

*Ministry of Higher Education
And Scientific Research
University of Al-Qadisiyah
College of Education
Department of English*

Water Imagery in Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway

Submitted By

*Hassan Jameel Khuhdair
fMansi*

Mansi Khalfih

Supervised By

Lect. Ahmed Abdul Hussein Chiyad

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Dedication

To our prophet Muhammad (peace and prayer upon him)

To our sisters and my brothers

To our special friends with whom we spent the best
moments

To all people who know us.

To anyone who respects and loves us .

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Abstract

The study based on the thesis that Virginia Woolf's symbolism in *Mrs. Dalloway* not only is a way to enrich the writing and create an added layer of interest, but is a vital part of the novel and that without the symbolism, communicating central views and ideas to the reader would not have been possible. The focus of the essay is to analyze different categories of symbolism such as characters used to criticize aspects of society, references to nature and objects that carry symbolic meaning, and to find out how symbolism is used to create meaning beyond words in *Mrs. Dalloway*.

The study consists of two chapters. Chapter one deals with Virginia Woolf's life and career .Chapter two sheds light on Water Imagery in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs.Dalloway*

Finally the conclusion sums up the findings of the study.

Chapter One

Virginia Woolf's Life and Career

Virginia Woolf was an English author and one of the preeminent innovators of the twentieth century. She was born in 25 January 1882 in London. Her guardians were Sir Leslie Stephen and Julia Prinsep Duckworth Stephen. Leslie Stephen was a prominent student of history, creator, commentator and mountain dweller. He was an establishing supervisor of the Dictionary of National Biography, a work that would impact Woolf's later trial account .¹

Woolf was taught by her folks in their educated and all around associated family. Her folks had each been hitched beforehand and been widowed, and, therefore, the family unit contained the offspring of three relational unions. The passing of Virginia's dad in 1904 incited her most disturbing breakdown and she was quickly institutionalized . She invested energy recouping at her companion Violet Dickinson's home, and at her auntie Caroline's home in Cambridge .²

Throughout her life, Woolf was plagued by periodic mood swings .For the duration of her life, Woolf was tormented by occasional emotional episodes and related diseases. She spent three brief periods in 1910, 1912 and 1913 at Burley House. Though this shakiness regularly influenced her social life, her scholarly profitability proceeded with few breaks for the duration of her life. After the

demise of their dad and Virginia's second apprehensive breakdown. Woolf came to know Lytton Strachey, Clive Bell, Rupert Brooke, Saxon Sydney-Turner, Duncan Grant, Leonard Woolf, John Maynard Keynes, David Garnett, and Roger Fry, who together framed the core of the scholarly hover of journalists and craftsmen known as the Bloomsbury Group .³

A few individuals from the gathering accomplished reputation in 1910 with the Dreadnought scam, which Virginia took part in camouflaged as a male Abyssinian regal. Her entire 1940 chat on the deception was found and is distributed in the diaries gathered in the extended version of *The Platform of Time* (2008). Virginia wedded the author Leonard Woolf on 10 August 1912. Despite his low material status .⁴

Woolf started writing professionally in 1900. The first of her compositions to be acknowledged for production, "Haworth, November 1904", a journalistic record of a visit to the Brontë family home at Haworth, was distributed secretly in a ladies' supplement to an administrative diary, *The Guardian* in December 1904. From 1905 she composed for *The Times Literary Supplement* .⁵

Her first novel, *The Voyage Out*, was distributed in 1915 by her stepbrother's engraving, Gerald Duckworth and Company Ltd. This novel was initially titled *Melymbrosia*, yet Woolf over and over changed the draft. A prior adaptation of *The Voyage Out* has been reproduced by Woolf researcher Louise DeSalvo and is currently accessible to people in general under the proposed title. DeSalvo contends that a significant number of the progressions Woolf made in the content were in light of changes in her own life .⁶

