women's emancipation from the patriarchal society that they were living in. It is an ideology that aims to get social, political and economic equality between the two genders, males and females. This movement's objective is to encourage women's awareness of their rights. Women before were regarded as passive objects in which the only role that would be acceptable for them by society is marriage, however, men were the norms that build society. This unfair division led to the appearance of many feminist groups that aimed to find solutions to women's wondering. Although these feminist groups could not answer women's question, but such understanding could make them realize their purposes and encourage them to start composing.

Virginia Woolf was one of those feminist writers who was considered as an important writer at that time. Woolf was living in a depressed atmosphere, she grew up in a family ruled by patriarchy and domination from her father towards his wife which influenced her. After her mother's death, Virginia Woolf became submitted to her father's endless demands for sympathy and emotional support from his daughters. Over the years, Woolf's emotion of disliking male's domination that was represented in her family was growing continuously with combination with her appreciation for women.

Virginia Woolf in her time started to read different literary works that were produced by famous and relevant females writers who were against patriarchal society they were living in. She also used to examine their lives and how they interpret their feelings towards these dominations in literature. In her novels, Virginia criticizes the established society in general. She used to determine different kinds of females in different contexts and help women know that according to their society they are inferior and passive objects by providing them with an archtype female convention to depend on. In *Mrs Dalloway*, for example, the idea of the diversities of female characters was clearly determined. In her novel, Woolf tried to characterize how the patriarchal English society affected women's lives. She unveiled the real situations of women such as loneliness and frustration they were suffering from. Their lives have been shaped by moral, ideological and traditional elements. '*Mrs Dalloway*' was a story about a single day on June, during this day Clarissa, the protagonist of the novel, gives a party in the evening when Peter Walsh suddenly comes. In her party, Clarissa meets some of her old friends such as Sally Seton, Whitebeard and others. Over the story Clarissa's experiences of love were present in all its parts. She had experienced two lovers, her love to Richard Dalloway, and the most important one was the one with Peter and her love to her female friend Sally Seton. Clarissa deeply loved Peter, she finds herself thinking of him all the time but her personal privacy and her freedom made her decided not to marry him. In her relationship with Peter, an unchangeable tension between love

and personal independence was characterized in Clarissa's soul. This was as a result of the aggressive social structure where women were hated and ignored. Peter is characterized by the identity of a male dictator in which he believes that he has the right to commend her how she should live and what she should do. For this reason she decided to marry Richard rather than Peter. Clarissa understands that if she married Peter, she would not find the kind of independence and freedom she thought is necessary for being happy.

'For in marriage a little licence, a little independence there must be between people living together day in day out in the same house; which Richard gave her, but with Peter everything had to be shared, everything gone into' (*Mrs Dalloway*, p. 5)

In *Mrs Dalloway*, Clarissa's relationship with her husband has not proved to be successful. Throughout Woolf's presentation of Clarissa and Richard relationship, she emphasizes that marriage was not necessary a happy relationship between men and women, and a mutual understanding between a spouse and wife in patriarchal society, even while living under the same roof. Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* called for excluding all masculine values of competition and dominance. She called for a society of women as an alternative to the authoritarian structures. Woolf found a refreshing freedom and a mutual understanding in her relationship with women. She clearly presented it in *Mrs Dalloway*

'It was a sudden revelation, a tinge like a blush which one tried to check and then, as it spread, one yielded to its expansion, and rushed to the farthest verge and there quivered and felt the world come closer, swollen with some astonishing significance, some pressure of rapture, which split its thin skin and gushed and poured with an extraordinary alleviation over the cracks and scores. Then, for that moment, she had seen an illumination ; a match burning in a crocus ; an inner meaning almost expressed' (*Mrs Dalloway*, p.26)

For Clarissa, the most intense emotions she would ever experience were that with her old friend Sally Seton. Sally was also against the patriarchal society which means that she was an

anti-patriarchal woman. Woolf used to describe such relations as a gift

‘She felt that she had been given a present, wrapped up, and told just to keep it, not to look at it- a diamond, something infinitely precious, wrapped up, which, as they walked (up and down, up and down), she uncovered, or the radiance burnt through, the revelation, the religious feeling!’

