

Univerzita Karlova v Praze
Pedagogická fakulta
Katedra anglického jazyka a literatury

**MODERNIST NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES IN SELECTED
WORKS OF VIRGINIA WOOLF**

**MODERNISTICKÉ NARATIVNÍ TECHNIKY A STRATEGIE VE
VYBRANÝCH DÍLECH VIRGINIE WOOLF**

Vedoucí diplomové práce: PhDr. Petr CHALUPSKÝ, Ph.D.

Autorka DP:

Iveta Šavrdová
Štechova 3204, Kladno
český jazyk – anglický jazyk
prezenční studium magisterské

2010

Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně s použitím uvedené literatury.

Praha
1.7.2010

Abstrakt:

Tato práce pojednává o modernistických strategiích a narativních technikách se zaměřením na vybraná díla Virginie Woolfové. Teoretická část stručně pojednává o Modernismu jako takovém. Také se věnuje skupině Bloomsbury, jež výrazně ovlivnila tvorbu Virginie Woolfové. Praktická část je zaměřena na analýzu dvou románů této autorky. Jedná se o romány *Paní Dallowayová* a *K majáku*. Tato část se zabývá přístupem autorky k vnitřnímu životu postav, gendrovým rozdílům, k tehdejší společnosti a k jejímu užití obrazných pojmenování.

Abstract:

This thesis deals with literary modernist strategies and narrative techniques in selected works of Virginia Woolf. The theoretical part gives a general outline of modernism as such. It also deals with the Bloomsbury Group which significantly influenced the work of Virginia Woolf. The practical part is focused on the analysis of two novels written by this author. These are *Mrs Dalloway*(1925) and *To the Lighthouse*(1927). This part looks into the approach of the author concerning the characters` inner life, gender, contemporary society and to her usage of imagery.

Key words:

Virginia Woolf, Modernism, Mrs Dalloway, To the Lighthouse, stream-of-consciousness

Table of Contents:

1. Introduction	5
2. Modernism	7
2.1. Modernism	7
2.2. The social and intellectual background.....	10
2.3. The Bloomsbury Group	14
3. The novels.....	20
3.1. Mrs Dalloway.....	20
3.2. To the Lighthouse	23
4. Narrative techniques and strategies	26
4.1. The Inner Life of Characters.....	26
4.2. Gender.....	31
4.3. Reflecting social situation.....	37
4.4. Imagery	48
5. Conclusion.....	62
6. Bibliography.....	64

1. Introduction

Virginia Woolf is one of the most important representatives of modernism. As she wrote in her essay *Mr Bennet and Mrs Brown* she intended to continue the work of great novelists of the past such as Thackeray, Tolstoy, Hardy, Flaubert, Austen or Charlotte Bronte by focusing on a character. However, she also recognised that the novel form needed to change. Virginia Woolf was looking for a better way of creating her characters' inner life, their private, undisclosed mental and emotional experiences.

The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate certain modernist narrative techniques and strategies that were typical for the works of Virginia Woolf. The first chapter contains the general overview of Modernism. It describes Modernism as a movement in general and locates it in terms of time and place. This chapter also mentions new tendencies in art, mainly in writing such as stream-of-consciousness technique.

The first one to use this technique was James Joyce in *Ulysses*. Virginia Woolf did not completely agree with Joyce's style as she thought that his aim was to record every thought of a character and she was looking for a more elaborated vision of the character's mind. She wanted to re-create the actual processes of the mind, but her objective was to convey a complete form, not just the confusing stream of ideas. She achieved this by building a unity of her character's mind. In *Mrs Dalloway*, she used this method to bring memories of the past into her character's present. The effect is that a character's personality is fully developed.

Contemporary social and intellectual background is outlined briefly in the second part of the first chapter as it is one of the most important factors that have an

influence on a writer. It deals with the study of psychology, Sigmund Freud, suffragette movement, increasing literacy, popular culture, the Jazz Age and its effects on culture.

The third part of this chapter describes the Bloomsbury Group; its members, their beliefs, aesthetics and philosophy. It also mentions the art exhibition that was organised by Roger Fry in 1910 and its effects on British culture. The same year Virginia Woolf wrote an essay called *Mr Bennet and Mrs Brown* describing her ideas on creating realistic characters.

In the second chapter, the two novels - *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* - that were chosen for the analysis are described. The aim is not to describe the plot and characters in general but to point out the characteristic features of the novels.

The third chapter shows the narrative techniques and strategies Virginia Woolf uses in these novels. This chapter is divided into four parts: The Inner Life of Characters, Gender, Reflecting Social Situation and Imagery.

The first part, The Inner Life of Characters, shows how Virginia Woolf achieves to reflect mental processes of characters. The second part called Gender is focused on the role of gender in *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*. It is answering a question whether or not stereotypes and social gender roles affect the characters, their lives and the relationships between them. The third part looks into the way in which Virginia Woolf treats the contemporary social situation. In the last part the attention is paid to imagery and its use in Virginia Woolf's novels.

2. Modernism

2.1. Modernism

Modernism is a term synonymous with various movements in art, architecture and literature. It is a reaction across the continents and disciplines to the fast changing world at the end of the 19th century. The term modern has existed in literature for centuries. However, the existence of the term modernism is quite short. It was fully established after the year 1930. Modern typically means something that is characteristic of the present and recent time; contemporary; not antiquated or obsolete. It is therefore precarious to choose such a name for something we want to define in terms of time.

When we say modern we imagine a movement or an event that comes up with something entirely new, not known or used until that time. In the case of Modernism, this would be 'introversion, internal self-scepticism, technical display, mannerism and sophistication' (Bradbury,26). Modernism means experimentation in art. That includes the use of stream-of-consciousness narrative technique in the novel and the use of free verse and fragmentation in poetry.

Modernism tries to depict the modern age, life in the cities, the multiplicity of sensations of a person who lives in such time. An individual is in the centre of attention. The culture of modernism is strongly affected by the opposition of the public and the private, objective and subjective. Modernist writing psychologised and aestheticised the cultural and social conflicts of the period. It is a movement deeply influenced by Freud, especially his notion of the unconscious. The subject is no longer seen as stable but in crisis, as fragmented. People are perceived from the internal point of view of their thoughts, compulsion and repressed desires.

Although Modernism appears to have its roots in France and the main inspiration comes from Flaubert, relating to prose, and Baudelaire, relating to poetry, Modernism is clearly an international movement. As Bradbury and McFarlane (30) say 'it is maybe the oblique nature of Modernism that explains why critics have found it so hard a movement to find a clear place and date for'. Forms of modernism differ with respect to the period and geographical location they are associated with. One of the important features of modernism is its expansion around the world. We can talk about European modernism on the one side and Anglo-American modernism on the other. All these places are specific in some way. The culture, politics and social issues may vary but their diffusion is what makes modernism cosmopolitan. This can be also attributed to the fact that the centres of artistic (in our case literary) activities were cities – cosmopolitan cities or, in other words, cultural capitals. Those capitals and cosmopolitan centres were Berlin, Viena, Prague, London, Paris, New York and Chicago. Each of them contributed to the creation and interpretation of Modernism, in each of these centres there were artists who became known as Modernists.

In some places Modernism persisted and culminated several times whereas in other places it appeared as a short-lasting phenomenon. Hence it is complicated to set the exact beginning, the peak and the end of Modernism. It did not appear at once, it took time and it was coming in waves as it was a movement reflecting the shifts in the contemporary society, culture and science.

Bradbury and McFarlane agree on the point that 'it is impossible to fix on any one particular time as the start of the Modern movement. 1880 is taken as the point where the Enlightenment's 'critical' intelligence' had combined with Romanticism's 'exploring sensibility' to stimulate the work of the first generation of truly modern writers'(Bradbury, 31). 1880 can be therefore set as a symbolic beginning of the new

way of thinking about literature, about interpretation of reality and people. However, it should not be until the publication of James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* that we talk about the beginnings of Modernism as a consistent artistic movement as it was there where Victorian realism was fully rejected and a new narrative technique called the stream-of-consciousness was first used.

2.2. The social and intellectual background

The end of the nineteenth century is seen as the final breakdown of pre-industrial way of life and economy. The agricultural depression that took place from 1870 until the year 1902 meant the end of rural England. As Lawrence denoted, even the countryman became a 'town bird' at heart (*The Modern Age*, 14). Living in the countryside and owning a fertile piece of land no longer meant certainty and wealth. Free trade and urbanization caused a decline of the rural way of life. The role of money in the new rural economy increased significantly. The effect of this was that people did everything in order to be economically independent.

The integrity of religious and ethical systems was weakened due to advances in anthropology in favour of a more relativistic attitude. Suddenly, there was more than one definition of what a man stands for. According to Freud, the man is a biological phenomenon, a prey to instinctual desires and their redirection in the face of 'harsh reality'. Darwinian tradition says that man is simply a part of nature and its evolutionary processes. Marxists come up with the idea that man is an outcome of economic and social forces, a product of an evolutionary necessity as rigid as any to be found in the natural world. The classic Christian notion was that of a person as inherently the child of sin, one whose essence is free self determination and whose sin is the wrong use of his freedom. (*The Modern Age*).

The study of psychology was developing rapidly. One of the most important representatives of current psychology was Sigmund Freud. His theory was based on biological instincts, the emphasis was put on the power of the unconsciousness. According to him, we all display neurotic symptoms, anger and aggression are natural,

primitive instincts that we are trying to repress in order to behave as civilized people. The impact on private and family relationships was significant. Jealousy was recognized where no such allegation had been made before, mothers were said to try to absorb their sons (therefore Hamlet was interpreted in terms of the Oedipal), interest in such issues had grown.

There was another important phenomenon rising called 'New Woman'. This was connected with the suffragette movement as well. In other words, women started to fight for their rights. Suffragette is the American term for the members of the late-19th and early-20th century movement for women's suffrage in the United Kingdom. It is derived from the word 'suffrage' meaning the right to vote. American women's right to vote was established in 1920. Women in the United Kingdom achieved suffrage on the same terms as men in 1928.

Apart from the right to vote there was another issue concerning women. It was as Virginia Woolf writes in *A Room of One's Own*: 'reprehensible poverty of our sex' (Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, 22). Women needed more than suffrage they needed to be, as Virginia Woolf says, intellectually free. At that time, it was men who were undertaking positions such as professors, judges or directors. They could do everything they wanted. 'The most transient visitor to this planet, ..., could not fail to be aware, ..., that England is under the rule of a patriarchy.' (Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, 35). Women were supposed to be at home with their children and taking care of the family. If they worked, they could do such jobs as making artificial flowers or reading to old women which definitely could not bring a lot of money. Women needed freedom and that could have been achieved by means of being economically independent. Virginia Woolf hoped that 'in a hundred years women will have ceased to be the protected sex and take part in all the activities and exertions that were once

denied them. Moreover she believed that women will finally reach the intellectual freedom and 'Shakespeare's sister' will come and write poems. As she writes 'Intellectual freedom depends upon material things. Poetry depends upon intellectual freedom. And women have always been poor.' (Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, 106) According to her, it was important for women to study, to get the habit of freedom and the courage to write and say exactly what they thought. She also said that women should have children but only in twos and threes not in tens. This was the way to achieve independence that meant to have their own rights, money and space to do things they really wanted – a room of one's own.

