

## The Law of the Father in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925)

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### **Abstract:**

This paper discusses Virginia Woolf's two novels *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs. Dalloway* in the light of a third-wave feminism, namely from a Kristevan perspective. It argues that the existence of the law of the father and the symbolic is extremely important for Woolf as a writer and for the characters of the two novels who are artists. The absence of Woolf's real father does not cancel his symbolic authority. On the contrary, it creates a stronger presence of his power in the life of Woolf, the person and the writer. The artists in the novels also cannot create without a patriarchal structure. Lily Briscoe and Clarissa could rescue their art by clinging to the father while Septimus couldn't save his art or life as he relinquishes the symbolic. This does not mean that the father cannot be challenged, but it means that the semiotic that erupts in the novels should parallel the symbolic or should be within its context.

**Keywords:** Artist, Kristeva, the patriarchal system, the semiotic, the symbolic, third-wave feminism, Woolf