Concerning the character Miss Kilman, Miss Kilman lost her job as a teacher on the ground that she might have German sympathies by the beginning of the war. She considered herself victimized by her patriarchal society which made her stand against the entire world and had the idea of revenge from it. The cruelty of life made her think of going to the church and be a solace because for her it was the only solution at that time. For Miss Kilman, religion is her only choice to overcome her disappointments though the only purpose of religion is to teach love which was against Miss Kilman’s will which was the mastering of the raging passion of hatred, her want to be a solace was marked to be a failure. Miss Kilman considers Clarissa is the reason why she became a product of this cruel society. A society that knows nothing about the sufferings and the poverty she experienced, she was victimized by it that is why she felt that the only way to have revenge from her society was to humiliate Clarissa.

‘If she could felled her it would have eased her. But it was not the body, it was the Soul and its mockery that she wished to subdue ; make feel her mastery. If only she could make her weep, could ruin her; humiliate her; bring her to knees crying’ (*Mrs Dalloway*, p.107)

This way of thinking makes her put down her femininity by dressing like men and behaving with ruthlessness and fostering aggressive masculine values

Another character that was introduced in Virginia’s novel to foster feminism in her novel was Clarissa’s daughter, Elizabeth Dalloway, who was an example of an unconventional woman. She has desires to have a career or a professional life. She gives a promise for the construction of a new identity for women.

2.2. The Presentation of Gender Roles and Stereotypes in Mrs Dalloway

The novel of *Mrs Dalloway* tackles the traditional gender roles and stereotypes in post world war era. Woolf strives to represent the slight changes that touched the English society from her own point of view in order to reveal the situations and the realities of women's experiences. Woolf implied different female characters such as Clarissa, Sally, Lucrezia, and Kilman to illustrate different roles which were occupied by women of that time.

2.2.1. Gender Roles

2.2.1.1. The Women As Mothers And Wives

Women's roles in the Victorian era were conventional, they were submitted to their roles as wives and mothers because they were the only roles that suited them. There were also a gendered division in their society which was represented by two different spheres 'public' and 'private'. The private sphere was represented by women, yet the public sphere was characterized by men. The private sphere for women means 'home' however men's sphere represents society, independence and domination. Woolf was one of the writers who stand against the Victorian family values. In the novel *Mrs Dalloway*, Woolf generally portrays female characters' roles as mothers, wives and daughters. Woolf tries to differentiate their roles to contrast the Victorian ideas about women because at that time even education was limited only to learn how to be good wives and mothers.

'The entire education of women ought to be in relation to man. To please him, to be use to him, to love and honour him, to rear his children, to tend him in manhood, counsel, console him, make life pleasant and sweet for him ; these are the duties of woman in all their infancy' (pp. 139-140)

In Woolf's novel, *Mrs Dalloway*, the informal education of women is portrayed and represented by her female character, Clarissa. Although she is considered as a remarkable woman by her brilliance in hosting parties, but that does not mean that she is a well educated woman

'She knew nothing, no language, no history, she scarcely read a book now, except memoirs in bed....could not think, write, even play piano.' (*Mrs Dalloway*, p. 105)

In *Mrs Dalloway*, Woolf uses the female characters to portray how the roles of mothers and wives are represented and determined in various and different states to show how she is against the traditional society that impose inferiority to women. To begin with, the character Clarissa is somehow presented as a woman that does not really embody the conventional Victorian values of a mother and a wife. She does not perfectly do her duties, for her the reason behind being a wife was to realize her needs and desires to have a position in society by marrying a prominent gentleman in the government as well as the exaggerated need for security which Richard provides her.

'The obvious thing to say was that she was wordy; cared too much for rank and society and getting on in the world' (*Mrs Dalloway*, p. 65)

The second female character that represents a mother and a wife in Woolf's novel *Mrs Dalloway* is Sally Seton; Although being under the control of a man and becoming a housewife is against her will, but the patriarchal society that she is living in imposed her to play these roles.

'It was seeing blue hydrangeas that made her think of him and the old days_ Sally Seton, of course! It was Sally Seton_ the last person in the world one would have expected to marry a rich man and live in a large house near Manchester, the wild, the drawing, the romantic Sally!' (*Mrs Dalloway*, p 61)

Lucrezia is the only female character that displays the real 'Angle of the house' in the novel. She plays the role of a wife by perfection in which she used to be under her husband's control. She is always trying to please him and help him in various occasions. She also wanted to become a mother, but because she is representing the good Victorian wife she accepts her husband's will who rejected the idea of being a father.

