

Block**3****Novel (2)****BLOCK INTRODUCTION** **02**

UNIT 9
“Stream of Consciousness”: an Introduction **03**

UNIT 10
Virginia Woolf as Novelist **15**

UNIT 11
***Mrs. Dalloway* – Analysis and Interpretations** **34**

UNIT 12
***Mrs. Dalloway* - Themes and Concerns** **38**

BLOCK INTRODUCTION

This **Block ‘Novel 2’** continues the discussion on the early twentieth century novel, initiated in the previous block. Focusing on Virginia Woolf’s novel *Mrs. Dalloway*, this block looks at the ways in which the modernist novel approaches the conventional elements of fiction, such as ‘character’, ‘plot’ and ‘narration’.

Unit 9 “Stream of Consciousness”: an Introduction discusses on the connections between the ‘stream of consciousness’ narrative techniques adopted in modernist novels and the developments in Psychology in the early twentieth century.

Unit 10 Virginia Woolf as Novelist focuses on Woolf as a major modernist writer, while touching upon her work as a feminist and leading intellectual of the early twentieth century.

Unit 11 *Mrs. Dalloway* – Analysis and Interpretations considers the ‘stream of consciousness’ technique as employed in *Mrs. Dalloway* to understand the mental processes of the characters in the novel.

Unit 12 *Mrs. Dalloway* - Themes and Concerns discusses the themes of the novel, such as its critique of contemporary society, and the trauma and horror caused by the first World War.

Acknowledgement

The material and images we have used is purely for educational purposes. Every effort has been made to trace the copyright holders of material used in this book. Should any infringement have occurred, the publishers and editors apologise, and will be pleased to make the necessary corrections in future editions of this book.

UNIT 9 ‘STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS’: AN INTRODUCTION

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Psychology as the Background of Literary Production
- 9.3 The Stream of Consciousness *vis a vis* Characters
- 9.4 Memory as an Important Factor
- 9.5 Observation as Basis of the Stream of Consciousness
- 9.6 Aesthetic of the Stream of Consciousness
- 9.7 History as a Component of Stream of Consciousness
- 9.8 Varied dimensions of Stream of Consciousness
- 9.9 Conclusion
- 9.10 Glossary
- 9.11 Unit end Questions
- 9.12 Works Cited

9.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit we shall discuss the stream of consciousness technique that became a crucial marker of English fiction in the beginning of the twentieth century. The term established itself as a new way of **exploring human psychology** that was reflected in the practices of modern men and women. Since the author to be discussed in this block is a woman, Virginia Woolf, the stream of consciousness approach would indeed be more appropriate to make sense of her novel in the course. Here, you will have a chance to follow the motivation in the case of a woman given to expressing herself creatively. We shall also discuss in this unit the efficacy of this particular approach in understanding the novel as a literary form.

9.1 INTRODUCTION

As is clear from the term “stream of consciousness”, the faculty of human thinking never remains fixed. It always goes back and forth in time, from the past to the present and from the present to the past. The same happens at the level of the place, too — in one moment, consciousness is present at the actual place where you live, and in another moment, you shift attention from that place to the one you visited later. The word “stream” signifies this specifically. The focus upon the stream of consciousness will make us aware about the internal processes of an individual’s mind. It should be clear to us that being socially repressed, women in earlier centuries, generally were confined to the world of dreams, fears, and expectations. The family or the larger society seldom allowed them to take important decisions in life. This was done by the menfolk in the territory of the home. And indeed, the outside world was entirely under the control of men. As such, Virginia Woolf can be comprehended as a writer through the **imaginings** in her novels.



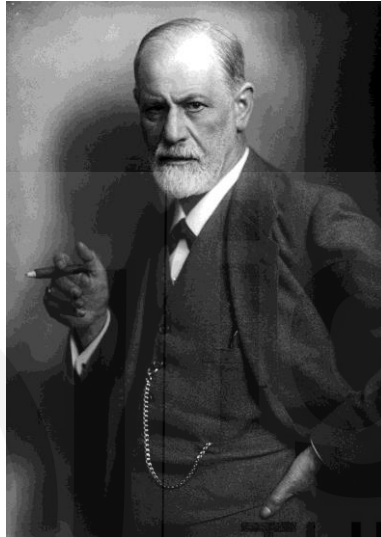
(Virginia Woolf. Picture Source: commons.wikimedia.org)

At the back of fiction writing, in the opening years of the twentieth century, stood the scientific research conducted in the nineteenth century. The approach was based on what scientists observed in the physical world. For them, the region of the senses was open to enquiry and could be investigated objectively. It involved experiment that would help them know the phenomena for what it was in reality. There was no scope in it for accepting any mysterious source for reference. That became the yardstick of scientists interested in motivation, for them the human mind was at centre of all the happenings witnessed in life.

9.2 PSYCHOLOGY AS THE BACKGROUND OF LITERARY PRODUCTION

Psychology investigates the functioning of the human brain in relation to the existing physical world. In the production of literature also, mind is actively involved in giving words to feelings and emotions. We may keep in view the fact that most branches of knowledge address the physical world, be they economic, social, natural or health-related. That determines the working of the human brain most of the time. We may also remember that our waking time is spent worrying about livelihood, bonding with family members and the people in the neighbourhood. But when we sit back and visit the softer areas of feeling, we forget about the external world and look inwards. We go into the wrongs we committed and failures we suffered. The pain caused by loss and happiness brought to us through a win tell us what may be done in life and what might be avoided. This may be called the internal process which is a subject of psychology.

The functioning of the brain produced ideas as well as other determining factors. That gave rise to a new way of interpreting individuality, choice, morality and relationships. In this regard, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) comes to mind as a pioneer in the field. A neurologist from Austria, Freud devised new methods of psychoanalysis. He used the technique of holding a dialogue with the patient to good effect. His studies were epoch-making. Of particular interest for him was the field of human consciousness. He was one of the finest intellectuals of his time and saw that the human being characterized as an economic, a religious, or a political man was not the whole story. To it could be added the term 'the psychological man' a term initially coined by the American sociologist Philip Rieff, a fact mentioned in the records of Britannica.