Woolf went ahead to distribute books and papers as an open scholarly to both basic and well known achievement. Quite a bit of her work was independently published through the Hogarth Press. She is viewed as a noteworthy twentieth-century author and one of the principal modernists. Woolf is viewed as a noteworthy trailblazer in the English dialect. In her works she tried different things with continuous flow and the hidden mental and in addition enthusiastic thought processes of characters. Woolf's notoriety declined strongly after World War II, yet her significance was re-set up with the development of women's activist feedback in the 1970s .⁷

Virginia Woolf's peculiarities as a fiction author have had a tendency to cloud her focal quality. Her books are very test: an account, every now and again uneventful and ordinary, is refracted and once in a while relatively disintegrated in the characters' open cognizance. Extreme lyricism and complex virtuosity wire to make a world overabundant with sound-related and visual impressions. Woolf has frequently been credited with continuous flow composing nearby her innovator counterparts like James Joyce and Joseph Conrad .⁸

Virginia Woolf was among the writers who lived and saw the pivotal change, both in history and writing, from the Victorian time to the innovation of the twentieth century. New ideas, belief systems, arrangements, advancements, wars and speculations were brought into life. Individuals wanted to make

developments and to credit to them particular names to redesign the world after the change of the First World War (1914-1918).⁹

Women began to force their fingerprints in different areas. In England, for instance, by taking an interest in the war, the Suffragette Movement utilized patriotism to get the privilege of vote. Virginia Woolf is the best recalled lady author of the period in view of her awesome commitment to writing. She is regularly considered as a women's activist author and faultfinder .¹⁰

An assortment of themes originating from Victorian belief systems, which were accordingly destroyed by the Great War, are depicted in Virginia's books. For instance, Virginia brings up the issue of what constitutes worthy conduct for men and shows how the Great War developed a huge scope of once prohibited options that were getting to be plainly middle of the road. She likewise indicates how gendered solution and training kept ladies in a sub-par position in the public eye. Through concentrating on the connection amongst death and time, Virginia emphasizes how war setbacks changed the way British society saw life and passing.¹¹

Class hierarchy and social differences, and the importance of the ruling class are also satirized. Having touched on each of these topics, Virginia brings the changes occurring in Great Britain to her readers' attention. British society after the war, as indicated by many historical sources, had a perceived inclination toward revolution. This inclination stemmed from the want for change, change that was seen as long over due .¹²

Virginia Woolf is a writer whom doesn't waste time with a lengthy introduction: she goes straight to the point in few sentences. Her style is very informal, which is very pleasant for the reader. She switches off between using the pronouns "we" and "you," making the reader feel included, which makes the reader pay more attention to her context. Virginia also uses commands, "Do not dictate to your author; try to become him. Be his fellow-worker and accomplice." Her use of commands contribute to her informal style, proving that she does not try to "sugar coat," but instead get straight to the point.¹³

Virginia's syntax consists of long, complex sentences separated by hyphens or commas. She uses allusions to Defoe, Jane Austen, and Thomas Hardy multiple times to support what she is saying. Finally, Virginia also uses metaphors in her writing: "The thirty-two chapters of a novel--if we consider how to read a novel first--are an attempt to make something as formed and controlled as a building." In this quote, Virginia compares the chapters of a novel to a building—both needing to be solid and concrete, never changing and without question. Overall, Virginia Woolf is a talented author that included many literary devices in her writing.¹⁴

Virginia Woolf uses establish her idea of true reality and reject a whole tradition of literature: they are chosen so as to have an air of modernity, to seem intangible, vague and shapeless. The events that traditionally make up a story are no longer important. What matters is the impression they make on the characters who experience them. In Woolf's novels the omniscient narrator disappears and the point of view shifts inside the characters' minds through flashbacks, associations of ideas, and momentary impressions presented as a continuous flux.¹⁵

Woolf's technique has also been defined as "impressionist" in her attempt to seize the impressions of the individual consciousness, in the use of light and colors. Her use of words is almost poetic; they are allusive and emotional. Rhyme, refrain and metaphor are the main features of Woolf's poetic style, together with fluidity; in other words that quality of language which flows following the most intricate thoughts and stretches to express the most intimate feelings .¹⁶