'He was happy without her. Nothing could make her happy without him! Nothing he was selfish, so men are. For he was not ill. Dr Holmes said that there was nothing the matter with him.

She spread her hand before her. Look! Her wedding ring slipped_ she had grown so thin. It was she who suffered-but she had no body to tell.' (*Mrs Dalloway*, p.18)

2.2.1.2. The Woman as Hostess

During the twentieth century, the act of hostess ship plays an important role in Britain in which it brought a great awards and outcomes for women. Although these practices were highly experienced and taking part in society's matters, that did not mean that they do not submit to the public judgement and gossip because of the kind of independence that females were privileged by at that time.

Female hostess ship was characterized by a great success in the twentieth century's Britain which was identified with the realization of the suffrage movements that gave to women the opportunity to create their own businesses and traveling alone which resulted the possibility to master hosting and planning parties.

In Virginia Woolf's novel *Mrs Dalloway* the act of hostess ship was clearly portrayed. Women before were considered as 'the angles of the house' in which their role was limited to be mothers and wives in the private sphere that they were the representatives of it. In *Mrs Dalloway*, Woolf comes out of the ordinary when she determines the protagonist of the novel, Clarissa, as a successful party planner instead of being a good wife and mother.

Clarissa, in her domestic sphere, had a privileged role represents her as a brilliant hostess in whom she used to receive and entertains various and different guests in her home. By doing that Clarissa used to mix the two spheres together.

2.2.2. Gender Stereotypes

Woolf works out on the social stereotypes in enclosing, femininity, in particular how women should behave with the surrounding people, those beliefs are constantly described through the female characters' lives and relations. Woolf strives to make her female characters combat the social expectations and the gender stereotypes. The character Clarissa, the central female character in *Mrs Dalloway*, is a figure whose relationships with

her surroundings reveal many things about her personality. Although Clarissa may not be considered as the best portrayal of women and their relations, she is able to trespass those prescribed positions for women. Woolf attempts to introduce females relationships as close to her society's reality as possible. Clarissa Dalloway's several relationships serve to contradict the strict gender norms of the patriarchal society in which she lives. Clarissa shares different and distinctive relationship with everyone in her life. Through her relationship with herself and Sally, gender norms and femininity are presented.

2.2.2.1. Clarissa's Relationship With Sally

The relationship between Clarissa and Sally is a kind of complex. It seems as a strong friendship but also can be identified as same gender attraction (homosexuality). As it is stated in the novel when Clarissa and Sally kissed each other, Clarissa found it as one of her greatest feelings. 'Something warm which broke up surfaces and rippled the cold contact of man and woman, or women together' (*Mrs Dalloway*, p. 26). Clarissa always remembers her romantic kiss with Sally as being her true love, but is never able to share it. The same example of these homosexual relationships is the one between Septimus and Evans.

Sally was the first one that Clarissa shared secrets and true affection with, but she decided to marry Richard, a man, while she had feelings for a woman. This is because she could not realize that kind of relationships due to roles and expectations that the patriarchal society implied at that time. That kind of relationship did not exist and its only choice is to be suppressed.

2.2.2.2. Clarissa's Relationship With Richard

Clarissa preferred to marry Richard rather than Peter because she is overly oppressed with having privacy of her own. Richard gave Clarissa the freedom she was looking for. He paid much attention to his relationship with her, he did everything he could do in order to rise up to her expectations and show her that she means the world to him and that her comfort is what he wants for her even though he finds difficulties in expressing his love to her. 'For the house sat so long that Richard insisted, after illness, that she must sleep undisturbed' (*Mrs Dalloway*, p. 25). Richard

was and still deeply in love with Clarissa, he is happy for her being part of his life: 'Richard is obviously happy about having married an attractive representative wife, who would properly fulfill her female duties of a mother and a perfect hostess and thus fitting Clarissa perfectly for her role in the pretentious, limited world of facts' (Lessova, 2011, p.21). Whereas, Clarissa is not satisfied with her relationship with her husband. 'She had failed him' (*Mrs Dalloway*, p.25). She keeps feeling that she is missing something. 'It was not beauty; it was not mind. It was something central which permitted; something warm which broke up surfaces' (*Mrs Dalloway*, p.26). Richard's life style makes Clarissa feels loneliness which led her to arrange parties and gather people around them. Despite her loneliness, Richard supports her ideas and desires which can be considered as a post world war effect on society. Woolf represented the husband wife relationship between Clarissa and Richard as a long durable relationship despite all its strange events.