Literacy of the masses was increasing rapidly. Consequently, people emancipated politically and socially. The tendency was to appeal at a low level of the public taste expecting that this will bring about the largest quantitative return in terms of people interested in literature. This resulted not only in the declining quality of popular literature but also esthetic criteria in general. Hilský writes that Babbit, who had a strong influence on T. S. Eliot, blamed liberal democracy and the cult of the freedom of the individual (33). Aesthetic theories of modernists were marked by the disillusion with liberal democracy and its consequences. Therefore they turned to traditionalism and conservatism.

Writers like T.S. Eliot became isolated because they did not want to conform to the demand of the mass market. Modernists perceived literature as something more demanding, something sophisticated not for the masses but for the elite. Literature was meant to challenge people's ideas and notions of the world. Virginia Woolf once said that she could not imagine anything better than being called 'intellectual' by the critics.

After World War I, in 1920's, in America, there was an age of rebellion called The Jazz Age. Jazz, whose roots were African-American, was considered as something

wrong. Parents said that it had a bad influence on their children. Jazz was something new and shocking, loud and syncopated. It brought about new dances such as Charleston. At that time, life equaled pleasure. Although there was the Prohibition in 1919 people did not stop partying and drinking alcohol. The effect of The Prohibition was the contrary. The criminality and illegal sale of alcohol increased heavily. The Jazz Age also marked a shift in women's fashion, the flappers, as they were called, were wearing short skirts that exposed their knees, silk stockings and they cut hair into a short bob. What is more, they went out with men to all-night parties. The Jazz Age also meant the rise of film entertainment. 1920 made Hollywood. People went to see the films every week. This was another challenge for literature. Writers had to cope with the power of their new competitor – cinema. On the other hand, it was a source of inspiration. The Jazz Age ended in 1929 together with the stock market. The years of pleasure were replaced by the years of depression. Young American writers such as T.S. Eliot left America for Europe.

2.3. The Bloomsbury Group

‘They really were the progressives and the embodiment of the avant-garde in early years of this century. Every time we look at them again they seem to have something for the contemporary world, whether in sexual ethics, liberation, biography, economics, feminism or painting.’

- Michael Holroyd, in the San Francisco Chronicle, 1995¹

‘It is a very fascinating, queer, self-absorbed, fantastic set of people. But they are very interesting...’

- Ray Costelloe, in a letter to Mary Costelloe, 1909

‘Above all, the personalities that counted as far as the inhabitants of Gordon Square and Charleston were concerned were their own: what Virginia had to say about Lytton, whether Duncan was sleeping with Vanessa or Maynard, and whether Roger and Clive knew or cared.’

- Charles Derwent, The Independent on Sunday, 7 November, 1999²

The Bloomsbury Group was a famous circle of English writers, philosophers and artists. They were not only colleagues but also friends. It all began around the year 1904 when the father of Virginia Woolf died and Virginia, her sister Vanessa and their two brothers, Thoby and Adrian, moved to a famous part of London the Bloomsbury

¹ <http://therem.net/bloom.htm>

² http://www.tate.org.uk/archive/journeys/bloomsbury/html/group_lifestylebeliefs.htm

district. Thoby went to Cambridge and was a member of Cambridge Apostles, the elite group of intellectuals. Many of them used to visit him in their house.

In 1906, Thoby died and the rest of the Stephen's family had to move again. However, they remained in Bloomsbury – 29 Fitzroy Square . There, they were regularly visited by Thoby's best friend Clive Bell and later on, there were more people coming every Thursday and the Bloomsbury Group was established.

However, it cannot be said that the Bloomsbury Group was an official organization as its members were friends who met each other to talk. They were independent and did not have any official programme. The core of the Bloomsbury Group was formed by strong individualities, namely Virginia Woolf, the critic and writer, Lytton Strachey, the critic and biographer of *Eminent Victorians* (1918) and *Queen Victoria* (1921), the art critics Clive Bell and Roger Fry, John Maynard Keynes the economist and Leonard Woolf, a left-wing political theorist and publisher. Other important people were also part of the group, such as the drama critic Desmond MacCarthy, the novelist E.M. Forster, the painters Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell, and Adrian Stephen, Virginia Woolf's brother.

As we said above, they did not have any official programme as the Bloomsbury Group but still they had some common beliefs and attitudes. They were against Victorianism, mainly its notion of a family and the role of women, even though some of them, for example Virginia Woolf and Lytton Strachey, were brought up in Victorian families. As Hilsky points out, they represent the ambivalent cultural phenomenon of British Modernism which is characterised by the blending of the revolt, negation and radicalism with the elements of conservatism (Hilský, 156).

They were influenced by the philosophy of G.E. Moore, and also by Bertrand Russell, both connected with the Cambridge University as well as majority of the

Bloomsbury Group. Lytton Strachey, John Maynard Keynes and some others were all in the society of Cambridge Apostles. Both Apostles and the Bloomsbury were inspired by Moore's book *Principia Ethica* (1903). The book symbolised the rejection of Victorian morality, insincerity, falseness and hypocrisy. It was a text revealing the new vision of the independent and creative imagination (Hilsky, 168).

According to S. P. Rosenbaum, 'The essential disinterestedness of art was...a fundamental conviction of Bloomsbury's aesthetics, which suggests that...Bloomsbury's...aesthetics attitudes descend mainly from Kant' - that is, from the *Third Critique, the Critique of Judgement* (Froula, 12). Aesthetic judgements should be pure – free from personal prejudice, preference, use or purpose also free from particular local, national, and cultural contexts. Kant says that the artist does not describe or copy nature but creates 'another nature'.

Kant had a strong influence on the aesthetician Roger Fry whose thoughts were inspirational for Modernist writers such as Virginia Woolf. Bell thought that Roger Fry's Essay (1909) on Aesthetics was the most important since the time of Kant. Fry's aesthetics is based on two fundamental principles – it is the autonomy of art and the antimimetic attitude. As Froula says in *Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Avant-garde*, he believes in disinterested and contemplative imagination; not a reflection of actual appearance but the conviction of a new and defined reality; not an imitation of nature but an equivalent for life (Froula, 15). His major contribution was the exhibition 'Manet and the Post-Impressionists' at London's Grafton Gallery from November 1910 to January 1911. It introduced England to the work of Seurat, Van Gogh, Gauguin and Cézanne. The traditionalist British public and critics were shocked as we can see from some of the reactions that followed.

One of the accounts was recorded by Wilfrid Blunt:

15th Nov. -- [Went] to the Grafton Gallery to look at what are called the Post Impressionists pictures sent over from Paris. The exhibition is either an extremely bad joke or a swindle. I am inclined to think the latter, for there is no trace of humour in it. Still less is there a trace of sense of skill or taste, good or bad, or art or cleverness. Nothing but the gross puerility which scrawls indecencies on the walls of a privy. The drawing is on the level of that of an untaught child of seven or eight years old, the sense of colour that of a tea-tray painter, the method that of a schoolboy who wipes his fingers on a slate after spitting on them . . .

Apart from the frames, the whole collection should not be worth 5 pounds and then only for the pleasure of making a bonfire of them. Yet two or three of our art critics have pronounced in their favour. Roger Fry, a critic of taste, has written an introduction to the catalogue, and Desmond MacCarthy acts as secretary to the show . . . They are the works of idleness and impotent stupidity, a pornographic show.

Another reflection came from a letter of Eric Gill (1882-1940 British sculptor and graphic artist) to Sir William Rothenstein (1874-1945, British painter):

“You are missing an awful excitement just now being provided for us in London, to wit, the exhibition of Post-Impressionists now at the Grafton Galleries. All the critics are tearing one another’s eyes out over it, and the sheep and goats are inextricably mixed up. The show quite obviously represents a reaction and transition, and so, if, like Fry, you are a factor in that reaction and transition, then you like the show. If, like MacColl and Robert Ross, you are inseparably connected with the things reacted against and the generation from which it is a transition, then you don’t like it.”

(The Impressionists and their Legacy, P.645, Barnes & Noble, 1995)³

³ http://jssgallery.org/Essay/Fall_and_Rise_of_Sargent/Fall2.htm

In the article 'Culture quake: Manet and Post Impressionism', Will Hodgkinson writes that the exhibition ruined Fry's credibility as a critic and it cemented his place in history. However, he points out that authors like Virginia Woolf, Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell were prescient enough to recognise it as a pivotal movement in British culture, and the art of the Post Impressionists revealed itself as the major influence on key modern movements including Cubism, Art Nouveau and German Expressionism.⁴

The year 1910 was significant, for Virginia Woolf it was an *annus mirabilis*. As she writes in her essay 'Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown', 'human character changed' (Woolf, *Jak to vidí současník*, 174). She also wrote that, 'All the human relationships has shifted: the relationships between masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children. And when the human relationships are changing, religion, behaviour, politics and literature are changing as well.' (Woolf, *Jak to vidí současník*, 174)⁵. In this essay, Virginia Woolf is talking about the state of the novel. Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown was a reaction to an article written by Arnold Bennet. He, as a representative of Edwardians, said that the novel was in crisis because of the failure of Georgian novelists in the art of creating a believable character which he considers the most important element when writing a novel. Woolf agrees that representation of characters is crucial to the novel as a genre and as well as that the character making is in crisis. However, she adds that the genre is in crisis, too. She sees the Edwardian fiction as pedantic and precise but not capable of creating complex characters as opposed to the Victorians who were, according to her, creating vivid and real characters. The conclusion was that creating a believable character meant to represent characters as complex including their inner life and leaving the strategy of describing the outside

⁴ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/donotmigrate/3618913/Culture-quake-Manet-and-Post-Impressionism.html>

⁵ Author's own translation

details only. We can say that this was an argument for a new kind of psychological realism.

The Bloomsbury Group was also against sexual restrictions of the Victorian age. In all their actions they were trying to demonstrate they believed in a sexual freedom. Homosexuality was considered something normal for them. Even Virginia Woolf had an affair with Vita Sackville-West. Later, she wrote *Orlando* where it is argued that love and passion ignore gender. Others in the Bloomsbury Group were bisexual or had a lover outside their marriage, like for instance Vanessa Bell. For the Bloomsbury Group triangular relationships and gay twists were nothing shocking or strange. It was a part of their freedom.