(Sigmund Freud. Source: commons.wikimedia.org)

For Freud, consciousness worked at many levels. In some cases, it was perceived by the individual, whereas in others, only a shade of it was noted. The latter earned for it the epithet 'subconscious'. At a deeper level, consciousness had a link with an unknown, unobserved entity called the unconscious. These aspects of internal human mechanism presented a scenario for the researcher to grasp and stress upon. By 1899 when Freud's book *The Interpretation of Dreams* was published, his fame had spread in Europe. James Strachey has observed:

The unconscious contents of the mind were found to consist wholly in the activity of conative trends—desires or wishes—which derive their energy directly from the primary physical instincts. They function quite regardless of any consideration other than that of obtaining immediate satisfaction, and are thus liable to be out of step with those more conscious elements in the mind which are concerned with adaptation to reality and the avoidance of external dangers. Since, moreover, these primitive trends are to a great extent of a sexual or of a destructive nature, they are bound to come in conflict with the more social and civilized mental forces. Investigations along this path were what led Freud to his discoveries of the long-disguised secrets of the sexual life of children and of the Oedipus complex. (14)

In a significant sense, literary writing of nineteenth century Europe also struggled to know the causes of impulse, desire, control, and the working of social pressures. They were integral to

literary depictions in the period dominated by the Bronte sisters, Dickens, George Eliot, and Hardy. The presentation of characters made it necessary that their thoughts were recognized as seminal to the trends witnessed in society. Still more importantly, the progress of secular perceptions embedded in the reality of the period inspired the writers to find connections between emotions and social interests. The clash between the two might have given rise to the use of fantasy in fictional writing. There is no wonder that as the nineteenth century came to a close, a whole new paradigm had taken shape at the hands of writers and thinkers. That may offer to us a perspective on the stream of consciousness as a **determining principle** of knowing the structures affecting the human being.

9.3 THE STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS VIS-A-VIS CHARACTERS

As we see the stream of consciousness at work in the modernist writing of the time, it pushes specific fictional characters from the centre to the margins. For the writer, there is no interest in the growth of a character from one stage to another. The childhood and youth may be important for a fictional work, but they are no longer with reference to the path the characters pursue—economic earning, success in society, or competition to outdo others in the game of life. The career-graph of individuals is not given importance in the new fiction. Even as the spatial surroundings are described in detail, they do not form a link with an individual as their centre.

The stream of consciousness remains away from the firm ground of social activity and forms a wall around the characters inhabiting the social space. The space gets created between the writer and the reader, too, the former telling anyone who cares to listen that such and such an idea visited a person at some point in one's life. Connectives such as "He thought," "he was reminded of," "he might have said," "she was afraid that" merely share with the reader an ordinary reference. On them is hung an account of the character, or of an event, such as the First World War in *Mrs. Dalloway*. The style is of making a person observe and associate life's details, which when given a sequence would assume a fictional shape. In such a work, we could see a peculiar drama taking place at the level of characters' imaginings, a drama in which opinions and outlooks might be in harmony with each other while the reader struggles to make sense of the description. Yet, the character exists in the background. Significantly, men in flesh and blood do not exist in the fiction characterized by the stream of consciousness. The characters have no concrete emotions defining their mental state. The potential to intervene, to agree with some and disagree with others is conspicuous by its absence in the genre under discussion.

As such, the stream of consciousness novel has no palpable plot with a dynamic of ups and downs and a moral principle. The very convention of sequence is discarded. This is fundamentally caused by the absence of characters as we see them striving in the action plan of a traditional narrative. Here, the author relies on impressions that a situation left on him / her or the characters hinted at. The characters do have names but identity is missing in their case since they are not portrayed. We might as well call them walking thoughts.

Such an aspect of the stream of consciousness fiction reduces characters to fluid mental states changing by the minute and getting away from or merging with others arbitrarily, with no validation from the circumstance in which they are placed. We might ask—has this writing

expelled the active men and women from the realm of depiction? Where are those people who become angry or happy in view of the questions they face? What has happened to the tragic consequences or comic resolutions that engaged the attention of imaginative writing from the beginning? We may admit in the context that characterization indeed has suffered. The **stream, flow or fluidity** does not allow the reader to be in contact with groups, sections and classes. The metaphor of the river caught from a given point to another arbitrarily in this fiction leaves no scope for the individual to make a place for self so one could test the waters and change course to realize one's potentialities. In fact, potentiality as an additional dimension of what a person does is sacrificed on the altar of merely observing or wondering.

Check your progress 1

What is the concept of "characterization" in "stream of consciousness" novels?

9.4 MEMORY AS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR

The central logic of the stream of consciousness novel is memory-related. It is believed that a person actively involves himself / herself in life at the level of memory, not action seen around the social space. Since action is of limited significance, the human being sticks to memory as a support. We live by memory, a cluster of events that left traces in the individual's mind. For the writer of this genre, the said traces have a life of their own that can be activated and enlarged to engage the person concerned. So far as this human trait is concerned, one is always with oneself and one's company is in the mode of memory. To reiterate, all that one has gone through in life is stored in one's mind and that keeps coming to the consciousness as a matter of habit or when one faces a specific situation. In that sense, traces cease to be traces and become markers. For the individual, memory serves as a storehouse of information about those markers.

Additionally, there is no specific pattern in things that consciousness engages with. The things in question seek guidance from the individual, his/ her moods and choices in a particular moment. Soon, the pattern starts forming itself with help from incidents and situations one gets mentally involved with. In the complex interplay of this sort, living items inhabiting the brain take over and write their own script. They contain values, ideas, vague responses of the early phase in one's life and at times become a guide to the person concerned. This is a clear departure from the conventional novel in which creativity invents those points that fit in with the aim of the writer. In the case of the stream of consciousness novel, the writer lets himself/ herself loose in the middle of his / her own mental state and lives the life of a dreamer, not one prosecuting plans to fulfil himself / herself.

Under the technique of the stream of consciousness, the memory offers a parallel world to the one the person lives in. Note that the matter of habit in the case of a participant in life is intertwined with the situation s/he faces. The **habit** is without contours, it can be visual or auditory. Other senses too take part in this act of fixed priorities. The habit makes it sure that one remains awake and mentally alert till late evening, as is the case with Clarissa in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Under the stream we talk of, the memory as form is resorted to for showing the general health of the individual. Mark that the chosen situation lets in a part of the external reality since it is connected with a previous episode. Do we give it the name of associative memory that provides us with the image

of something that happened in the past? The fiction writer of our time puts the two, the thing stored in memory and the episode that came from association into the account. The two as such are integrated.

