

## ABSTRACT

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*Title:* Portraits of Women in Selected Novels by Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster

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Female characters in novels by Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster are studied in their relationships as wives, mothers, daughters and prospective brides. The novels selected are those where the writers are concerned with families dominated by Victorian ideals. Virginia Woolf: *The Voyage Out* (1915), *Night and Day* (1919), *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927). E.M. Forster: *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), *The Longest Journey* (1907), *A Room with a View* (1908), *Howards End* (1910).

The socioeconomic, religious and ideological origins of the Victorian ideals are traced, esp. as they are related to the writers' family background in the tradition of English intellectual life. The central theme of the four novels by Woolf is the mother-daughter relationship which is analyzed in its components of love and resentment, often revealed in an interior monologue. Forster's novels usually present a widowed mother with a daughter and a son. It is shown how the plot, dialogue and authorial intrusions are used to depict a liberation from the constraints of the Victorian ideals of family life. The mothers in the novels of both writers are shown to be representative of various aspects of the Victorian ideal of womanhood. The attitudes of men towards women vary from those typifying Victorian conceptions of male superiority to more modern ideals of equality and natural companionship.

*Key Words:* Forster, E.M., Woolf, Virginia, Victorianism, Victorian women, female characters, Bloomsbury Group, woman in history, history of woman, woman in literature, mother-daughter relationship