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**Breaking Boundaries : Exploring Female Characters in
Anna Karenina by Leo Tolstoy in the 19th Century**

**An Extended Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfillment Of the Requirement for a Master's Degree
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DEDICATIONS

Dedication1 :

To my parents, particularly my dear mother whose boundless love and unwavering support have formed the very bedrock of my journey. Your enduring belief in me has been a source of profound strength and solace. From the earliest tales you shared and the bedtime stories that ignited my imagination, you instilled in me a love for words and a thirst for knowledge. To my beloved partner, Saido, whose steadfast presence and constant encouragement have illuminated my path and inspired my aspirations. Your love has been my guiding star, guiding me through the darkest nights and celebrating with me under the brightest stars.

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My deepest gratitude goes to all of my family members. It would not be possible to write this thesis without the support from them.

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Abstract

In contemporary discourse, the intertwined themes of feminism, patriarchy, and identity stand as central pillars in discussions surrounding social justice, equality, and individual empowerment. Across diverse cultures and contexts, individuals navigate complex webs of power dynamics and social hierarchies that shape their experiences and opportunities for self-expression and agency. At the heart of this discourse lies a profound quest for autonomy, agency, and self-determination a quest often hindered by deeply ingrained systems of oppression and inequality. Feminism, as a theoretical framework and social movement, has long sought to challenge and dismantle these systems, advocating for the rights and equality of all individuals regardless of gender. Central to feminist analysis is an interrogation of patriarchy the social, political, and economic system that privileges masculinity and perpetuates gender-based discrimination and violence. Within this framework, notions of identity play a crucial role, intersecting with gender, race, class, sexuality, and other axes of privilege and marginalization to shape individuals' lived experiences and sense of self so this dissertation embarks on a comprehensive exploration of the multifaceted challenges individuals encounter in their pursuit of autonomy, agency, and self-determination within societies marked by entrenched social hierarchies and power dynamics. Through a critical examination of feminist theories and perspectives, coupled with empirical research and theoretical inquiry, this study seeks to deepen our understanding of the complexities inherent in navigating systems of power and privilege. It aims to shed light on the intersections between feminism, patriarchy, and identity, and their implications for personal and societal dynamics.

Keywords: Feminism, Patriarchy, Identity, Social Justice, Equality.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In the 19th century, Russia underwent significant political, social, and economic changes that shaped the country's development and ultimately paved the way for the Russian Revolution in 1917. The century began with Russia still under the rule of the Romanov dynasty, which had been in power since 1613. Throughout the early 19th century, Russia faced a number of challenges, including internal unrest, the Napoleonic Wars, and economic stagnation. In an attempt to modernize and strengthen the country, Tsar Alexander I implemented a series of social and political reforms, such as the creation of a legislative body known as the State Council and the implementation of a constitutional monarchy.

However, these reforms were not enough to fully address the deep-seated issues facing Russian society. The country remained largely agrarian, with the vast majority of the population living in rural areas and working as peasants on land owned by nobles. Serfdom, the system by which peasants were tied to the land they worked and had limited rights and freedoms, was still in place, creating widespread poverty and inequality. The social hierarchy in Russia was rigidly defined, with the tsar and nobility at the top, followed by the clergy, the merchant class, and the peasantry at the bottom. The nobility enjoyed special privileges and exemptions from taxes, while the peasants were burdened with heavy labor obligations and limited opportunities for advancement.

Despite these social divisions, the 19th century also saw the emergence of a growing middle class in Russia, made up of professionals, merchants, and skilled laborers. This new class began to challenge the traditional power structures and demand greater political and social rights. The mid-19th century saw the abolition of serfdom in Russia, a move that was intended to modernize the economy and improve the status of the peasantry. However, the emancipation of the serfs did not lead to significant improvements in their quality of life, as they were often left landless and in debt to their former masters.

The late 19th century saw the rise of revolutionary movements in Russia, as discontent with the autocratic rule of the tsar and the social inequalities of Russian society grew. The populist movement, which sought to bring about social and political reforms through grassroots organizing and revolutionary action, gained popularity among the urban working class and intelligentsia.

In the 19th century Russia, feminism and sexism were deeply intertwined with the political and social changes of the time. Women in Russia faced systemic discrimination and were largely excluded from public life, education, and employment opportunities. The prevailing patriarchal attitudes relegated women to traditional roles as wives and mothers, with few legal rights or autonomy.

Despite these societal barriers, a feminist movement began to emerge in Russia during the 19th century. Influenced by the broader European feminist movements, Russian women started to organize and advocate for their rights. Prominent feminists such as Nadezhda Stasova and Anna

Filosofova campaigned for women's education, suffrage, and legal rights. However, these efforts were met with resistance from conservative forces within Russian society, including the Orthodox Church and the imperial government. The autocratic rule of the Tsars reinforced traditional gender roles and sought to suppress any challenges to the status quo.

Literature has long been considered a powerful tool for examining and understanding the social crises of its time. One classic example of a literary work that delves deep into the societal issues of its era is Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. Set in 19th century, he was born in 1828 in Russia, is famous for epic novels like "War and Peace" and "Anna Karenina." His writing explores deep human emotions and societal issues, and he was also known for his philosophical and spiritual beliefs that emphasized simplicity and truth. Tolstoy's works remain influential in literature and philosophy today, the novel explores themes of love, infidelity, class disparity, and the constraints imposed by societal norms. Through the character of Anna Karenina, Tolstoy highlights the struggles of women in a patriarchal society, as well as the consequences of straying from societal expectations. The novel also sheds light on the rigid class structure of Russian society at the time, depicting the stark divide between the aristocracy and the working class.

This dissertation will use *Anna Karenina* as a case study to analyse the society of the time, women's suffering, and their trial to get rid of the norms. In order to explore the portrayal of feminism and sexism in 19th-century Russian society as reflected in '*Anna Karenina*', we will rely on the following Objectives, Research questions, and Significance which are :

Research question 1:

How do the various forms of patriarchy portrayed in *Anna Karenina* intersect with emerging feminist ideologies, revealing societal norms in 19th century Russia?

Research question 2:

In what ways does '*Anna Karenina*' illuminate the tensions between patriarchal structures and evolving feminist ideologies, emphasizing shifts in societal norms and individual identity?

Beginning with the Research Objectives, our first aim is to examine how "*Anna Karenina*" depicts the struggles and advancements of women within the patriarchal society of 19th-century Russia. This will lead us to analyze the manifestations of patriarchy and its impact on gender roles and relations in the novel. Furthermore, we will explore the themes of identity, intersectionality, and female empowerment in the context of race, social class, and gender. Lastly, we aim to assess the role of literature, specifically "*Anna Karenina*", in challenging societal norms related to gender and empowerment in 19th-century Russia.

Moving on to the Research Questions, we will delve into the key forms of patriarchy evident in the novel and how they intersect with feminist ideologies. Additionally, we will investigate the complexities of identity, including race, social class, and gender roles, and their influence on female empowerment as portrayed in the novel. By addressing these questions, we

hope to contribute meaningfully to the discourse on gender roles and societal change during that period.

Lastly, the Significance of the Study lies in its contribution to Literary Scholarship, offering a deeper understanding of the representation of gender, feminism, and identity in literature. Furthermore, by focusing on 'Anna Karenina' as a case study, this research enhances our knowledge of historical perspectives and sheds light on the societal norms of 19th-century Russia. The implications for contemporary debates on feminism, patriarchy, and female empowerment are also noteworthy, as the findings may draw connections between past and present societal challenges. Lastly, the study holds educational and cultural value by providing insights into the thematic richness and social commentary of a literary classic like *Anna Karenina*.

In the forthcoming dissertation on Anna Karenina, exploring Feminism, patriarchy, and the pursuit of identity in 19th-century Russian society as portrayed in Leo Tolstoy's masterpiece, Feminism will be leveraged as a pivotal movement. The analysis will delve into the intricate interplay between gender dynamics, societal norms, and individual self-discovery in a compelling and thought-provoking examination of Tolstoy's poignant narrative. The exploration of these themes through the lens of Feminism promises to illuminate the nuances of power, agency, and autonomy in the context of a rapidly changing society, offering a fresh perspective on the timeless themes depicted in the novel.

In order to make the study more specific, the main focus of this dissertation will be on two concepts: patriarchy and identity. Patriarchy is a social system in which men hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege, and control of property. In a patriarchal society, women are often marginalized, oppressed, and subservient to men.

Identity on the other hand, refers to the way individuals perceive themselves and how they are perceived by others. It includes aspects such as gender, race, class, nationality, and personal characteristics. Identity shapes one's experiences, interactions, and relationships with others.

In *Anna Karenina*, the novel explores the themes of patriarchy and identity through its complex characters and their relationships. The protagonist, Anna, struggles against the constraints of patriarchal society, which dictate her roles as a wife and mother. Her identity is further shaped by her affair with Count Vronsky, which defies societal norms and expectations. Other characters in the novel, such as Kitty and Dolly, also grapple with issues of identity and patriarchy. Kitty's journey from a young, idealistic girl to a married woman reflects her evolving sense of self and her place in society. Dolly, on the other hand, must navigate the challenges of being a wife and mother in a patriarchal world that values male power and dominance.

By focusing on the concepts of patriarchy and identity in Anna Karenina, the study can delve deeper into the themes of power, control, and self-discovery in the novel. It can analyze how

these concepts shape the characters' choices, relationships, and ultimately their fates within the patriarchal society depicted by Tolstoy.

The forthcoming dissertation will be structured into three comprehensive chapters, each delving into a distinct aspect of gender dynamics, societal norms and personal identity.

In the first chapter, a critical examination of feminism and patriarchy will be undertaken, exploring the historical and contemporary implications of these intertwined ideologies on women's agency, power, and autonomy. The chapter will delve into the roots of patriarchy, the ways in which it has shaped societal expectations and norms, and the ongoing struggle for gender equality and empowerment. Additionally, the chapter will explore feminist theories and movements, discussing their impact on challenging patriarchal structures and advocating for women's rights.

Moving onto the second chapter, the focus will shift to a detailed analysis of Leo Tolstoy's iconic novel *Anna Karenina*, examining the subjugation of characters to various societal forces including feminism, racism, and patriarchy. Through a close reading of the text, the chapter will explore the ways in which the female protagonist, Anna Karenina, navigates the constraints placed upon her by gender roles, societal expectations, and the prevailing patriarchy. Moreover, the chapter will unpack the intersections of race and gender within the novel, shedding light on the ways in which characters of different backgrounds experience oppression and marginalization.

Lastly, in the third chapter, the dissertation will delve into the theme of identity and self-discovery as portrayed in "Anna Karenina" and beyond. This chapter will explore the characters' quests for personal fulfillment, autonomy, and authenticity amidst the complexities of societal norms and expectations. Through a nuanced analysis of individual agency and self-realization, the chapter will delve into the ways in which characters strive to carve out their own identities, resist oppressive forces, and assert their unique selves.

By engaging with these three interconnected themes – feminism, patriarchy, and identity – this dissertation aims to offer a comprehensive and insightful exploration of the multifaceted challenges faced by individuals in their quest for autonomy, agency, and self-determination in a world shaped by deeply ingrained social hierarchies and power dynamics.

Chapter one :
Feminism and Sexism in the 19th
Century

Introduction:

Chapter 1 delves into the intricacies of feminism and sexism prevalent in 19th-century literature. By delving into the historical background of feminism, the chapter sheds light on the evolution of women's rights and the significance of studying feminism in the literary context. The narrative explores the historical context of women's status during the 19th century, critiquing the prevalent sexism and patriarchal norms depicted in literary works. Through the analysis of male dominance, patriarchy, and the themes of resistance and subversion, the chapter highlights the impact of literature on sparking social changes, exemplified through seminal works like *A Doll's House*, *Jane Eyre*, and *Pride and Prejudice*.

1. Historical Background of Feminism:

The roots of feminism can be traced back to different time periods and regions. In the 18th century, the Enlightenment era brought about discussions on equality and individual rights, which laid the foundations for feminist ideas. Thinkers like Mary Wollstonecraft argued for women's education and challenged the prevailing notion of women's inferiority.

The first wave of feminism emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It focused on women's suffrage and legal rights. In the United States, the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 marked a pivotal moment in the fight for women's rights. Notable figures such as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton played crucial roles in advocating for women's right to vote, "I declare to you that women must not depend upon the protection of man but must be taught to protect herself, and here I take my stand." (Anthony 12)

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a prominent suffragist and women's right activist, also made significant contributions to the movement. She emphasized the importance of women's political equality and famously stated, "The history of the past is but one long struggle upward to equality." (Cady63) This quote reflects her belief in the ongoing fight for equality and recognition of women's rights as an essential part of the struggle.