Association also gives the writer a chance to recreate an older episode with imaginative effort. At the back of re-creating consciously and usefully a previous happening is in fact a creative act. It is essentially literary. The act also places the writer in the position of an interpreter. Let us bear in mind that interpretation changes with time, something interpreted when one is young is entirely different from that which is interpreted in old age. Does a change in interpretation not suggest that time in a person's life is crucial? That is really the case. **The dimension of time** lends the required complexity coming from the stream of consciousness as a paradigm. Willy-nilly, it takes the life of an individual into the historical bind where different segments of time raise head for comparative view and make us wonder whether other choices were available to the people inhabiting the fictional world in question. This question will be taken up further in another unit of this block.

In the above, we have gradually shifted ground from remembering an event per se to the one we describe with effort and that suiting a character's mental state. Clearly, remembering and describing are two different things. Remembering is more internal, whereas describing impels us to express in words belonging to human action in the outer world. Our discussion here is based on what the writer using the stream of consciousness method wished to create and the other he / she kept out of purview consciously. Thus, we spread our net wide to do justice to the subject in hand. The range of memory includes working of the human mind to tell oneself what is observed in the flow of thought, the act leading to movement back and forth in time and capturing of the flow with the help of writing.

Check your progress 2:

What is the role of memory in a "stream of consciousness" novel? Discuss.

9.5 OBSERVATION AS BASIS OF THE STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

So far, we have talked about the significance of memory in the stream of consciousness. Relatively speaking, memory keeps itself away from life in the raw. It exists with reference to the past.

With that in mind, let us consider the working of consciousness, its nature and role. With it, an individual is visualized as wandering around the places she or he lived in. There is also the implication that each individual has a world of one's own. In the modern period, the efforts made by an individual end in futility, and the time span of happenings leaves a sense of pain. That is usually the case. Even as repetitive in nature, the feelings of pain or loss integrate of their own into a narrative and offer insights into the existing life-conditions. It is a complex process. This is one observation linked with mundaneness.

The second is concerning the metaphor of the stream which is an important part of literary depiction. In the stream of modern life, breaks do not happen normally, but are sometimes necessitated by thematic unity. Thus, the writer/narrator pauses and changes course to make a point. Shall we term such breaks as thoughts that emerge in the flow and catch attention? Later, in a long sequence of thoughts that resemble a chain, one or two human figures might appear and register their specific existence. The reader might note it and begin thinking about them, their errors and lapses. That may be considered the emergence of an individuality. As such, the stream of consciousness writer gets stuck to that individuality and suggests its growth or decline. As a consequence of it, we might recognize that the stream of consciousness puts **a single person at the centre of attention** and accords to him /her the value of a social type, not as concretely as it might but tells us about its presence nonetheless. We view the society that produced him / her and gave him / her distinctive traits through the prism of the consciousness. In turn, the consciousness projects through one's impressions a general idea of the existing world. We say then that a linearity forms itself through the observations of a single person.

At the same time though, the mentioned linearity can be presented with suggestions of larger connections with life, nature, and poetic projection. On one side is the individual surrounded by varied perceptions, and on the other the images he / she uses fall into the pattern of vacuity, humour and self-doubt. Eventually, they become a comment on the existing scenario. Soon enough, we have as individual readers a confrontation with the tangled environment in front. Such an arithmetic of the individuals coming together in the flow of consciousness is the stuff of the subject we are engaged with.

We reach a minor conclusion from this in the form of an individual human being giving identity to the paradigm of the stream of consciousness. Further, **the paradigm is psychological**, something internal to the individual we are talking of — it has little connection with people in flesh and blood who interact with one another in a physical domain. Yet, the impressions of the individual picked up for depiction are only impressions, not verifiable in an objective manner. We as readers are told to take what we receive from an observer alone. To a large extent, this circularity defines the stream of consciousness.

9.6 AESTHETIC OF THE STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Aesthetics is generally the aspect of form under which a human-social experience gets shaped. For this reason, we shall discuss the form of the stream of consciousness as playing a distinct role in fictional representation. The stream of consciousness turned the direction of twentieth century English fiction towards the internal world of characters, **the world of their mind and imagination**. We note that fiction in the early twentieth century had only a limited interest in ideas and perspectives, and was distrustful of conveying a message through it. The writer hitherto focused attention on the contemporary world as a material reality where ideas, attitudes and relations clashed. That was the objective aspect of life.

On the other hand, the stream of consciousness stressed the subjective field, the personal dilemmas and uncertainties of individual human beings. This had something to do with the choices the writers had for dealing with their world. Our guess is that the first quarter of the twentieth century was heavily weighted against the majority of the people, the power being entirely in the hands of

finance and privilege. In this scenario, consciousness came to the rescue of the writer who could forge a whole pattern of situations in his/ her own mind where he / she would float free from all restrictions. The gap not only remained but also sustained the newly emerged fictional form with the writer active inside it. The freedom to shape an experience inside one's mind enabled the writer to assume a specific **persona** to live, feel, think and dream.

Subjectivity was deeply ingrained in the stream of consciousness fiction. The writer's subjectivity became more active than before and the existing aesthetic principles of comedy and tragedy meant little to him / her. Nor was the writer moved by philosophical issues of the kind George Eliot had grappled with in the latter half of the previous century. The years around the First World War offered a blocked scenario. The only door opened for literary writing was to deal with psychological curiosities. The required trend had an intense power and appeal. The vigour it possessed remained unmatched and the sweep was difficult to visualize under a single category or approach. Mark Andrew Sanders' comment about James Joyce's *Ulysses*:

Reading *Ulysses* is a process of refamiliarization with a variety of adapted styles, modes, and techniques. ... Whereas Stephen is preoccupied both with guilt over his failure to pray at his mother's death-bed and with intellectual speculation, Bloom's far less organized mind regularly throws up snippets of phrases and memories from a private past and from an observed world. (Sanders 549)

There is no reference in this quote to the method and order that the previous century adapted for representation. One particularly notes the absence of religion, philosophy and morality in such a literary engagement. The important words in the quote are "adapted styles," "intellectual speculation," and "unsystematically." We find in them a seriously accepted anarchy that goes hammer and tongs at the entrenched thought-structures. An area in which all this is possible is consciousness. Does a combination of these not present an aesthetic, a form that might hold a mirror up to the dominant power-centres of the day? For us, James Joyce creates a rush of observations and brings in a memory crowded with impressions and images. We confront in it a kind of comic suffusion that overwhelms us. The mind is in focus, but it is "far less organised." In it there is a past but not the objectively verifiable one, instead it is a private happening on its own terms.