Another important feature when it comes to the aesthetics of the Bloomsbury Group is synesthesia of poetic prose. Synesthesia means a perceptual condition of mixed sensations. In terms of literature, it means fusion of words, visual art and music. Writers were inspired by painters and musicians and they are learning how to use colours and sounds to create authentic images. Music principle can be seen in the structure of their work, an example of it can be T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* or Ezra Pound's *Cantos*. Virginia Woolf uses Wagner's technique of leitmotifs that have two different functions - symbolic and advertising - such as flowers in *Mrs Dalloway*. The motifs of flowers are symbolic – characters are described by means of flowers and as the motifs are repeated they maintain reader's attention, in other words they function as an advertisement signaling the reader that there is something important on the scene.

3. The novels

3.1. *Mrs Dalloway*

Mrs Dalloway was the first Virginia Woolf's novel published both in Britain and in the United States at the same time, in 1925. As the title suggests it is a novel about a woman but it is not the only fact that can be deduced from the title. It implies that women's identity is considered as retrenched by men. The novel is not called Clarissa, not even Clarissa Dalloway. Her identity is reduced to Mrs Dalloway so the facts the readers learn from the title are that this woman is married (Mrs) and that her husband is called Dalloway.

It is a story of a single day in the lives of a man and a woman who never met. She is a perfect hostess and politician's wife who gives a party and he is a deranged shell-shocked soldier who eventually commits suicide. The reader is not implicitly told what they have in common or why their lives are being described in parallel which is typical for modernist novels. There is no given straightforward climax or final explanation. The reader is invited to interpret the end of the novel themselves.

Virginia Woolf wanted to bring the reader closer to everyday life, to bring back the value of daily experience with all its confusion and uncertainty. She was against the artificial structures and categories of Victorian fiction like comedy, tragedy. *Mrs Dalloway* is written in a way that pushes the reader into taking an active role when it comes to the process of interpretation.

The author uses a technique of interior monologue or in other words, the stream-of-consciousness technique which is characteristic for modernist fiction. It is Clarissa,

Septimus and the people around them whose life experience creates the story. Clarissa can be perceived as an insider, she lives at the heart of English establishment, in Westminster, she is a representative of the upper-class. Septimus Warren Smith on the other side is a part of the lower-class, he is the victim of shell shock and as Julia Briggs writes in *An Inner Life* 'he embodies the troubled unconscious of a society that has buried its dead and turned back to the business of living,' (133). At the end of the novel we are provided two climaxes representing the 'achievements' of these two opposing characters and these are Clarissa Dalloway's party and Septimus Warren Smith's suicide.

The narrative goes from one place to another, back and forth through time and from one consciousness to another. As the events are related through the minds of individuals the traditional voice of the narrator has fewer chances to make judgements and therefore leaves space for the reader to make their own ones.

There are many ways of reading *Mrs Dalloway*. It can be read as an elegy on the dead of the Great War, as a simple love story, as a description of a life of middle-aged woman or there is also a less traditional lesbian and gay reading. However, these are definitely not the only ones because, as it was said above, the final verdict is left upon the reader.

Many critics read *Mrs Dalloway* as a consciously modernist novel. According to many of them, Virginia Woolf wrote *Mrs Dalloway* to be a representative of modernist style. That was the reason why Virginia Woolf felt the need to describe how she came to write *Mrs Dalloway* in an introduction to an American edition in 1928. She denied that the novel was based on a theory of literature or that it was an intentional outcome of a method. She said that '...the idea started as the oyster starts or the snail to secret a house for itself. And this it did without any conscious direction. The little note book in

which an attempt was made to forecast a plan was soon abandoned, and the book grew day by day, week by week, without any plan at all; except that which was dictated each morning in the act of writing . . . it was necessary to write the book first and to invent a theory afterwards,⁶.

From this excerpt, it is obvious that Virginia Woolf did not write a novel based on theory but it was the other way round. First, she wrote a novel and then she came up with the theory.

⁶ `Intoduction to *Mrs Dalloway*`, p. 25

3.2. *To the Lighthouse*

To the Lighthouse is regarded by many as Virginia Woolf's masterpiece. It was published in 1927 as her fifth novel. It can be described as a highly poetic, self-reflexive and allusive novel. *To the Lighthouse* is often labelled as a feminist Künstlerroman (German: artist's novel), a class of Bildungsroman, or apprenticeship novel, that deals with the youth and development of an individual who becomes—or is on the threshold of becoming—a painter, musician, or poet⁷.

The structure of the novel is triadic, as Virginia Woolf wrote in her notebook, two blocks joined by a corridor. Part I, 'The Window' is linked via Part II, 'Time Passes', to Part III, 'The Lighthouse'. Mr and Mrs Ramsay can be identified as the two blocks joined by a corridor.

The novel is a combination of the autobiographical and the fictional. There are many references to Scottish texts, including, for example, David Hume's Enlightenment philosophy or Boswell's and Johnson's accounts of their tour of the Hebrides. 'Such texts were staples of her father's library' (Goldman, 60). It is said to be an elegy on her dead parents. As Goldman writes (60) Vanessa Bell thanked her sister for her accurate portrayal of their mother. Virginia Woolf perceived her novel as a kind of exorcism.

The novel is rich in allusions to and quotations from many other poetic and literary texts such as Shakespeare, Tennyson or Scott. It is an important element of the novel as it shapes the characters; Mr Ramsay for example is reading a Scott's novel, Mrs Ramsay would like to read but she, does not have enough time due to her duties as

⁷ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/325047/Kunsterroman>

a mother and a housewife. However, she reads Shakespeare as well as Grimm's fairy-tales to her son.

The number and complexity of the metaphors and symbolism used in the novel makes it difficult for the reader to interpret. It requires many levels of interpretations. The reader is constantly invited to contemplate on what the Lighthouse means, how it might be understood. Roger Fry wrote a letter in which he congratulated Virginia Woolf on her achievement and mentioned that the Lighthouse has a symbolic meaning that cannot be understood well. However, she rejects any such intention in her reply: 'I meant nothing by *The Lighthouse*. One has to have a central line down the middle of the book to hold the design together. I saw that all sorts of feelings would accrue to this, but I refused to think them out, and trusted that people would make it the deposit for their own emotions.' (*The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, London, vol.3, 385).

One of the most interesting and important characters is Lily, a young artist, who stands for an alternative path for women. She is creative, young and single and she does not want to get married. It could be said that she represents certain modernist's beliefs, this can be seen, for example, when she is being criticised for her painting by Mr. Banks.

'What did she wish to indicate by the triangular purple shape, 'just there?'' he asked. It was Mrs. Ramsay reading to James, she said. She knew his objection – that no one could tell it for a human shape. But she had made no attempt at likeness, she said. . . . Mr. Banks was interested. Mother and child then – objects of universal veneration, and in this case the mother was famous for her beauty – might be reduced, he pondered, to a purple shadow without irreverence.'

In a way, her painting is a reaction to Mr Tansley's statement that 'women can't read or write...' but also the technique she used when giving the form to Mrs Ramsay

and James is significant. She did not use the classic technique of painting exactly what she saw, she just portrayed them as a triangular purple shape. She was painting also the things she felt not only those she saw as well as modernist writers do not only describe the character from the outside but they are also trying to convey their inner life, their emotions and feelings.

4. Narrative techniques and strategies

4.1. *The Inner Life of Characters*

One of the defining features of the modernist novel is a technique called the stream-of-consciousness. It is a narrative technique of interior monologue. The term is derived from William James' description of conscious experience. He described it as continuous and unbroken.

Virginia Woolf is not only concerned with the consciousness of the characters but also with the unconscious level of their minds. This causes the effect that the reader can never be sure of what a certain character will do as her characters often act in an illogical way. Their thoughts frequently contradict their feelings as well as their actions. The character's mental processes are usually reflected by longer sentences. Short sentences are in most cases connected with inner conflicts, arguments inside the characters.

'No!No! he cried. She is not dead! I am not old, he cried, and marched up Whitehall, as if there rolled down to him, vigorous, unending, his future. He was not old, or set, or dried in the least. As for caring what they said of him – the Dalloways, the Whitbreads, and their set, he cared not a straw – not a straw (though it was true he would have, some time or other, to see whether Richard couldn't help him to some job).' (Mrs Dalloway, 54-55)

This paragraph captures Peter Walsh's thoughts when he left Clarissa's house. He saw her mending her dress, preparing herself for a party, he saw her daughter and he thought she was old. The shorter sentences in the beginning imply the swiftness of his

thoughts – she is not dead – I am not old – and the panic he feels realising he is old even though he is trying to deny it. However, he is not that sure of being young as we can see from the repetition of the word old. In his mind, he was trying to get rid of this feeling by repeating the fact that he was not old. The same process occurs when he says he does not care what they say. The repetition of the phrase evokes doubts rather than conviction. Moreover, he adds that he will need their help. The argumentative tone creates a feeling of an internal debate taking place in characters' minds. Also, it can be seen that his mind is shifting from one emotion to another. Peter Walsh is under a constant pressure as he cannot decide whether to settle down or persevere in his rebellion.

Projection is another phenomenon typical for the characters' mental processes. It can be described as a tendency to project one's needs and desires on other people or some external objects. In the case of Peter Walsh, it is when he sees the young boys marching in the street and identifies with them. They are young and strong but they are also stiff. Again, there is a conflict between the rebellion and convention present in this paragraph.

‘A patter like the patter of leaves in a wood came from behind, and with it a rustling, regular thudding sound, which as it overtook him drummed his thoughts, strict in step, up Whitehall, without his doing. Boys in uniform, carrying guns, marched with their eyes ahead of them, marched, their arms stiff, and on their faces an expression like the letters of a legend written round the base of a statue praising duty, gratitude, fidelity, love of England.’ (Mrs Dalloway, 55)

In the following passage, the focus will be on the mind of Mrs Ramsay. She is married and has eight children. Religion, death, struggle of day-to-day existence, romantic and sexual fantasies and rationalism are the themes that preoccupy her mind.

The following extracts of the novel brings the reader closer to those precious moments when Mrs Ramsay is alone and she does not have to do anything for the family. She has the time for herself and her thoughts.

