

Charles University
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BACHELOR THESIS

Modernist Narrative Techniques in *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf

Modernistické narativní techniky v *Paní Dallowayové* od Virginie Woolfové

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Declaration

I hereby declare that I worked on this thesis, entitled “Modernist Narrative Techniques in *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf”, on my own and that I used only the cited sources. I also declare that this thesis was not used in order to gain any other academic degree than the one applied for.

Prague, 10th of July 2018

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to introduce and analyse selected modernist narrative techniques in *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) by Virginia Woolf, who was one of the main protagonists of Modernism (1890-1930) in Britain. The theoretical part attempts to describe and clarify the nature of chosen modernist narrative techniques and to put them into context of Modernism. The practical part reveals Woolf's unique usage of these techniques and it demonstrates what effects these techniques had on the novel.

Key Words: Modernism, modernist narrative techniques, stream of consciousness, Symbolism, intertextuality

Abstrakt

Cílem této práce je představit a analyzovat vybrané modernistické narativní techniky v románu *Paní Dallowayová* (1925) od Virginie Woolfové, jedné z hlavních představitelk Modernismu (1890-1930) v Británii. Teoretická část popisuje a objasňuje charakteristické prvky vybraných narativních technik a zasazuje je do kontextu Modernismu. Dále se zabývá unikátním užitím těchto narativních technik Woolfovou v románu samotném a zmiňuje, jak ho tyto narativní techniky ovlivňují.

Klíčová slova: Modernismus, modernistické narativní techniky, proud vědomí, Symbolismus, intertextovost

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1 Introduction

As the title suggests, this bachelor thesis deals with modernist narrative techniques used in *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925). Virginia Woolf is widely considered to be a prominent female writer and the main representative figure of British Modernism. She made her name not only in British but also the global history of literature, thanks to the focus on the inner life of her characters, usage of the stream of consciousness, free associations, intertextuality, a completely new perception of the outer reality and many other factors. Having read *Mrs. Dalloway* at grammar school and at university I became fascinated by her brilliant style of writing, as she follows the typically modernist approach to writing. Nevertheless, her fiction is still accessible and understandable to the reader, which was also one of the reasons why I have decided to analyze this particular novel.

Firstly, the opening chapter outlines the historical and social background of Modernism in Great Britain so as to introduce all the factors – the negative and also the positive ones – that helped to form Modernism as a literary revolution at the beginning of the 20th century.

The next theoretical part focuses on the modernist novel in general. An attempt is made here to map its beginnings, in what aspects it differs from the realist novel and what innovations it brought. What is more, several prominent authors and their works are mentioned in order to illustrate the gradual transition from literary Realism to Modernism. Secondly, the peak period of Modernism is described and connected with the works of Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. This chapter is briefly concluded with information about the end of Modernism, but at the same time with the influence it had on Postmodernism.

The second, practical part, deals with the concrete narrative techniques such as the stream of consciousness, focus on the inner life, symbolism and intertextuality in detail. To prepare the ground for the actual references and comments on these narrative techniques in *Mrs. Dalloway*, a brief theoretical introduction to the concrete literary term always precedes the practical part.

To sum up, the main objective of this thesis is an analysis of selected modernist narrative techniques, their main characteristic and concrete examples which are to be found in Woolf's modernist masterpiece *Mrs. Dalloway*.

2 British Modernism

Generally speaking, Modernism might be characterized as a groundbreaking cultural and literary revolution of the new century; a shift away from tradition, not only in Britain but around the world, thanks to several changes that had come with the end of the 19th century. It is essential to perceive Modernism as a cosmopolitan innovative literary movement that should not be only confined to the United Kingdom, because its reach was world-wide. Nevertheless, this chapter focuses primarily on British Modernism for the purpose of this bachelor thesis.

Modernism affected arts as well and what this cultural era wanted was to depict the world differently. In Britain, it was mainly a departure from what was typical for the 19th century. “Woolf was speaking of a double revolt, against “Victorianism” and “Edwardianism,” but in fact the new movements and tendencies split in many directions, in which Georgianism was just one voice” (Bradbury, 82). The Victorian age was mainly criticized for its narrow-mindedness and conservative values including puritan ethics, patriarchal social order or restraint and prudishness when it came to a private life of the middle class. Literature was then closely linked to moral concern, conclusiveness, absolute objectivity and social involvement.

On the other hand, Modernists’ contribution to the modern world was completely opposite to the past and innovative above all. Bradbury points out that “Modernism 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” (26). Artists and thinkers had the feeling that previous viewpoint on arts, literature, social life and even on human beings was stereotyped and not topical in terms of the new philosophical and social background, booming economy and new approach to life by the fully industrialized society. In contrast to Victorian and Edwardian societies that were still strongly determined by religion, the new society – mainly the lower classes – were rather concerned with the task of becoming economically independent after the agricultural depression, while the intellectuals from the upper-class made efforts to perceive the inner and outer human reality in a different way.

Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that “modern did not only reflect mentioned changes, this era did not point a single direction, did not declare a single aesthetic, did not claim a single audience, or merge from a single tradition. What had been willed to the

modern world was not a tradition but mixture of traditions” (Bradbury, 66). As a consequence, other movements such as Impressionism, Expressionism, Symbolism, Realism or Imagism can be, in many cases, traced as a secondary influence in the modernist prose and poetry.

In any case, with the new era a completely new challenge for writers in Britain emerged to capture new truths and to confront the former image of reality and style of writing. One of the theories that provoked this innovative perspective of the real world was Einstein’s famous theory of relativity. His breakthrough study affected an irreversible paradigm shift in understandings of the physical universe by proving that no physical law is entirely reliable, that it is the observer’s point of view that will always affect the result, making it relative and contingent (Childs, 66). Einstein’s influence was then mirrored in fiction by narrative relativity being characterized by its unreliability and highly subjective point of view. This narrative tendency that had been conceived in the era of Modernism became a few decades later an inherent part of postmodernist fiction.

Another theory that was presenting a new discrimination of time was the one introduced by Henri Bergson and William James. So called “historical and psychological time” was made known by the French philosopher Bergson. While “historical time” is external, linear and can be measured by clocks (in *Mrs. Dalloway* this theory is used in practice by the striking of Big Ben), psychological time is internal and highly subjective, which means it is measured by the emotional intensity of a moment. This is closely related to “stream of consciousness” or “stream of thought”. Stream of consciousness was at the core of the philosophy of the American philosopher William James who saw time not as a sequence of separated moments but as a continuous flow (Childs, 49-50). The new perception of time and space were crucial for Modernists because of the frequent usage of stream of thought and experimentations with time-space.

Yet it was not only James who examined the phenomenon of human consciousness. This problem was further developed and described by S. Freud who argued that the mind is not the mirror of matter, but has its own motions and structures apprehending experience (McFarlane and Bradbury, 27). Along with his three-step model of the human psyche and the power of seemingly hidden unconsciousness and libido, he investigated the human mind with emphasis on the analysis of dreams and “free-associations” as an alternative to hypnosis for recovering repressed memories. “There are obvious connections between Freud’s ‘free association’ and the modernist novelists’ associative technique of ‘stream of consciousness’”, said Childs (52). Both of them work on a principle of the continuity of

images and thoughts, which were later presented in modernist novels. What is more, it was not only modernist writers who were inspired by Freud's detailed analysis. For instance, D. H. Lawrence, who was not considered a typical modernist writer, examined his characters' behavioral traces such as the power of libido springing from the depths of the character's unconscious life.

Another, and highly important, change came with the ground-breaking exhibition of post-Impressionist painters in London in November 1910, showing paintings by Van Gogh, Pablo Picasso or Paul Gauguin. Virginia Woolf said: "On or about December 1910 human character changed," and it was mainly because of the strong influence that this exhibition provoked. Cook explains:

It was the non-naturalistic figuration, new compositional techniques and also references to non-Western source materials in works by Cézanne and Gauguin that the critics did not like. Critics' responses ranged from disdainful dismissals of post-Impressionist art that was seen as bizarre, morbid, and horrible to accusations that the works' abstracted forms betrayed the artists' psychological degeneracy. (Cook qtd. in Berkowitz)

Along with negative reactions to this exhibition came a wave of admiration and excitement. This exhibition had a strong influence on modernist writers mostly belonging to the Bloomsbury Group (several comments about this literary circle will follow below). A sharp shift away from previous movements to distinctive, highly subjective and emotionally provoking paintings predicted the focus on inner life or interior monologue used as one of the main modernist techniques not that much later. Gogh's paintings hiding an inner spirituality and symbolism or Picasso's experimentation and fragmentation of geometrical angles and colors, and his subjective perception of an ordinary life for example, can be seen to have left a trace in the typically modernist form of novels.