The intensity of Virginia Woolf's poetic vision elevates the ordinary, sometimes banal settings often wartime environments of most of her novels. For example, *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), *Orlando* (1928) is one of Virginia Woolf's lightest novels, *The Waves* (1931), *Flush: A Biography* (1933) is a part-fiction, part-biography of the cocker spaniel owned by Victorian poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Her last work, *Between the Acts* (1941), sums up and magnifies Woolf's chief preoccupations¹⁷

Subsequent to finishing the original copy of her last novel, *Between the Acts*, Woolf fell into a despondency like what she had before experienced. The beginning of World War II, the decimation of her London home amid the Blitz, and the cool gathering given to her account of her late companion Roger Fry all declined her condition until the point when she was not able work .¹⁸

Woolf's position in the public eye was differentiating. In one side, she originated from a well off and special family. She delighted in distinguished existence with hirelings. In the opposite side, she and her better half worked hard and viewed themselves as expert individuals. The occasions of her life influenced so much her works. Her journals demonstrate that she was fixated on the memory of her dead guardians for quite a while until the point when her mid-forties when

she composed a representation of them and their marriage in her novel *To the Lighthouse*.¹⁹

For whatever is left of her life Virginia was constantly at risk to experience the ill effects of grave sorrows, apprehensive pressures and physical disease, for example, anorexia. The frantiness of Septimus Warren Smith in *Mrs Dalloway* and his treatment on account of the specialists are firmly in light of her own understanding, a blend of affection, disease and misery that wrapped her life. The sense and sensibility of Virginia Woolf stream in her books.²⁰

Being a modern novelist, Virginia Woolf's enthusiasm for analysis is reflected using continuous flow method in her books. Her real spotlight is on the brain science or internal perspective which she communicates through different images and pictures in her books. In one of her journals, it is specified that she utilizes images and pictures intentionally to characterize the inward cognizance of her characters. She communicates the concealed 'openings of regularly changing awareness' of her characters through floods of pictures with the goal that the occasions, activities and goings on inside the brain of characters can be effectively examined.²¹

Virginia Woolf was considered as a popular author amid the 20 century by the utilization of the anecdotal style of composing continuous flow ,she was depicted her character's cognizance .Also ,she composed such a large number of various artistic works inside this account procedure. Searching for the correct sort of portrayal of her experience, Woolf needs to abstain from composing like her pragmatist peers. These creators, whom she called realists, chafed her as they were excessively engrossed with sensible depictions. Regardless of all their thoughtfulness regarding the material environment and presence of their

characters, their work by one means or another neglects to speak to what Woolf observes to be the 'best possible stuff' of fiction .²²

Virginia Woolf was searching for elective approaches to speak to reality and working out how to utilize imagery in her written work was a vital piece of this procedure. In any experimental writing it is normally imperative to portray people and surroundings so as to convey life to the characters and setting. Woolf, in any case, not just portrays the general population and settings in Mrs. Dalloway by the utilization of modifiers and engaging composition yet she utilizes imagery as an apparatus all through her novel .²³

The focal quality that influences Woolf to remain outside the convention of English and European fiction is by all accounts her remarkable vision of human life and her feeling of watching standard things with such a certified intrigue and pleasure that it makes a general liquid and flawlessly requested succession of these suggestive characteristics. Characters in Woolf's books are once in a while portrayed specifically, by disclosing to us straightaway what they look like and what their fundamental identity attributes are. It is fairly the multifaceted nature of the human experience, recollections, memories of the past and little apparently immaterial things related together, through which the perusers discover more about the characters who are bit by bit exhibited to them . All these obviously divided pieces that Woolf continuously uncovers through the characters' musings, colloquialisms and doings, are firmly interlaced and they are driving the plot to a peak. Some may contend that the peak isn't exceptionally obvious in her books, or even that it is missing, and Woolf herself would likely not differ with this announcement since driving her books to an unmistakable peak was in no way, shape or form her point.²⁴

On 28 March 1941, Woolf drowned herself by filling her overcoat pockets with stones and walking into the River Ouse near her home. Woolf's body was not found until 18 April 1941. Her husband buried her cremated remains beneath an elm tree in the garden of Monk's House, their home in Rodmell, Sussex.²¹

Notes

¹ Maria DiBattista, *Imagining Virginia Woolf an Experiment in Critical Biography*(Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009)p,43.