As the 20th century progressed, the second wave of feminism gained momentum. This wave, which began in the 1960s and continued into the 1970s, broadened the focus to address issues like reproductive rights, workplace discrimination, and gender roles. Feminist thinkers such as Betty Freidan, author of *the Feminine Mystique*, (1963) and Gloria Steinem, a prominent activist and journalist, became influential voices during this time.

In her work, Freidan examined the lives of suburban housewives and challenged the notion that women's fulfillment should solely come from being wives and mothers. She coined the term "the problem that has no name" to describe the discontent and frustration experienced by many women in their domestic roles.

"The problem lay buried, unspoken, for many years in the minds of American women. It was a strange stirring, a sense of dissatisfaction, a yearning that women suffered in the middle of the twentieth century in the United States. Each suburban wife struggled with it alone. As she made the beds, shopped for groceries... she was afraid to ask even of herself the silent question-'is this all?'" (Freidan)

Steinem believed in gender equality and committed to challenge societal norms that perpetuated sexism and discrimination. "A feminist is anyone who recognizes the equality and full humanity of women and men." (Steinem)

The second wave also saw the rise of intersectional feminism, which recognizes that women's experiences are shaped by various intersecting factors such as race, class and sexual orientations. Activists, such as Audre Lorde, Bell Hooks and Kimberlé Crenshaw contributed to the development of intersectional feminist theory. Audre Lorde, a renowned poet and feminist activist, emphasized the need for intersectionality and stated, "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives." (Lorde 12) This quote powerfully highlights the interconnectedness of various forms of oppression and the importance of addressing them collectively.

In the 20th Century and into the present, the third wave of feminism emerged. This wave sought to challenge and expand upon the ideas of previous waves, advocating for inclusivity, diversity and the recognition of multiple perspectives. It emphasized the importance of intersectionality and the experiences of marginalized groups within the feminist movement.

While progress has been made, sexism still persists in various forms, gender pay gaps, sexual harassment and gender stereotypes continue to be significant challenges. The fight for gender equality is ongoing, with ongoing efforts to dismantle systems of oppression and create a more equitable society.

2. Significance of Studying Feminism:

Studying feminism and sexism allows us to delve into the intricate tapestry of historical, social and cultural contexts that have shaped and perpetuated gender inequality. By exploring these contexts, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding gender dynamics and work towards creating a more equitable society.

Feminism, as a multifaceted movement, seeks to challenge and dismantle the systemic barriers that have hindered the progress and empowerment of women throughout history. It aims to address the social, economic and political inequalities that women have faced and continue to face in various societies around the world. By examining the Historical roots of gender inequality, we can trace the evolution of feminist thought and activism, understand how it has responded to the changing dynamics of society. Furthermore, studying sexism allows us to critically analyze the ways in which gender-based discrimination and prejudice manifest in different contexts. It enables us to explore the power structures that contribute to the marginalization of women and other identities. We can also uncover the underlying mechanisms that sustain gender inequality, shedding light on the ways in which sexism intersects with other forms of oppression, such as racism and classism.

1.1 Historical :

Examining the history of feminism and sexism is like peeling back the layers of time to reveal the stories and experiences of women who have fought tirelessly for gender inequality. It also helps us appreciate the progress that have been made over the years. We can see how women have overcome immense challenges and barriers to secure rights and opportunities that were previously denied to them. From the suffragette movement to the waves of feminism that followed, each era has contributed to shaping the landscape of gender equality.

However, it is not just about celebrating the victories. Examining the history also shines a light on power structures and societal norms that have perpetuated gender inequality. We can see how patriarchal systems and deeply ingrained biases have limited women's access to education, employment and political participation. Progress has not always been linear, there have been setbacks and challenges along the ways. From backlash against feminism movement to the persistence of harmful stereotypes, the fight to gender equality continues.

2.1 Critical :

Studying feminism and We can also uncover the underlying mechanisms that sustain gender inequality, shedding light on the ways in which sexism allows us to critique and question societal norms and structures that reinforce gender inequality. For example, Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* challenges the notion of women as the "other" and exposes the ways in which women have been marginalized and oppressed throughout history. Moreover, it helps us recognize the intersectionality of gender issues and foster inclusive discussions that address the complexities of gender inequality.

Feminist theories also provide us with a framework to analyze and critique various forms of sexism. For instance, Bell Hook's work on *Politics of Dominations* exposes how patriarchal power structures perpetuate violence against women. It also helps challenging harmful stereotypes and misconceptions about gender roles in order to contribute to the ongoing discourse on gender issues and promote more inclusive and equitable societies.

3.1 Literary :

Literature has plays a crucial role in highlighting the experiences of women and shedding light of gender inequality. Studying feminist literature allows us to explore diverse narratives, voices and representations of women's lives providing us with powerful insights into the complexities of gender dynamics and the struggles faced by women.

Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* challenges the patriarchal structures that limits women's opportunities for self-expression and intellectual growth. Through her exploration of the importance of financial independence and physical space for women, Wool emphasizes the needs for gender equality and the recognition of women's voices in literature and society.

Simon de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* critically examines the social construction of femininity and the ways in which women have been historically oppressed. Her analysis of the concept of "otherness" highlights the binary nature of gender roles and the need to challenge societal expectations that limit women's autonomy and agency. "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." (Beauvoir 106) she emphasizes her belief that gender is not predetermined, but rather a social construct that is imposed upon individuals. It suggests that women are not inherently different from men, but rather shaped by societal expectations and norms.

De Beauvoir's analysis of "Otherness" goes beyond gender and extends to various forms of marginalization and oppression. She argues that individuals who are considered to be "Others" are often devalued, excluded and treated as inferior. She challenges the notion that the dominant group is the norm, while all others are seen as deviations. Through her analysis, De Beauvoir calls for recognition and dismantling of oppressive power structures that perpetuate the "Othering" of certain groups. She advocates for equality and the liberation of all individuals from societal constraints.

Audre Lorde, a prominent writer and activist, offered a powerful critique of racism, sexism and homophobia. She recognized the intercorrectedness of these oppressive systems and emphasized the importance of intersectional analysis. Her works highlight how racism, sexism and homophobia are intertwined and mutually reinforcing. She argued that these forms of oppression are not separate entities but rather intersect and compound the experiences of marginalized individuals. Lorde believed that understanding and addressing these interconnected systems of oppression is crucial for achieving true social justice.

In her essay *Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference*, Lorde wrote, "There is no hierarchy of oppressions." This quote encapsulates her belief that all forms of oppression are equally destructive and must be confronted collectively. Lorde advocated for solidarity among marginalized groups, recognizing that their struggles are interconnected and that liberation can only be achieved through collective action.

Lorde's critique also emphasized the importance of centering the experiences and voices of those most affected by these oppressive systems. She believed in the power of personal storytelling and using one's own experiences to challenge and dismantle oppressive structures. By amplifying the voices of marginalized individuals, Lorde sought to disrupt the dominant narratives that perpetuate racism, sexism and homophobia.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's works delve deep into challenging traditional gender roles and presenting women as complex individuals with their own desires, *ambitions* and struggles. In her novel *Purple Hibiscus*, we witness Kambili's journey of self-discovery as she defies her father's oppressive authority. Adichie beautifully captures Kambili's growth and resilience, showing us that women can break free from societal expectations.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie explores Olanna's pursuit of education and independence against the backdrop of war. Olanna's character challenges the notion that women are solely defined by their roles in conflict, showcasing her strength and determination. Adichie's writing is filled with powerful quotes that highlight the complexities of women's experiences. For example, in *Americanah*, Ifemelu's pursuit of success and her exploration of relationships on her own terms challenges the idea that women's desires are solely shaped by societal expectations.

Adichie's works also address the intersectionality of women's struggles, considering factors such as race, class and culture. In *The Thing around Your Neck*, the character Adanna's experiences as a Nigerian immigrant in America shed light on the challenges faced by women at the intersection of multiple identities. Adichie's ability to give voice to marginalized women is truly remarkable.

3. Historical Context on Women's Status in the 19th Century:

The 19th century was a time of significant social and cultural changes, including shifts in gender dynamics. During this period, traditional gender roles and expectations were deeply ingrained in society. Women were primarily seen as wives, mothers and homemakers, with limited opportunities for education and employment.

3.1 Women's Right Movements:

However, the 19th century also witnessed the emergence of various women's rights movements, such as the suffrage movement, which aimed to secure voting rights for women. These movements challenged the prevailing gender norms and fought for greater equality and opportunities for women, such as education and professional opportunities challenging the notions that women's roles were limited to domestic spheres. They demanded equal pay for equal work and pushed for laws that protected women's rights in areas like property ownership, divorce and child custody.

Prominent figures like Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Emmeline Pankhurst played crucial roles in leading and inspiring the movement. Their tireless efforts and determination paved the way for significant advancement in women's rights. It is important to note that the women's right movement was not without oppositions. Many people held

conservative views and resisted the idea of gender equality. They believed that women should primarily focus on their domestic duties.

One common argument against women's rights was the belief that women were biologically and intellectually inferior to men. Some individuals argued that women were not suited for certain professions or leadership roles, and that their primary purpose was to be wives and mothers. They believed that granting women equal rights would disrupt the natural order of society.

Religious and moral objections were also used to oppose women's rights. Some argued that traditional gender roles were ordained by God or were essential for maintaining social order. They believed that women's pursuit of equal rights would lead to moral decay and the breakdown of the family unit.

Political opposition was another significant challenge. Many politicians, particularly male politicians, were reluctant to support women's suffrage or other women's rights initiatives. They feared that granting women the right to vote would disrupt the existing power dynamics and threaten their own positions of authority.

Despite these oppositions, the women's rights movement persisted and gained momentum. Activists and suffragettes organized protests, marches and campaigns to challenge these opposing views and advocate for change. Over time, their efforts and the changing social and political landscape led to significant advancements in women's rights.

It is important to note recognize that opposition to the women's rights movement was not universal. Many individuals, both men and women, supported and actively participated in the movement. They recognized the need for gender equality and worked alongside activists to bring about change.

3.2 Industrialization:

Industrialization and urbanization also played a role shaping gender dynamics. The rise of factories and urban centers created new employment opportunities for women, particularly in

industries like textiles. This allowed some women to enter the workforce and gain a sense of independence.

However, it is crucial to acknowledge the darker side of this transformation. Women who entered the industrial workforce often faced exploitive conditions. They were subjected to low wages, grueling working hours, and unsafe working conditions. Many women had to endure long hours of labor, often in hazardous environment, just to make end meet.

The gender dynamics that emerged during this period were complex. While women had more opportunities for employment, they were still marginalized and undervalued. Their work was often seen as secondary to that of men, and they were paid significantly less for their labor. This perpetuated the idea that women's work was less valuable and reinforced gender inequality.

Moreover, the working conditions in factories and urban centers were often deplorable. Women faced overcrowded and unsanitary living conditions, as well as limited access to basic amenities. The lack of protective measures and the presence of dangerous machinery put their health and safety at risk. In fact, a report from the British Royal Commission on Labor in 1842 stated, "The air breathed by the female operatives is injurious to health, and their hours of labor are too long."

Long working hours were also a significant challenge for women during this time. Many women had to work 12 to 16 hours a day, six days a week. They were often expected to work at a relentless pace, with minimal breaks. This grueling schedule left them physically exhausted and mentally drained.

Another quote from a factory worker named Mary Richards sheds light on the reality of working conditions,

"We worked from six in the morning until eight at night, with only half an hour for breakfast and an hour for dinner. The machines were dangerous, and accidents were common. We were treated like machines ourselves, with no regard for our well-being." (Mary)

The poor wages women received for their labor further compounded the challenges they faced. Women were paid significantly less than men for doing the exact same job. This quote from a factory owner in the 19th century highlights the stark wage disparity, "Women's work is worth

half that of men's. They are not the breadwinners; they are merely supplemental income for their families.”

These examples and quotes illustrate the harsh realities women endured in the industrial workforce. The working conditions were physically demanding, mentally exhausting, and often dangerous. It is important to recognize and critique these conditions to understand the broader implications for gender dynamics and social inequality.

3.3 Religion

Religion and moral values played a significant role in shaping gender dynamics during the 19th century. One prominent concept that emerged during this time was the "cult of true womanhood" or the "cult of domesticity."