9.7 HISTORY AS A COMPONENT OF STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

You have gone through a number of ideas presented in this unit. By now, it would have been clear that the stream of consciousness takes in its fold a whole variety of literary and ideological aspects without taking recourse to a conventional pattern. Particularly, the convention of the plot or the narrative is anathema, and the aesthetic is of the supposedly unreal kind. What about the existence of history in it? Ponder over the issue and you may find that the states of mind depicted in this fiction have a concreteness about them. The said mental states relate to specific individuals imagined by the fiction writer. Also, imagination is common to the writer and the characters found in the fictional work. It might be said convincingly that the stream of consciousness fiction is rooted firmly in a given moment of history. The fictional genre we talk of enjoys an association

with all that has gone on in the past—**myths, legends**, literary works, cultural trends and **geographical-linguistic spaces**.

In stream of consciousness fiction, ideas and points of logic connect us with society at the level of mutual give and take as well as the policies pursued by a collective. That is history in the palpable sense. Developments in psychology in the latter part of the nineteenth century brought into view responses in an associative sense, derived as they were from what the human senses perceived in the surroundings. Psychologists such as William James drew attention to that which was not limited to rational thoughts. There were impressions of the physical and subliminal varieties putting constant pressure on human consciousness. For the psychologist, these could not be separated from the rational field. In a true sense, the rational and impressionistic as well as the associative made living immensely rich and fruitful. That would take the literary endeavour quite near the fluent mind and consciousness.

We are told, for example, that “narrative technique in nondramatic fiction intended to render the flow of myriad impressions—visual, auditory, physical, associative, and subliminal—that impinge on the consciousness of an individual and form part of his awareness along with the trend of his rational thoughts. The term was first used by the psychologist William James in *The Principles of Psychology* (1890). As the psychological novel developed in the 20th century, some writers attempted to capture the total flow of their characters’ consciousness, rather than limit themselves to rational thoughts. To represent the full richness, speed, and subtlety of the mind at work, the writer incorporates snatches of incoherent thought, ungrammatical constructions, and free association of ideas, images, and words at the pre-speech level” (‘The stream of consciousness’, *Encyclopedia Britannica*).

Because of pressures from history, writers of the stream of consciousness came back again and again to the social questions, be they of the individual kind, showing bafflements and mixed priorities in the family, education and market. The psychological aspect had the sense of history overshadowing it; it revealed isolation of the people from institutions which had hitherto sustained them.

Check your progress 3

Does the stream of consciousness free the novel from its historical context? Give reasons in support of your answer.

9.8 VARIED DIMENSIONS OF STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Let us take a look at a still more distinctive consciousness exhibited by James Joyce in his novels written around the same time as the fiction of Virginia Woolf. Joyce’s stream of consciousness is more exploratory, experimental, and creative than perhaps witnessed in Woolf. The variety exhibited by Joyce takes us to the inner workings of the mind on an altogether different plane. It probes the mythical memory that may connect an individual with unknown features of dreaming and imagining. What does an individual consciousness engage with? It might be the powerfully affecting worries drowning the psyche with burdens accumulated in the past. Does an individual not carry the values of his / her own father as also the religion shaping his/her identity? Joyce used

persona more than the person carrying hurts and traumas. In such a fiction, the flow of mind would stop for a while to hold dialogue with another mind from a new perspective. The interplay of the two personas left the author fumbling for answers that in fact did not exist. The inner tumult is more the case of the Joyce representation, more poetic, lyrical and daunting.

Consider language as freed from the domain of experience. Joyce's heroes wallowed in that experience. When one touched upon human thought processes, one confronted the issue of word use, of a search to express the inexpressible. That became more akin to life's literary aspects. Further, the thought process was an area where consciousness faced the issue of formulating than expressing an experience. The question became: where to find the verbal equivalent of an unformulated idea? Joyce worked to lay bare the crux of language contending with sound patterns in the vacuum and to take the reader into an unformed reality, that which was caught in the process of forming itself. That raised the issue of the interior monologue accepting an existing situation whereas the goal to be pursued was of a situation in the middle of forming itself. Examples of such a literary endeavour were Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. Arnold Kettle has observed:

[The final chapter of *Ulysses*] pushes to the furthest extent the 'stream of consciousness' method -- the attempt to find a verbal equivalent for the inner thought-processes of a character. ... Joyce's purpose in developing this method is primarily to enrich his objective invocation of a total situation by adding a new dimension, another side to the many-sidedness of complex life. This attempt, though it has often been associated historically with the development of psychology as science, is no more 'scientific' than any other literary attempt to give the impression of reality. You cannot in the nature of things find a precise verbal equivalent for unformulated thoughts; the interior monologue may give the *impression* of an actual thought-track, but it cannot do more than that. (Ford, 308)

Kettle joins here the two exploratory ventures of psychology and literature, and extends the argument saying that Joyce was an artist rooted in the reality of his time than driven by any scientific or sociological mission. To quote,

Joyce knew plenty about contemporary developments in psychiatric research. He knew what it was to be Jung and easily Freudened. He did not live in Zurich for nothing. But while he used the material of modern psychology for his purposes (just as he used among much else a considerable knowledge of anthropology and scholastic philosophy and a life-long passion for vocal music), his aim was not that of the analyst, the scientist. And he was bound to run up against an outstanding difficulty: you cannot isolate the individual's consciousness from what is happening around and to him. Hence, throughout most of *Ulysses*, 'stream of consciousness' is mingled continuously and sometimes uneasily with objective narrative and the description of outside fact.

The point of the objective narrative raised by Kettle is the crux. It underlines the importance of linking imagination with the facts of life that have built into them the relationships of individuals and sections. The stream of consciousness is integral to human existence and the defining trait of social life.