² Ibid,p.49.

³ Ibid,p.51.

⁴ Allie Glenny, *Ravenous Identity : Eating and Eating Distress in the Life and Work of Virginia Woolf* (New York: St Mrtin"s Press, 2000),p.28.

⁵ Ibid,p.29.

⁶ Ibid,p.31.

⁷ Quentin Bell, *Virginia Woolf: A Biography*(New York: Harcourt, 1972),p.41.

⁸ Nick Ward, *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 5th ed(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002),p.182.

⁹ Ibid,p.184.

¹⁰ Ibid,p.188.

¹¹ Agsous Amina, *The Novel as Autobiography and Therapy: Virginia Woolf's Mrs Dalloway and To the Lighthouse*(Penguin: London,2010),p.15

¹² Ibid,p.16.

¹³ Cuddy-Keane, Melba. *Virginia Woolf, the Intellectual, and the Public Sphere*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003),p.27.

¹⁴ Ibid,p.31.

¹⁵ Dubino, Jeanne and Beth Carole Rosenberg. *Virginia Woolf and the Essay* (New York: St. Martin's, 1997), p.152.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid, p.153

¹⁸ Julia Briggs, *Reading Virginia Woolf* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p.74.

¹⁹ Ibid, p.75

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid, p.76

²² Tony E. Jackson, *The Subject of Modernism; Narrative Alterations in the Fiction of Eliot, Conrad, Woolf, and Joyce* (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 1994), p.45.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ N. C. Thakur, *The Symbolism of Virginia Woolf* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p.15.

²⁵ Ibid.

Chapter Two

Water Imagery in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*

Virginia Woolf's novel *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) was published during a time when British society was still recovering from World War One. Many people still suffered from loss and mourning and post-war trauma. In spite of having won the war, British society was, of course, very much affected and struggled to find a way back to some sort of normality. People tried to rebuild their lives as best they could but the effects of the war were to be felt for a long time to come. People had not experienced suffering on this scale before and society did not know how to best deal with it.¹

Mrs. Dalloway takes place in London on a single June day, 1923, and centers on Clarissa, a woman in her early fifties, there are many stories told in this novel through different characters and shifts in time. While Clarissa is preparing to host a society party the same night, she walks down memory lane, thinking about her youth and old friends. In a different part of town, however, Septimus Smith is struggling to get through the day, suffering from severe mental illness. At first there appears to be nothing connecting these two main narratives but at the end when Clarissa hears of Septimus's suicide their stories come together as his life, and final act, enter her consciousness. Through the use of symbolism and the method of stream of consciousness, Woolf channels her own thoughts and criticism in fields such as gender and feminism, psychology and the treatment of mental illness in a changing society recovering from World War One.²

Virginia Woolf was looking for alternative ways to represent reality and working out how to use symbolism in her writing was an important part of this process. In any creative writing it is naturally important to describe persons and surroundings in order to bring life to the characters and setting. Woolf, however, not only paints a picture of the people and settings in *Mrs. Dalloway* by the use of adjectives and descriptive writing but she uses symbolism as a tool throughout her novel.³

While water communicates the concept of fertility and femininity, its fluidity also represents the cycle of life and death. In her novel, *Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf uses these many aspects of water to symbolize the significance of Clarissa Dalloway's experiences with Peter Walsh. On the opening page, Clarissa Dalloway remembers plunging from her bedroom window into the still morning air, "like a flap of a wave; a kiss of a wave; chill and sharp and yet (for a girl of eighteen as she then was) solemn, feeling as she did that something awful was about to happen" (3). Clarissa, prior to the war, finds this wave invigorating and filled with potential. She wants to immerse herself in it and be carried upon it. In her innocence, she enters into the cycle, yet a part of her understands that the wave will eventually crash and return to the sea. Her relationship with Peter Walsh is pending, as is the war, and she senses that her life is about to change.⁴