‘No, she thought, putting together some of the pictures he had cut out - . . . - children never forget. For this reason, it was so important what one said, and what one did, and it was a relief when they went to bed. For now she need not think about anybody. She could be herself, by herself. And that was what now she often felt the need of – to think; well not even to think. To be silent; to be alone. All the being and the doing, expansive, glittering, vocal, evaporated; and one shrunk, with a sense of solemnity, to being oneself, a wedge-shaped core of darkness, something invisible to others.’ (69)

The phrases in this passage vary in length, there are again a lot of repetitions that usually have the function of reassurance. As well as this it can be seen that she is having an internal argument with herself when she says that ‘we are in the hands of the Lord’ and later on she asks: ‘We are in the hands of Lord?’ The narration is in the past tense but the author uses participles such as ‘sitting and looking’ that have the effect of a continuous present experience. The internal argument is concerning death. Mrs Ramsay usually thinks about death when she is left on her own. She sees death as a kind of escape from the weariness of her daily life. However, she know that she cannot kill herself as it is the God who decides when it is the right time to die.

Another important feature of this passage is the contrast of light and dark. ‘The glittering, vocal evaporated’ - children went to bed together with her outer life and she is now alone, silent, a wedge-shaped core of darkness. The overall image of this passage is connected with the sea. Mrs Ramsay’s inner self is dark like the sea at night but her horizon seems to be limitless when her life sinks down for a moment. Her inner life is

described as dark but deep. She does not have time to read but she would like to. This brings the reader to the notion of an inner conflict inside the character.

Although she continue to knit, and sat upright, it was thus that she felt herself, and this self having shed its attachments was free for the strangest adventures. When life sank down for a moment, the range of experience seemed limitless. . . . Her horizon seemed to her limitless. There were all places she had not seen; . . . This core of darkness could go anywhere, for no one saw it. They could not stop it, she thought, exulting. There was freedom, there was peace, there was, most welcome of all, a summoning together, a resting on a platform of stability.` (69-70)

As it was already said, Mrs Ramsay is married, she has children but she has ambivalent feelings. Inside, she hopes that `It will end, It will end` and `It will come, it will come`. She wants her life to end and she wants death to come but `children never forget`. However, she is trying to avoid thinking about death by thinking about her duties and family. She is projecting herself on the light of the Lighthouse stands for the complete opposite of the darkness of her private life.

`Often she found herself sitting and looking, sitting and looking, with her work in her hands until she became the thing she looked at – that light for example.` (70)

Mrs Ramsay`s wish to escape, to repose and her ambivalent attitude towards death is similar to Clarissa`s feelings about suicide. At the end of the party Lady Bradshaw murmured that a young man had killed himself. `Oh! thought Clarissa, in the middle of my party, here`s death, she thought. . . . What business had the Bradshaws to talk of death at her party?`(Mrs Dalloway, 201) Clarissa was clearly exasperated by the presence of death at her party but as it can be seen from the following part she was also

a kind of attracted by the image of death when she thought `He had killed himself – but how?`.

In conclusion, several characteristic features can be traced when looking at the interpretation of the inner life of the main characters. First, it is the repression of thoughts that are not pleasant or the character does not want to let them into their mind. Second, there is something like a barrier that protects characters from the repressed thoughts. In the case of Mrs Ramsay, it is on the one side the preoccupation with marriage and matchmaking and on the other side the duties she has as a mother and a housewife. Clarissa hides herself from unwelcome thoughts by giving perfect parties.

`Oh these parties, he thought; Clarissa's parties. Why does she give these parties, he thought.` (52-53)

Third, there is the element of projection. Characters are looking for sympathy by identifying themselves with someone or something else. As said before, Peter identifies himself with young boys, Mrs Ramsay identifies herself with the light of the Lighthouse - `it seemed to her like her own eyes meeting her own eyes, searching as she alone could search into her mind and her heart, purifying out of existence that lie...`. The last is the state of a certain passivity when character's mind cannot resist the unconscious thoughts. In such moments, the activity of the character becomes automatic or repetitive such as Mrs Ramsay's knitting. This is all caused by the inner conflict in the characters and their efforts to expel thoughts such as worthlessness or death.

4.2. Gender

This part will focus on the role of gender in *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, whether or not stereotypes and social gender roles affect the characters, their lives and the relationships between them.

As it was already said, even the title *Mrs Dalloway* suggests the main protagonist's social role. She is, in the first place, a wife. Her existence is determined by a man. This implies the position of women and their gender-role. Some of the gender stereotypes can be observed when looking close at the relationship of Rezia and Septimus Warren Smith.

According to Rezia, men are selfish and that is why her husband is selfish as well. This is one of the examples of gender stereotypes that she makes. She is a wife and therefore she is loyal to her husband even though he does not pay the same attention to her as at the beginning of their relationship and, as she says, he is happy without her. However, since she is a woman and a wife, it is supposed that she cannot be happy without him.

‘And he would not kill himself; and she could tell no one. ‘Septimus has been working too hard’ - that was all she could say, to her own mother. To love makes one solitary, she thought. She could tell nobody. . . . And it was cowardly for a man to say he would kill himself, but Septimus had fought; he was brave; he was not Septimus now. . . . Nothing could make her happy without him! Nothing! He was selfish. So men are. For he was not ill. Dr. Holmes said there was nothing the matter with him. She

spread her hand before her. Look! Her wedding ring slipped –she had grown so thin. It was she who suffered – but she had nobody to tell.` (24-25)

She is the one who suffers and feels ashamed for Septimus who is no longer a `real` man, he is even crying in public which is impossible for a man. Rezia feels that she cannot tell it anyone about that so she comes up with the story of Septimus working hard because it is socially acceptable when it comes to explaining his breakdown.

Another stereotype she makes is the one that men must be strong, stoic and insistent. In her eyes Septimus was strong because he had taken part in war, he fought. Judging by this statement we can see how shallow her views of gender-roles are. She does not even consider that it did not have to be his own decision to take part in the war.

Another interesting thing is that Rezia hopes to attract her husband by wearing a new hat. This shows she relies on a common notion that female exterior beauty is what men find attractive.

`She put on her lace collar. She put on her new hat and he never noticed; and he was happy without her.` (25)

She also assumes that it is `cowardly` for a man even to consider suicide. Is it then alright for a woman? The absurdity of such stereotypes is potentiated by making a conclusion that `Septimus is not Septimus now`. The same kind of conclusion is made by Septimus when Rezia calms him down by putting her hand on his knee and brings him back to reality. He decides that `he would not go mad` but the way to achieve it is ridiculous as thinks that `he would shut his eyes; he could see no more`.

In the case of Rezia and Septimus, gender attitudes and stereotypes are an obstacle in understanding each other. Mr and Mrs Ramsay accept their gender roles. In

their case, it is like a compromise as it is demonstrated in the following passage in which Mr and Mrs Ramsay are together without any other people.

‘He felt about this engagement as he always felt about any engagement; the girl is so much too good for that young man. Slowly it came to her head, why is it then that one wants people to marry? What was the value, the meaning of the things? (Every word they said now would be true.) Do say something, she thought, wishing only to hear his voice. For the shadow, the thing folding them in was beginning, she felt, to close round her again. Say anything, she begged, looking at him, as if for help.’ (133)

Apparently, Mr and Mrs Ramsay needed each other. She wanted him to speak and so did he. However, it seems they have nothing to say which could be seen as an ironic expression of the complexity of gender-roles and stereotypes. Both of them want the other speak but to Mrs Ramsay the content does not matter; she just wants her husband to say something whereas he wants her to tell him she loved him.

Mr Ramsay needs to hear that she loves him because she wants to feel important. As every man he feels the need to be admired. He is scared of the imagination of being forgotten. To compensate this fear, he needs his wife to express her admiration towards him.

‘You won’t finish that stocking to-night,’ he said, pointing to her stocking. That was what she wanted – the asperity in his voice reproving her. If he says it’s wrong to be pessimistic probably it is wrong, she thought; the marriage will turn out all right.’ (133)

When they finally speak, we can see they have a close relationship as they are using a kind of code to express their feelings which they both understand . Mentioning the stocking is not only to cut Mrs Ramsay off her pessimistic thoughts Mr Ramsay does not like, but it also serves as a symbol of going to the lighthouse. Mrs Ramsay wanted to take the stockings with her. However, she is told by her husband she would not finish it. It means they will not go to the lighthouse and because Mrs Ramsay is a loyal wife, like Rezia or Clarrisa, she says: `No, I shan't finish it.` and when he wants her to express her love she says: `Yes, you were right. It's going to be wet to-morrow.` Again, she agrees with him and that stands for her loving him.

Mrs Ramsay says `yes` very often. She is a mother and a wife and she says `yes` to her son and husband. In fact, `yes` is her first word and the first word of the novel.

`Yes, of course, if it's fine to-morrow,` said Mrs Ramsay. `(7)

Mrs Ramsay's `yes` represents her approval of patriarchy in her family. She admits her husband's superiority also by saying that she could feel his mind overshadowing her mind. In fact, he was the one reading Balzac, Scott and the other books she did not even have time to read. And this is exactly what Mr Ramsay wanted when he was waiting for her to say she loved him. He wanted her attention but she could not give it to him. So she is looking for something else to satisfy him and she finds a solution in gender-role. Suddenly, she turns from a wife into a housewife. It is when she asks whether there is something she could do for him.

`It was only that she never could say what she felt. Was there no crumb on his coat? Nothing she could do for him? `(134)

Virginia Woolf usually depicts men as preoccupied by such things as literature, philosophy and politics. Mr Ramsay is constantly thinking of philosophical questions. Richard Dalloway is connected with politics and the problems of society. For both of them, these issues are important, more important than their wives. As she writes in *A Room of One's Own* men and their interests are considered superior and men need the feeling of superiority as it stimulates the nervous system. `Take it away and man may die, like the drug friend deprived of his cocaine, ` (38).

There is an obvious distinction when it comes to the minds of characters. Septimus Warren Smith and Mr Ramsay can concentrate on non-living things such as hallucinations and philosophy whereas their wives are interested in life and relationships. However, this can be a result of socialisation. The writer does not exactly say that it is caused by different gender.

In conclusion, there is an ambivalent relationship between the characters and their gender-role. It either serves as a shelter, it helps them to run away from their feelings as they can easily adopt a relevant gender-role and they do not have to think about their own identity or it is a kind of inhibitor that prevents them from expressing their own emotions and fulfilling their lives. This is partly the case of Lily who is upset when she hears that women cannot write or paint. However, Lily is not the one who conforms to gender-roles. In contrast with Mrs Ramsay who thinks that everybody should get married, Lily does not even want to get married. For her, marriage does not mean anything important. Lily finds her satisfaction in her art, not in marriage.

`So that is marriage, Lily thought, a man and a woman looking at their girl throwing a ball. That is what Mrs Ramsay tried to tell me the other night. ` (80)

Gender-roles are on the one side limiting for the characters but on the other side they provide an easily accessible haven. So the gender role can inhibit or frustrate the characters. It is for example, Mr Ramsay's need to be famous in order to make his wife admire him. Since he is insecure of achieving the fame, he suffers agonies as a result and that is the case of frustration. Mrs Ramsay, on the other hand, finds a shelter under her husband's superior wisdom, preventing herself from pessimism and despair.