9.9 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we gained knowledge of stream of consciousness as an important characteristic of modern fiction in English. It was a new addition to literary writing for redefining representation in view of changes in the early twentieth century. The stream of consciousness influenced characterization under which individuals assumed the stance of alert observers. We also came to know that memory can be a mode by itself and might portray the individual as well as circumstance in a unique manner. The fiction of this variety used interior monologue to reveal the creative self of the modern man and establish beyond doubt the human capability of seeing life through the prism of psychology.

9.10 GLOSSARY

Determining principle: an idea that strongly influences the decision-making of an individual or a section of society.

Metaphor: a literary device to expand the scope of meaning in poetry.

Paradigm: a theoretical model to bind and present ideas.

Persona: an independent voice in fiction or drama. It is used by the author to distance himself from an opinion expressed in his work.

Subjectivity: In fiction, a character's individuality, his personal opinion and standpoint.

Ulysses and Finnegans Wake: titles of novels written by James Joyce.

9.11 UNIT END QUESTION

1. Explain the technique of the stream of consciousness put to use in modern fiction.

9.12 WORKS CITED

“Philip Rieff: American Psychologist” <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Philip-Rieff>>

Sanders, Andrew. *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*. New Delhi: Oxford, 2011.

Strachey, James. Int., *Sigmund Freud: Historical and Expository Works on Psychoanalysis*. New Delhi: Shrijee's Book International, 2003.

“Stream of Consciousness: Literature” <<https://www.britannica.com/art/stream-of-consciousness>>

UNIT 10 VIRGINIA WOOLF AS A NOVELIST

- 10.1 Objective
- 10.2 Introduction
- 10.3 Virginia Woolf in the Role of a Writer
- 10.4 Virginia Woolf's Ideological-Literary Traits
- 10.5 Modern, Modernity, and Modernism
- 10.6 Modernist Writing and the Social Context
- 10.7 Woolf: A Novelist of Assertion
- 10.8 Virginia Woolf as a Thinker
- 10.9 Woolf as a Leading Light of the Bloomsbury Group
- 10.10 Let us sum up
- 10.11 References
- 10.12 Glossary
- 10.13 Questions

10.1 OBJECTIVE

In the first unit of this block, we had a closer view of “stream of consciousness” as a technique used in modern fiction. In the present unit, we shall explore Virginia Woolf as a writer who had adopted the novel form to express herself. We shall begin with Modernism that emerged as a strong trend in the closing years of the nineteenth century and flowered further, so to say, in the twentieth century. We shall relate Modernism with the First World War influencing life on a big scale. In the topsy-turvy world that unfolded following the First World War, feminism drew attention crucially. We shall see the implications of feminism entering the world of fiction. This and a few other related aspects of the issue would be taken up in this unit.

10.2 INTRODUCTION



Adeline Virginia Stephen was born in Lewes, United Kingdom in 1882. Her father was the famous English thinker and writer Leslie Stephen. In 1912 at the age of thirty, Virginia Woolf married

Leonard Woolf, a thinker and writer of repute at the time. The marriage was marked by mutual understanding and affection. Apart from writing fiction, Virginia took up the cause of women's freedom and assertion and was a thinker in her own right. Her major works include *Jacob's Room* (1922), *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927) *Orlando* (1928), and *The Waves* (1932). In books such as *The Common Reader* (1925) and *A Room of One's Own* (1939), she comments on social and literary issues. She died in 1941.

Virginia Woolf's life had many ups and downs. The process started with childhood. She belonged to a family of stepbrothers and stepsisters as well as brothers and sisters. She was born to her father Leslie Stephen in his second marriage. The age gap between parents, and siblings left her without appropriate company. Her first mental breakdown occurred when she was thirteen. In that year, she was molested by her stepbrother. This incident left a mark on her psyche never to be sorted out in life. Even as the great Leslie Stephen treated her with fondness and love and gave her all access to his rich library, a distance remained between the two. The teenage trauma revisited her in many diverse forms throughout her life. She would have one bout of insanity after another. A relative steadiness came to her when at the age of thirty she got married.

Her knowledge of human beings, their nature, temperament and psychological make up came from the close company of the family members, neighbourhood and later, the literary world. All along, she felt a sense of a gap between males and females. It gave her the feeling that social power as well the supposed intellectual superiority of the menfolk was a reality never to be overlooked or forgotten. The struggles and tensions she saw in her actual world are captured graphically in her writing. Social life for her was a limited territory and may have compelled her to further go into the psychology of human beings than their external social behaviour. With time, her unease and volatility may have increased giving rise to unstable behaviour. In that regard, her writing played a therapeutic role, giving her a chance to express herself and lessening her emotional pressures. In the latter part of life, Leonard Woolf and Virginia founded the publishing house called Hogarth Press in the small town of Hogarth, England. Yet, as time passed, Virginia Woolf became more and more vulnerable to stress. Finally, she committed suicide by drowning.

10.3 VIRGINIA WOOLF IN THE ROLE OF A WRITER

The literary atmosphere influenced Woolf greatly. In English fiction, she is considered along with James Joyce (1882-1941), a pioneer of the stream of consciousness trend. This made her literary approach **nonlinear, fragmentary, and impressionistic**. It was historical but in a new sense. History for Woolf is the sense of the present in its variations and dynamic living. For that reason, her narrative has become exploratory than descriptive. The conventional episodic structure is conspicuous by its absence in her novels. Her fiction instead follows a pattern-less depiction, taking unexpected twists and turns, while investigating the grey areas of experience. Likewise, dialogues and statements are mixed with other forms of expression such as monologue, daydreaming and fantasy. They lack cogency and appear anarchic. Sharply critical of logic and rational projection, Virginia Woolf experiments with images, pauses and sudden breaks. This is the preferred stance of modernist writing, rejecting viewpoints rooted in history.

In Modernist writing, negation of ideas was vehemently stressed and the integrated human being, was made the target of attack. Woolf combined creative expression with the prevailing ideas.