As Clarissa's thought's return to the present, she explains how her ability to freely immerse herself in this life is inhibited. As she walks the city streets, she has "a perpetual sense 'of being out, out, far out to sea and alone' that it was very, very dangerous to live even one day" (8). Riding her wave at Burton as a young woman, she is carried into a socially unacceptable and delicious encounter with another young woman, Sally Seton. Bound by the suppression of her innermost truth,

because Clarissa understands that society will not allow for the enjoyment of such encounters, she protects her innermost thoughts from the scrutiny of others. This secret causes her to feel secluded and alone, even among the busy streets of Westminster.⁵

Peter Walsh is a threat to Clarissa's secret. His love for her drives him to question everything about her, the intimacy of which she prefers to avoid although she does enjoy the attention. After an entire summer spent at Burton in their youth, Peter can stand it no longer. He needs to know how she feels about him and confronts her. They stand "with the fountain between them, the spout (it was broken) dribbling water incessantly" (64). Woolf uses this fountain to illustrate their lack of fluid communication. Peter begs Clarissa for the truth, his tears and words dribbling as freely as his emotion. Clarissa, sensing the danger of being so open in return, stands rigid in the solitude of her secrets. She rejects Peter for the less intimate Richard, breaking both their hearts much like that pump. After suffering the blow of unrequited love, Peter crosses the sea, leaving for India to serve in the war, thus ending their first cycle together.⁶

The image of the sea represents loneliness, separation and disconnect again for Clarissa and Peter. The one man who knows her better than any other has gone. When each of them is in their fifties, Peter returns across the watery divide and they are forced to examine the resurfacing emotions that return with him. For Peter these emotions come back in full, fluid force. He asks himself, "bursting into tears this morning, what was all that about" (80)? As he shows an outpouring of emotion as he did the first time, Clarissa is again externally solid and unyielding, "as cold as an icicle" (80). Later, as Peter visits Regents Park, he hears the bubbling "voice of an ancient spring spouting from the earth" (80). He envisions a woman, perhaps

a vision of Clarissa, placing one hand on her hip and holding the other out like a pump. This image is reminiscent of the broken pump that stood between himself and Clarissa at Burton and ends the second full cycle between them. Once again, they are lost in the sea of loneliness .⁷

As fluid as the water is that represents their experience, Clarissa and Peter have remained unchanged. Unlike a wave that climaxes, crashes and rolls back into the ocean, Clarissa does not flow with her desires but remains an unyielding object merely riding the surface of the tide. Peter is still taken with Clarissa and spouting his bubbling and gurgling emotion, but his love never fully flows to fruition. Clarissa continues to bury deep her gift of Sally Seton's kiss to avoid the chaos it would bring if it ever drifted to the surface. She concludes that all of life, as it exists day by day, is orderly and enjoyable in its sturdy and unmoving way, reaffirming her choice to suppress her true love for both Sally and Peter in exchange for her security with Richard .⁸

Among various expressive symbols, water symbol has been widely used in different ways suggesting a number of different meanings. In general, water is a sign of life, a change, flow of time, joy of life, the force of nature more or less an endless development. In many religious books, it symbolizes the origin of life, vehicle of cleansing, regeneration, and sign of purification to wash away sins or guilt. Woolf transcends the cliché of water symbol and uses it not only to suggest multiple meanings, but as a power to shape the inner state of her characters' minds. In her novels, water is used as an external object or physical element to reveal multiple emotions, and thoughts of the characters. Most of her characters are surrounded by the sound of water .⁹

In her famous novel, the experiences of Clarissa and Peter are depicted through water symbol. Here, it is symbolic of the stillness or permanence of Clarissa's desires and state of mind and suggests her loneliness, alienation and separation not only from Peter but also from the entire physical world which leads to the complete void of her communication to outer world. Therefore, it is clear that Woolf challenges the traditional way of novel writing by using expressive symbols in a complex frame. The water imagery is not only suggestive but evocative too. It does not stick to one meaning only but is open to multiple meanings and interpretations .¹⁰