Virginia Woolf is quite impartial. She shows Septimus, Rezia, Mr Ramsay and Mrs Ramsay with the same degree of understanding. She does criticise sexual stereotypes but on the level of creative treatment she shows both men and women equally. They all need to make themselves free of gender-role stereotypes.

4.3. Reflecting social situation

Virginia Woolf, as well as Jane Austen, writes about her own time and social class. The novels reflect middle class society, before and after the First World War and the changes that happened meanwhile. Things that were important before the war, the Conservative establishment, Empire and patriotism and formal manners, are losing their value. Because of the war and its consequences, people are more concerned with social problems and egalitarian ideas. Apart from her treating gender roles, she is trying to show society in contrast with the individuals confronting such issues as mortality or the purpose of their lives.

At the beginning of *Mrs Dalloway* there are these words: `The war was over, except for someone like Mrs. Foxcroft at the Embassy last night eating heart heart because that nice boy was killed...` (4-5). This quote demonstrates the fact that although the war was over, its painful consequences were still present in the minds of people.

To the Lighthouse is also circumscribed by the war, `The Window` takes place on a summer day before the war, `Time passes` refers to events and deaths of the war itself. `A shell exploded. Twenty or thirty young men were blown up in France, among them Andrew Ramsay, whose death, mercifully, was instantaneous.` (145) `Mr. Carmichael brought out a volume of poem that spring, which had an unexpected success. The war, people said, had revived their interest in poetry.` (146)

The war and its consequences are present but they are not the main topics of the novel. *To the Lighthouse* is an elegy on the loss and grief of Virginia Woolf's dead parents and also it is about English class-structure and its break with Victorianism after

the First World War. The novel is trying to demonstrate the need for an art that could adapt to this break.

As it was said, Virginia Woolf focuses mainly on the life of the middle class that she was familiar with. In *Mrs Dalloway*, there are only two characters from the lower class who are given more attention and these are Septimus Warren Smith, a soldier suffering a shell-shock, and Miss Kilman, a religious teacher who tutors Elizabeth, Clarissa's daughter. They are both part of the educated and ambitious, lower middle class. People from the working class and servants are only given a name instead of a proper description; they are not really important characters of the novel, more likely, they serve as figures creating the background only.

In *Mrs Dalloway*, it is patriotism and the exaggerated admiration of 'greatness' that is being satirized right at the beginning of the novel. 'The motor car with its blinds drawn and an air of inscrutable reserve proceeded towards Picadilly, still gazed at, still ruffling the faces on both sides of the street with the same dark breath of veneration whether for Queen, Prince, or Prime Minister nobody knew. . . But there could be no doubt that greatness was seated within; greatness was passing.' (17). Virginia Woolf describes the whole situation in such a way that the final picture seems absurd. The importance of the car and the person inside, both seem to be powerful and mysterious, is exaggerated to such measure that the respect and veneration of the people in the street appears silly, for example the behaviour of the policeman who 'jerks his head'.

However, there is something more in this passage and that is the fact that such situation can bring people together across the barriers of the class. 'For thirty seconds all heads were inclined the same way ... strangers looked at each other and thought of the dead; of the flag, of the Empire. ... For the surface agitation of the passing car as it sunk grazed something very profound.' (19) It is a moment of patriotism when people

think of the flag and Empire while watching the mysterious car passing by. There is another message that Virginia Woolf is trying to convey when she writes about the things that are on the people's mind at that moment. `Death` is on their minds same as the flag or the Empire. It could be interpreted as if death was closely related to patriotism as patriotism stood at the beginning of the war that brought death of millions who were devoted to their country.

The following paragraph represents Clarissa Dalloway's response to the same moment. Her reaction is ridiculous when she is thinking about the important person that represents patriotism and imagines `candelabras, glittering stars or breasts stiff with oak leaves`. Her patriotic images are stereotypical but still there is a hint at her deeper involvement when she is staying at the top of the stairs, remembering a Palace party and she identifies the Queen's party with her own.

`... Clarissa, too, gave a party. She stiffened a little; so she would stand at the top of the stairs.` (19)

Her position at the top of the stairs is also significant as it stands for not being part of the lower-class; the same strategy can be observed when reading about Clarissa's party which takes place upstairs whereas the servants are preparing the food downstairs.

In this part of the novel, Virginia Woolf describes patriotism with a mixture of satire and understanding. She shows the absurdity of power and ceremony on the one side and the absurdity of awe on the other. However, she also demonstrates that to belong to some group or class is a deep human need and that national pride brings people together on an emotional, human level, for example, when they share the fear of death.

Virginia Woolf's dislike of the world of society hostesses, lustrous politicians, prominent doctors and lawyers, and grand old dowager ladies; the world where men talk a lot and women are supposed to entertain, decorate men and be the 'angels of the house' can also be easily recognized when reading the novel

Virginia Woolf was more familiar with the world of Clarissa Dalloway than the one of Septimus Warren Smith. However, her personal experience was used to create the inner character of Septimus. His illness, insanity and the hatred of doctors. It can be said that in terms of social identity, Virginia Woolf was closer to Clarissa, but in terms of feelings and personality, she was closer to Septimus.

Clarissa Dalloway is described on two levels; the reader can see her through the eyes and comments of the people surrounding her or through her own mind. The external level is the same as the social one. People see Clarissa as a middle-aged, high society hostess and an MP's wife. The reader is warned against judging people according to their social status. Still, the external level is a part of her self. Throughout the book, we are provided a lot of external views of Clarissa. For example, the one of Scrope Purvis right at the beginning of the novel.

'A charming woman, Scrope Purvis thought her (knowing her as one does know people who live next door to one in Westminster); a touch of the bird about her, of the jay, blue-green, light, vivacious, though she was over fifty, and grow very white since her illness. There she perched, never seeing him, waiting to cross, very upright.' (4)

Scrope Purvis is Clarissa's neighbour. He describes Clarissa as a charming who seems to be young and bird-like even though she is over fifty. The reader also learns that Clarissa has recently undergone some illness and therefore her skin is pale.

Clarissa, too, perceives herself and the reader is given a chance to see what she thinks. When she looks in the mirror and sees herself she thinks: 'That she had grown

older? Would he say that ... It was true. Since her illness she had turned almost white. ... (as she looked into the glass), seeing the delicate pink face of the woman who was that very night to give a party; of Clarissa Dalloway; of herself. ... That was her self – pointed; dartlike; definite. That was her self when some effort, ..., drew the parts together, she alone knew how different, how incompatible and composed so for the world only into one centre, one diamond, one woman ... had tried to be the same always, never showing a sign of all the other sides of her – faults, jealousies, vanities, suspicions...` (39-40). It is clear that Clarissa is ageing and she is aware of it. Since she is trying to be the best wife and hostess she takes care of her appearance. However, as she looks into the mirror, she sees a woman but she does not identify with her totally. It is because she knows that her outside image, which she is maintaining very carefully, is different from the one of her soul, which though is not always perfect, is much deeper. It is the emotional part of Clarissa remembering her love for Sally Seton and Peter Walsh, together with her present feelings for her husband Richard or her daughter Elizabeth, whom she loved. There is also a person Clarissa hates and that is Doris Kilman. Clarissa hates Miss Kilman because she is worried that she would steal Elizabeth and she also hates for her religion. Clarissa assumes that religion and love can `destroy` people's privacy.

`... Kilman her enemy. ... Ah, how she hated her – hot, hypocritical, corrupt; with all that power; Elizabeth's seducer; the woman who had crept in to steal and defile...` (191)

Lucy, a servant, makes a comment on Clarissa and her party. `They would come; they would stand; they would talk in the mincing tones which she could imitate, ladies and gentlemen. Of all, her mistress was loveliest – mistress of silver, of linen, of china ... ` (41) The language she uses is a bit grotesque and is typical for a mock-heroic

diction that makes Clarissa's social existence worthless and laughable. However, it does not mean Lucy does not like Clarissa; she is only mocking her social significance. Clarissa is trying to behave in such way to make her servants like her; as can be seen in the following excerpt: `But, thank you, Lucy, oh thank you,` said Mrs Dalloway... she went on saying in gratitude to her servants generally for helping her to be like this, to be what she wanted, gentle, generous-hearted. ` (42) Again, her need to be loved is present, even when treating servants.

When describing Hugh Whitbread, Virginia Woolf is also slightly satirical. It is apparent that Clarissa likes Hugh because at the beginning of the novel, in Bond Street, she calls him `admirable` Hugh. Later in the book, it can be read that `He had been afloat on the cream of English society for fifty-five years. He had known Prime Ministers. His affections were understood to be deep. ... and his name at the end of letters to the Times, asking for funds, appealing to the public to protect, to preserve, to clear up litter...` (112-113) It is similar to what was described in the case of the passing car in Bond Street. The position of Hugh is mocked as it is said that he was afloat on top of English society. This implies that his high position in contrast with his deeds is just a question of formality. His activities are mocked being boiled down to writing unimportant letters to the Times.

Another object of satire is Lady Bruton, one of the old dowagers, whom Clarissa admires and respects. The reader knows that she was an `old woman, not good for much`. `She never spoke of England, but this isle of men, this dear, dear land, was in her blood, (without reading Shakespeare)...` (198) She is loyal to her country and she is very proud. She describes England as the isle of men which is an allusion to Shakespeare, whom she never read because she had never read poetry to herself. `... if ever woman could have worn a helmet and shot the arrow, could have led troops to

attack, ruled with indomitable justice barbarian hordes ... that woman was Millicent Bruton. (198). She is described as a tempestuous woman. Also, her name Bruton suggests her `brutal` personality. The description and satire goes further: `Debarred by her sex, and some truancy too, of the logical faculty (she found it impossible to write a letter to the Times), she had the thought of Empire always at hand, and had acquired from her association with that armoured goddess her ramrod bearing, her robustness of demeanor ...` (198) So it is obvious that despite her not being very intellectual, Lady Bruton has achieved, due to her behaviour, that she is perceived as a very strong lady, even as a goddess.