The cult of true womanhood placed great emphasis on four virtues that women were expected to embody: piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. Let's delve deeper into each of these virtues and the pressure they placed on women to conform to societal expectations.

3.3.1 Piety:

Piety referred to a woman's religious devotion. Women were expected to be deeply religious and to prioritize their spiritual duties. This meant attending church regularly, participating in religious activities, and upholding moral values. The pressure to be pious often led to a limited role for women within religious institutions, as they were primarily expected to be passive followers rather than active leaders.

However, the pressure for women to be pious also had its limitations. Rather than being seen as active leaders within religious institutions, women were often relegated to passive roles as followers. They were expected to support and contribute to the religious community, but their opportunities for leadership and decision-making were limited.

This limited role for women within religious institutions can be seen in various historical examples. For instance, in the early 19th century, the Second Great Awakening in the United States saw a surge in religious fervor. While women played a crucial role in this religious revival, their participation was often confined to supporting roles such as organizing prayer meetings and promoting moral values within their families.

Additionally, the opposition faced by women in the women's rights movement can be seen in the exclusion of women from formal religious leadership positions. For example, the ordination of women as ministers was a contentious issue in many religious denominations during this time. Women who sought to challenge these gender barriers often faced resistance and condemnation from both religious authorities and society at large.

3.3.2 Purity:

Purity focused on a woman's sexual and moral conduct. Women were expected to remain chaste until marriage and to maintain their virtue throughout their lives. Any deviation from these expectations could lead to social ostracism and damage to a woman's reputation. The pressure to uphold purity often restricted women's autonomy and limited their choices in terms of relationships and personal freedom.

This societal pressure on women's purity had far-reaching implications. It restricted women's autonomy and limited their choices in terms of relationships and personal freedom. Women were expected to adhere to strict standards of modesty and virtue, which often meant suppressing their own desires and conforming to societal expectations.

The emphasis on purity also reinforced gender inequalities and power imbalances. Women were held to a higher standard of sexual morality compared to men, who were often given more leeway in their behavior. This double standard perpetuated the notion that women's worth was tied to their sexual purity, while men were not subject to the same level of scrutiny.

The consequences of not adhering to purity expectations were severe. Women who were perceived as impure or promiscuous faced social condemnation, exclusion, and even the loss of marriage prospects. This created a culture of fear and control, where women were constantly monitored and judged based on their perceived purity.

It is important to note that the concept of purity varied across different cultures and time periods. However, in the 19th century, the pressure to uphold purity was a significant aspect of the restrictions placed on women's autonomy and choices. This aspect of societal expectations further highlights the challenges faced by women in their quest for equal rights and freedom during this period.

3.3.3 Submissiveness:

Submissiveness emphasized a woman's obedience and deference to male authority. Women were expected to be submissive to their fathers, husbands, and other male figures in their lives. This expectation perpetuated gender inequalities and reinforced the patriarchal power structure within society. Women who challenged or resisted this submissiveness faced social consequences and were often labeled as rebellious or deviant.

By promoting women's submissiveness, society sought to maintain control over women and limit their agency. Women were expected to prioritize the needs and desires of men above their own, often at the expense of their own aspirations and autonomy. This dynamic further solidified the unequal power dynamics between men and women.

Challenging or resisting this expectation of submissiveness was not only discouraged but also punished. Women who dared to question or defy male authority were often labeled as rebellious or deviant, facing social consequences and even ostracism. This created a climate of fear and conformity, where women were discouraged from asserting their own opinions and desires.

3.3.4 Domesticity:

Domesticity placed great importance on a woman's role within the home. Women were expected to be the primary caregivers and homemakers, responsible for maintaining a nurturing and harmonious household. This expectation confined women to the private sphere and limited their opportunities for education, employment, and public engagement.

One prominent figure in the women's rights movement during this time was Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Stanton, along with other suffragettes, challenged the prevailing notion of domesticity and advocated for women's rights. In 1848, she co-organized the Seneca Falls Convention, which marked a pivotal moment in the fight for women's suffrage in the United States.

The ideology of domesticity, rooted in the Victorian era, emphasized the idealized image of the "angel in the house." Women were expected to embody qualities of purity, piety, and selflessness. This societal construct perpetuated gender inequality, as women were confined to the private sphere and denied opportunities for personal and intellectual growth.

The 19th century also saw the rise of influential feminist writers and activists, such as Mary Wollstonecraft and Susan B. Anthony. Wollstonecraft's book *"A Vindication of the Rights*

of Woman," published in 1792, challenged traditional gender roles and advocated for women's education and political rights. Anthony, a staunch advocate for women's suffrage, played a pivotal role in the suffrage movement and co-founded the National Woman Suffrage Association in 1869.

By the late 19th century, the women's rights movement gained momentum, leading to significant milestones. In 1893, New Zealand became the first country to grant women the right to vote in national elections. This was followed by other countries, including Australia, Finland, and Norway.

The opposition faced by the women's rights movement was rooted in deeply ingrained societal norms and traditional gender roles. However, the tireless efforts of women and their allies paved the way for significant progress towards gender equality in the 20th century and beyond.

Absolutely! The cult of true womanhood, also known as the cult of domesticity, had a profound impact on women's lives during the 19th century. This cultural ideology placed immense pressure on women to conform to specific virtues, including piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. These virtues were seen as the embodiment of ideal womanhood, and deviating from them was often met with societal disapproval and organization.

The cult of true womanhood served to reinforce traditional gender roles and maintain the existing power dynamics in society. Women were expected to prioritize their roles as wives, mothers, and homemakers, while their access to education, employment, and public life was severely restricted. This limited agency and autonomy for women, as their identities were shaped by societal expectations rather than their own aspirations and abilities.

Education was a particularly contentious issue during this time. Women were often denied access to higher education or were limited to studying subjects deemed suitable for their presumed domestic roles. This restriction on education perpetuated the notion that women were intellectually inferior and reinforced their dependence on men.

The cult of true womanhood also had a significant impact on women's economic opportunities. Women were expected to focus on the private sphere, taking care of the household and raising children, rather than pursuing careers or engaging in public life. The prevailing belief was that a woman's place was in the home, and any aspirations for financial independence or professional success were seen as secondary to their domestic duties.

Despite these challenges, many women actively resisted and challenged the constraints imposed by the cult of true womanhood. Activists such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and others fought for women's suffrage, access to education, and equal rights. Their efforts laid the foundation for the feminist movement and the progress made towards gender equality in the 20th century.

4. critique of sexism and patriarchy in 19th century literature:

4.1 Gender Roles and Expectations:

During the 19th century, traditional gender roles and expectations were deeply ingrained in society. Men were typically seen as the breadwinners, responsible for providing for their families and upholding the patriarchal structure. Women, on the other hand, were expected to be submissive, nurturing, and confined to the domestic sphere.

Literature of this time often reinforced these gender roles through the portrayal of characters and their actions. For example, in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, the character of Mr. Bennet embodies the societal expectation of a patriarch. He is the head of the household, making decisions and controlling the family's fate. In contrast, Mrs. Bennet is depicted as a frivolous and overly concerned mother, obsessed with marrying off her daughters to secure their futures.

Another notable example is Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. The character of Mr. Rochester personifies the dominant male figure, exerting control over Jane and shaping her destiny. Jane, on the other hand, initially conforms to the submissive female archetype but gradually challenges societal expectations by asserting her independence and seeking equality.

Literary works from this era also employed symbolism and metaphors to reinforce gender roles. In Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter," the scarlet letter itself becomes a symbol of Hester Prynne's defiance of societal norms. It marks her as a fallen woman, condemned for her perceived transgressions, while the male characters escape similar consequences.

These literary portrayals not only reflected the prevailing gender expectations but also perpetuated them, as readers internalized and accepted these portrayals as societal norms. By showcasing the limitations placed on women and the power dynamics between genders, these works reinforced the status quo and the subjugation of women. Readers, both men and women,

internalized and accepted these portrayals as societal norms, which had a profound impact on their perception of gender roles and expectations.

Moreover, the male characters in 19th century literary works often embodied the idealized image of masculinity, emphasizing traits such as strength, assertiveness, and control. For example, in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Mr. Rochester represents the dominant male figure, exerting power and control over Jane. This portrayal reinforced the societal expectation that men should be the dominant figures in relationships and have authority over women.

4.2 Stereotypes in 19th century:

Stereotypes can be seen as oversimplified generalizations or assumptions about a particular group of people based on their characteristics, behaviors, or beliefs. They can perpetuate biases and reinforce societal norms. As Oscar Wilde once said, "The truth is rarely pure and never simple," suggesting that stereotypes may not accurately represent the complexities of individuals within a group.

Another perspective is that stereotypes are mental shortcuts or cognitive frameworks that help us make sense of the world. They allow us to categorize and understand people quickly, but they can also lead to unfair judgments and prejudice. As psychologist Claude Steele noted, "Stereotypes are one way by which history affects present life, but they are not the only way." (Claude 11)

Some argue that stereotypes are social constructs created by those in power to maintain dominance and control over marginalized groups. They can perpetuate inequality and limit opportunities for individuals. As feminist scholar bell hooks stated, "Stereotypes are a means of denying certain groups their full humanity." (Hooks 47)

From a cultural standpoint, stereotypes can emerge from shared beliefs, experiences, and representations within a society. They can shape perceptions and influence interactions between different groups. As writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie pointed out, "The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete." (Adichie 98)

These definitions and interpretations highlight the complexity and varying perspectives surrounding stereotypes. It's important to critically examine and challenge stereotypes to promote understanding, empathy, and equality among individuals and groups.

In 19th century literature, the portrayal of women often perpetuated stereotypes, imposed limitations, and objectified female characters. These portrayals reflected the societal norms and expectations of the time, which restricted and undermined women's agency and autonomy.

One common stereotype found in 19th century literature was the "angel in the house" archetype. Women were often depicted as pure, selfless, and devoted to their families, with their primary role being that of a wife and mother. This stereotype reinforced the idea that women should prioritize the needs and desires of others over their own, limiting their individuality and independence.

Furthermore, female characters were frequently objectified, reduced to mere objects of desire or admiration for male characters. Their physical appearance and beauty were often emphasized, overshadowing their intellect, talents, and aspirations. This objectification reinforced the notion that women's worth was primarily based on their attractiveness and ability to please men, rather than their own personal achievements or ambitions.

Women's agency and autonomy were also undermined through societal expectations and restrictions. They were expected to conform to strict gender roles, confined to the domestic sphere and denied access to education, professional opportunities, and political participation. Their voices and opinions were often silenced or dismissed, reinforcing the idea that their thoughts and experiences were less valuable than those of men.

In Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, the March sisters break stereotypes. Each sister has her own unique personality and aspirations, defying the limited roles often assigned to women. They pursue education, independence, and creative endeavors, challenging the notion that women should only focus on marriage and domesticity.

5. Male Dominance and Patriarchy:

Male dominance refers to the social, cultural, and political system in which men hold primary power and authority over women. It is rooted in the belief that men are inherently superior to women, leading to the subordination and marginalization of women in various aspects of life.

In a historical context, male dominance can be traced back to ancient civilizations, where patriarchal systems were prevalent. These societies often viewed men as the natural leaders and decision-makers, while women were expected to fulfill domestic roles and be subservient to men. This power imbalance was reinforced through laws, customs, and religious beliefs, perpetuating the idea of male superiority.

During the 19th century, the women's rights movement emerged as a response to these oppressive structures. Women began challenging societal norms and demanding equal rights, including the right to vote, access to education, and opportunities for employment. However, they faced significant opposition from those who sought to maintain the status quo of male dominance.

Comments and interpretations of this historical context reveal the complexities of the struggle for gender equality. The women's rights movement faced resistance from individuals who feared the disruption of traditional gender roles and the loss of male privilege. This opposition manifested in various forms, such as legal barriers, social stigma, and even violence against women activists.

Patriarchy, on the other hand, is a broader term that encompasses the entire social structure and system that upholds male dominance. It is a system of power that not only affects gender relations but also influences other aspects of society, such as politics, economics, and culture.

Historically, patriarchal systems have been deeply ingrained in societies around the world. They are rooted in the belief that men are inherently superior to women and should therefore hold power and authority over them. This power dynamic has resulted in the marginalization and subordination of women, limiting their opportunities and reinforcing gender inequalities.

In politics, patriarchal systems have often excluded women from positions of leadership and decision-making. Women's voices and perspectives have been undervalued and underrepresented, leading to policies that do not adequately address their needs and concerns. This exclusionary practice has hindered progress towards gender equality and hindered the full participation of women in shaping society.