Mrs. Dalloway is a complex story dedicated to a day in the life of Clarissa Dalloway, in her attempts to throw a party and her constant filtering thoughts about others, society and her life choices. There are many layered themes and motifs, notably including time and the use of flowers and trees, Virginia Woolf's use of water to enhance the meaning of the novel. The use of water in *Mrs Dalloway* is used to blend everyone's thoughts together and also symbolizing the wave-like aspect of time. For example, when Rezia is making a hat with Septimus, she is happy with him and refers to the moment "like a contented tap left running." She knows the moment will not last forever, but wishes to let it run as long as possible like a running faucet. The thoughts of the characters are also very wave-like. The thoughts will show, get very intense, and then fade into another just like a wave. The water aspect could also mirror society, which is like an undertow to some extent .¹¹

The use of water throughout the novel not only enhances the symbolic nature and themes of the novel, but also reflects the fluidity of the novel itself, especially with the language and connection of thoughts between characters. Symbolization is

latent everywhere in her works. She gets a great pleasure in discovering what is hidden behind the very appearance of things. She believes that there is some real meaning behind this appearance and she calls this discovery a "shock".¹²

It is the rapture I get in writing when I seem to be discovering what belongs to what . . . at any rate it is a constant idea of mine; that behind the cotton wool is hidden a pattern; that we I mean all human beings are connected with this; that the whole world is a work of art; that we are parts of the works of art. Hamlet or Beethoven quartet is the truth about this vast mass that we call the world. But there is no Shakespeare, there is no Beethoven; . . . we are the words; we are the music; we are the thing itself. And I see this when I have a shock .¹³

The water imagery Virginia Woolf employs in *Mrs. Dalloway* indicates the nature and sometimes marks the development of each fictive consciousness, from minor characters such as Lady Bradshaw or Miss Kilman, to Peter Walsh, Septimus Smith, and Clarissa Dalloway herself. The metaphors and similes repeatedly connect city to ocean, human consciousness to watery depths; the work itself becomes protean, operating according to principles of metamorphosis on two major planes-external topography (London and, in a different mode, Bourton) and internal experience-with aspects of time serving as framing devices. In a parenthetical aside to his own interior monologue, Peter imagines Clarissa thinking of humanity as a "doomed race chained to a sinking ship" and comments: "(her favorite reading as a girl was Huxley and Tindall, and they were fond of these

nautical metaphors)" (117).¹⁴

This casual remembrance suggests the narrator's own awareness of the constant recurrence of such language in the text being produced. In his or her own way, each character will, by the conclusion, have been related to the ocean-as either person, object, or animal encountering it, or through a comparison of mental state to aqueous element. Past and present are tenuously connected through memories of Bourton that infiltrate the characters' minds in London; in crucial ways, however, the present is an island, or indeed a sinking ship, cut off from both past and future, which loom as ruined or uncivilized, the very antithesis of the civilization epitomized by civic representatives such as the Prime Minister or even by Clarissa Dalloway's party.¹⁵

This stress on the present moment can serve to eliminate the baggage of the past in an attempt to topple hegemonic structures, to erase patriarchal codes, to look to an unforeseen future:

Not the origin: she doesn't go back there. . . . A girls' journey is farther-to the unknown, to invent [T]hat is how she. . . . writes, as one throws a voice-forward, into the void. . . . Contrary to the self-absorbed, masculine narcissism, making sure of its image, of being seen, of seeing itself, of assembling its glories, of pocketing itself again. (93-94)

From the beginning of *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf establishes the intermingling of the city with sea imagery:

Clarissa reflects that she had a perpetual sense, as she watched the taxi cabs, of being out, out, far to sea and alone; she always had the feeling that it was very dangerous to live even one day (8).

Despite what may be perceived as a foreboding tone in these lines, Clarissa balances her thought with the outward exclamation that she loves walking in London more than in the country and with another oceanic image .¹⁶

"(S)omehow in the streets of London, on the ebb and flow of things, here, there, she survived, Peter survived, lived in each other, she being part, she was positive, of the trees at home; of the house there, ugly, rambling all to bits and pieces as it was" (9).