As Clarissa mentions several times in the novel, Peter Walsh has always been critical towards her. `He is very well dressed, thought Clarissa; yet he always criticises me. (44) When Peter comes to see her, he is rather disappointed with her present situation. `Here she is mending her dress as usual, he thought; here she's been sitting all the time I've been in India; mending her dresses; playing about; going to parties; running to the House and back and all that...` He sees Clarissa as a housewife, woman that was only at home, giving parties and seeing her husband whereas he was travelling. Peter is getting angry and irritated with this vision of Clarissa. He notes that `for there's nothing in the world so bad for some women as marriage and politics, and having a Conservative husband, like the admirable Richard. ` Peter does not like the fact that Clarissa is under such an influence of her husband. He demonstrates that later when he reacts to what Clarissa has said by thinking that: `In all this there was a great deal of Dalloway, of course; a great deal of the public-spirited, British Empire, tariff-reform, the governing-class spirit, which had grown on her, as it tends to do. With twice his wits, she had to see things through his eyes – one of the tragedies of married life. (84) In this part, Virginia Woolf's dislike of marriage, in the sense of women having a lot of

children and not having any room or time, is being evident as it is described as something that could potentially cast down a woman. However, Virginia Woolf was not against marriage in general, she just did not see the purpose of marriage in having tens of children and devoting all the time to taking care of the household.

Apart from this, Peter also criticises her wordy character, her coldness, her arrogant and prudish manner. `... it is her manner that annoys him; timid; hard; arrogant; prudish. `The death of the soul.` He says that instinctively, ticketing the moment as he used to do – the death of her soul.`This was caused by the society as Clarissa was not like that when she was young but as she grew older, got married and became one of the high society hostesses, she has changed as Peter remarks. When he comes to the party he thinks it was a mistake to come as he sees Clarissa at her worst `effusive and insincere`. These are all instances of the criticism of Clarissa's social self. They are similar to those made by Doris Kilman. However, there is a difference between the reasons for their attacks on Clarissa; Doris is assaulting her because of hatred and jealousy, Peter criticises Clarissa from love and admiration. It is the target of their criticism they share - Clarissa's worthless, luxurious existence.

The various methods of satire are showed at the party. The party points out the ironic difference between the expectations of the youth and the middle-aged resignation. It is most visible in the case of Sally Setton coming unexpectedly to the party. Everyone would imagine her as wild, different but she turns out to be a wife with five children. Sally and Peter are comparing their past wishes and hopes with their present achievements. Sally asks Peter if he wrote something and he replies: `not a word`. It suggests that their expectations were totally different from what happened to them and with them. Lady Bruton makes a remark that Richard has lost his chance of the Cabinet. According to her, it was partly the fault of Clarissa, not being good enough to help him.

She thinks that: `It might have been better if Richard had married a woman with less charm, who would have helped him more in his work.` (197) Hugh Whitbread, the duchess, the Prime Minister and Lady Bradshaw are all seen through the eyes of Peter who is the most severe critic of this society.

Peter's criticism is undermining Clarissa's success, her `triumph` as a perfect hostess. As it was already said, the party implies a division of the English society into classes. Servants are downstairs, they are only preparing the party but they do not take part. People from lower-classes are not invited. The reader already knows that, for example, Doris Kilman is not asked to come to parties. Septimus, who is from the same class, gets to the party thanks to his death being seen as his alternative way of communication. People would not talk to him as he reminds them of the war. And moreover, they wanted to get rid of him sending him to a nursing-home. Clarissa's `triumph` is seen as trivial and corrupt. It brings her satisfaction for the least admirable part of her character. Her real triumph is her reaction to the death of Septimus Warren Smith, about which she learns from the Bradshaws.

Sir William Bradshaw is described as the most repulsive character in the novel. Virginia Woolf presents him in a much worse light than she presents Doris Kilman. In his case, the mock-heroic language is used very intensely as it can be seen from the following extract: `Proportion, divine proportion, Sir William's goddess, was acquired by Sir William walking hospitals ... Worshipping proportion, Sir William not only proposed himself but made England prosper, secluded her lunatics, forbade childbirth, penalised despair, made it impossible for the unfit to propagate their views until they, too, shared his sense of proportion...` (108-109) He represents the way of life in which individuals must obey the rules and fit; in other case they would be put away. Such an individual is Septimus who reminds people of the war and who is seen as insane by the

doctors and they want to send him away to a nursing-home. Clarissa is against Sir William and his `forcing the soul`, she is against this social world, she is on the side of Septimus who stands for the privacy and integrity of the individual.

In *To the Lighthouse*, the Ramsays are presented as Victorian philanthropists. They think about the servants or fishermen as individuals, not as a class. Moreover, Mr Ramsay admires their simplicity and envies their life. He even wishes for his children to have such life. This is shown when Mr Ramsay is in the boat with James and Cam together with the other old men. James is watching his father and finds out that: `Now he was happy, eating bread and cheese with these fishermen. He would have liked to live in the cottage and lounge about in the harbour spitting with the other old men.` (221) It shows that Mr Ramsay felt happy among people from lower-class. And later on Cam adds that she was sure that it was the way her father wanted them to live. At this part of the book, Mr Ramsay loses his class distinction, aspirations and the need to be admired; he becomes, according to his daughter, the `Spanish gentleman`.

There is an association made between Mrs Ramsay and the sentimentality of Victorianism. At one moment she is even identified with Queen Victoria. `...when, suddenly, in she came, stood for a moment silent... stood quite motionless for a moment against a picture of Queen Victoria wearing the blue ribbon of the Garter; and all at once he realised that it was this :...` (18). Mrs Ramsay is not being satirized for her Victorian attitudes but for her feelings concerning society in the same way Clarissa is criticised by Peter Walsh. For both women the need to be loved and to be perfect meant a lot. This need is presented as their weakness because it overshadowed their real qualities that could not be fulfilled.

Mr Ramsay is seen as an absolute patriarch. He still insists on the traditional Victorian assumption that each sex is assigned its sphere and should not outside it.

Virginia Woolf aimed to stress the sexual polarization of Victorian family life and its effect on women who were expected to be at home, take care of their family and have little time for themselves.

4.4. Imagery

Imagery is a descriptive use of language that includes the `mental pictures` that readers experience while reading a literary work. It signifies all the sensory perceptions referred to, whether by literal description, allusion, simile, or metaphor. Imagery is not limited to visual imagery; it also includes auditory (sound), tactile (touch), thermal (heat and cold), olfactory (smell), gustatory (taste), and kinesthetic sensation (movement).⁸ The novels of Virginia Woolf are characteristic by an extensive use of imagery. The most typical examples of imagery in her works are similes, metaphors and symbols.

Virginia Woolf's use of imagery is not limited in simply comparing two things. She elaborates on the figurative idea in detail so that she finally gets to something else that is different but derived from the original idea. She moves the reader's attention further from the concrete towards the abstract, internal and theoretical events. The image usually functions as a connection between the external reality and the inner world of characters' mind, which is where the most important action of Virginia Woolf's novels takes place. It is, for example, when an object is used as a revelation of a character's aspects that have not been stated explicitly in the novel before or of their life experience.

In *Mrs Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf uses flowers as one of the means of describing characters. There is a long tradition between flowers and their meaning as symbols. The term `floriography` or in other words `the language of flowers` comes from the Victorian Times when `the language of flowers was as important as being well-dressed`.⁹ At that times, a dictionary of floral vocabulary was created and expressing

⁸ http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_i.html

⁹ <http://www.victorianbazaar.com/meanings.html>

one's feelings by the language of flowers became socially significant. The flower etiquette is one of the issues criticised in the novel.

The flowers appear right at the beginning of the novel. The opening scene starts with a well-known sentence: 'Mrs Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself.'(3). Not only does this sentence create a connection between the protagonist and flowers but also tells the reader that Mrs Dalloway belongs to the upper-class. It is demonstrated by the emphasis on the fact that today she will do it herself. It implies that this is an extraordinary situation for her. Normally she has the things done for her. The readers can see that Clarissa likes flowers and enjoys being surrounded by them as it is showed in the following excerpt. The passage also demonstrates the way Virginia Woolf works with synesthesia. The scene is brimming with stimuli for sensual perception such as smells, colours and movements.

'There were flowers: delphinium, sweet peas, bunches of lilac; and carnations, masses of carnations. There were roses; there were irises. Ah yes – so she breathed in the earthy – garden sweet smell ... And then, opening her eyes, how fresh, like frilled linen clean from a laundry laid in wicker trays, the roses looked; and dark and prim the red carnations, holding their heads up; and all the sweet peas spreading in their bowls, tinged violet, snow white, pale – as if it were the evening and girls in muslin frocks came out to pick sweet peas and roses ... and how she loved the grey white moths spinning in and out...'(13-14)

Peter Walsh's attitude to flowers is totally different. Clarissa remembers that when he saw her looking at the flowers in Bourton he said: 'Musing among vegetables? – was that it? - 'I prefer men to cauliflowers'(5). He perceives flowers as something absolutely ordinary not deserving extra attention. However, later in the novel, it is

suggested that his view of the flowers , as well as his character, changed as he got engaged with a woman from India called Daisy, which is also the name of a flower.

Almost every character is described by means of their treating flowers. Clarissa loves flowers in general, Peter degrades flowers to vegetables. Sally's extraordinary and unconventional personality is also illustrated by her way of handling flowers.

`Sally's power was amazing, her gift, her personality. There was the way with flowers, for instance. At Bourton they always had stiff little vases all the way down the table. Sally went out, picked hollyhocks, dahlias – all sorts of flowers that had never been seen together – cut their heads off, and made them swim on the top of water in bowls.`(36).

Miss Kilman does not even know how to treat flowers.`...would Miss Kilman like some flowers? To Miss Kilman she was always very, very nice, but Miss Kilman squashed the flowers all in a bunch, and hadn't any small talk...` (143) This suggests that the same way Miss Kilman treated flowers she treated people. She did not know how to get on with people. Elizabeth confirms it by saying that `Miss Kilman was quite different from any one she knew; she made one feel so small,`. (143)

Richard Dalloway gives Clarissa red and white roses, universally acknowledged as a symbol of love. He wants to `come in holding something` when telling her that he loves her. `Flowers? Yes, flowers, since he did not trust his taste in gold.`(126) He decides for flowers because it is generally known that red roses stand for love and he imagines `that he would say it in so many words`. However, when he arrives `bearing his flowers like a weapon` he is short of words. `He was holding the flowers – roses, red and white roses. (But he could not bring himself to say he loved her; not in so many words.)`(129). Even though he did not say anything, he is convinced that she - `his Clarissa`- understood. Clarissa receives the flowers and puts them in a vase on the

mantelpiece. It is a demonstration of her accepting Richard's gesture of love and also accepting her position in their marriage. She is 'his' Clarissa; an object that belongs to somebody. The flowers are put on display to remind her the fact that she is 'his' Clarissa.

Lady Bruton's way of handling flowers she receives at her luncheon can be taken as a contrast to the one of Clarissa. Hugh Whitbread brings Lady Bruton flowers because he would never come to lunch without doing so as it is a social must. He chooses carnations which represent admiration. Nevertheless, the reaction of Lady Bruton is at least unexpected as 'she takes Hugh's carnations with her angular grim smile' and 'places them beside her plate'. By doing this, she rejects their significance. Only after Hugh helps her with the letter for the Times, 'Lady Bruton, who seldom did a graceful thing, stuffed all Hugh's carnations into the front of her dress...' (121). It shows that Lady Bruton is a really awkward person. Virginia Woolf writes that 'she is more interested in politics than people'. In contrast with Clarissa, Lady Bruton seems to be rather 'masculine' than 'feminine'.