Unfortunately, the first and relatively optimistic part of the new era was interrupted and strongly influenced by the First World War (1914-1918). The disillusionment and tragedy that followed even further deepened the predisposition towards self-orientation and self-searching. Thus, a common base definition would be the "movement towards sophistication and mannerism, technical display, internal self-scepticism and especially introversion" (McFarlane and Bradbury, 26). Childs had a similar opinion, claiming that "The Modernists who followed after World War I were more noticeable for their

pessimism and their sense of a failed, fragmented society, in which the uncomprehending individual was swallowed up by huge forces outside of personal control” (Childs, 27). From the war onwards, art was laden with strong feelings of disillusion, pessimism and criticism towards the war, industry, the focus on materialism and the western society in general. A theme of human destiny having been devastated by the shell shock and horrifying memories from the war are also to be also seen in *Mrs. Dalloway*.

From a social point of view, the postwar society wanted to leave the previous tragedy behind and start living by the *carpe diem* motto. That is to say, the social background of the twenties was highly dynamic, and especially in the USA, jazz was flourishing. As a result, the 20’s became known as the Roaring Twenties or the Jazz Age. Clubs and bars were crowded, and the young Americans craved parties and drinking (Drowne and Huber, 39). This popular culture and notable Americanization left a mark on British culture and literature as well.

Firstly, a new perception of womanhood was conceived. This was reflected by new manners in fashion, new sexual standards and female independence (specifically the call for suffrage). Kern even talks about gender depolarization, about the ongoing “masculinization” of women and “feminization” of men (10). Woolf herself was known as a feminist, advocating the independence of women and protesting against the patriarchal concept of family. All the mentioned above mores worked as manifestos of the unofficial rejection of Victorian Puritanism.

On the other hand, popular culture also meant a decline in literature. The new genre of comics, which was based on a play with words and drawn pictures, was established and people started to prefer mundane entertainment such as cinema to reading *belles-lettres*. This fact initiated an opposite reaction from Modernists who disdained the lower forms of literary culture. This was especially true of the British intellectuals forming a part of Bloomsbury Group, who felt the need to write poetry and prose based on non-uniformity, complicated syntax or diverse usage of symbolism, in order to present literature that would challenge the reader in comparison with popular culture.

The Bloomsbury Group was a cultural phenomenon and its members such as Virginia Woolf, together with James Joyce, Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot may be reckoned as the leaders of British Modernism. Their novels and poems gained international literary importance and influence. Furthermore, their works are read by a wide range of readers, even today, and are considered classics being taught at schools.

The Bloomsbury Group was never defined by an official program, and more than a formal group they formed a close circle of good friends and graduates of Cambridge, having regular meetings at Woolf's. These intellectuals and artists working as poets, novelists, historians, economists, musicians or critics shared the same values. They stood up against the conservative approach to life according to Victorians and Georgians. Furthermore, they were advocating free relationships and open sexuality, the importance of education and they were strictly opposed to restrictions in society in general. On the other hand, Hilský points out that they had their own critics as well, such as D.H. Lawrence who saw the Bloomsburies as a snobbish elite who misused their money and social status to live a scandalous and bohemian life (191).

However, it was the Bloomsburies who indicated the literary direction of Modernism. All the changes that came with the new century unified the opinions and writing techniques of the Bloomsbury members. Consequences of WWI and the post-impressionist exhibition made Modernists focus on the inner life of their characters, to look thoroughly into their personalities and emotions and at the same time to be able to focus on average moments and details. This was enabled mainly thanks to the stream of consciousness and free associations. The new technique of showing, not telling connected to the loosely related associations appeared, and finally, the subjective perception of time and challenge to reality was provoked by Einstein and Bergson. As a result, the traditional plots of novels disappeared and were gradually replaced by distortion, chaos and numerous literary experiments. These experiments were reflected also in poetry. Ezra Pound, the main representative of modernist poetry insisted on "making it new" and "breaking the pentameter". Ultimately, a typically modernist poem consists of irregularities (in terms of rhythm or length of the lines), fragmented passages, repetitiveness or intertextuality.

3 The Birth and Rise of the Modernist Novel

Modernist writing brought innovations to poetry, prose and drama as well. Both its prominence and influence were changing during the first decades of the new century. When it comes to poetry, for instance, it was radically shaped during the modernist period. Firstly, the typical features of modernist poetry were fragmentations and irregularities. On top of this, in the post-war period they became laden with pessimism and criticism of western society, as already mentioned before. Modernist drama, on the other hand, lived in the shadow of modernist poetry and fiction, due to the fact that Modernism had less impact on the British theatre. Putting other literary genres to one side, this chapter focuses only on the modernist novel, its birth, rise and reasons why it started to lose its fame during the 30's.

The novel as a literary genre had existed for many years before Modernism was born. It was namely in the early 18th century in England when the novel was founded by Daniel Defoe. By that time, novels were read mainly by the middle classes and were seen as a lower genre in comparison with poetry and drama. The novel as a literary genre underwent considerable changes whether the writer, the storyline or the characters are taken into account and it is probable that it may bring new innovations even in the 21st century.

Talking about the modernist novel, Bradbury explains that with the end of the 19th century there occurred a great "turn of the novel" which means that the former Victorian fiction, which was typically moral and realistic, was losing its fame (1). In a completely new environment being full of technological changes, decline of religion, the rising importance of materialism and a completely new outlook on life and human being (thanks to the psychology and philosophy) the former realistic novel could not reflect the ongoing changes anymore and was destined to be replaced by the new aesthetics of Modernism, by the modernist novel.

To comment further on this topic, the novel was about to become more complex, open. It was also about to have an open and self-conscious form. The novel released itself from Victorian strict conventions and was aspiring to become part of a modernist fiction (Bradbury, 1). At this point, it is important to keep in mind that this literary upheaval did not appear suddenly. At the beginning of the 19th century modernist tendencies in literature were not the prevailing ones. Even though the modernist movement was already rooted in

literary history, there were authors who followed the traditional and realistic tendencies, for example: Arnold Bennett, John Galsworthy or H. G. Wells. In comparison to Realism, Modernism was still out of the mainstream (Childs, 76) and it had to make its name during the time, because at the beginning, it was primarily the literature of Realism that had the best sales. Bradbury further comments on this literary clash of revolutionary Modernism and traditional Realism: “But that break was never really to become complete. Many of the Victorian conventions and myths continued to haunt the radical surprise of the modern novel, and Victorian fiction leaves its lasting imprints on British fiction to this moment” (4). What is more, he emphasizes the fact that “The modern novel came, but the Victorian novel did not entirely go away; and that is one of the essential secrets of the modern novel” (5). On these grounds it could therefore be claimed that fragments of the realistic fiction can be found in modernist writings, especially in pre-modernist writings. This literary transition was pre-signaled by many authors. When these two opposing writing styles started to mingle, Henry James, Joseph Conrad or E. M. Forster could be viewed as having significantly contributed to the birth and appreciation of Modernism, because their works predicted a significant literary shift.

Firstly, Conrad’s novels lack conclusive endings or single narrative perspectives, he uses flashbacks, fragmentary plotline and his characters are depicted as individuals in hard situations, in situations of crisis. In his *Heart of Darkness* (1899), the main character Marlow tells a story about his voyage to Africa, Asia and South America. He experiences alienation and is forced to undergo a permanent psychological and moral scrutiny.