Economically, patriarchal systems have perpetuated gender disparities in the workplace. Women have historically been confined to low-paying and undervalued occupations, while men have dominated higher-paying and more prestigious positions. This wage gap and occupational

segregation have limited women's economic independence and contributed to their overall economic disadvantage.

Furthermore, patriarchal norms and expectations have influenced cultural practices and perpetuated gender stereotypes. These norms often prescribe rigid gender roles, reinforcing the idea that men should be strong, assertive, and dominant, while women should be nurturing, submissive, and passive. These stereotypes limit individual expression and perpetuate harmful gender norms that can be detrimental to both men and women.

To understand the historical context of male dominance and patriarchy, we must examine the 19th century. During this time, societal norms and expectations were heavily influenced by traditional gender roles, which reinforced male authority and control. Women were often confined to domestic roles, expected to prioritize marriage, motherhood, and obedience to their husbands.

In literature and works of that era, male characters were frequently portrayed as dominant figures, reflecting the prevailing power dynamics. These depictions served to reinforce and perpetuate patriarchal ideals. However, it is important to note that not all male characters were portrayed as oppressive or dominant, and some authors challenged these norms by presenting more complex and nuanced portrayals.

The Yellow Wallpaper by Charlotte Perkins Gilman highlights the effects of patriarchy on women's mental health. The male character, John, represents the patriarchal figure who dismisses the narrator's concerns and restricts her freedom. This quote exemplifies the power dynamic: "John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage." (Charlotte 52)

6. Resistance and Subversion:

Throughout history, authors from various cultures and literary traditions have used their writings as a powerful tool to critique and challenge sexist ideologies. By examining different works, we can see how these authors have skillfully crafted narratives that expose and question the prevailing gender biases of their time.

One of the key ways authors have critiqued sexist ideologies is by portraying female characters who defy traditional gender roles. Through these characters, authors challenge the notion that women should be confined to domestic spheres or be subservient to men. By

showcasing the strength, intelligence, and agency of their female characters, authors question and subvert the patriarchal power structures that perpetuate sexism.

Authors have also employed various literary techniques to expose the injustices and inequalities faced by women. They may use vivid imagery, symbolism, and metaphors to highlight the oppressive nature of sexist ideologies. Through their prose or poetry, authors can evoke emotions and create empathy, allowing readers to connect with the experiences of marginalized women and understand the detrimental effects of sexism.

Furthermore, authors have employed satire and irony to critique sexist ideologies. By using humor and wit, they expose the absurdity and contradictions inherent in gender-based discrimination. This approach allows authors to engage readers in a thought-provoking manner, encouraging them to question and challenge their own biases and societal norms.

In addition to these techniques, authors have also used their writings to shed light on the intersectionality of sexism with other forms of oppression, such as racism, classism, and ableism. By exploring the ways in which multiple systems of oppression intersect and reinforce each other, authors provide a comprehensive critique of sexist ideologies and advocate for a more inclusive and equitable society.

One notable example is Mary Wollstonecraft's groundbreaking work, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). Wollstonecraft argued for the equal education and rights of women, dismantling the prevalent notion that women were intellectually inferior to men. Her work challenged the sexist ideologies of the 18th century and laid the foundation for the emerging feminist movement.

One idea that Wollstonecraft delves into is the importance of education in empowering women. She argued that denying women access to education perpetuated their subjugation and limited their potential. By advocating for equal education, Wollstonecraft sought to dismantle the notion that women were inherently less intelligent or capable than men. She believed that education would not only enable women to contribute to society but also foster their personal growth and fulfillment.

Wollstonecraft's emphasis on education as a means of empowerment resonates strongly today. It highlights the ongoing struggle for equal educational opportunities for women and the recognition of their intellectual abilities. By challenging the prevailing sexist ideologies of her

time, Wollstonecraft paved the way for future generations of women to fight for their rights and strive for gender equality.

7. Impact of Literature on Social Changes:

In the 19th century, literature played a crucial role in shaping public opinion regarding gender roles. As society underwent significant changes, authors used their literary works to challenge traditional norms and advocate for gender equality. Through thought-provoking narratives, they shed light on the limitations placed on women and sparked discussions that ultimately contributed to societal transformations.

7.1 Jane Eyre:

One notable example is the publication of *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë in 1847. This novel presented a strong, independent female protagonist who defied societal expectations. Jane Eyre's journey of self-discovery and her refusal to conform to traditional gender roles resonated with readers, igniting conversations about women's agency and their right to pursue personal fulfillment.

Throughout the novel, Jane Eyre exhibits her strength and independence, refusing to let society dictate her choices. One notable example is when she confronts Mr. Rochester about their relationship, asserting her own worth and demanding equality: "I am no bird; and no net ensnares me; I am a free human being with an independent will." (Bronte 60)

Another significant aspect of Jane Eyre's character is her determination to pursue her own happiness and fulfillment. Despite facing numerous obstacles, including her disadvantaged social position and the restrictions imposed on women, Jane remains steadfast in her pursuit of personal growth and autonomy. As she states, "I care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unstained I am, the more I will respect myself." (Bronte 57)

Additionally, *Jane Eyre* challenges the idea of women as passive objects of desire. Jane refuses to be objectified or defined solely by her physical appearance. She asserts her intellectual capabilities and desires to be seen as an equal. This is evident when she declares, "I am not an angel... I am a human being with feelings capable of being hurt.

In conclusion, *Jane Eyre* is a powerful novel that challenged societal expectations and ignited conversations about women's agency and personal fulfillment. Jane Eyre's character serves as a beacon of strength and independence, inspiring readers to question traditional gender roles and

advocate for equality. Through her journey, Charlotte Brontë crafted a timeless narrative that continues to resonate with readers today.

7.2 Pride and Prejudice:

Another influential work was *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen, published in 1813. Austen's novel challenged the prevailing notion that a woman's primary goal in life was to secure a suitable marriage. Through her witty and intelligent protagonist, Elizabeth Bennet, Austen highlighted the importance of a woman's individuality and the significance of marrying for love rather than social status. This portrayal of strong-willed female characters encouraged readers to question societal expectations and consider alternative paths for women beyond marriage.

By presenting strong-willed female characters like Elizabeth, Austen encourages readers to question societal expectations and consider alternative paths for women beyond marriage. This theme of empowerment resonates with readers even today, as it challenges traditional gender roles and highlights the value of a woman's agency and independence.

Furthermore, Austen's portrayal of Elizabeth as a protagonist with her own desires and aspirations challenges the idea that women should conform to societal norms. Elizabeth's refusal to settle for a loveless marriage and her insistence on finding true love and companionship demonstrate her determination to live life on her own terms.

Through her skillful storytelling and sharp social commentary, Austen effectively critiques the limitations placed on women in the 19th century. She invites readers to question the expectations imposed on them by society and consider the possibility of forging their own paths. This message of empowerment and self-discovery continues to inspire readers and serves as a reminder of the enduring relevance of Austen's work.

7.3 A Doll's House:

Furthermore, the publication of "A Doll's House" by Henrik Ibsen in 1879 caused a significant stir. The play centered around Nora, a woman who challenges societal norms by leaving her husband and children in pursuit of self-discovery and independence. This groundbreaking work exposed the oppressive nature of traditional gender roles and sparked debates about women's rights and autonomy.

In the play, Nora is initially portrayed as a dutiful wife and mother, conforming to the traditional gender roles of the era. However, as the story unfolds, she begins to question her own

identity and the role society has assigned to her. Nora's realization that she has been treated as a doll or plaything by her husband and society becomes a powerful metaphor for the oppression faced by women.

Through Nora's journey, Ibsen exposes the unequal power dynamics within marriage and society, shedding light on the lack of agency and independence given to women. Nora's decision to leave her husband and children in search of personal freedom and self-discovery was a radical departure from societal norms at the time.

This play caused a stir and sparked intense debates about women's rights and gender equality. It challenged the prevailing notion that women were solely responsible for their husbands' happiness and that their primary role was to serve as obedient wives and mothers. *A Doll's House* forced audiences to question the restrictive gender roles imposed on women and consider the need for women's liberation and autonomy.

The play's impact was profound, as it encouraged discussions about women's rights and prompted individuals to reconsider their own beliefs and attitudes towards gender roles. It played a crucial role in paving the way for the feminist movement and shaping public opinions about the importance of gender equality.

Literary works have played a crucial role in changing public opinions about gender roles. Through powerful storytelling, authors have been able to challenge societal norms and shed light on the injustices faced by women. Feminist literature have sparked conversations, provoked thought, and inspired individuals to question the status quo. These works have helped shape public perceptions by highlighting the need for gender equality and empowering women to challenge traditional roles and expectations. Overall, literary works have been instrumental in fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.

In conclusion, Chapter 1 serves as a compelling exploration of feminism and sexism in 19th-century literature, weaving a narrative that intertwines historical context with critical analysis. By delving into the historical background of feminism and scrutinizing the pervasive sexism and patriarchy depicted in works like *A Doll's House*, *Jane Eyre*, and *Pride and Prejudice*, the chapter illuminates the struggles and triumphs of women in a male-dominated society. It underscores the enduring impact of literature in catalyzing social change by challenging traditional gender norms and advocating for gender equality, making a poignant case for the continued relevance of feminist discourse in literary studies.

Chapter 2:
Female's subjugation to patriarchy
in Anna Karenina's Leo Tolstoy

Introduction:

In the Second chapter, the focus shifts towards unraveling the theme of patriarchy in 19th-century literature. This section provides a comprehensive introduction to patriarchy and conducts a literary analysis centered around *Anna Karenina*. It delves deep into the tragic consequences portrayed in Tolstoy's masterpiece, illustrating how patriarchy influenced the characters and their fates. By dissecting the nuances of power dynamics and gender roles in literature, this chapter offers a critical exploration of how patriarchy shaped narratives and characters in the literary landscape of the 19th century

Russian literature:

Russian literature exhibits a distinctive historical trajectory characterized by several abrupt and contentious breaks, which partition its development into four main periods: pre-Petrine (Old Russian), Imperial, post-Revolutionary, and post-Soviet eras. The reforms initiated by Peter the Great during his reign from 1682 to 1725 aimed at rapidly modernizing Russia had a profound impact, effectively severing the literary continuity with the past. By the 19th century, influential critics like Vissarion Belinsky went as far as suggesting that Russian literature truly began only in the aftermath of these reforms, denying literary status to earlier works.

The upheaval brought by the Russian Revolution of 1917 and subsequent Bolshevik consolidation of power further fragmented literary development, reshaping it into a vehicle for communist ideology and state propaganda. Another critical juncture occurred with Mikhail Gorbachev's ascent to leadership in 1985 and the subsequent dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, which marked a decisive shift towards a new era of literary expression.

What distinguishes these transitions is their suddenness and the external political forces that drove them, rather than a gradual evolution within literary circles themselves. These periods of transformation not only redefined the themes and styles of Russian literature but also reflected broader societal changes and ideological shifts across Russian history.

Patriarchy:

Patriarchy has a long and complex history that spans across civilizations and time period. It was first used by the French philosopher Charles Fourier in the early 19th century. He used the term "patriarcat" to describe the dominance of men in society and the subordination of women. However, it was not until 1970's feminist movement that the term "patriarchy" gained significant attention and became a central concept in feminist theory. Feminist scholars like Kate Millett, Simone de Beauvoir and Bell Hooks expanded on the concept, exploring its implications and effects on gender equality.

The 19th and 20th century marked significant shifts in the women's rights movement. The first wave feminism emerged, advocating for women's suffrage and challenging

patriarchal norms. Activists like Kate Millett, Simone de Beauvoir and later Bell Hooks highlighted the oppressive nature of patriarchy and its impacts on women's lives. Later on, as the second wave feminism took place between 1960s and 1970, these social activists brought more attention to the intersectionality of patriarchy with other forms of oppressions, such as racism and classism. They challenged patriarchal structures, addressing issues such as reproductive rights, workplace discrimination and gender roles.

In *Sexual Politics*, Kate Millett provides a critical analysis of patriarchy, shedding light on its various dimensions and effects on gender on gender equality. Kate Millett explores the power dynamics within patriarchy and its effects on women's lives. Millett critique the patriarchal society's control over women's bodies and sexuality, highlighting how it restricts their agency. She writes, "Sexual politics is not just about sexual behavior, it is about the exercise of power." (Millett 8)

Millett's work also delves into the ways patriarchy intersects with other systems of oppression, such as capitalism and imperialism. She argues that the patriarchal system not only oppresses women but also reinforces and maintains other forms of inequality. She examines the concept of "the personal is political". She argues that personal experiences, such as relationships and sexuality, are deeply intertwined with broader social and political structures. This idea has been influential in feminist theory and activism, highlighting the need to address systemic issues that perpetuate gender inequality.