Another example of flowers illustrating a relationship between people is the one of Rezia and Septimus. When Rezia is decorating a straw hat with artificial flowers for Mrs. Peter, who has just got married, she is thinking about her own marriage. Watching Septimus smiling on his own, she realises that her marriage is a failure and she cannot understand the way Septimus behaves. She feels abandoned even though she is in the presence of her husband. It could be said that her marriage is like those artificial flowers she is sewing onto the hat; unreal, dry and symbolic; but Septimus suddenly stands up to help her, and this is the moment when she feels they are like 'married people'.

'There,' she said, pinning a rose to one side of the hat. Never had she felt so happy! Never in her life!' (157)

By putting a real rose on the one side of the hat she enlivens their marriage. In this part of the novel Rezia is compared to `a flowering tree`. This is the case when flowers - an object - undergo the transformation from being inanimate into the living human form.

Another symbolic object is Peter Walsh's penknife. It reveals a considerable part of his character traits. The penknife is first mentioned on the first page as well as flowers when Clarissa is remembering the times at Bourton. `It was his saying one remembered; his eyes, his pocket knife, his grumpiness...` (3). His knife is mentioned as one of his characteristic features. This suggests its high importance. Later on, the knife appears on page 44 when Peter comes to unexpectedly visit Clarissa, he kisses both her hands `positively trembling`, puts one of his hands into the pocket and takes out a large pocket-knife and half-opens the blade. This implies that Peter needs a kind of reassurance in this situation. At the beginning the reader can see that he is trembling and then to be more comfortable he takes out the knife symbolising masculinity. As her reaction, Clarissa opens her scissors that can be taken as the opposing symbol. Peter says that `she is too cold; sewing, with her scissors,` (47). The knife reappears again when Clarissa asks Peter about Daisy on page 50.

`But what are you going to do?' she asked him. Oh the lawyers and solicitors, Messrs. Hooper and Grateley of Lincoln's Inn, they were going to do it, he said. And he actually pared his nails with his pocket-knife.` (50)

The knife gives away Peter's feeling of uncertainty. Its significance increases throughout the novel. Peter is presented as sexually uncertain and immature and the knife is a way of reassurance. To Clarissa the knife seems amusing and it reminds her of Peter's lack of confidence. This insecurity is caused by the fact that she rejected him and his love thirty years ago. Therefore, the habit of fidgeting with the knife has the

effect of blaming her and that makes her angry. The knife is also a reminder of her unfulfilled desires and dreams.

The knife goes on depicting Peter's personality when he is walking and sees a woman who, he thought, was 'extraordinarily attractive walking across Trafalgar Square,'(57). At this time his romantic desires become fantasy of following this young lady through London. The sign that tells the reader that Peter is aware of this being only in his mind is again playing with the knife. 'Straightening himself and stealthily fingering his pocket-knife he started after her to follow this woman, this excitement...' (57). The knife turns up again, this time together with the feeling of jealousy when Peter is thinking about Daisy. 'It was jealousy that was at the bottom of it – jealousy which survives every other passion of mankind, Peter Walsh thought, holding his pocket-knife at arm's length.' When he leaves this scene he is furious 'realising what Clarissa might have spared him, what she had reduced him to – a whimpering, snivelling old ass' (88). He dismisses Clarissa thinking: 'But women, he thought, shutting his pocket-knife, don't know what passion is. They don't know the meaning of it to men.' (88). The knife is mentioned again at the party when Peter is talking to Sally. 'That was his old trick, opening a pocket-knife, thought Sally, always opening and shutting a knife when he got excited.' (205) Sally knows that because they became quite close when Peter was in love with Clarissa. How close their relationship was can be demonstrated on the following extract where the knife appears for the last time.

'Poor Peter, thought Sally. Why did not Clarissa come and talk to them? That was what he was longing for. She knew it. All the time he was thinking only of Clarissa, and was fidgeting with his knife.' (210)

It can be said that for Peter Walsh the knife represents his romantic life, his memories, desires, fantasies and also it is a symbol of Clarissa's rejection of his love and its consequences. For Clarissa Dalloway, the knife shows Peter's insecurity and also functions as a reminder of her past decision that changed her life. It reminds her of the time and feelings she lost when she decided to marry Richard Dalloway. Every time, the knife appears, the memories and emotions from Bourton come back. As a parallel to Peter and his knife, Clarissa has scissors and her needle. These are a part of her new artificial life of a married woman. She has a husband, politics, parties and society to keep her busy and prevent her from thinking too much about her past at Bourton.

The aeroplane writing in the sky also has its symbolic function. Apart from demonstrating something new which was the advertising done in this way, it points out to how people perceive what they see. All the people are looking at the same thing but they understand it differently. 'All down the Mall people were standing and looking up into the sky. ... 'That's an E,' said Mrs. Bletchley – or a dancer - 'It's toffee,' murmured Mr. Bowley ... It was toffee; they were advertising toffee, a nursemaid told Rezia.' (22-23) Whilst all these people see the plane advertising toffee, Septimus Warren Smith assumes that the plane is speaking to him.

'So, thought Septimus, looking up, they are signaling to me. Not indeed in actual words; that is, he could not read the language yet; but it was plain enough, this beauty, this exquisite beauty, and tears filled his eyes as he looked at the smoke words languishing and melting in the sky and bestowing upon him in their inexhaustible charity and laughing goodness one shape after another of unimaginable beauty and signaling their intention to provide him, for nothing, for ever, for looking merely, with beauty, more beauty! Tears ran down his cheeks.' (23)

This part of the novel demonstrates that there is not always only one point of view but many more. This is what Virginia Woolf is trying to show in her novels by always offering the readers always more than one perspective for description of characters and situations.

Some elements in Virginia Woolf's novels often have a larger significance. The following analysis will focus on the symbolic role of the lighthouse in the novel *To the Lighthouse*. The importance of the lighthouse is emphasised by the fact it is the title of the novel. Virginia Woolf uses the lighthouse as an object that reveals emotions and thoughts of the characters and this helps the reader to better understand them. Similarly to flowers or Peter's knife in *Mrs Dalloway*, a lighthouse is mentioned on the first line of the novel where Mrs Ramsay promises James that they will go to the lighthouse if the weather is fine. James' reaction that follows shows the excitement caused by the expectation of going to the lighthouse. Moreover, the lighthouse already means more than just a place or a building as can be seen in the following passage.

'Yes, of course, if it's fine tomorrow,' said Mrs. Ramsay. 'But you'll have to be up with the lark,' she added. To her son these words conveyed an extraordinary joy, as if it were settled the expedition were bound to take place, and the wonder to which he had looked forward, for years and years, it seemed, was after a night's darkness and a day's sail, within touch.'

Going to the lighthouse is something James really wants; it is his desire. When Mrs Ramsay promises to go there the other day, the reader can see how happy James is and that going to the lighthouse means something exciting in comparison with his boring everyday life.

Then, Virginia Woolf describes James more saying that: 'Since he belonged, even at the age of six, to that great clan which cannot keep this feeling separate from

that, but must let future prospects, with their joys and sorrows, cloud what is actually at hand, since to such people even in the earliest childhood any turn the wheel of sensation has the power to crystallise and transfix the moment upon which its gloom radiance rests...` (7). From this excerpt, it can be seen that Virginia Woolf wants to point out that reality is `this` and imagination is `that` and therefore it is impossible for them to become a unity. Mixing them together can be only confusing for people and their minds. The other issue are the `future prospects` that are described as preventing people from seeing the reality of their present life clearly. Virginia Woolf explicitly writes that they `cloud` people's view of what is being present at the moment. However, the verb `must` implies the power of these desires and dreams.

It is apparent that one's fantasies and dreams can take their minds off the dreariness and uselessness of their everyday life under the condition that there is a prospect that these will come true one day. But what happens if they really come true and become reality? This is the question that is present throughout the novel. Having fulfilled a dream is dangerous because then there would not be anything else to live for. Still, people must have some hope, some ideal to reach since if they do not have any ideal or the ideal seems to be out of their possibilities, they suffer mentally. It is not only James who has fantasies and who is longing for something. It is, for example, his father, Mr. Ramsay too. His objective is to gain prestige.

Mr. Ramsay is furious when he imagines that his books could be forgotten. He needs to be respected and admired. The example of him demanding admiration from his wife was showed in the chapter about gender. The prestige is what he dreams of.

`And his fame lasts how long? It is permissible even for a dying hero to think before he dies how men will speak of him hereafter. ... Who shall blame him, if, so

standing for a moment, he dwells upon fame, upon search parties, upon cairns raised by grateful followers over his bones?` (41)

As if Mr Ramsay is focused on his prestige and importance, Mrs Ramsay is intent on matchmaking and marriage. There is always a connection between a character's dream or fantasy and the ability to handle their life and avoid dullness and despair. Virginia Woolf makes the reader think about the need to live for a future fantasy.

In the chapter dedicated to the inner life of characters we already mentioned the power the lighthouse has on Mrs. Ramsay and that she identifies with its beam. However, the character of the lighthouse beam is ambivalent. On the one side, it stands for something external, for the ideas of beauty and it is something looking at her. On the other side, its regularity that hypnotises her brings about the monotonousness of her day-to-day life and allows her to think about death.

When Mr Ramsay says that `there wasn't the slightest possible chance that they could go to the Lighthouse tomorrow,` (37), Mrs Ramsay was shocked by the cruelty of her husband. In the following passage the reader can see what was on her mind at that moment.

`To pursue truth with such astonishing lack of consideration for other people's feelings, to rend the thin veils of civilisation so wantonly, so brutally, was to her so horrible an outrage of human decency that, without replying, dazed and blinded, she bent her head as if to let the pelt of jagged hail, the drench of dirty water, bespatter her unrebuked. There was nothing to be said.` (37)

She was disappointed to find out how easy it was for her husband to destroy her son's dream. In this part, the meaning of the lighthouse is extended by its relation to `civilisation` and `truth`. It implies that people should always consider the consequences

of telling the others the whole truth. Therefore, Mrs Ramsay would not tell James they will not go to the lighthouse, she would rather say they might go there so that there is a chance of fulfilling his dream. There is another example of Mrs Ramsay hiding the real truth and that is when she covers a boar's skull, which is in the children's bedroom, with her shawl. The boar's skull represents death and Mrs Ramsay wants to avoid her children thinking about death and its ubiquity. She does so by putting the shawl on it.