Secondly, E. M. Forster, later belonging to the Bloomsbury Group, wrote his novels in the spirit of Modernism with help of frequent usage of deeper and symbolic levels of meaning. Bradbury emphasizes that Foster was looking for a new view of life and culture, based on personal relations, the reform of the heart, on passion and paganism (72). This new approach that challenged writing conventions such as narrative ethic, linguistic, temporal or geographical boundaries (Castle, 28) contributed to the fact that by the year 1900 many of the modernist writing principles were already in effect and the voice of modernity was upon the new world in which the rights to freedom and frankness of expression were at the base of literature (Bradbury, 63). But of course, the mainstream of Modernism is usually credited to James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, as the modernist fiction reached its peak after the Great War. From this time on modernist novels (but also poetry) revolved around the disillusion and feelings of loss, tragedy and pessimism at the post-war age. As Childs notes:

The Modernists who followed after World War I were more noticeable for their pessimism and their sense of a failed, fragmented society, in which the uncomprehending individual was swallowed up by huge forces outside of personal control, leaving many writers with the sense that they should withdraw into their art and an intense, aesthetic world where sense, shape and order could be achieved. (27)

Such tendencies in fiction were followed even by originally realist or other genre writers such as D. H. Lawrence who in 1920 wrote his *Women in Love* and labeled it is a novel which reflects the results of the war in one's soul. Aldoux Huxley touched upon the theme of psychoses of the post-war intelligentsia in *Crome Yellow* (1921) (Bradbury, 139) and many other authors who could not be seen as Modernists, were writing about typically modernist topics. For instance, Radclyffe Hall in her scandalous novel *The Well of Loneliness* (1928) described the love between two women and free sexuality. Moreover, the twenties could be described as the first truly modern decade as it produced the most important modernist novels and it modernized the new modern epics.

As mentioned before, James Joyce belonged to the most influential and significant literary voices of Modernism. He devoted his writing career to his love-hate relationship with Ireland and his older primary works dealt with this topic. What is more, his works from the beginning of the 20th century showed signs of Modernism. For example, in his *Dubliners* (1914) he described in 15 stories the destiny of middle and supper-middle class people living in Dublin. In this collection of stories, the fading voice of Realism meets modernist elements. Joyce's characters undergo analysis of the inner mind and mental processes and the usage of symbolism deepens the upcoming modernist influence. That is to say, *Dubliners* predicted Joyce's literary transition from Realism to Modernism. This influence is to be seen primarily in his masterpiece *Ulysses* (1922) in which he introduced a completely new approach to time-space order, breaking down the classical plot construction when he came up with a single day plotline. Childs argues that what Joyce and other Modernists did was to "focus on psychology, introspection and individual consciousness and on individuality rather than on a society, because any truth is subjective and highly individual" (32), thus, a typical modernist novel contains a third person narration, though the narrator is omniscient. Joyce's novel is then as a complex unit understood as a parody on the mythological story. Yet, thanks to several narrative

experiments, Joyce might sometimes be problematic to read, as he presents a completely natural flow of thoughts and free associations to the reader.

Virginia Woolf, the fundamental representative of British Modernism, found inspiration from Joyce and published many works of modernist fiction including *Jacob's Room* (1922), *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) or *To the Lighthouse* (1927). Just like Joyce, Virginia Woolf examined the characters' mind, inner life and free-associations. *Ulysses* along with *Mrs. Dalloway* introduced to the reader not only a completely new plotline, but there are also intertextual references to literature, history and philosophy. The flourishing experimentation affected not only the narrator and the characters but also the plotline. The reader might have noticed that it was no longer the lower-class characters and outcasts coming from the margins of society being typical for the novel in the era of Realism and Naturalism. The focus was shifted to the lives of the middle and upper-middle class characters in the modernist novel. The main characters usually represent well-educated intellectuals coming from the British elite.

When it comes to settings, modernist novels are frequently set in the big cities. It helped the writer to reflect or criticize the shift of industrialization and technological progress along with a massive wave of urbanization that Britain was experiencing with the new century. What is more, it supported the distinction between the public and private life of the characters. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, for instance, the reader witnesses and can put into contrast Clarissa's public life in London as she is about to give a party and act as a perfect hostess with her private, inner life as her mind is attacked by free associations and memories from her past.

Still, the modernist novels can differ from each other and it depended on the writer with regards to what extent his fiction was challenging to the reader. While reading Joyce, for example, might cause trouble, because it is easy to get lost in his stream of consciousness, Woolf's stream of thought represents more clearly build text and it is therefore more understandable. This is probably one of the reasons why Woolf was more accepted as a writer by critics at that time.

In general, the modernist novel showed four great preoccupations: "with the complexities of its own form, with the disorder behind the ordered surface of life and reality, with the freeing of narrative art from the determination of an onerous plot and with the great sensation of inward states of consciousness" (Bradbury and McFarlane, 393), the later of which is the subject of the following chapter.

After the modernist novel had reached its peak in the 20's, it started to lose its eminence in the 30's. This corresponds with the reason why Bradbury and McFarlane placed the modernist period between the years 1890-1930. The 30's made its name primarily thanks to the several negative and alarming political, economic and social changes in Europe such as the Great Depression in 1929 and the rise of totalitarian regimes in Europe. All these changes culminated with omnipresent anxiety and fear of another war and possible economical problems. Consequently, there arose a need for literature that would be relevant to the ongoing reality. The modernist writing techniques such as stream of consciousness could no more fulfil the reader's needs. Therefore, a satirical and documentary fiction and poetry engaged with moral and political issues. Nevertheless, it did not mean that the modernist novel and Modernism in general completely disappeared. It actually partly experienced its renaissance in the second half of the 20's century when Postmodernism made its name. Although this movement has brought completely new innovations and not all its literary characteristics mirror Modernism, it could be claimed without any hesitations that Modernism was the key inspiration for postmodernist writers, because the fundamental modernist narrative techniques such as stream of consciousness and the usage of symbolism or intertextuality were further developed and worked with during Postmodernism. The following chapters analyze and describe these techniques in detail, with a concrete examples and references to *Mrs. Dalloway*.

4 Stream of Consciousness

The new intellectual atmosphere and new theories created a breeding ground for the new narrative technique of the stream of consciousness. Liisa Dahl analyzed this technique in detail and introduced a new chapter about the psychological and philosophical background of the stream of consciousness, with a reference to James and Bergson who labeled it as a process of endless accretion and continuous change (16). This corresponds with Childs who claims that “Bergson’s conviction that experience is understood by intuition rather than rational reflection combined with Freud’s belief that past events shape the psyche, resulted in the view that reality only exists in subjective apprehensions becoming widespread in artistic circles” (50). The first stepping-stone to writers who wanted to examine the hidden emotions of their fictive characters and to enrich the novel with free associations was by then created.

Even though stream of consciousness is usually associated with the literature that came after the end of the 19th century and the philosophical backdrop of Henri Bergson and William James, this writing technique (or at least attempts to use it), appeared many centuries earlier. The first attempts to use it are noticeable in some Shakespearean soliloquies in which broken syntax illustrates this point (Törnqvist, 79-81). Another example to be mentioned is Laurence Sterne who treated time differently in his fiction *The Life and Opinions of Tristan Shandy, Gentleman* (1759) – many pages were devoted to a description of a few moments or reduced events that could normally only be depicted in a few lines (Dahl, 13). Another hint of the usage of the stream of thought can be also found in the works by Tolstoy or Dostoevsky. Childs points out that in Dostoevsky’s *Notes from Underground* (1864) the character’s mind is freely allowed to associate ideas in order to uncover insights (52). A similar “talkingcure” is to be seen in *Crime and Punishment* (1856). Moral dilemmas of the main character Raskolnikov are examined through an inner monologue being presented through the whole book.

At this point the need to distinguishing between the terms stream of consciousness and inner monologue arises. This is because the term “stream of consciousness” and “interior monologue” are sometimes seen as the same linguistic and literary feature. “Interior monologue is a technique by which the stream of consciousness of a character, as subject-matter, is presented. Thus, the interior monologue presents a further connotation; it can take place in individual mind” (Dahl, 9). Which means, the usage of stream of

consciousness was enabled by interior monologue, which can be understood as a verbal expression of the stream of consciousness. Dahl further explains that interior monologue (direct and indirect) along with internal analysis help the stream of consciousness to be realized (10). Some of the authors like Joyce preferred to use the stream of consciousness on the basis of direct monologue. That is to say, the participation of the author is minimized, and no emphasis is put on the narrator. A straightforward revelation of thoughts is presented without the reader in mind. The reader is then left on his own to reach an understanding, without being given any directions from the author (Humphrey, 25-26). For these reasons Joyce's later fiction written in the stream of consciousness may seem chaotic and harder to understand for the reader.