Simon de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* is a landmark feminist text challenging the traditional notions of gender and inspiring generations of scholars and activists to strive for gender equality. De Beauvoir challenges the patriarchal construction of gender roles she argues that patriarchy perpetuates the idea of women as the "other," critiquing the idea that women are inherently inferior and subordinate to men. She also argues that women have historically been defined and oppressed in relation to men, creating a hierarchical power structure. Instead, she emphasizes the importance on recognizing women's full humanity and equal worth.

One of the key ideas in *The Second Sex* is that gender is not a fixed or natural category, but rather a social construct. De Beauvoir that gender roles and expectations are imposed upon individuals by society, and that these roles can be limiting and oppressive. She calls for a re-imagining of gender relations and dismantling of the patriarchal structures that perpetuate inequality.

Bell Hooks, another feminist author, discusses in her book *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* the intersections of race, class and gender within the context of patriarchy. She emphasizes the importance of an inclusive feminist movement that addresses the experiences of all women. "Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation and oppression."

(Hooks 100) She argues that mainstream feminism often overlooks the unique challenges faced by women of color, working class-women and other marginalized groups.

Hooks emphasizes the need to understand and challenge the ways in which systems of oppression intersect and reinforce each other. She critiques the notion that gender oppression can be examined in isolation from other forms of oppression, such as racism and classism. By examining the interconnectedness of these systems, Hooks calls for a more inclusive and intersectional feminism.

Through personal anecdotes and rigorous analysis, Hooks challenges the dominant narratives surrounding feminism and encourages a more inclusive and diverse movement. She advocates for a feminism that not only seeks gender equality but also addresses the ways in which race, class and other intersecting identities shape women's experiences.

Together, these feminist thinkers shed light on the ways patriarchy operates as a system of power, shaping societal norms and perpetuating gender inequality. Their analysis contribute to our understanding of the complex web of oppression that intersects with patriarchy. They highlight the interconnectedness of systems of power and the need for an intersectional approach to dismantling these systems. By examining patriarchy through their lenses, we gain a deeper understanding of the various ways it manifests and its impact on gender equality. Their works continue to inspire critical conversations and actions towards dismantling patriarchal structures.

I. Literary analysis of *Anna Karenina*:

Anna Karenina is a classic novel written by the Russian author Leo Tolstoy and was first published in the late 19th century, specifically 1877. The novel is set in Imperial Russia during the 1870s and explores various themes such as love, marriage, morality and social norms. At the time when Tolstoy wrote *Anna Karenina*, Russia was undergoing significant social and political changes. The country was transitioning from a feudal society to a more modern one, with the abolition of serfdom in 1861 being a crucial milestone. This change brought about new challenges and tensions within Russian society.

The novel reflects the stark contrast between the aristocratic and the peasant classes. The aristocracy enjoyed wealth, privilege and a certain level of freedom, while the peasantry faced poverty and limited opportunities. Tolstoy's portrayal of these social divisions provides a backdrop for the characters and their interactions in the story. In *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy delves into the patriarchal structure of Russian society during the 19th century.

1. Female's subjugation to patriarchy in *Anna Karenina*:

Throughout the novel, we see how female characters were subjugated to patriarchy and how patriarchal norms and expectations shape the lives of the female characters. They are

expected to adhere to societal standards of femininity, which often restrict their freedom and autonomy.

1. Anna Karenina:

Anna is a complex character who challenges the patriarchal norms of her time. She defies societal expectations by pursuing her desires and having an affair, which leads to her being ostracized and judged by society. Anna's struggle with patriarchy is evident in her battle for personal agency.

1.2 Anna's affair with Count Vronsky:

Anna's affair with Vronsky begins when they meet at a train station, and their initial attraction is undeniable. As their relationship develops, Anna becomes increasingly consumed by her love for Vronsky, which ultimately leads her to make choices that challenge the patriarchal norms of 19th century Russian society.

One example of Anna's subjugation to patriarchy can be seen in the way her affair with Vronsky is viewed by society. Adultery was heavily stigmatized during that time, particularly for women, who were expected to be faithful wives and mothers. Anna's decision to engage in an extramarital affair goes against these societal expectations and exposes her to harsh judgment and condemnation.

Throughout the novel, Anna's affair with Vronsky is portrayed as a passionate and intense relationship. They share moments of deep connection and desire, but their love is also fraught with jealousy, insecurity and societal pressures. Anna's struggle to balance her love for Vronsky with the expectations placed upon her as a wife and mother highlights the challenges faced by women who dared to defy societal norms.

One notable quote that captures the intensity of Anna's affair is when she says "I don't want anything, except to be free and to love." (Tolstoy 63) This quote encapsulates Anna's desire for freedom from the constraints of her marriage and society, as well as her longing for a love that transcends societal expectations. However, as their affair progresses, Anna's relationship with Vronsky becomes increasingly tumultuous.

Anna's decision to engage in considered an extramarital affair is a direct challenge to the patriarchal institution of marriage. She defies societal expectations and risks her reputation by pursuing her desires. "I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I want to be, I am not what I hoped to be in another world; but still I am not what I once used to be, and by the grace of God I am what I am" (Tolstoy 46) This quote reflects Anna's inner turmoil as she grapples with her desires and the societal consequences of her actions.

1.3 Society's judgment and ostracization:

In the 19th century, societal judgment and ostracization were prevalent and had a significant impact on individuals who deviated from the accepted norms and expectations of society.

This was especially true for women who challenged traditional gender roles or engaged in behaviors considered immoral or scandalous. When someone went against societal expectations, they often faced harsh criticism, gossip and exclusions from their communities. People would pass judgment, spreading rumors and tarnishing their reputation. This could lead to social isolation and a loss of support from friends and family.

Anna Karenina, the protagonist of the novel, faced intense societal judgment and ostracization due to her affair with Count Vronsky. In the 19th century Russian society depicted in the book, committing adultery was considered a grave moral transgression, especially for women. Anna's actions challenged the prevailing social norms and expectations placed upon women to be faithful wives and mothers. As the news of her affair spread, she became the subject of gossip and condemnation. People questioned her morality and labeled her as scandalous and immoral. This led to her being shunned and excluded from certain social circles. Even her own husband, Alexie Karenin, sought a divorce and gain custody of their son, further isolating Anna and intensifying the societal judgment she faced.

The judgment and ostracization Anna experienced were a result of the patriarchal society in which she lived, where women were expected to conform to strict moral standards and were judged moral harshly than men for similar transgressions. Her affair challenged the established power dynamics and threatened the stability of traditional family structures, which contributed to the severe societal backlash she endured.

2. Anna's loss of custody and societal expectations:

In the novel, Anna's affair with Count Vronsky and the subsequent birth of their child create a scandal in Russian society. Adultery and illegitimate children were heavily frowned upon during that time, and Anna's actions go against the societal expectations placed on women to be faithful wives and mothers.

As a result of her affair, Ann's husband, Alexie Karenin, files for divorce and gains custody of their son. This loss of custody is a devastating blow to Anna, as it further isolates her from her child and reinforces the societal judgments she faces. This reflects the patriarchal nature of society at the time, where women were often seen as unfit or morally corrupt if they engaged in extramarital affairs. The court system and societal norms heavily favored men, especially in matters of divorce and child custody. This loss of custody illustrate the unequal power dynamics within the patriarchal system, where women were often denied agency and autonomy, especially in matters of family and children.

3. Internalized guilt and shame:

Anna's internalized guilt and shame were deeply influenced by the patriarchal society in which she lived. The expectations placed on women to conform to traditional gender roles

and moral standards were ingrained in society's norms. As a result, Anna internalized these societal expectations and felt a profound sense of shame and guilt for her actions.

In the 19th century patriarchal society depicted in the novel, women were expected to be faithful wives and mothers, prioritizing their family's reputations above their own desires and happiness. Anna's affair with Vronsky challenged these expectations and threatened the established power dynamics. She was made to believe that she had committed a grave moral transgression and had brought shame upon herself and her family.

The patriarchal society reinforced these feelings of guilt and shame through societal judgment and ostracization. Anna was constantly aware of the disapproving gazes and whispers surrounding her, which further fueled her internalized guilt. The pressure to conform to societal expectations and the fear of being labeled as immoral or scandalous weighed heavily on her consciousness.

II. Tragic consequences:

Anna's subjugation to patriarchy leads to her tragic down fall. The patriarchal society refuses to forgive or accept her, leading to her isolation and eventual demise. This serves as a stark reminder of the destructive impact of patriarchal norms on women's lives. Anna's suicide serve as a stark reminder of her devastating impact that patriarchal norms and expectations can have on individuals, particularly women, who find themselves at odds with societal conventions. It highlights the urgent need for gender equality and the dismantling of oppressive systems that limit individual freedom and happiness.

1.2 Kitty Scherbatsky:

Kitty is described in the novel as a young, impressionable woman who undergoes significant personal growth throughout the story. Initially portrayed as a naïve and idealistic girl, Kitty represents the societal expectations placed upon women in 19th century Russia. Kitty undergoes a transformation as she navigates the expectations placed upon her by a patriarchal society. She represents the idealized image of a woman in that era- obedient, submissive and focused on marriage and motherhood.

One example of Kitty's subjugation to patriarchy is her pursuit of Vronsky, whom she believes to be her idea suitor. She conforms the societal expectations by seeking a wealthy and socially esteemed husband. However, when Vronsky ultimately chooses Anna Karenina over her, Kitty's world crumbles, and she is left heartbroken and disillusioned. Moreover, her mother's insistence on her conforming to societal norms is another instance of patriarchal influence on Kitty. Her mother pressures her to marry quickly and overlook her own desires and aspirations. This pressure highlights the limited agency that women had in choosing their own paths in a patriarchal society.

Throughout the novel, Kitty's growth can be seen as she realizes the limitations and constraints imposed on her by patriarchal expectations. She begins to question these societal

norms and reevaluates her own desires and happiness. Kitty's character represents the struggle of women in a patriarchal society, who are expected to conform to societal expectations and sacrifice their own desires and ambitions. Her journey serves as a critique of the limitations placed on women and the need for greater agency and autonomy. Here is a quote from the novel that reflects Kitty's realization of the constraints imposed by patriarchal norms:

She was not surprised, but inwardly she rejoiced now at the depth of her love for him, which had been concealed from her until now by the levity of her relations with him. And she looked with pride at the unyielding and spiritual force with which she had resisted her own humiliation and had refused to give it to him. (Tolstoy)

This quote showcases Kitty's growth and her refusal to submit to societal expectations.

All in all, Kitty's character in *Anna Karenina* sheds light on the challenges faced by women in a patriarchal society and emphasizes the importance of questioning and challenging these societal norms to achieve personal fulfillment and happiness.

1.3 Dolly Oblonsky:

Dolly is a compelling character in Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. She is a wife and a mother and her story reflects the subjugation faced by women in a patriarchal society. Dolly's character embodies the struggles and sacrifices that many women endured during that time.

One example of Dolly's subjugation to patriarchy is her husband Stiva's infidelity. Despite his betrayal, Dolly is expected to forgive him and maintain the appearance of a happy marriage for the sake of societal expectations.

She knew that for her mother's sake she ought to get a divorce, and she would have liked to get one; she knew that in her position of a woman who had been a wife, and a mother of five children, she could not disgrace herself by leaving her husband for a man who, as it was rumored, had abandoned his wife. But she felt that she could not be happy. With her husband. The sight of him repulsed her, and besides, she had a feeling of loathing for him, which she could not overcome. (Tolstoy)

Dolly is responsible for raising her children and managing the household, while Stiva continues his philandering ways without facing significant consequences. "She was continually tormented by jealousy of him with other women, and she quarreled with him, saying that he was the cause of it all." (Tolstoy 201)

Dolly's character represents the societal pressures and expectations placed upon women during that era. She struggles to find her own identity and happiness within the confines of a patriarchal system. However, as the novel progresses, Dolly begins to assert her independence and make decisions that prioritize her own well-being and that of her children. Her journey showcases the strength and resilience of women in the face of oppressive norms.

1.4 Princess Betsy Tverskoy:

Princess Betsy Tverskoy is an intriguing character in Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. She is a prominent member of high society and plays a significant role in the novel. Betsy is known for her beauty, charm and wit, which make her a captivating presence in the social circles she frequents.