While talking about her, we should keep in mind the nineteen twenties that shaped her as an extremely active person in the world of thought. It may even be said that she ran a campaign against simplification in literature. This shows that in practice, she was not an individualist occupying a corner away from the happenings of life. Even though a Modernist in vision, she gave much credence to the common taste and thinking of the ordinary reader. The essays in her book *The Common Reader* stand testimony to this fact. She ruffled many a feather in the literary world by referring boldly to Shakespeare. As she projected the women's state of her time into the past, she made the interesting statement that Shakespeare became famous simply because he was a man—if a woman wrote those plays, none would care about them. In this way, the gender prejudice was highlighted. This viewpoint put her at the forefront of literary debates in England. She proved to be a champion of the women's cause. From that angle, she could convincingly assert that at home, in the patriarchal family, a woman with talent and ideas should have a separate room to herself. In her opinion, this secured for the woman the right to privacy, and freed her from the intrusive male gaze. The point was made in her celebrated book *A Room of One's Own*. To quote:

A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction; and that ... leaves the great problem of the true nature of woman and the true nature of fiction unsolved. ... women and fiction remain, so far as I am concerned, unsolved problems. ... Perhaps if I lay bare the ideas, the prejudices, that lie behind this statement you will find that they have some bearing upon women and some upon fiction. ... When a subject is highly controversial—and any question about sex is that—one cannot hope to tell the truth. One can only show how one came to hold whatever opinion one does hold. One can only give one's audience the chance of drawing their own conclusions as they observe the limitations, the prejudices, the idiosyncrasies of the speaker. Fiction is here likely to contain more truth than fact. (5)

Apparently, one cannot make head or tail of the subject Woolf takes up in the above quote. Indeed, the problem of the true nature of woman and the true nature of fiction are difficult to grasp in our world. The psychology of the woman is beyond our reach for that reason. The concerns of the male-dominated society have all along been to maintain the prevailing structures and to continue with whatever gives success. The feeling was more acute in Woolf's time. Also, "the true nature of fiction" is a problem. How do we relate the one with the other? Mark the repetition of the word "true." Finally, we reach the word "truth." In the way of what is called "truth", come such obstacles as the questions about sex, the prejudices that a society nurtures and the idiosyncrasies met with in the behaviour of individuals. These questions are raised in the quote, even as Woolf remains non-committal about their resolution. In an obvious sense, drawing one's "own conclusions" does not lead us anywhere. What then? Woolf stresses the gap between "truth" and "fact." These are some of the difficulties the contemporary writer faces. We might assume that Woolf is conscious about them in the course of composing her fiction, as a woman as well as a citizen in the modern world.

Yet, Woolf grappled with the issue of selfhood seriously. It became for her an important concern regarding dilemmas and uncertainties. Making her stand clear in the situation, she observed in *The Common Reader*:

... the accent falls differently from of old; the moments of importance came not here but there ... Let us not take it for granted that life exists more fully in what is commonly thought big than in what is commonly thought small. (Qtd. Ford)

Woolf's comment is clearly on the side of the ordinary and the commonplace than on the side of what she calls big. She is equally conscious about the factor of importance. Even as the tone is urbane, Woolf shows the upper class its place and its distance from the issues of the day. For her, the women's existence had remained marginal all along.

10.4 VIRGINIA WOOLF'S IDEOLOGICAL-LITERARY TRAITS

Virginia Woolf is associated closely with three things—Modernism, Stream of Consciousness, and Feminism. These are broader themes denoting the literary trend, method of representation, and theoretical standpoint. They also point towards the important link between literary writing and society. Woolf's approach was a decisive factor. She wrote to criticise and intervene and stood for freedom to express an opinion and to take a position on social issues. In her opinion, the writer is a participant in the practices of one's times. This has something to do with the very form of fiction that writers like Woolf adopted. She was a conscious writer, conscious of class and gender divisions. This will have a bearing on the discussion in this unit.

There is a distinct version of the Stream of Consciousness deployed by Virginia Woolf in her fiction. We witness in it a flow of thoughts in conjunction with an individual's mental state. A link exists between the character's biography, and the larger happenings moulding his/her consciousness in specific circumstances. In the flow, a sequence gets asserted. Even as the individual mind is not stuck to a linear trajectory from the past to the present or from present to the past, one notices a sequence. It tells the story of a society caught in its evolution. Woolf maintains the posture of detachment. She observes the existing phenomenon, not directly but through the lens of an independent perceiver. This lets it be known that Woolf is not sure about the supposed truth emerging in the circumstance at the moment. Her mistrust of a position on the unfolding scene is a comment by itself, letting the reader know that decisive positions do not matter since the flow of events in life is relentless. Note the important point Woolf makes by maintaining the posture of neutrality. It might be a statement of breaking free from the prevailing logic of life. We identify that there is a sense of freedom in the narrative moving back and forth under a loose guidance from the character or from the writer-narrator who apparently lets things happen on their own. In case of the Stream of Consciousness narrative in the hands of Virginia Woolf, the plot line is arbitrarily followed. There are necessities of the character's temperament, her/his decisions and clear or vague movements in the frame of the chosen fictional space.

Check your progress 1

Discuss Virginia Woolf's writing with reference to its ideological and literary traits.

10.5 MODERN, MODERNITY, AND MODERNISM

What is Modernism and how does it help us understand Virginia Woolf as a novelist? For this question, we may briefly trace a bit of history to serve as a background. Modernism is meant to recognize the presence of new ideas taking us effectively into our own time and enabling us to grapple with the newly-emerged issues. In that regard, in England's cultural history, we have the clear markings of Feudalism to separate the old and the medieval from that which is **modern**. It is clearly established in English literary thought that Chaucer is a modern poet. He is followed much later in the sixteenth century by Spenser, Marlowe and Shakespeare. They are considered rightly the modern voices. To this category, belong poets such as Donne, Marvell and Milton. All of them belong to the modern stream of writing.

Likewise, **modernity** was the binding thread between Chaucer on one side and Shakespeare or Milton on the other. Modernity laid out the character of secularism stressing the reality of the given world. Open to change, this world was tangible and took intervention from human beings as a source of strength. People's endeavour was a positive factor in history since it questioned the religious or moral structures blocking their ways and disallowed any dynamic step human beings might take to improve their fate. On the other hand, privilege was central to social life and it received authentication from divinity. In a significant sense, modernity contested it and enabled specifically the section of merchants and traders to take things in their hands. The regime of the privileged and powerful could not take the merchant class for granted any longer. With help from modernity, the new social classes earned greater initiative than before and moved closer to the levers of power. This helped them make a dent in the stranglehold of orthodoxy. In the process, the behaviour of money and trade drew influence from secular politics and scientific thought bringing about momentous change in the country's body politic. The change unleashed by the forces of modernity made possible the rise of a new ethos of optimism and positive outlook. Finally, the sway from Feudalism to Capitalism was complete in the following centuries. By the mid-nineteenth century, modernity had gained unquestioned acceptance as the governing idea, its forms being democracy and egalitarianism. Thus, we observe that modern and modernity are inextricably linked, the modern assuming a theoretical frame of modernity.