The indirect monologue, on the other hand, lets the narrator to be present and to regulate the stream of flow and instead of the first person, the second or the third person narration is used (Humphrey, 28-31). It is therefore more regulated and readable for the reader. Dahl labels Woolf's stream of consciousness as a compromise between indirect monologue and internal analysis (which is a summary of the character's impressions in the words of the author (11). Ultimately, Woolf's presentation of stream of consciousness is more semantically comprehensible and syntactically bound.

4.1 Stream of Consciousness in *Mrs. Dalloway*

It was one day in January when Virginia Woolf saw an almost insignificant spot on a wall. She decided to observe it many times because she could not decide what shape this spot had. Firstly, it looked like an ordinary black dot, then an iron nail hole, which suddenly turned into a cranny. It was this spot on a wall that made Woolf think about different scenarios of how it could have appeared there. However, Woolf was not interested in the physical appearance of the spot but the states of mind that this little mark provoked. These mental states are much more realistic than the outer reality (Hilský, 175-176). This was the moment that inspired Woolf and she decided to write a short story called *The Mark on the Wall* (1917) in which she did not use the traditional literary technique for the first time. Her novel *Mrs. Dalloway* is based on the same narrative technique, which serves the purpose of a link between the plotline and the character's states of mind.

Generally, Virginia Woolf delved into her characters' minds, into their thoughts. These thoughts may map everyday life in London or they can reveal something about the

characters' personal history. It is usually simple moments within an ordinary day that evoke thoughts and memories from the past. What is more, stream of consciousness affects not only the traditional syntax, but also forms the whole text construction. As the time and associations flow onwards and backwards and one impulse evokes another, there is no need to divide the novel into chapters. Even though the stream of consciousness can be chaotic, Woolf helps the reader to orientate in the text thanks to paragraphs and direct speech, which form and give limits to the unbound flow of thoughts. Unlike Joyce, Woolf did not quote directly from the mind of the characters but presented the subject-matter as experienced through her own personality (Dahl, 42). The narrator reminds the reader of his/her presence with help of the third person narration or usage of tags:

And then, thought Clarissa Dalloway, what a morning — fresh as if issued to children on a beach. What a lark! What a plunge! For so it had always seemed to her, when, with a little squeak of the hinges, which she could hear now, she had burst open the French windows and plunged at Bourton into the open air. How fresh, how calm, stiller than this of course, the air was in the early morning. (Woolf, 1)

This citation shows the third person narration, usage of tags such as 'she thought' and also proves that one impulse helps to develop another, one thought provokes another one. Comments on morning rekindle thoughts about mornings that Clarissa experienced in Bourton. Stream of consciousness is usually compared to a river. The water itself is the consciousness that freely drifts away, but it is still limited by the banks of speech, confined to the utterance of a narrator who is not omniscient. Here Childs notes: "Reality takes shape in the memory alone. Therefore, because individuals order reality differently from external time, fiction for the Modernists had to represent the individual's actual experience" (50), therefore any individual reality could be questioned.

What is more, Woolf can skip from one character to another, from one personal story and consciousness to another one. Childs explains: "In this way, Woolf conveys what she calls 'life'; that is, the narrative can slide from one consciousnesses to another for purposes of comparison and connection, evoking the idea of many minds operating individually but similarly" (171). Here is a perfect example in which Woolf skips from Septimus to Peter:

“I will tell you the time,” said Septimus, very slowly, very drowsily, smiling mysteriously. As he sat smiling at the dead man in the grey suit the quarter struck — the quarter to twelve.

And that is being young, Peter Walsh thought as he passed them. To be having an awful scene — the poor girl looked absolutely desperate — in the middle of the morning. (Woolf, 53)

For Woolf it is characteristic not only to skip from one consciousness to another but also to present more consciousness at the same time. One would expect that this would confuse the reader, but what is typical for Woolf is the fact that along with a dynamic language, she still wanted her work to achieve a uniformity. In other words, she wanted her fiction to be understandable. Her usage of stream of consciousness was more readable and understandable for the reader in comparison to Joyce, for example, whose stream of consciousness was so pure that it caused chaos for the reader who had problems to orient in the text.

Peter Childs lists three approaches to the usage of stream of consciousness in which Woolf and Joyce differ and which illustrate why Woolf’s style of writing is considered more accessible to the reader. Firstly, as it was demonstrated before, it is the usage of tags, such as ‘he thought’ or ‘she wondered’ that interrupt the ongoing inner monologue and thus create a space for sorting of the ideas and for getting accustomed to Woolf’s language (170). Here is another example from *Mrs. Dalloway*: “For he would say it in so many words, when he came into the room. Because it is a thousand pities never to say what one feels, he thought, crossing the Green Park and observing with pleasure...” (Woolf, 85).

Secondly, “the style of Woolf’s interior monologue is similar from character to character; sentences, syntax and vocabulary do not alter as much as they do in Joyce’s prose, and this helps to connect characters” (Childs, 170-171). It can be seen from the previous citation that Woolf does not make any difference when it comes to the inner analysis of emotions, every character undergoes a similar process of revealing their consciousness and feelings, no matter they are a male, female, main or a marginal character.

And thirdly, Woolf always works with the past tense for interior monologues, so as to stress the importance of personal history (Childs, 171). When the characters show to the reader part of what they experienced and what has an emotional value for them, past tense is used for this purpose. “She and Sally fell a little behind. Then came the most exquisite

moment of her whole life passing a stone urn with flowers in it. Sally stopped; picked a flower; kissed her on the lips” (Woolf, 26). This scene illustrates the past tense narrative when Clarissa recalls her common history with Sally Senton.

To continue with a description of Woolf’s stream of consciousness, it should also be pointed out that a variety of specific lexicology and syntax is a part of characteristics occurring with the stream of consciousness. Liisa Dahl dedicated a whole study essay to the linguistic features of the stream of consciousness. She comments primarily on concrete usage of vocabulary and syntax being typical for works of Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and Eugene O’Neil. A chapter that deals with ‘Woolfian’ stream of consciousness will help to illustrate what its typical features are in *Mrs. Dalloway* and what enables one to read Woolf without greater obstacles.

Firstly, at the core of the stream of consciousness is the fact that when an idea has been expressed, a link is needed to lead to another idea. Virginia Woolf uses repetitions as a connecting link between separate sequences in a monologue. Dahl further clarifies its purpose in the novel saying that this method helps Woolf to break the stream of associations into independent sections without distorting the impression of a continuous flow. The repetitive usage of anaphora is a device which helps to express an incomplete chain of thoughts that gradually develop in the speaker’s mind (49). It is especially the usage of anaphora and the conjunction ‘and’ that serve the purpose of a bridge connecting one sentence with another: “I am alone; I am alone! She cried, by the fountain in Regent’s Park (staring at the Indian and his cross) ...” (Woolf, 18), said desperate Rezia, full of hapless emotions.

In order to reproduce vivid impressions or to emphasize a general vision of a situation, Woolf enriches her novel by plenty of gerunds and verbal nouns (Dahl, 42). This is another prominent feature of stream of consciousness in *Mrs. Dalloway*:

In people’s eyes, in the swing, tramp, and trudge; in the bellow and the uproar; the carriages, motor cars, omnibuses, vans, sandwich men shuffling and swinging; brass bands; barrel organs; in the triumph and the jingle and the strange high singing of some airplane overhead was what she loved; life; London; this moment of June. (Woolf, 1)

In passages like this the reader may notice Woolf’s very dynamic language and the attempt to highlight daily situations.

Another specific element which makes Woolf's fiction more understandable is the power of varied suffixes that are used to demonstrate different meanings of sentences. For example, the suffixes -ness, -ity or -y can bear a special semantic function, namely to emphasize the summing-up of a situation (Dahl, 43). This can be illustrated in a scene when Peter Walsh walks through the Regent's Park: "Never had he seen London look so enchanting — the softness of the distances; the richness; the greenness; the civilization, after India, he thought, strolling across the grass" (Woolf, 53). From a syntactical point of view, this repetitive usage of the suffix -ness may also represent a rhythmical function in the text.

What is also remarkable is also the usage of plural nouns in series, which produces the effect of things being experienced as one (Dahl, 43). "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 [...]" (Woolf, 10). Woolf puts emphasis on experiencing certain moments or items being close to her characters— for example like flowers for Clarissa.