‘What was the matter? It was that horrid skull again. ... It was nailed fast, Mildred said, and Cam couldn't go to sleep with it in the room, and James screamed if she touched it. ... She could see the horns, Cam said, all over the room. It was true. Wherever they put the light (and James could not sleep without a light) there was always a shadow somewhere. ... ‘Well then,’ said Mrs Ramsay, ‘we will cover it up,’ ... she quickly took her own shawl off and wound it round the skull...’ (124)

Not all the characters want to go to the lighthouse. For example, Lily Briscoe does not perceive the lighthouse in the same way as the others. She does not have to go there as well as she does not wish to get married. Instead of trying to go there, she decides to paint it as a part of the scene. Her art is able to represent the lighthouse well, so there is no need to sail there with the others. It is the art that satisfies her desires.

When James finally sees the lighthouse, ‘a silvery, misty-looking tower with a yellow eye’ (202), he realises that it is actually a real object not a ‘fabled land’ he imagined in the beginning. However, he is satisfied because his dream became reality, no matter that it was not exactly the same kind of the lighthouse he was dreaming about. The important thing was that he managed to reach it.

‘So that was the Lighthouse, was it? No, the other was also the Lighthouse. For nothing was simply one thing. The other was the Lighthouse too. It was something hardly to be seen across the bay. In the evening one looked up and saw the eye opening

and shutting and the light seemed to reach them in that airy sunny garden where they sat.` (202)

This excerpt also demonstrates what was already stated when commenting on *Mrs Dalloway*. As James realises, there are always more views and perspectives on things and their meaning and there are always more ways how to find the truth. As it was said before, the question is then what the truth is and who can judge it. The lighthouse is an important symbol that provides a unifying focus that enables the reader to understand the author's intentions.

The sea and water also play an important role in the novel. The sea is a powerful symbol in *To the Lighthouse* because the novel takes place on an island surrounded by the sea. One of the examples of Virginia Woolf using the sea in a symbolic way, is when she describes the inner conflict of Mrs Ramsay between her commitment to persevere in her family life and her strong desire for death. `But what have I done with my life?`,` she thinks. Her life is described as a voyage in a ship and she does not feel secure in this ship and hopes that she might find `rest on the floor of the sea,` (92). The life and the present mean chaos and Mrs Ramsay would like to get rid of this chaos. She would like to control her life. She thinks she managed to achieve this aim during the dinner, by bringing all the people together inside the house.

`Now all the candles were lit, and the faces on both sides of the table were brought nearer by the candle-light, and composed, as they had not been in the twilight, into a party round a table, for the night was now shut off by panes of glass, which, far from giving any accurate view of the outside world, rippled it so strangely that here, inside the room, seemed to be order and dry land; there, outside, a reflection in which things wavered and vanished, waterily.` (106)

However, Mrs Ramsay did not reach her objective. Everything she achieved is just an illusion. The light inside the room, created by candles, was artificial. To Mrs. Ramsay, the room seemed to be a dry land but as the reader can see there was a reflection of the outside chaotic world anyway. Mrs Ramsay did not cook the Boeuf en Daube herself, Minta and Paul's marriage failed and Mr Ramsay is flattered by the attention Minta pays to him.

Lily Briscoe finds the sea calming and peaceful. When she watches the sea through the window she perceives `messages of peace that breathed from the sea to shore` and her feelings form a unity with her fantasy. At this moment, Lily loses her own self and becomes inseparable from her imagination. This demonstrates how Virginia Woolf achieves modernist perception of characters' identity using not only authorial description but also techniques such as symbolism.

Virginia Woolf uses imagery on a large scale. Her similes are very often just simple comparisons at first but then they are carefully elaborated. This process moves the ideas systematically away from the physical reality of the narrative towards mental events and emotions. It can be said that similes provide a connection between the story and the level of life experience, and that is what Virginia Woolf is trying to convey an insight to the life experience and minds of characters.

Sometimes, imagery is used only to reveal internal experience, or abstract ideas that are on the minds of characters. Physical metaphors create a real, solid inner life of thoughts and emotions. The character's thoughts often vary between this `inner` metaphorical story and a real `outer` one. In this case, the image idea that develops and occurs repeatedly throughout the story helps the reader to understand the character's inner life.

It can be said that Virginia Woolf uses imagery in order to create both inner and outer life of the characters and that these two lives are intended to be real, parallel and equally valid. Virginia Woolf usually uses small, everyday object (such as knife, scissors, needle, dress, stocking) as significant motifs. Their significance and the characters' feelings and thoughts about them are build up simultaneously as they reappear in different context throughout the novel. They are very often an external manifestation of character's traits, their fears, worries or dreams. For example, Peter Walsh's knife is an external manifestation of his insecurity.

Some objects that Virginia Woolf uses have more complicated significance. An example of this is the lighthouse in *To the Lighthouse*. These objects are related to minds and emotions of more than one character and they usually act like a reflector of different subjective perceptions. Because they function as a symbol, they are often difficult to interpret. They stand for many different things to different characters and their meaning evolves as the novel progresses. As it was said before, these symbols usually have a unifying effect in these almost plotless novels.

Virginia Woolf also widely uses natural images such as the sun, sea, flowers, storms, the night and day. These often refer to life and death in the traditional manner but also illustrate the mood and feelings of the characters, their personality traits, fears or desires. In the symbolic descriptions, these images represent a link between a traditional imagery and a wider symbolic structure of the novel. They help the reader to better understand the characters' experiences throughout a novel.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to demonstrate certain modernist narrative techniques and strategies that were typical for the works of Virginia Woolf.

The first chapter of the practical part, *The Inner Life of Characters*, demonstrates how Virginia Woolf achieves to reflect mental processes of characters using a technique called the stream-of-consciousness that is typical for modernism. As it was said at the end of this chapter, several characteristic features can be traced when looking at the interpretation of the inner life of the main characters. First, it is the repression of thoughts that are not pleasant or the character does not want to let them into their mind. Second, there is something like a barrier that protects characters from the repressed thoughts. Third, there is the element of projection. Characters are looking for sympathy by identifying themselves with someone or something else. In other words, it can be said that the characters project elements of themselves on the things around them. It is, for example, the case of Peter Walsh identifying himself with the marching boys or Mrs Ramsay's feeling that the lighthouse was her own eyes.

The second part called *Gender* was focused on the role of gender in *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*. It was answering a question whether or not stereotypes and social gender roles affect the characters, their lives and the relationships between them. The conclusion was that gender roles can, on the one side, inhibit and frustrate the characters from expressing themselves, or form true relationships. On the other side, adopting a `safe` gender role is attractive for the characters since it helps them to escape their fears.

In the third part, Virginia Woolf's approach to the contemporary social situation was explored. It shows the way Virginia Woolf takes a satirical approach when describing the class division, snobbery and English patriotism. She uses irony, sarcasm

and hyperbolic style to reveal the absurdities of the society's manners. In her novels, she ironically sets them against the effects of the First World War and also against the unfulfilled ambitions and desires of characters.

The last part dealt with imagery and its use in Virginia Woolf's novels. It demonstrated that her use of imagery is not limited simply in comparing two things. In this chapter, it was showed how she elaborates on the figurative idea in detail so that she finally gets to something else that is different but derived from the original idea. Virginia Woolf moves the reader's attention further from the concrete towards the abstract, internal and theoretical events. The image usually functions as a connection between the external reality and the inner world of characters' mind. Virginia Woolf developed and extended the use of symbol and metaphor in prose, also by adopting the use of these devices in poetry. In *To the Lighthouse*, in particular, she uses symbols and metaphors as a substitution of the traditional plot.

6. Bibliography

- BENNET, Joan. *Virginia Woolf Her Art as a Novelist*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1964. ISBN 0- 521-09951-X
- BRADBURY, Malcolm and McFARLANE, James. *Modernism A Guide to European Literature 1890-1930*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978. ISBN 978-0140138320
- BRIGGS, Julia. *Virginia Woolf An Inner Life*. Orlando: Harcourt, 2006. ISBN 0-15-101143-5
- FORD, Boris. *The Modern Age (Pelican Guide to English Literature)*. London: Penguin Books, 1969. ISBN 0-14-020465-2
- FROULA, Christine. *Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury avant-garde*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005. ISBN 0-231-013444-4
- GOLDMAN, Jane. *The Cambridge Introduction to Virginia Woolf*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. ISBN-10 0-521-54756-3
- HILSKÝ, Martin. *Modernisté*. Torst, 1995. ISBN 80-85639-40-8
- LEE, Hermione. *The Novels of Virginia Woolf*. London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1977. ISBN 0-416-8-28701
- LEE, Hermione. *Virginia Woolf*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1996. ISBN 0-7011-6507
- MARSH, Nicholas. *Virginia Woolf The Novels*. New York: Macmillan Press, 1998. ISBN 0-312-21374-1
- PARSONS, Deborah. *Theorists of the Modernist Novel*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2007. ISBN 978-0-415-28543-8
- WOOLF, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1965
- WOOLF, Virginia. *Jak to vidí současník*. Translation Ivana Jírovcová-Fieldová. One Woman Press, 2000. ISBN 80-902443-5-1

WOOLF, Virginia. *Mrs Dalloway*. London: The Penguin Group, 2000. ISBN 978-0-141-18249-0

WOOLF, Virginia. *To the Lighthouse*. London: The Penguin Group, 2000. ISBN 978-0-141-18341-1

WOOLF, Virginia. *The Common Reader First Series*. London: The Hogarth Press, 1962

WOOLF, Virginia. *The Letters of Virginia Woolf Volume III, 1923-1928*. Ed. Nicolson, Nigel, Trautmann, Joanne. Mriner Books, 1980 ISBN 978-0156508834

Other sources:

‘Künstlerroman.’ Encyclopædia Britannica. 2010. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 14 May 2010

<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/325047/Kunstlerroman>>.

Hodginson, Will. ‘Culture quake: Manet and Post Impressionism’. *Telegraph* 14 June 2004. 20 April 2010

<<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/donotmigrate/3618913/Culture-quake-Manet-and-Post-Impressionism.html>>.

Dawley, Janice. ‘The Bloomsbury Group’ Theren. 1 December 2008. 5 June 2010

<<http://therem.net/bloom.htm>>.

Tate Archive Journeys. ‘Bloomsbury Group, lifestyle and beliefs’ 2003. 5 June 2010

<http://www.tate.org.uk/archivejourneys/bloomsburyhtml/group_lifestylebeliefs.htm>.

‘Imagery’. Web.cn.edu. Literary terms and definitions. 28 January 2010. 5 June 2010

<http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_i.html>.

‘Language of Flowers’. Victorian Bazaar. 2000. 5 June 2010

<<http://www.victorianbazaar.com/meanings.html>>.