Contrarily though, with the onset of the twentieth century we note a crucial alteration in the parameters forging a different view of the unfolding scenario. We talk no longer about the non-medieval or anti-medieval values to connect with the period of science and rationality. Instead, **Modernism** assumes a distinct twentieth century connotation with no link with the previous decades. It is counter to the view that writers such as Chaucer and Shakespeare stood for. Modernism is not understood in relation to modernity of the kind associated with the great writing of the previous centuries. To reiterate, modernity and Modernism have no connection with each other. The latter is confined specifically to the decades leading to the First World War and the writers emerging in its wake. Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound are Modernist writers since they talk of a dilemma arising in the era of uncertainty and stasis in the twentieth century. Modernism assumes a universalist connotation under which the modern man becomes a prototype of mankind itself. One wonders whether the study of psychology in the nineteenth century did this by putting at the centre the individual human being. Whatever the case, modernism of the twentieth century gave rise to a form of writing that could be set apart from all literary forms in the past.

Check your progress 2

Explain the terms ‘modernity’ and ‘modernism’. Are the terms connected in any way?

10.6 Modernist Writing and the Social Context

The age of modernist flowering was conflict-ridden with no tangible contours. It was recognised as a fact of modern-day life and appeared to be the circumstance going out of control. That was contrary to the perceptions of Woolf’s predecessors. Gone was the time when human beings by themselves decided on a path to pursue, when a tangible aim worked out with effort at the larger cultural level and was the determining principle of their behaviour. That was in the nineteenth century when Charles Darwin and Karl Marx had redefined the humanist-historical view of man as a conscious agent of the phenomenon of change. Truly emphasised in Modernism, however, was a view that was dark and pessimist at its core. In the new century, power and initiative were snatched away from the citizen, from the human individual who would perceive, think about and analyse the existing social trends, when he would exercise conscious choice to realise himself. The same held true about social sections evolving a consensus, and on that basis working for a change in conditions. The spread of Capitalism in the new situation reduced the citizen to the level of a helpless person meant to follow the established conventions and dictates of a state. This environment produced persons alienated from their surroundings. In brief, the Modernist trend was bereft of all links with the preceding epochs in history and lacked cohesion. Such a Modernist paradigm emerged in the fiction of Virginia Woolf.

There is a justification in saying that the peculiar manifestation of Modernism was the Stream of Consciousness emerging in a new form of fiction. It gave literary writing a peculiar character adhering to the logic of spontaneity in thought. That indeed turned the table on how thought had been considered so far. At the turn of the century, a belittling of thought occurred. The presence of logic was rejected in representation. That undermined the nature of thought steadying the boat of life, so to say, and leaving the mental process to the exigencies of moods and emotions. The sense of certainty in the human mind was done away with. Thus, Modernism and the Stream of Consciousness worked hand in hand to establish the superiority of human being’s mental processes in a raw form. The paradigm appeared in the form of thoughts of the characters in works of fiction without a specific pattern. Literally, it was a flow. We are made to realise that consciously chosen endeavours of a character relate, directly or indirectly, with his/her self, thus going over innumerable matters floating in memory as thinking and memory work in tandem. In the Stream of Consciousness fiction, a character was shown as waking up in the morning and soon beginning to sort out his or her dilemmas with a **dreamy pressure of the previous day**.

10.7 VIRGINIA WOOLF: A NOVELIST OF ASSERTION

Think of the socio-ideological haze covering the fates of twentieth century men and women and letting no escape route to emerge. It recognised the working of the human mind parallel to the plans the individual pursued. As was the case in reality, a person lived invariably at two levels, the level of the job he /she was assigned to determine his / her life, and the other level where in mind

he / she continuously engaged in a parallel thought irrespective of whether it related directly or indirectly to the assigned job. According to the Stream of Consciousness, a person was never alone—someone/something always remained active in his/her mind. Indeed, someone always talked to him/her. It amounted to a drama enacted inside one's mind. Further, and yet more meaningfully the act of imagination was integral to the person concerned.

The next thing to be considered is the state of women around the First World War. It was a domain shaped entirely by the male. Trade and commerce as well as social and political management were in the grip of the dominant male even as women were pushed to the periphery of running the household. They were to merely assist the contemporary leadership and bureaucracy in the larger world. As an individual, Virginia Woolf stood at the point of relative advantage. Coming from the upper sections in English society, Woolf had witnessed the lack of freedom and initiative in women's role. Things were changing though, but at a slow pace. The family and marriage observed the dictates of the husband. Woolf had woken up to the presence of powerful women writers in the latter part of the nineteenth century. George Eliot and Elizabeth Barret Browning were examples. But the scope of women's participation in social life was limited and narrow. Acutely aware of this aspect, Woolf chose to follow her own independent path of expression for drawing attention to the secondary position of the womenfolk.

10.8 VIRGINIA WOOLF AS A THINKER

Virginia Woolf was primarily a fiction writer engaging with contemporary literary criticism, theory and the subordinate position of women in society. That takes us to the third point mentioned above concerning the characteristic emphases in her writing. She chose to reflect upon women-related issues, with that she could offer resistance to the prevailing hierarchy based on gender. Her essays on social biases against women left a distinct mark on the English literary thought. Activists in the Feminist trend in the sixties and the seventies constantly referred to her insights into the culturally flawed social phenomenon. Virginia Woolf is remembered for her essays in *A Room of One's Own* that highlight privacy as being crucial to a woman's identity. The essays discuss anonymity that had been forced upon women of her time and which was indeed an extension of a long tradition of neglect. Also, the element of neglect that was subtly present won acceptance of the population of women. In the context, we may keep in mind her portrayals of women characters in her fiction. Her works such as *Orlando*, *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* come to mind. We note in a significant sense the thoughtful and extremely creative nature of the women she picks up for representation. This is borne out by the following:

[S]he was increasingly angered by masculine condescension to female talent. In *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Woolf blamed women's absence from history not on their lack of brains and talent but on their poverty. For her 1931 talk "Professions for Women," Woolf studied the history of women's education and employment and argued that unequal opportunities for women negatively affect all of society. She urged women to destroy the "angel in the house," a reference to Coventry Patmore's poem of that title, the quintessential Victorian paean to women who sacrifice themselves to men. ...