On the other hand, when it comes to a dialogue between Peter Walsh and Clarissa Dalloway, the plural makes anything abstract concrete (Dahl, 44). For instance: "...she had helped young people, who were grateful to her; had tried to be the same always, never showing a sign of all the other sides of her – faults, jealousies, vanities, suspicions, like this of Lady Bruton not asking her to lunch" (Woolf, 42). This is a very interesting linguistic tactics, which intensifies the emotional load between abstract objects and the characters.

Another typically 'Woolfian' strategy is the impressionist depiction of reality with several adjectives denoting or expressing painting, music or colors: "[...] old ladies on the tops of omnibuses spread their black parasols; here a green, here a red parasol opened with a little pop" (Woolf, 11). The usage of colours can bear a symbolic meaning, or it can leave a positive/ negative impression on the reader.

Subsequently, adjectives being favored by Woolf in *Mrs. Dalloway* are those ending with -ed. Woolf's intention was to use them to reproduce crystallized pictures in the stream of consciousness of the characters. If there is a backlog of adjectives, there is also an accompanying focus on a state not on a movement (Dahl, 45). The following example illustrates this: "Septimus Warren Smith, aged about thirty, pale-faced, beak-nosed, wearing brown shoes and a shabby overcoat, with hazel eyes which had that look of

apprehension in them which makes complete strangers apprehensive too” (Woolf, 11). It is also the direct characteristic of characters that makes Woolf accessible for the reader.

Another principal stylistic feature of Woolf’s style is observed in the adverbs ending in -ly which are frequently used in descriptions. In *Mrs. Dalloway* they predominantly concentrate on describing the manner of some procedure or event (Dahl, 45-46). Here is one of the examples:

At Hyde Park Corner on a tub she stands preaching; shrouds herself in white and walks penitentially disguised as brotherly love through factories and parliaments; offers help, but desires power; smites out of her way roughly the dissentient, or dissatisfied; bestows her blessing on those who, looking upward, catch submissively from her eyes the light of their own. (Woolf, 58)

To compare Woolf and Joyce, “Woolf’s intention of using these adverbs is clearly impressionistic– to produce an impression of an easy flow of associations in the mind. On the contrary, Joyce used these adverbs to make an artificial impression, not to illustrate the stream of consciousness” (Dahl, 45-46). That is to say, the reader may sympathize more with Woolf’s emphatic form of impression. In addition to this, in impressionistic writing exclamatory and interrogative sentences are typically employed for their emotional value and for an emphasis of a passage with one action focus (Dahl, 51). There are several examples of exclamations in the novel, but these are probably the best-known: “What a lark! What a plunge!” (Woolf, 1), or: “Not a word!” said Peter Walsh, and she laughed” (Woolf, 137). These exclamations correspond with the excitement or sincere confession that Clarissa and Peter felt at that moments.

The last peculiar play with words and sentences is to be found while observing the numberless fronting of sentence element. A scene in which Peter Walsh has to come to terms with his aging serves as an example: “A terrible confession it was (he put his hat on again), but now, at the age of fifty-three one scarcely needed people any more” (Woolf, 59). According to Dahl, the fronting and inversion have double function: firstly, it is the rhythmic function from the syntactical point of view and secondly, it reproduces the natural order of ideas arising in the character’s mind (47-48).

In general, Woolf’s language is highly lyrical, the length of the sentences illustrates the tempo with which associations proceed from character’s consciousness, but her literary

aims are obvious (Dahl, 69). It was primarily the stream-of-consciousness which brought Woolf's books to prominence and her name closely linked to this writing technique.

5 Multiple Perspective Narration in the Modernist Fiction

As mentioned before, in realist fiction there was no challenge to the narrative technique or the traditional temporal and local composition of a novel. Its story was based on a single perspective, linearity of the plotline and reliability of the narrator. In Modernism, on the other hand, as Childs reminds the reader, the novel is accompanied by stream of consciousness and free associations challenged by subjectivity, with a focus on inner life and experimentations with the narration. In this case narrative experiments refer to the usage of, flashbacks, jumps in time, repetitions or subjective leaps (67) and first of all for a multiple perspective narration. As a result, the traditional linear composition of the novel falls apart into individual fragments— into individual viewpoints.

The modernist confrontation with the realists' clear and linear narration emerged thanks to the revolutionary understanding of space by artists who presented their paintings at the *Manet and The Post-Impressionists* exhibition. Artists such as Picasso inspired Modernists in terms of the usage of collage or multiple perspectives (Childs, 114). Hence, Bergson's theory together with revolutionary transformations of artistic representation of space, culminated in a fragmented story, being analyzed from many points of view. In contrast with the realist novel is also the missing comprehensive introduction and conclusive ending.

At this point the question arises of what a multiple perspective narrative actually is. It could simply be characterized as a kind of narration or as a specific mode of storytelling. Its specifics lie in the fact that multiple or even divergent viewpoints are employed in order to present, evaluate and comment on the story. This polyperspectivity may fulfil a variety of different functions in literature. In some cases, it helps to highlight the perceptually, epistemologically or ideologically restricted nature of individual perspectives. Secondly, it draws attention to various kinds of differences or similarities between the viewpoints presented therein. Therefore, multiperspectivity in many cases serves as tool for portraying the relative character of personal viewpoints or perspectivity in general (Hartner, Introduction). Multiple perspective narration could be applied to the voice of a narrator and characters. In a modernist fiction, the third person narration is typically used. The narrator is omnipresent— he or she is enabled to look into characters' consciousness and thus present their thoughts. Nevertheless, he or she is not considered reliable as long as any reality can be questioned, and the story is narrated in the third

person, not the first one. The most prominent role of the narrator in a modernist novel is to comment on the ongoing situation, to guide the reader through the individual transitions between a single or shared consciousness of the characters. However, the distinction between the voice of the narrator and the characters might not often be so clear and straightforward in a modernist novel and the reader is sometimes forced to identify whose opinion or comment he is given.

Yet the point of view of the narrator and the characters is frequently separated by chronological and psychological time in the novel. In other words, any reality is possible to split into two perspectives— chronological time, which is understood as a time of history that can be measured by seconds, minutes, hours and clocks, and psychological time revealing feelings, opinions and personal history of the characters.

Talking about the chronological time, Childs claims that: “For many Modernists, it is the clock, which regulates and parcels out time that is to blame for the tyranny of space over the psychological flow of time in the mind” (50). It is often the clocks striking which serves as a mediator between two points of view— between the perspective of the narrator and the characters, between individual streams of consciousness and the psychological time. During the psychological time, there is a shift from an objective point of view (usually of the narrator) to a subjective one, which is exclusively regulated by the mind of the character. Childs remarks that such opposition leads to the conclusion that it is no longer facts from ordinary life that matter; it is the emotional load (3). Consequently, the time can adapt according to the intensity of a moment and cannot be measured by clocks anymore but by duration. On the other hand, it should be kept in mind that even when the reader looks into the consciousness of the character, it is still mediated by the narrator in third-person narration.

Similarly, another objection of Childs and Hilský is that the modernist novel plays with the contrast of public and private time. Public time can be understood as the objective point of view of the character, entailing observation of ordinary things during ordinary day, whereas inner or private time takes place in the character’s mind, in his or her consciousness. It is therefore subjective and while the presentation of public time to the reader may take only a few minutes, private time conversely, is able to cover even hours (Childs, 171). For this reason, it can be said that private time carries the importance and more informative function in the novel.

Nevertheless, it should not be therefore argued that the role of the narrator is less important than the role of the characters. It is the multiple perspective narrative including

every single viewpoint no matter whether a more informative voice of the character or more objective and regulating voice of the narrator is concerned.