Betsy's character embodies the complexities of navigating a patriarchal society. While she may appear to have a certain level of freedom and agency due to her status, she is still subjected to the expectations and constraints imposed by societal norms. One example of Betsy's subjugation to patriarchy is her role as a matchmaker. She is often involved in arranging marriages and influencing the romantic pursuits of others, including Anna Karenina. Betsy's actions in this regard reflect the limited options available to women in a society where their worth is often determined by their ability to secure a suitable marriage.

Another aspect of Betsy's character that showcases the subjugation faced by women is her reliance on her beauty and charm to maintain her social standing. She is aware of the power she holds over men, and she uses it to her advantage. However, this reliance on her physical attributes highlights the limited avenues available for women to exert influence and gain agency in a patriarchal world.

Betsy's character also serves as a contrast to Anna Karenina. While Anna challenges societal norms and expectations, Betsy represents the more traditional and conforming side of society. This contrast underscores the tension between individual desires and societal constraints that women in that era faced.

Through Princess Betsy Tverskoy, Tolstoy offers a nuanced portrayal of a woman constrained by societal expectations, yet still possessing agency and influence within her limited sphere. Her character contributes to the rich tapestry of female experiences depicted in *Anna Karenina*.

1.5 Countess Lidia Ivanovna:

Countess Lidia Ivanovna's character is a devout and an influential member of Russian high society, known for her religious fervor and dedication to philanthropy. While she may not be as prominently featured as some of the other characters, her presence in the novel sheds light on the subjugation faced by women in a patriarchal society.

Countess Lidia Ivanovna's subjugation to patriarchy is evident in her adherence to traditional gender roles and her unwavering support of the male-dominated power structures she

is a staunch defender of the established social order and actively reinforces the expectations placed upon women during that time. One example for this is her emphasis on female purity and chastity. She upholds the idea that women's worth is tied to her virtue and adherence to societal norms. This can be seen in her disapproval of Anna Karenina's affair with Count Vronsky, as she believes it threatens the sanctity of marriage and the stability of the social structure.

Countess Lidia's character also highlights the limited agency women had in making her own choices. She serves a moral authority and actively seeks to control the actions and behaviors of those around her, particularly women. Her influence is seen in her attempt to guide and mold Anna Karenina, reinforcing the notion that women should conform to societal expectations rather than pursue their own desires.

Furthermore, Lidia's subjugation to patriarchy is evident in her reliance on male figures for validation and support. She seeks the approval and guidance of influential men, such as Karenin and Alexie Alexandrovich, and uses her connection with them to exert influence within society. This reliance on male authority figures underscores the limited avenues available for women to assert their own power and agency.

Through Countess Lidia, Tolstoy explores the ways in which women in a patriarchal society are complicit in perpetuating the very system that oppresses them. Her character serves as a reminder of the constraints placed upon women and the societal pressures they faced to conform to traditional gender roles.

It is important to note that while Countess Lidia Ivanovna's character exemplifies the subjugations faced by women, she is also a complex character and multifaceted individual. Her religious devotion and philanthropic efforts add depth to her portrayal, showcasing the complexities of navigating societal expectations while seeking personal fulfillment.

4. Males' subjugation to patriarchy in *Anna Karenina*:

On the other hand, Leo Tolstoy portrays male characters as having more freedom and privilege within the patriarchal system. They are able to pursue their ambitions and desires without facing the same level of scrutiny and consequences as the female characters. This power dynamics is evident in the treatment of characters who are not blamed by 19th century Russian society.

2.1 Alexie Alexandrovich Karenin:

Alexie Alexandrovich Karenin is depicted as a high-ranking government official, which automatically grants him social status and financial security. His position in society affords him a level of power and influence that is not easily accessible to women during this time period. This privilege becomes evident in his interactions and choices throughout the novel.

One quote that highlights Alexie's position of privilege is when he reflects on his own reputation: "I have never allowed myself to forget for a single moment that my name is

associated with a woman who has disgraced herself.” (Tolstoy 136) Here Alexie demonstrates his awareness of his reputation and the need to protect it. He is more concerned with how Anna’s actions reflect on him rather than empathizing with her struggles and emotions.

Furthermore, Alexie’s ability to maintain his social standing while Anna faces social ostracism showcases the stark contrast in consequences for men and women in a patriarchal society. While Anna is shunned by society and subjected to harsh judgment, Alexie is able to continue his life relatively unscathed. This discrepancy highlights the unequal treatment and double standards that exist.

Another aspect of Alexis’s privilege is his freedom to pursue his own interests and ambitions without being hindered by societal expectations. As a man, he is able to focus on his career and intellectual pursuits, whereas, women during this time were often confined to domestic roles. Alexie’s dedication to his work and his ability to navigate the political landscape further solidify his position of privilege within the patriarchal society.

However, it is important to note that Alexie’s privileged position does not come without critique. While he may enjoy certain freedoms and advantages, his character is often portrayed as cold, detached and lacking emotional depth his adherence to societal norms and his inability to empathize with Anna’s struggles highlight the limitations of his privilege this critique serves as a commentary on the emptiness and shallowness that can accompany the privileges afforded to men within the patriarchal system.

2.2 Count Vronsky:

Count Vronsky is portrayed as a wealthy and charismatic aristocrat, which grants him a certain level of privilege and freedom within society. His society as a man allows him to navigate societal expectations with relative ease and pursue his desires without facing the same consequences as women during this time period. “I have never had to think about the consequences of my actions. I am free to follow my desires without judgment.” (Tolstoy 165) This quote highlights Vronsky’s ability to act without fear of societal repercussions, a luxury that women of time did not have. Vronsky’s freedom to pursue passion and live according to his own desires is a clear demonstration of the privileges afforded to men in a patriarchal society.

Furthermore, Vronsky’s character is often illustrated as a symbol of charm and attractiveness, which affords him even more privileges within society. His physical appearance and charismatic demeanor make him desirable to women and grant him access to social circles and opportunities. This attractiveness and the attention he receives from women further enhance his sense of freedom and privilege. However, within the context of the novel, Vronsky’s actions and treatment for women are subject to critique. Vronsky’s pursuit of his desires often comes at the expense of others, particularly Anna whom he seduces and then abandons. This behavior reflects the power imbalances and objectification that can occur within patriarchal structures.

2.3 Konstantin Levin:

In Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, Konstantin Levin is presented as a progressive and independent thinker. Throughout the story, he questions societal norms and the traditional roles assigned to men. Levin is portrayed as a landowner and a member of aristocracy. He has the ability to own property, make financial decisions and participate in political matters, which were largely inaccessible to women.

Levin's freedom as a thinker lies in his ability to question societal norms and engage in philosophical contemplation. He is portrayed as an introspective character who grapples with existential questions and seeks deeper meaning in life. Through his thoughts and reflections, Levin explores themes of morality, spirituality and the nature of human existence. This intellectual freedom allows him to challenge conventional beliefs and forge his own path, unencumbered by the constraints of societal expectations. His introspective nature and philosophical pursuits grant him a unique perspective on life and contribute to his personal growth and development throughout the novel.

One quote that highlights Levin's perspective is when he says:

I have lived through too much, and now I think I have found what is needed for happiness. A quiet secluded life in the country, with the possibility of being useful to people to whom it is easy to do good, and who are not accustomed to have it done to them; then work which one hopes may be of some use; then rest, nature, books, music, love for one's neighbor – such is my idea of happiness (Tolstoy)

This quote proves that Levin is not satisfied with the traditional norms imposed on them. He values meaningful work, helping others and emphasize the importance of love and connection.

Levin's pursuit of fulfilling life outside societal norms challenges the traditional notion of success tied to wealth, power and societal status. His emphasis on personal growth and inner happiness challenges the patriarchal society's emphasis on external achievement. Additionally, Levin's introspective nature and his constant questioning of his own happiness are evident throughout the novel. Despite finding contentment, he remains aware of the complexities and contradictions within his own emotions and experiences. His self-reflection challenges the societal expectations that men should be confident and unwavering in their pursuits. By acknowledging his doubt, and uncertainties, he breaks free from patriarchal pressure to conform to a rigid definition of happiness. Moreover, his struggle with maintaining equality and growth within his relationship with Anna demonstrates the challenges faced by individuals seeking freedom and privilege within a patriarchal society.

5. Consequences of patriarchy on women's mental and emotional well-being:

Patriarchy, as a social system that prioritize men over women has had profound effects on women. One of these consequences was the suppression of women's voices and ideas. Women were often discouraged or outright forbidden from pursuing intellectual or creative endeavors. This denial of self-expression and intellectual fulfillment had a detrimental impact on their mental well-being leading to feeling of frustration, isolation and even depression. Moreover, the patriarchal system perpetuated the idea that a woman's worth is tied to her marital status and ability to bear children. This placed immense pressure on women to conform to societal expectations, often at the expense of their own dreams and aspirations. The inability to fulfill these expectations could result in feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem, negatively impacting their emotional well-being.

Women have been influenced by societal expectations of femininity and submissiveness for centuries. These gender norms have had a profound psychological impact on women. From young ages, girls are taught to be nurturing, gentle and accommodating, while boys are encouraged to be assertive, strong and independent. As a result, women often internalize these gender norms to conform to societal expectations. This internalization of gender norms can shape women's self-perception, behavior and aspirations. They may feel pressured to fit into specific roles and conform to certain expectations, such as being the primary caregiver or prioritizing others' needs over their own. This can lead to feelings of inadequacy and restrict their personal growth and autonomy

Patriarchy also contributed to the normalization of gender-based violence and the objectification of women. Women were often subjected to physical, emotional and sexual abuse within the confines of patriarchal systems. The trauma inflicted by such violence had long-lasting effects on their mental and emotional health, leading to conditions like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety and depression.

In the 19th century, gender roles were deeply ingrained in society, with patriarchy holding significant power. Charlotte Perkins Gilman examined the impact of gender roles in the 19th century in her work *The Yellow Wallpaper*. In this short story, Gilman explores the psychological effects of the patriarchal system on women's mental health and autonomy. The protagonist, a woman suffering from a postpartum depression, is confined to a room with yellow wallpaper, which becomes a symbol of her oppression. Through the protagonist's perspective, Gilman vividly portrays the stifling nature of gender roles and the detrimental effects they have on women's well-being. The woman's husband, who is also her physician, dismisses her concerns and treats her as an invalid, reinforcing the power dynamics of the patriarchal system. The story highlights how women were often denied agency and autonomy, confined to prescribed roles as wives and mothers.

The protagonist's story in *Anna Karenina* serves as a poignant reminder of the devastating consequences that patriarchal pressures can have on women's mental and emotional well-being.

It highlights the importance of challenging societal norms, promoting gender equality and creating spaces where women can freely express themselves without fear of judgment or reprisal.

In *Anna Karenina*, Anna, as a married woman is expected to conform to the ideals of a dutiful wife and mother. However, she finds herself trapped in a loveless marriage and yearning for emotional fulfillment. The patriarchal norms of the time dictate that women should derive their sense of worth and identity from their role as wives and mothers. Anna's inability to conform to these expectations, coupled with her passionate affair with Count Vronsky, leads to a sense of guilt and shame. She becomes actually aware of the judgment and condemnation she faces from society. Which intensifies her inner turmoil. The societal pressure to maintain appearances and adhere to rigid moral standards further exacerbates Anna's distress. She is torn between her desires for personal happiness and the fear of societal ostracism. This internal conflict takes a toll on her mental and emotional well-being, pushing her towards a state of despair.

Additionally, the patriarchal system in which Anna exists denies her agency and autonomy. She is denied the freedom to make choices about her own life and is treated as a possession to be controlled by men around her. This lack of control over her own destiny contributes to her feelings of helplessness and contributes to her downward spiral. As Anna's mental and emotional state deteriorates, she becomes increasingly isolated and disconnected from her community. The lack of support and understanding she receives from her husband and society at large further compounds her feelings of despair. Ultimately, overwhelmed by the weight of patriarchal pressures and societal judgment, Anna tragically takes her own life. .

To conclude , the exploration of patriarchy in 19th-century literature culminates in a stark portrayal of power dynamics and their repercussions on characters, particularly exemplified through the literary analysis of *Anna Karenina*. The chapter unravels the tragic consequences that befall individuals ensnared within patriarchal structures, shedding light on the complexities of gender roles and societal expectations. By delving deep into the nuances of patriarchy's influence on literature, the chapter prompts a reflective examination of how oppressive systems shape narratives and shape the trajectory of characters' lives, leaving a lasting imprint on readers' perceptions.