The oceanic in *Mrs. Dalloway* can also be found in regard to Clarissa's memories of a summer past, which claim a certain urban flavor despite their setting away from the city. In a quiet, solitary moment, as she mends a dress for her evening party, Clarissa reflects:

So on a summer's day waves collect, overbalance, and fall; collect and fall; and the whole world seems to be saying 'that is all' more and more ponderously, until even the heart in the body which lies in the sun on the beach says too, That is all. Fear no more, says the heart. Fear no more, says the

heart, committing its burden to some sea, which sighs
collectively for all sorrows, and renews, begins, collects,
lets fall. (39-40)

In this passage, oceanic tenors and rhythmic diction construct a dialogue based on emotions in memory, but it also echoes her experience as a consumer in the city. Woolf surreptitiously ties together consumerism and the oceanic. Rather than a personal, domestic object triggering and helping to shape a memory of the past, which would link together the private sphere of home and the internal life of the character, a public, urban image of a book for sale in a window projects onto Clarissa's consciousness to frame her thoughts.¹⁷

Notes

¹ Elaine Showalter, "Introduction." *Mrs. Dalloway* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1992),p.7.

² Ibid,p.8.

³ Ibid,p.10

⁴ Jessica Johnston, "Symbolism in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*" *Spring* 2013,p.5.

⁵ Ibid,p.6.

⁶ Ibid,p.8.

⁷ Hajjari Leila1 and Abjadian Amrollah, Objects, Symbols, and Their Thematic Roles in Virginia Woolf's *to the Lighthouse*, *Research Journal of Language*,

Literature and Humanities Vol. 2(9), 2015,p.7.

⁸ Ibid,p.11.

⁹ Graham John, *Time in the Novels of Virginia Woolf, In Critics on Virginia Woolf. Ed. Jacqueline E. M. Latham* (New Delhi: Universal Book Stall, 1994),p.36.

¹⁰ Ibid,p.37.

¹¹ Ibid,p.38.

¹² Ibid,p.41

¹³ Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*. 1925 (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1992),p.34.All further quotations are taken from this copy.

¹⁴ N. C. Thakur, *The Symbolism of Virginia Woolf*. London: Oxford University Press ,1965),p.23.

¹⁵ Ibid,p.24.

¹⁶ Ibid,p.27.

¹⁷ Ibid,p.28.

Conclusion

While symbolism previously had been used to add mysticism to various works of literature, Virginia Woolf used symbolism not only a way to enrich the writing and create an added layer of interest, but as a tool to structure her novel. Woolf wanted to find a narrative shape that suited her and through experimenting with streams of consciousness, fragmentation and careful plotting she could both avoid materialistic descriptions and find a suitable way to incorporate her own experiences. Primarily, as in any story, rich descriptive language, saturated in adjectives, serves the purpose of describing the characters and settings to us quite

openly and, so to speak, set the framework of the storyline. On a deeper level, though, the symbols speak to us subconsciously.

Woolf wanted her symbolism to balance carefully on the border between what is apparent and what is obscured, in order to have the desired effect of enhancing the narrative. She also thought it important that the realization of both the symbol used and of what it was representing should be instant. It would, of course, be interesting to know how deep the understanding of the symbolism was among Woolf's so-called common readers at the time of first publication and if the way in which she used symbolism had the desired effect.

In *Mrs. Dalloway* there is a difference between the symbols used in terms of category and function. On the one hand, there are the characters used to structure the novel. On the other hand there are the references to nature and the use of different objects symbolically. These categories are maybe equally important, but on a different level, as they serve to add subtle feelings and reflect people's emotions, frames of mind and unspoken thoughts. Consequently, these different types of symbolism are at play simultaneously in the novel; they are intertwined.

For Woolf, water represented creativity and writing, and was also specifically associated with femininity (she may have been influenced by psychoanalytic thought, which sees water imagery as representative of creativity and the subconscious). Woolf's protagonists, as well as important events in their lives, are always closely linked with water. For example, throughout *Mrs Dalloway*, the experiences of Clarissa and Pete are often described using water imagery

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