5.1 Multiple Perspective Narration in *Mrs. Dalloway*

Talking about multiple perspective narration in *Mrs. Dalloway*, it should firstly be commented on what type of narrator Woolf presents and what his/her position and role in this novel is. Woolf is commonly considered to be using free indirect discourse, which also determines the position of the narrator within the story. FID is a stylistic device, which mediates the speech of the characters and designates the relationship between the narrator and the characters. Secondly, it could be also characterized as a compromise between direct and indirect discourse. As Groot explains in his thesis, when the narrator uses direct discourse, first person narration and present tense are involved. What is more, there is no subordinator, there is only the reported and reporting clause and the details about time space (so called deixis) are very close to the narrator— he/she speaks about “here”, “now”, “today” etc. On the other hand, indirect discourse represents third person past tense narration, the usage of subordinators is optional and the approach to deixis is far more distant (19-21). That is to say, the narrator in *Mrs. Dalloway* mingles these two discourses together and as a result, the reader mostly deals with third person past narration, but the deixis is not distant, and the subordinator is absent. Nevertheless, this could not be applied as a rule to the whole novel, as long as Woolf sometimes uses reporting clauses just like in the opening sentence: “Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself” (Woolf, 1). In this case the primary intention of the narrator was to introduce the main protagonist of the novel.

Another reason why Woolf decided to work with free indirect discourse is that she did not want her narrator to be too dominant in the story (as it is typical for the indirect discourse narration), but she still wanted his/her (because her narrator stays anonymous the whole time) voice to be heard and not become faded in the tangle of many consciousness of the characters. Hoff comments on this peculiarity:

The narrator [...] must almost always share the stage with the characters it seems, expressing their narrated focalizations, hardly getting a word in edgewise as conventional narrators usually can do. Still, narratorial intrusions occasionally come in

the form of parentheses—sometimes occupying an entire paragraph, sometimes excavating only a part of the paragraph, sometimes merely claiming a small space in the middle of a sentence. (256)

That is to say, this novel does not only consist of a never-ending flow of streams of consciousness, it also enables the narrator to take an important part in the story narration. The narrator is allowed to be heard as he/she gives descriptions and comments about the ongoing situation. At the same time, it is FID, which mediates the private look into the character's minds.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, a multiple perspective narration refers to the individual observation of an ordinary day in London and to the flashbacks in time when the characters recall their past experiences. The reader is given the story through the eyes of many characters, as the narrator looks into their consciousness. Every character is unique and observes the reality differently. The next paragraphs comment on the characteristics of Woolf's narrative tactics when she skips from the narrator to the characters, so as to attain multiperspectivity.

The whole story can be fragmented into two parts that are presented to the reader. Firstly, it is the story narrated during the present—public and chronological time. Clarissa Dalloway a middle-aged, upper-class woman and the main protagonist of this novel is experiencing another day in London. Here the narrator follows the traditional chronological timeline that is linear and regulated by the periodic striking of Big Ben. However, the unstoppable stream of thought interrupts the linearity of public time and there is a time conversion from public to private – psychological time. In a private time, as Childs claims, Woolf uses a unique method in constructing her characters. She calls this technique “tunneling” in her diaries. She would burrow into the characters' past in order to unearth their history. As a result, her characters are revealed to the reader as split beings living in the past and the present at the same time (165-166). Woolf said she wanted to examine an ordinary mind during an ordinary day. “How I dig out beautiful caves behind my characters: I think that gives exactly what I want; humanity, humor, depth. The idea is that the caves shall connect, and each comes to daylight at the presentment” (R. Woolf and V. Woolf, 60). Thus, the inner examination of the characters is a connecting element in the novel. Her characters share the public time, whereas their inner examination of the mind takes place during private time.

To put it another way, multiperspectivity might occur during the public – chronological time when the characters are living in the present moment and private, psychological time, which reveals the magic of personal outlooks on one’s own history and experiences from the past. What is more, the beauty of the narration of this novel lies in the fact that the role of observer can be attributed not only to Clarissa, but also to other characters in the book. Although Clarissa’s mind might seem dominant, Peter’s, Septimus’, Richard’s, Sally’s or Rezia’s could not be labeled as secondary, as long as any viewpoint is unique and highly subjective. Woolf writes her novel as she skips from one point of view to another just like in the scene in which Rezia and Septimus are sitting on a bench in Regent’s Park and a young lady called Maisie Johnson appears on the scene:

“Oh look,” she implored him. But what was there to look at? A few sheep. That was all. The way to Regent’s Park Tube station — could they tell her the way to Regent’s Park Tube station — Maisie Johnson wanted to know. She was only up from Edinburgh two days ago.

“Not this way — over there!” Rezia exclaimed, waving her aside, lest she should see Septimus.

Both seemed queer, Maisie Johnson thought. Everything seemed very queer. (Woolf, 20)

Firstly, the story is narrated through the perspective of Rezia being despondent because of her husband’s state and as Maisie leaves the couple behind, Woolf moves the reader’s attention to her mind and viewpoint, which in comparison to Rezia’s is very optimistic. This proves that one moment or reality could be perceived completely differently.

Furthermore, Woolf works with individual consciousness but also with the common consciousness— in other words, with common viewpoints, when a group of people is let to observe a specific feature within time: ““Kreemo,” murmured Mrs. Bletchley, like a sleep-walker. With his hat held out perfectly still in his hand, Mr. Bowley gazed straight up. All down the Mall people were standing and looking up into the sky. As they looked the whole world became perfectly silent” (Woolf, 15-16). This scene illustrates that here the narration focuses only on one moment when a group of Londoners observes a flying airplane, trying to find out what letters it is making in the sky. This is a typically ‘Woolfian’ method of narration. There is a scene from public time that turns into shared time and the individual points of view mingle.

Similarly, the internal mental time of the characters may be interrupted by a shared time. Childs believes that the writer proceeds as follows: “narrative uses the distribution of the clock chimes in the air to form links across space: different places can be connected by a common chronology, which must always be public, external, shared” (171-172). In the following citation the clocks striking helps the narrator to catch the characters— namely Clarissa, Warren and Rezia in time, it brings them together.

It was precisely twelve o'clock; twelve by Big Ben; whose stroke was wafted over the northern part of London; blent with that of other clocks, mixed in a thin ethereal way with the clouds and wisps of smoke, and died up there among the seagulls — twelve o'clock struck as Clarissa Dalloway laid her green dress on her bed, and the Warren Smiths walked down Harley Street. Twelve was the hour of their appointment. Probably, Rezia thought that was Sir William Bradshaw's house with the grey motor car in front of it. The leaden circles dissolved in the air. (Woolf, 69)

Here the narrator comments on what her characters are going at a particular time, as the clock strikes another hour. Similarly, Woolf's strategy is to come up with a character's thoughts when a clock begins striking the hour. Their thoughts are reported for several pages or paragraphs and then there is a return to the character's awareness of the clock finishing striking (Childs, 171). Therefore, Woolf can be praised for her genial ability to use the fragmented narration in a multiple perspective with an aim to challenge and distort the timeline, but also to demonstrate the modernist outlook on reality. It is the observer's point of view that matters and that can be completely different, yet, sometimes also very similar, for example, when Septimus' or Clarissa's consciousness deals with the question of death.

6 Symbolism and Modernism

In literature, the usage of symbolism appeared many times before Modernism. Its official origins are to be found in works of Baudelaire and generally in French symbolism in the 19th century. Childs is of the view that together with the tendency towards dense, poetical imagery and an emphasis on metaphor, Modernists are keen on using symbols for their allegorical or representational effect. They adopt the belief that a symbol or metaphor should not have the denotative but rather a connotative meaning (190-191). The meaning that the symbol conveys is not revealed to the reader, it is hidden between the lines and the reader is forced to solve the riddle of its importance and purpose in the novel.

This part of the thesis will focus on the usage of symbolism used by Virginia Woolf who commented on symbol value and purpose in her diaries and *The Common Reader* series. Woolf felt that symbols are not used to inform the reader but only to suggest and evoke. The right way to use symbols is not to present them in set pieces, but coherently; they should be connected and build a complex system. The reason is because when they are used in set pieces they lose originality and evocative power (Woolf qtd. In Thakur, 3-4). To further comment on what Woolf meant by this opinion, it should be mentioned that even though Modernists were strongly influenced by Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung, Woolf's symbols are the opposite of Freud's dream symbols or Jung's archetypes. Dream symbols and archetypes are the results of human unconsciousness, they result from insanity or hidden emotions. Woolf, on the other hand, admits she 'prepares' her symbols (Thakur, 4). This probably accounts for why Woolf's symbols appear repetitively in her novel, they provoke the reader's emotions and senses. To put it simply, not only did Woolf count on the usage of symbols in her novels, but also on several images that attack the reader's visual, auditory or taste senses. It is primarily the visual imagery— a vivid usage of colours and shapes.