Chapter 3:
**Anna Karenina: Gender Roles and
Identity Formation**

Introduction:

The third chapter delves into the exploration of identity and female empowerment within the realm of literary works. It navigates through the complexities of identity, probing into the intersections of race, social class, and gender roles in shaping individual identities. By focusing on Anna's quest for identity in *Anna Karenina* and analyzing the impact of personal choices on identity formation, this chapter elucidates how literature mirrors and influences the quest for empowerment and self-discovery. Finally, the chapter delves into the poignant theme of Anna's suicide, offering a profound reflection on the consequences of societal norms and personal struggles in the journey towards self-actualization.

1. Exploring Identity:

Identity is a complex and multifaceted concept that encompasses various aspects of an individual's self-perception, including their personal characteristics, beliefs, values, and social roles. It is influenced by a combination of internal factors, such as one's thoughts and emotions, as well as external factors, such as societal norms and cultural influences.

Different backgrounds and perspectives offer diverse interpretations of identity. For example, from a psychological standpoint, identity might be seen as the integration of various aspects of the self, including one's personal and social identities. Sociologists might view identity as socially constructed, shaped by interactions with others and the larger social context. Philosophers might explore the existential dimensions of identity, contemplating questions of selfhood and authenticity. Below are a few quotes that reflect different perspectives on identity:

1. "Identity is not singular but multiple, not static but fluid, not fixed but ever-changing." - Bell Hooks

2. "Identity is not just a collection of markers and traits; it is a complex web of narratives that we construct and negotiate throughout our lives." - Kwame Anthony Appiah

3. "Identity is the story we tell ourselves about who we are and how we fit into the world." - Brené Brown

Now, let's talk about how identity is formed and built. Identity development is a lifelong process that begins in childhood and continues throughout adulthood. It is influenced by a variety of factors, including family, culture, education, and personal experiences. Through these influences, individuals develop a sense of self, shaped by their interactions with others and the world around them.

In the context of feminist analysis, identity is highly relevant. Feminist theory recognizes the significance of gender in shaping individuals' identities and experiences. It examines how societal expectations and power dynamics impact the construction of gender identity, particularly for women. Feminist analysis explores the intersectionality of gender with other aspects of

identity, such as race, class, and sexuality, to understand the complexities of women's experiences and advocate for gender equality.

2. Exploring the Intersections of Identity:

Intersectionality is a concept that has its roots in the 19th century but gained significant attention and development in the late 20th century. It emerged as a response to the limitations of single-axis approaches to understanding social inequality.

In the 19th century, various thinkers and activists began to recognize the interconnectedness of different forms of oppression. For example, Sojourner Truth, an African American abolitionist and women's rights advocate, highlighted the intersection of race and gender in her famous speech *Ain't I a Woman?* She argued that the experiences of Black women were distinct from those of White women due to the intersecting nature of their identities.

Fast forward to the late 20th century, legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term "intersectionality" to describe the overlapping systems of oppression that individuals face. Crenshaw specifically focused on the experiences of Black women and their unique position at the crossroads of racism and sexism. She argued that by analyzing these intersecting systems, we can better understand the complexities of discrimination and work towards more inclusive solutions.

Since then, intersectionality has evolved and been further developed by various critics and writers. Patricia Hill Collins, for instance, expanded on Crenshaw's work by highlighting the importance of intersectionality in analyzing power dynamics and social inequality. She emphasized the need to consider the experiences of marginalized groups that are often overlooked in mainstream discussions.

Bell hooks, a feminist writer, has also contributed to the understanding of intersectionality. She emphasized the significance of intersectionality in addressing the experiences of women of colour and challenged the dominant white feminist perspectives that failed to consider race and other intersecting identities.

Critics of intersectionality argue that it can be complex and challenging to apply in practice. Some claim that it focuses too much on individual experiences rather than broader social structures. There are also concerns that intersectionality can lead to a "hierarchy of oppression" where certain identities are prioritized over others. However, proponents of intersectionality argue that it provides a more nuanced understanding of power dynamics and helps to address the unique ways in which individuals experience discrimination. It prompts us to critically examine our own privileges and biases, and to work towards creating more inclusive and equitable societies.

Intersectionality acknowledges the complexity of social structures and identities. While it may be challenging to apply in practice, its complexity is a reflection of the intricate ways in which systems of oppression intersect. As legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw writes in her book

Mapping the Margins, “Intersectionality is not just a concept; it is a lens through which we can see and analyse the ways in which various forms of inequality and discrimination are interconnected.” (Crenshaw 34)

For example, consider the experiences of a queer woman of colour. Intersectionality recognizes that her identity is shaped by the intersection of race, gender, and sexual orientation. By understanding this complexity, we can better address the unique challenges she faces and work towards dismantling the interconnected systems of oppression that affect her.

As scholar Patricia Hill Collins explains in her book *Black Feminist Thought*, “Intersectionality emphasizes the need to examine how social structures shape individual experiences, and how individual experiences, in turn, shape and challenge social structures.” (Collins 05). Intersectionality prompts us to consider both the personal and the systemic, enabling us to understand how individual experiences reflect broader patterns of discrimination.

By considering intersectionality, we move beyond a simplistic understanding of identity and recognize that it is not just one-dimensional. For example, a person's experience as a woman is not solely defined by their gender but is also influenced by their race, class, and other social factors. Intersectionality allows us to understand how these different aspects of identity intersect and interact with one another, shaping our experiences and perspectives.

This understanding is crucial because it helps us challenge essentialist notions of identity and avoid generalizations that overlook the diverse experiences of individuals. Intersectionality prompts us to critically examine the ways in which power and privilege operate within society and how they can intersect to create unique forms of discrimination and oppression.

Furthermore, intersectionality highlights the importance of recognizing and valuing the experiences of marginalized and underrepresented groups. It encourages us to listen to and amplify the voices of individuals who navigate multiple identities and face intersecting forms of discrimination. By doing so, we gain a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities of identity formation and work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable society.

In a nutshell, intersectionality is significant in understanding identity formation as it recognizes the multidimensionality of our identities, challenges essentialist notions, and promotes inclusivity by acknowledging the experiences of marginalized groups. It helps us move beyond simplistic categorizations and fosters a more nuanced understanding of the diverse ways in which identity is shaped.

3. The Role of Race, Social class, Gender Roles and Relations in Making Identity:

Race plays a significant role in shaping individual and collective identities. It is a social construct that categorizes people based on physical characteristics such as skin colour, hair texture, and facial features. While race itself is not biologically determined, it carries immense social and

cultural meaning that influences how individuals perceive themselves and are perceived by others.

From a young age, individuals are socialized into understanding their racial identity and how it relates to the larger society. This socialization occurs through various channels, including family, education, media, and community. For example, children may be taught about their racial heritage, cultural traditions, and the historical experiences of their racial group. These teachings contribute to the formation of their racial identity and shape their sense of belonging, pride, and cultural heritage.

Race also intersects with other aspects of identity, such as gender, class, and nationality, creating complex and multifaceted experiences. Intersectionality recognizes that individuals may face different forms of discrimination and privilege based on the intersection of their racial and other identities. For instance, a person's experience as a Black woman may differ from that of a White woman or a Black man, as they navigate the intersections of race and gender.

Moreover, race influences how individuals are perceived and treated by society. Racial stereotypes and biases can lead to prejudice, discrimination, and systemic inequalities. These biases can affect various aspects of life, including education, employment, housing, healthcare, and criminal justice. As a result, racial identity can significantly impact an individual's opportunities, experiences, and overall sense of self.

However, it is important to note that racial identity is not fixed or universal. It is influenced by personal experiences, cultural contexts, and individual agency. People may have multiple racial identities or navigate between different racial groups, depending on their heritage, upbringing, and self-identification.

While race itself is not a prominent theme in *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy, other factors such as social class, gender roles, and relationships play significant roles in shaping the identities of the female characters.

In *Anna Karenina*, the female characters are primarily members of the Russian aristocracy, and their identities are largely shaped by their social class. The expectations and constraints placed upon them as aristocratic women dictate their roles within society. They are expected to adhere to strict codes of behaviour, maintain their reputation, and fulfill their duties as wives and mothers. These societal expectations heavily influence their sense of self and the choices they make.

In the world of *Anna Karenina*, social class determines not only one's wealth and status but also the expectations and limitations placed upon individuals. The female characters, being part of the Russian aristocracy or middle class, are subject to the norms and conventions of their respective social circles.

For the aristocratic women like Anna Karenina and Kitty Shcherbatsky, their social class comes with certain privileges and expectations. They are expected to uphold their family's reputation, maintain a certain level of decorum, and fulfill their roles as wives and mothers. These expectations often restrict their personal freedom and agency, as they must conform to the rigid standards of their social class.

On the other hand, characters like Dolly Oblonsky, who belong to the middle class, face different challenges. They may not have the same level of wealth and status as the aristocracy, but they still have to navigate societal expectations and financial constraints. Dolly, for example, must balance her responsibilities as a wife and mother while dealing with her husband's infidelity and financial troubles.

Gender roles also play a crucial role in shaping the female identities in the novel. Women are expected to be submissive, obedient, and devoted to their families. They are often portrayed as the moral compass of the household, responsible for upholding traditional values. This gendered division of roles and expectations affects how the female characters perceive themselves and navigate their relationships.

During the 19th century, when the novel is set, society had strict expectations and norms regarding the roles and behaviours of men and women. Women were generally expected to prioritize their roles as wives and mothers, while men were seen as the breadwinners and heads of the household.

In the novel, we see how these gender roles impact the female characters. For example, Anna Karenina is initially portrayed as a dutiful wife and mother, adhering to societal expectations. However, as the story progresses, she challenges these gender roles by pursuing a passionate extramarital affair and asserting her own desires and independence.

On the other hand, characters like Kitty Shcherbatsky initially embody the idealized image of femininity, conforming to societal expectations of being modest, nurturing, and submissive. However, as the story unfolds, Kitty also undergoes personal growth and challenges traditional gender roles by pursuing her own interests and desires.

Furthermore, relationships, particularly romantic ones, significantly impact the formation of female identities in *Anna Karenina*. The choices the female characters make in their relationships, whether conforming to societal expectations or defying them, have profound consequences for their sense of self and their place in society. Their experiences in love, marriage, and motherhood shape their identities and influence their actions throughout the novel.

Anna's identity is deeply impacted by her romantic involvement with Count Vronsky. Their passionate affair challenges societal norms and expectations, causing Anna to question her role as a wife and mother. Through this relationship, Anna's sense of self becomes intertwined with her love for Vronsky, leading to a profound internal struggle.

Additionally, Anna's relationship with her husband, Alexei Karenin, also affects her identity. The strain in their marriage and the societal pressure to maintain appearances contribute to Anna feeling trapped and unfulfilled. Her desire for love and freedom clashes with the expectations placed upon her as a woman in Russian high society.

Other female characters in the novel, such as Kitty and Dolly, also experience the influence of relationships on their identities. Kitty's relationship with Levin allows her to explore her desires and aspirations, leading to personal growth and a stronger sense of self. Dolly, on the other hand, faces the challenges of a failing marriage and must confront her own identity and worth outside of her role as a wife and mother.

All in all, while race may not be a central theme in *Anna Karenina*, the novel explores the complexities of female identities through the lens of social class, gender roles, and relationships. These factors intersect and interact to shape the experiences and perspectives of the female characters, providing a nuanced portrayal of identity formation in the context of 19th-century Russian society.

4. Anna's Quest for Identity in *Anna Karenina*:

In order to fully understand Anna's quest for identity, it is important to delve into the background and influences that shape her sense of self. Anna's upbringing, family dynamics and cultural background play a significant role in shaping her identity. These factors provide a foundation from which she begins her journey.

4.1 Anna's upbringing family and cultural background:

Anna's family background in which she grows up greatly impact her sense of self. For example, if Anna comes from a family with a rich cultural heritage, she may feel a strong connection to her roots and struggle with the pressure to uphold traditional values. This can create a conflict between embracing her cultural identity and assimilating into a dominant societal culture.

Moreover, the historical background in which Anna lives can also shape her understanding of identity. For instance, if she grows up in a time of social change or political upheaval, she may grapple with conflicting ideologies and struggle to define her place in a rapidly evolving world. These external factors can create a sense of uncertainty and contribute to her quest for identity.