2.2.2.3. Clarissa's Relationship With Miss Kilman

Clarissa and Kilman are two different characters. Kilman is affected by religion and love; whereas, Clarissa despises the two words and what they represent. They also have a competitive relationship over controlling Elizabeth. Clarissa is afraid that Doris will make Elizabeth convert and take her away from her. And Miss Kilman is afraid to stay alone if Elizabeth chooses to go on her mother's steps. This constant competition leads to an intense relationship between them, for instance, when Kilman compares herself with Clarissa, she realizes that the things Mrs. Dalloway has, she does not have.

'with her greatest gift, Clarissa is able to detect this incredible hatred, hypocrisy and jealousy of Miss Kilman's masked behavior, but she realizes she is not Miss Kilman herself that she finds so repulsive, but rather 'the idea of her', all the similar insensitive and domineering women 'love and religion' (Lessova, 2011, p.25). Kilman does not express her hatred directly to Clarissa, but she shows it in an indirect way by her deeds and looking. Additionally, Clarissa does not waste a chance without

her trying to humiliate her and look down to her, and she pushes her to cry sometimes.

To sum up, by rejecting Peter as her spouse, throwing parties, sexual attraction toward Sally, and androgynous connection to Septimus, Clarissa escapes from fix and definitive gender identity. She occupies a position in the middle through the process of becoming. Through unfixed gender identity of Clarissa, the novelist wants to show that gender is constructed by compulsory social discourse and people around her (Mahboubeh & Nozar, 2015). Virginia Woolf introduced the topic of gender roles and stereotypes about females from a female perspective. She introduced women in the role of wives, mothers and hostesses as their only roles, especially the upper class women, but at the same time represented characters that opposed such generalized roles like Miss Kilman and Elizabeth, who is represented as 'the new woman'. Additionally, she tackles females' relationships which is homosexuality and femininity in order to break the norms and challenge the traditional expectations. Wolf represented her society's traditions and at the same time challenged them by introducing new roles and norms

3. Conclusion

Virginia Woolf was one of the feminist writers whose writings were influenced by their experiences as a female, her literary works are about women's rights and position in a male dominated society. Her concerns about feminine troubles are delineated in novels like Mrs. Dalloway. In this novel, she claims that women should have equal rights with men, by showing that both males and females are capable of having the same traits whether being it female or male traits. Also, she managed to prove that besides being a mother and a wife, women can endure their own identity through social movements. This study tends to show that Virginia Wolf is able to use the novel to show that gender roles in post-war world changed a little, and she manages to introduce men and women as equal of each other in having feminine features as it is the case with Peter Walsh who sheds tears in many situations in the novel, 'he was not like as an expected English gentleman'. As she introduced new kinds of

relationships, homosexual relations, for instance, Clarissa and Sally's relation as well as Septimus and Evan's affair who could not fulfill their desires except with a same gender partner. Furthermore, Woolf writes Mrs. Dalloway in order to reveal the truth about women's life, especially married women. She aims to depict the sufferings and struggles of the female characters in their community. It is noticed that the married characters are in fact having two lives, the one they are living and another one they wished to live. Clarissa for example, when she married Richard she dreamt of a better life and a secure one within she would get the privacy she looks for, but she ends up with a feeling of loneliness in her attic. Lucrezia Warren Smith is another example of a woman who suffers in her marital life. Woolf exposes marriage as a source of sadness and alienation to some women to show that marriage is no longer the institution that provides women with happiness and security. She encourages them to get an identity rather than confine themselves to particular expected roles. For that, she introduces Miss Kilman to reflect that some women's desires cannot be achieved within marriage. Mrs Dalloway is a feminist work that reveals women's realities in marriage and society. Besides, Woolf represents some changes in the English society as a result of post world war by which she urges women to emancipate from social roles and expectations and liberate themselves from the social stereotypes.

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