Nevertheless, a connection between Woolf's symbols and Freudian theory about mental diseases may be traced. Thakur argues that one of the reasons why Woolf was using symbols is that "she was constantly subjected to illness, acute influenza and violent headaches. Long drawn-out illnesses, like highly emotional stresses, have a great sensitizing effect on the mind" (8). In other words, symbolism helped Woolf to communicate. Her illness supplied her ideas about concrete symbols that reflected her ill

mind later in her fiction. It also reflected the tragic destiny of Septimus Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway*.

6.1 The Role of Symbols in *Mrs. Dalloway*

Woolf is known among critics and her readers for the usage of manifold symbols. There are plenty of them and a single thesis could be written about this topic, therefore, only some of the symbols playing the role of leitmotifs will be listed and commented on in this subchapter.

Woolf prefers to use concrete items like cars, plane or flowers as oppose to abstract ones. Childs believes it is because: “A symbol relies on the one hand on having a concrete, real and also an elusive, suggestive, complex of signifieds. Symbolism is often used as a “method of uniting the internal and the external or projecting the internal onto the external” (191). Woolf uses symbolism as another tool to link her characters and to come up with something ordinary, with a concrete item such as airplane to demonstrate a hidden meaning. Or to mention a single symbolic item repetitively throughout the story – for example Big Ben – that can carry more than one connotative meaning and can refer to more than one signifié.

It is possible to notice the strong intention to enrich the novel with plenty of symbols starting with the beginning of the novel. Clarissa’s passion is flowers and their significance and symbolic value may be apparent from the very first page. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, flowers mirror the character’s personality, they help Clarissa to classify and judge other people around her on the basis of their attitude to flowers; the way they handle and perceive them. To illustrate this claim there is a scene in retrospective when Clarissa demonstrates her adoration for the way her former love Sally Senton arranges flowers:

Sally’s power was amazing, her gift, her personality. There was her 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. The effect was extraordinary — coming in to dinner in the sunset. (Woolf, 25)

Sally is Clarissa's contrast, she is spontaneous, beautiful and she is the person whom is easy to remember even among many people. It could be said that Clarissa is an ordinary woman; she is not overwhelmingly beautiful, nor intelligent, she would not attract people's attention, and this may correspond to the fact that she loves roses the most; roses which may be considered as a cliché. On the other hand, provocative Sally arranges flowers that have never been seen together. Thakur suggests Sally Senton surrounded by flowers "becomes a symbol of freedom-loving rebel who break the rigid senseless conventionalities" (61). Consequently, Clarissa looks up to Sally and falls in love with her and when they kiss for the first time, flowers are mentioned again. They are a significant element present in both the past and the present: "Then came the most exquisite moment of her whole life, passing a stone urn with flowers in it. Sally stopped; picked a flower; kissed her on the lips" (Woolf, 26). To put it another way, flowers can evoke and cherish strong feelings and memories from the past.

Moreover, the flowers serve as a label of prestige, they help to distinguish upper-classes from the lower classes. From the very beginning it is obvious that Clarissa comes from the upper-classes and that she uses floriography to comment on people's behavior. In contrast, Miss Kilman, who has never been Clarissa's favorite, is portrayed as a woman that does not understand flowers at all, she even smashes the flowers and her personality can be thus understood as rather boyish and non-tenacious. The ignorant way she handles flowers matches her dress code and status in society.

To comment further on floriography, it is interesting that the language of flowers was mainly dominant during the Victorian era in which floriography became commonly used to convey secreted messages that the strict and puritan Victorian morality avoided sharing openly ("*Floriography: The Language of Flowers in the Victorian Era*"). In a similar way, flowers also help to overcome communicative barriers in this novel. For instance, Richard Dalloway a typical noble and intelligent British gentleman who was born in the Victorian era uses the language of flowers to express his love towards his wife. Instead of telling her he loves her, he gives her flowers:

He was holding out flowers — roses, red and white roses. (But he could not bring himself to say he loved her; not in so many words.)

But how lovely, she said, taking his flowers. She understood; she understood without his speaking; his Clarissa. (Woolf, 86)

Clarissa is given roses— red being symbol of love and passion and white roses that could evoke faithfulness and honesty.

Flowers may also connote a celebration or a party. This is another theme and symbol in the story. In concrete terms, a party would evoke upper-class celebration, it is an opportunity for Clarissa to please her friends, to prove she is a perfect hostess. This is mirrored in a passage when Clarissa gets dressed for the party, she puts on a green dress, mends it, collecting the folds together. Thakur comments this passage: “Her mending the dress, collecting the folds together suggests her drawing her parts together and not showing the other side of her— faults, jealousies, vanities, suspicions— the tear in her personality” (69). This green dress not only corresponds with Clarissa’s personality, but it also supports her in a role of a perfect hostess, a perfect hostess that any party requires.

The story’s climax culminates at the very end when Septimus commits suicide and almost all the characters, sharing one past, come to the party because of Clarissa. The party gathers the characters together and reveals personal facts about them. Not only is the party a symbol for gathering but also for a change. In this case, change refers to the character’s lives and personalities, such as to now settled Sally Senton who used to be wild and provocative or to the death of Septimus.

What is interesting about *Mrs. Dalloway* is the fact that Woolf, as a Modernist, did criticize female/male stereotypes, but she actually points them out repetitively in the novel. Thakur notes that if flowers, the green dress and the party correspond with Mrs. Dalloway’s femininity and stability, then Peter’s pocket knife is a symbol for his wild soul, a longing for a journey but also for his uneasiness, his various emotions and changing personality (67). At the beginning, he said he preferred men to cauliflowers. In the end, however, it is suggested that his lone wolf character changed because he had fallen in love with a girl in India— purposely named Daisy. The party also reveals that Sally Senton changed in a similar way. When she unexpectedly appears at the party, Clarissa and Peter are surprised by the fact that her elusive and free spirit had settled down and started a family. “I have five sons!” she told him. Lord, Lord, what a change had come over her! The softness of motherhood; its egotism too” (Woolf, 136). Again, people are changing, and time is fleeting. It is changing from minute to minute and it cannot be preserved, only in a human memory can cherished and nostalgic memories about the past be rekindled.

The symbolism of time connects the characters. The time in the novel is measured by Big Ben. As it strikes, seconds, minutes and hours are measured and confined to the present only. Thus, the original title for the book was meant to be “The Hours”. “Clarissa

was positive, a particular hush, or solemnity; an indescribable pause; a suspense (but that might be her heart, affected, they said, by influenza) before Big Ben strikes. There! Out it boomed. First a warning, musical; then the hour, irrevocable. The leaden circles dissolved in the air” (Woolf, 1). The sound of the Big Ben is omnipresent, and it sometimes may sound ominous, reminding the characters of their mortality.

However, Woolf refers not only to unchanging truths but also to the changes that came with the new century. When the characters are part of public time and space, when they are standing on the streets, cars or planes in the air demonstrates the consequences of the great changes in technology. As Morris notes “*Mrs. Dalloway* contains references to every form of modern traffic: not just cars but buses, taxis, vans, an ambulance, a plane and the tube” (66). These symbols appear repetitively through the story.

All things considered, it was not only ordinary items such as flowers or cars that bear a symbolic value, it was also the characters portrayed in the novel. Woolf wanted to represent life and death, sanity and insanity and to show them work at their most intense (Woolf qtd. in Thakur, 55). This vision was gained in *Mrs. Dalloway* primarily thanks to the used symbols.

7 Intertextuality and Modernism

It was mentioned before, as Modernism made its name in literary history, it did not only bring literary innovations and preferences in terms of stream of consciousness, play with time-space order, flashbacks, usage of symbols, but also pastiche, collage and intertextuality. With the boom of popular-culture the need of creating more complex and complicated texts arose. Modernists aimed to challenge the grand narrative by supporting their novels by direct or indirect references to other literary works from the history.

Intertextuality works on a principle when a direct or indirect citation from another literary work is used. Intertextuality provides the writer with ability to highlight, hide or to multiply the meaning of motifs or themes in the fiction. Graham argues that the challenge for the reader arises as he/she has to seek to find a meaning which lies inside. In order to delve into the true meaning of the story, the reader is forced to interpret the text and sometimes read between the lines (1-2). Popular culture, on the contrary, would not pursue such strategy, its meaning would be more straightforward. Nevertheless, sometimes one text becomes so much crucial for another one and the reading thus becomes a process of moving between texts. Graham literally says the “meaning becomes something which exists between a text and all the other texts to which it refers and relates, moving out from the independent text into a network of textual relations” (2). What is more, intertextuality does not only cover the reference to history, it also uses the historical moment to comment on current situation. Therefore, the usage of several allusions, quotations or parodies is included with a purpose to critically refer to a concrete moment or to deepen a suggested problematic from the presence or the past.