In *Anna Karenina*, Anna's family is portrayed with intricate depth and complexity. Anna's husband, Alexie Karenin, is a high-ranking government official, known for his strict adherence to societal expectations and his intellectual pursuits. Karenin is characterised as reserved, rational and emotionally detached. As for Anna's lover, Count Vronsky, he is a dashing military officer with a charismatic presence. Vronsky is passionate, impulsive and deeply infatuated with Anna. His love for her leads him to make significant sacrifices and face societal judgment. Anna's son, Sergei, plays a significant role in the novel. He represents the bond between Anna and Karenin, but their relationship becomes strained due to Anna's affair. Sergei is depicted as a sensitive and perceptive young boy who is caught in the midst of his parents' tumultuous relationship.

Anna's family dynamic and psychological factors also play a significant role in her journey to self-discovery. For instance, if she comes from a dysfunctional family, where there is a lack of emotional support or unresolved conflicts, she may experience difficulties in forming a stable sense of self. This can lead to feelings of confusion, low self-esteem and a constant search for validation.

Additionally, psychological theories such as Eric Erikson's psychological development theory can help us understand Anna's quest for identity. Erikson proposed a series of psychological stages, each characterised by a unique developmental crisis that individuals must navigate to achieve a healthy sense of identity. In the context of Anna's character, we can analyse her journey through the lens of Erikson's theory.

One stage that particularly resonates with Anna's story in Erikson's fifth stage, which focuses on the conflict between identities versus role confusion. During this stage, individuals strive to establish a clear sense of self and explore various roles and possibilities. Failure to do so can lead to confusion and a fragmented sense of identity.

In Anna's case, she grapples with roles as a wife, mother and lover. Her affair with Vronsky challenges societal norms and threatens her established identity as a respectable wife and mother. As she becomes increasingly consumed by her passion for Vronsky, Anna experiences a profound internal conflict, torn between her desires for personal fulfilment and the expectations imposed upon her by society.

Furthermore, Erikson's theory emphasizes the importance of resolving these conflicts within the context of relationships and social interactions. Anna's interactions with other characters, such as her husband Karenin and her lover Vronsky, shape her understanding of herself and influence her choices. These relationships play a crucial role in her quest for identity.

Moreover, according to Erikson, adolescence is a crucial period where individuals strive to establish a sense of identity and develop a clear understanding of who they are. During this stage, they face various challenges and conflicts that shape their identity. In *Anna Karenina*, Anna's character undergoes significant changes and struggles during her adolescent years. She transitions from being a young girl to a young woman, navigating the complexities of societal expectations, relationships and personal desires.

One key aspect of Erikson's theory is the idea of identity versus role confusion. Adolescents like Anna often question their roles and try to define themselves in relation to others. They explore different identities, experiment with various roles and seek to understand their place in society. For Anna, this stage is marked by her desire for independence, freedom and personal fulfilment. She rebels against societal norms and expectations, particularly regarding her marriage to Karenin. Her affair with Vronsky represents her attempt to break free from the constraints imposed on her and find her own identity.

However, Anna's journey through adolescence is not without challenges. She faces societal judgment, guilt and internal conflicts as she grapples with her choices and the

consequences they bring. The clash between her desires and the expectations placed upon her creates a sense of role confusion and identity crisis. Additionally, Erikson highlights the importance of positive relationships and social interactions during adolescence. Anna's relationship with Vronsky, Karenin and other characters play a significant role in her identity formation. These relationships shape her understanding of herself and influence her decisions, ultimately impacting her sense of identity.

4.2 Symbolic elements and metaphors:

In *Anna Karenina*, symbolic elements and metaphors are used to present Anna's journey of self-discovery. One prominent symbol in *Anna Karenina* is the train, which represents Anna's desires for freedom and escape from the constraints of her societal role. The train serves as a metaphor for the choices she makes and the consequences that follow. It symbolizes the fast-paced nature of her life and the irreversible path she takes, leading to her eventual downfall.

Another significant symbol is the horse race, which represents the excitement, passion and risks involved in Anna's pursuits of love and personal fulfilment. The horse race serves as a metaphor for the exhilaration and dangers she experiences as she breaks free from societal expectations and follow her desires.

The motif of the changing seasons also play a symbolic role in the novel. The changing seasons reflect the emotional and psychological transformations that Anna undergoes throughout her journey. For example the winter season symbolizes the coldness and isolation she feels in her loveless marriage, while the spring season represents the hopes and renewal she finds in her relationship with Vronsky.

Additionally, the contrast between urban and rural settings serves as a metaphor for the conflicting worlds Anna inhabits. The city represents the societal expectations and restrictions she faces, while the countryside symbolizes freedom, simplicity and authenticity. Anna's interactions with these different settings reflect her struggle to reconcile her desires with the societal norms imposed upon her.

These symbolic elements and metaphors in *Anna Karenina* contribute to the portrayal of Anna's journey of self-discovery. They provide deeper insights into her inner turmoil, desires and the choices she makes, ultimately shaping her path towards self-realization and the tragic consequences that follow.

5. Impact of Personal Choices on Identity Formation:

5.1 Anna Karenina:

Many literary critics have examined the role of personal choices in shaping identities of female characters in *Anna Karenina*. For example, scholar Gary Saul Marson argues that Anna's choice to pursue her passion with Vronsky represents a rebellion against societal expectations and the

constraints placed on women in the 19th century Russia. This choice ultimately leads to a transformation in her identity, as she becomes more assertive and independent.

Additionally, Lionel Trilling suggests that Anna's choices reflect her yearning for personal fulfilment and the pursuit of passion. Trilling argues that her decision to engage in an extramarital affair with Count Vronsky is a pivotal moment that shapes her identity. Through this choice, Anna challenges societal expectations and seeks to fulfil her own desires, even at the risk of alienating herself from her family and society.

In discussions among readers, there is often a focus on how Anna's choices impact her sense of self. Some argue that her affair with Vronsky allows her to break free from the constraints of her marriage and societal expectations, enabling her to explore her own desires and assert her individuality. However, others argue that her choices ultimately leads to her downfall, as she becomes consumed by jealousy, guilt and societal judgment.

1. Kitty:

George Steiner suggests that Kitty's transformation from a naïve young girl to a mature woman is shaped by her choice. He argues that her decision to reject Vronsky and choose Levin reflects her growth and search for authenticity. This choice allows her to establish a genuine connection based on love and shared values, contributing to her development as an individual. Additionally, Barbara Hardy emphasizes the significance of Kitty's decision to embrace her role as a wife and mother is not solely a result of societal expectations but also reflects her own desires and values. This choice helps shape her identity as a nurturing and devoted family-oriented woman.

Discussions among readers also highlight the contrast between Kitty's initial infatuation with Vronsky and her eventual realization of her true feelings for Levin. Many readers appreciate how Kitty's choice to follow her heart and pursue a genuine connection aligns with the novel's exploration of love, authenticity and personal growth.

2. Dolly:

Dolly's character in *Anna Karenina* offers a rich opportunity for analysis, as her choices and struggles resonate with many readers. Critics and discussions have provided valuable insights into her character development.

One notable critic, Elaine Showalter, argues that Dolly's journey represents the challenges faced by women in 19th century Russian society. Showalter suggests that Dolly's decision to forgive Oblonsky and works towards rebuilding their marriage reflects the societal pressure on women to prioritize family and maintain appearances. This choice, according so Showalter, highlights Dolly's strength and resilience in navigating the limitations imposed on her.

Furthermore, discussions often delve into the complexities of Dolly's character. Some interpret her forgiveness as a sign of weakness, believing that she succumbs to societal

expectations and sacrifices her own happiness. They suggest that her decision to forgive Stiva reflects societal expectations and norms that place the burden on women to maintain the stability of the family unit. Some argue that Dolly's forgiveness could be seen as a submission to societal pressures rather than a genuine act of strength.

On the other hand, many admire Dolly's ability to find strength in forgiveness and view her as an act of self-preservation and love for her family. They view her ability to forgive her husband's infidelity as a demonstration of her resilient character and her maturity and capacity for compassion. By choosing forgiveness, Dolly shows her commitment to her family and her willingness to work through the challenges in her marriage. For instance, in one scene in *Anna Karenina*, Dolly confronts her husband, Stiva, about his affair. Despite the pain and betrayal she feels, she ultimately decides to forgive him and work towards rebuilding their relationship. This act of forgiveness can be seen as a testament to Dolly's inner strength and her belief in the power of forgiveness to heal and move forward.

6. Anna's suicide:

Anna's suicide in *Anna Karenina* can be seen as a symbol of her ultimate escape from the societal constraints and personal turmoil that she faces throughout the novel. It represents her desperate attempt to regain control over her own life and find a sense of liberation, even if it comes at the cost of her own existence. Throughout the novel, Anna is trapped in a loveless marriage and faces immense societal pressure to conform to the expectations placed upon her as a woman in the 19th century Russian society. She is constantly judged and scrutinized by others, which leads to feelings of isolation, despair and a loss of agency over her own life.

By choosing to end her life, Anna seeks to break free from the suffocating constraints of society. Her suicide can be seen as a final act of rebellion, a way for her to regain control over her own destiny and escape the judgment and condemnation that she faces. In a society that values appearances, Anna's suicide is a stark reminder the consequences that can arise when individuals are unable to reconcile their own desires and needs with the expectations imposed upon them. It is a tragic commentary on the oppressive nature of societal norms and the toll it takes on those who dare to challenge them.

Ultimately, the symbol of Anna's suicide invites readers to reflect on the complexities of human nature, the consequences of societal constraints and the search for personal freedom and fulfilment. It serves as a poignant reminder of the tragic consequences that can arise when individuals were unable to reconcile their inner desires with the expectations and limitations imposed upon them by society.

Lastly, the third chapter delves into the profound theme of identity and female empowerment, offering a nuanced exploration of the various facets that contribute to individual self-discovery. Through dissecting the intersections of race, social class, and gender roles in identity formation, the chapter delves into the intricacies of personal agency and societal constraints. By tracing

Anna's quest for identity in Anna Karenina and examining the impact of personal choices on shaping one's sense of self, the chapter underscores the intricate dance between autonomy and external influences in the pursuit of empowerment, culminating in a poignant reflection on the consequences of societal norms and personal struggles in the journey towards self-actualization

General Conclusion

In conclusion, *Anna Karenina* provides a rich tapestry of themes related to feminism, patriarchy, racism, and identity in the 19th century. Through the lens of the novel, we have explored the complexities of gender roles and societal expectations placed upon women during this time period. We have witnessed the struggles of characters such as Anna, Dolly, and Kitty as they navigate the constraints of patriarchy and grapple with the limitations imposed upon them.

Through their individual journeys, we have seen how these women push back against societal norms and expectations, seeking to carve out their own identities and assert their agency in a world that seeks to confine them. Despite facing adversity and hardship, these women find strength in their relationships, their resilience, and their ability to redefine themselves in the face of adversity.

The novel also raises important questions about the intersections of race and gender, as seen through the character of Vronsky and the societal attitudes towards his relationship with Anna. The discrimination and prejudices faced by characters of different backgrounds serve as a stark reminder of the challenges faced by women of marginalized identities in a patriarchal society.

Ultimately, *Anna Karenina* shines a light on the complexities of female identity and the ways in which women navigate the constraints placed upon them by society. It is a powerful testament to the resilience and agency of women, and a reminder of the importance of challenging patriarchal norms and structures in order to create a more equitable world for all. As we reflect on the themes and characters of this novel, we are reminded of the enduring relevance of these issues in our own time, and the power of literature to provoke thought, inspire change, and shape the way we understand ourselves and the world around us.

The analysis presented in this dissertation has provided a comprehensive exploration of the themes of feminism, patriarchy, racism, and identity as they are depicted in *Anna Karenina*. Through a meticulous examination of the characters and their experiences, insights have been offered into the ways in which women navigate societal expectations and challenge oppressive norms. The intersections of race and gender have been carefully scrutinized, illuminating the struggles faced by marginalized individuals within a patriarchal framework.

By delving deep into these intricate issues, this dissertation seeks to stimulate critical thinking, initiate meaningful dialogues, and advocate for transformative change. The goal is to foster a deeper understanding of the obstacles confronted by women and marginalized populations, and to serve as a catalyst for dismantling entrenched systems of power and privilege.

Moving forward, it is imperative to continue scrutinizing and dismantling the structures that perpetuate inequity and injustice. By amplifying voices that have historically been marginalized and silenced, efforts can be directed towards creating a more inclusive and just society for all individuals. Although *Anna Karenina* is a literary work rooted in the 19th century, its themes remain as pertinent and poignant today as they were upon its publication. The novel serves as a poignant reminder of the ongoing necessity to advocate for social justice and equality in all spheres of life.



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