

Rhetorical analysis of virginia woolf's essay



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In the anecdote by Virginia Woolf, the author reflects on men's oppression affecting women's intellectual pursuit in the twentieth century. Employing metaphors and simile, she exemplifies women succumbing to restrictions and boundaries placed upon them in their education. Woolf utilizes metaphors describing her thoughts and manifests what men had done to those thoughts. On a bank with willows in fine October weather, she compares her contemplation to "the sort of fish that a good fisherman puts back into the water.

Like a fish being caught, reflections are processed the same way letting "its line down into the stream" and "the cautious hauling of it in, and the careful laying of it out." However, if the conglomeration of an idea is insignificant, that same idea is "put back into the water so that it may grow fatter and be one day worth cooking and eating." This quote manifests that thoughts need more meditation if not yet ready to employ. It is not worth using if the idea is feeble and weak and through continuous contemplation, when ready, it will be worth "cooking and eating. Regardless, this portly fish of an idea cannot withstand the oppression men commit.

Constantly improving an idea, "a man's figure rose to intercept me." The Beadle "expressed horror and indignation" for the woman, Mary, with her pseudonyms deemphasizing her personal identity, had walked on the path instead of the gravel and that "only the Fellows and Scholars are allowed here." Despite the authority the Beadle had, the character in the anecdote, Mary, continued her way on the turf because it is "better walking than gravel. However, in protection of the turf, it had sent her idea into hiding.

Additionally, the author elucidates similes to convey the limits women encounter. After trespassing Oxbridge, which seemed to be “ contained in a miraculous glass cabinet” upon her presence, she approaches the door leading to the library only to be stopped by a “ kindly gentleman. ” “ Like a guardian angel barring the way,” the man in the black gown informs her that women are not admitted to the library unless accompanied by “ a Fellow of the College” or with “ a letter of introduction.

Like a guardian angel that protects us, depending on one’s beliefs, this gentleman who protects the library is an obstacle women face. It is insignificant to the library itself to be inhabited by a lady “ with all its treasures,” nevertheless, men take this in such regard that they do not allow permission for the opposite sex to pursue their intellectual goal they have always yearned for. In conclusion, the oppression of men has affected women with their intellectual pursuits making them surrender to their authority as exemplified at the end: “ Never will I wake those echoes never will I ask for that hospitality again. ”