Furthermore, the usage of intertextuality in Modernism prepared ground for its repeated and abundant usage in postmodernist fiction. However, intertextuality could be labelled as problematic for the reader, as Childs notes– the reader gets lost in the text during finding a context or meaning for the title or the words in the text as long as the modernist experimentation is laden with richly allusive and ambiguous prose (93). On the other hand, intertextuality is an inevitable and inherent narrative technique that can be traced also in the fiction by Virginia Woolf.

7.1 Intertextuality in *Mrs. Dalloway*

The purpose of intertextuality in *Mrs. Dalloway* may vary. It often mirrors what has just been said, the character's personality or attitude towards some problems. Secondly, it usually shows the contrast between the past and the present and most importantly, it is another technique, which enables the author to unify the novel, to build a logical bridge between individual themes and characters. When Woolf wants to direct the reader's attention to the intertextuality directly, she simply isolates a citation by blank lines in the text. However, it is up to the reader to find out where this citation comes from. Woolf does not mention the author or their literary work.

To give an example of a passage in which Woolf uses intertextuality, in order to highlight the situation, to put into words what has just happened or what is about to happen with help of a quotation separated from the rest of the text, there is a scene from the beginning of the novel in which Woolf profusely references Shakespeare, specifically his *Cymbeline*: "Fear no more the heat o' the sun. Nor the furious winter's rages" (Woolf, 7), says Clarissa out loud when she reads from an open book in a shop window. Mauck explicates that this quotation comes from one passage in *Cymbeline* in which a funeral song begins. Consequently, these lines appear repetitively in *Mrs. Dalloway* and just like in *Cymbeline* they help to set a tone of loss and tragedy, in this case with reference to the post-World War I atmosphere in London. What is more, this quotation becomes a sort of mantra for Clarissa who is concerned with her aging and death (Mauck, 340). This mantra returns in the middle of the book and at the end when Clarissa gets to know that Septimus Smith killed himself. Thinking of this mantra indicates her reaction to this death— she does not regret this loss, she understands why Septimus had done such a thing because sometimes death is the only way to escape: "The young man had killed himself; but she did not pity him [...] Fear no more the heat of the sun. [...] She felt somehow very like him – the young man who had killed himself. She felt glad that he had done it; thrown it away" (Woolf, 145). The theme of death is present in the whole story. The extract from *Cymbeline* highlights its omnipresence and similar mental states of Clarissa and Septimus.

Not only did Woolf find *Cymbeline* to be an important support of her story, but also other works by Shakespeare, for example *Anthony and Cleopatra* and *Othello*. An extract from *Othello* appears at the end of the book when Clarissa thinks about Septimus' death and her own mortality: "But this young man who had killed himself — had he plunged holding his treasure? 'If it were now to die, 'twere now to be most happy,' she had said to

herself once, coming down in white” (Woolf, 134). This is another moment when the theme of death is a connector of two characters. Wyatt explains that this quote resembles the scene from *Othello* in which he speaks these words just before the consummation of his marriage to Desdemona and when he is also willing to accept death (Wyatt, 449) so as is Clarissa at the end.

What is more, Wyatt even labels Septimus Smith as an extreme example of a character being created by literary allusions (440). Just like Clarissa adores flowers, he adores books. Even when he went to the war, literature was reflecting his zeal: “Septimus was one of the first to volunteer. He went to France to save an England which consisted almost entirely of Shakespeare’s plays and Miss Isabel Pole in a green dress walking in a square” (Woolf, 64). Despite his original enthusiasm, Septimus undergoes an emotional change due to the horrors in the war he was forced to witness. As he goes mad, literature reflects Septimus’ feelings and characteristic and what is more, it helps him to understand the life after war, to perceive it in his own way. The next quotation demonstrates that Septimus sees his wife like Dante saw Matilda: “She was a flowering tree; and through her branches looked out the face of a lawgiver, who had reached a sanctuary where she feared no one” (Woolf, 107). Wyatt explains the flowering tree comes from Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, from his image of Matilda (140). Woolf lets her characters cite authors they read. It is directly mentioned in the novel that Clarissa Dalloway read Shakespeare and Septimus Smith could read Dante quite easily. This is another point to comment on because the change of personality or the contrast between the more optimistic past and the decadent, rather negative or sentimental present is also demonstrated in the information about the characters’ favourite books or usual reading. Wyatt comments on the natural development of the taste in literature in a negative way. He claims that literary preferences mirror the decay of life through the years and that they also reflect the change of the characters’ personalities in an ironical way. While Sally in her youth was a devotee of Marry Shelley and William Morris and was strongly opposed to any marriage, conversely, she later ends up married with a wealthy captain of industry who is said to be rather critical about her youthful radicalism. Similarly, Peter’s former enthusiasm for eighteenth-century rationalism of T. A. Addison or A. Pope turns into sentimentality in his maturity. And finally, Clarissa, she was very keen on reading philosophy or poetry when she was young and influenced by Peter’s and Sally’s taste in literature, now, on the contrary, she hardly reads (140). “She knew nothing; no language, no history; she scarcely read a book now, except memoirs in bed...” (Woolf, 7). It could be claimed that Woolf used this

problematic issue in the novel purposely so as to criticize it, as Wyatt believes, or, on the other hand, to show that the progress from more idyllic, radical or provocative to more settled, realistic and sentimental mature self is absolutely natural.

As commented on above, the purpose of intertextuality in *Mrs. Dalloway* may vary and it can even multiply the number of themes or messages that this novel conveys. It unifies the novel and the characters within.

8 Conclusion

The main objective of this thesis was to introduce, comment on and provide examples of selected modernist narrative techniques used in the novel *Mrs. Dalloway*. All of them contributed to the final form and content of this novel, which was notably different from what the reader was used to during the literary period of Realism.

The first chapter described the origins of the stream of consciousness and analyzed its typical characteristic thanks to which the whole story is very subjective. In *Mrs. Dalloway* the narrator does not act as a person who judges, but as a person who mediates and presents not only the outer but also the inner life of the characters. In a modernist novel, it is the personal history and mental processes that matter. Even though the ongoing continuum of thoughts is from time to time interrupted by the presence of the narrator, it is the processes in the character's mind and freely related associations which rekindle memories from the past, which has the dominant role and literary value in this novel. Not only is Woolf's reader allowed to investigate the consciousness of one character but also into the consciousness of more characters which results in an offering of multiple points of view from the novel and multiple perspectives that are presented through the third-person narration.

As a result, the continuous flow of thought is not divided into traditional chapters being labeled with names or numbers, the reader is only provided with few blank spaces at the end of passages in the novel which might fulfill the function of a traditional chapter to some degree.

The next part revolves theoretically and practically around the usage of manifold symbols Woolf was very fond of in her novel. She enjoyed challenging her reader with various usage of symbols. Still, she chose this narrative technique also with a view to highlight the allegorical and representative effectiveness of the novel. According to Woolf symbols such as flowers, cars, a pocket knife or Big Ben are here to suggest and to evoke, to link the characters. They serve a purpose of a hint that helps the reader to orient in the text and understand the novel as a unit and in the sociological and historical context.

Similarly, Woolf enriched her novel with several references to other literary works. Letting her characters cite Shakespeare (which is the most notable for the reader) or Dante reflects their social status and personal interests. Secondly, it refers to seemingly ordinary things from the ongoing present or the past. Thirdly, they serve the purpose of literary

bridges between the characters and their personalities and lastly, they challenge the readers.

All things considered, all the mentioned narrative experiments and hallmarks of Modernism helped to present a completely new dimension of a narration from what was offered to the reader before Modernism. Moreover, all these changes influenced and prepared a breeding ground for post fiction. Even though Woolf presented only a day in a life story, she significantly contributed to awakening and celebrating the new perspective of literature and her *Mrs. Dalloway* is therefore deservedly considered a classic.

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