... Virginia had kept a diary, off and on, since 1897. In 1919 she envisioned "the shadow of some kind of form which a diary might attain to," organized not by a mechanical

recording of events but by the interplay between the objective and the subjective. Her diary, as she wrote in 1924, would reveal people as “splinters & mosaics; not, as they used to hold, immaculate, monolithic, consistent wholes.” Such terms later inspired critical distinctions, based on anatomy and culture, between the feminine and the masculine, the feminine being a varied but all-embracing way of experiencing the world and the masculine a monolithic or linear way. Critics using these distinctions have credited Woolf with evolving a distinctly feminine diary form, one that explores, with perception, honesty, and humour, her own ever-changing, mosaic self.*

Here, the mention of interplay between the objective and the subjective makes Woolf’s engagement authentic. She saw a given phenomenon, grasped it under her perspective and reproduced it on the page as per her choice of formulation. Mark in it, use of the apparently mundane along with ideas of an evolved mind.

10.9 WOOLF AS A LEADING LIGHT OF THE BLOOMSBURY GROUP

For understanding Woolf’s thought and role, it would be useful to refer to the Bloomsbury Group that had shown its potential face in friendships of a few English writers and thinkers in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Intellectualism was at its core and a deep distrust of convention and orthodoxy was its main strength. It was dominated by males at the time who were well-informed and sensitive as well as inspired by art. Their faith in art was derivative, not based on the experience of the time first-hand. In the nineteen twenties though, the Bloomsbury Group made a place for itself in the English cultural life, with discussion, dialogue, and a free exchange of views being its defining features. Most of the ideas and opinions expressed by its members revolved around literature. Even as rational discourse prevailed to a large extent, it steered clear of the expressly political standpoint. Can it be said the members of the Bloomsbury Group found the political projection of issues beneath them and for which they would not spare sustained consideration? They would instead bring in the aspects of art and high culture as well as a tolerant brand of humanism. This was to enrich the new atmosphere they wished to create in the post-First World War period of mixed-up perceptions.

The Bloomsbury group trusted their sophisticated minds for filling up gaps between their self and the concrete purpose, and yet remained stuck to a mild sense of peace. Incidentally, around 1920, sisters Virginia and Vanessa (children of Leslie Stephen) with husbands Leonard Woolf and Clive Bell respectively had joined the group and took part in its running with interest. The group was modelled around the ideals of Leslie Stephen, a passionate seeker of truth and one contributing his might to the cause of thoughtful participation in intellectual life. The company then became the ‘Memoir Club,’ literally making it a get-together of past memories in human form. Some of the friends of the foursome were Desmond and Dolly McCarthy, E.M. Forster, and John Maynard Keynes. The spirit of the group lurks behind Virginia Woolf’s fiction of the nineteen twenties, particularly *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*. The social life of the time would appear to the writers of this breed as a series of perceptions of what they saw and observed. It was a mix of the concrete spectacle existing at a safe distance. This spectacle ensured safety and equanimity of the perceiver, sanitising her/her sensitivity covered under layers of poetic similes and soft mental

projections. For Clarissa Dalloway, air in the early hours of the day would be, for instance, "like a flap of a wave; the kiss of a wave; chill and sharp."

The Bloomsbury spirit, so to say, aimed at breaking free from the conventional wisdom of the Victorian period. The second half of the nineteenth century England was marked by a shallow complacency and smugness. For people in the period, those settled in positions of power had easy questions to deal with and the answers were likewise banal. It all stood on the wealth coming to the metropolitan centre called England from the colonies spread over the entire globe. The clash of interests created an impasse. One might guess in such a case that the Modernism we have talked of in the earlier sections of this unit was an apt response to the Victorianism that ruled the roost. In the new response lay the effort of problematising answers and recognising that humans were to keep pace with the overall growth of social resources. It took to experimenting with an expression that recognised subtlety. For it, the existing human experience had a mercurial nature easily slipping through words and phrases and compelling the author to give it an open and uncertain shape. If in the hands of an artist, the human-social experience assumed a temper of ever innovating with words that would prove true to the nature of an ever-evolving meaning. It made the outlook of the Bloomsbury group elitist and appealed only to the chosen ones among readers.

The Bloomsbury Group became a symbol of writing marked by an exclusive emphasis on the literary art as a field beyond definition. It would not only be different from the fiction written in the nineteenth century but also from the writing that the post-First World War writers produced. Any literary convention of plot, characterisation, detailing of situations, use of dialogue, or dramatizing events was to be shunned since that would take away from the feelings, moods, and situations present behind human conduct. Finding an apt word or phrase and doing justice to a state of mind was the issue. Complexity was the watchword. In one go, literary writing went out of the purview of a common literary practitioner even as, ironically, the common reader and her/his needs and requirements were uppermost in the minds of Bloomsbury thinkers and theorists. Was it the case that it had fallen upon the writer of an evolved sensitivity to improve and enrich the understanding of the common reader, educating her/him in the niceties of the literary enterprise?

Check your progress 3

What is the significance of the 'Bloomsbury group' in the intellectual history of early twentieth century Britain?

10.10 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have dealt with the question of Virginia Woolf's personality as a writer. Her interests lay in expressing herself as a sensitive being in the surroundings of crisis. Her role involved interpreting the twentieth century situation as a woman who was equipped with the knowledge of the mental processes. Modernism of a new kind got forged in her hands. She established in fiction a style that relied on observation, feeling and exploration. She did not remain confined to a distant and detached view but exercised assertion against forces of money and market culture. Her participation as a member of the Bloomsbury group helped her remain unaffected by predetermined goals of easy access. Her ideology was hidden but was ever active

and alert. This is clear in her fictional depictions and critical statements carrying a sharp comment on the conditions of the day.

10.11 REFERENCES

Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas*. Ed. Morag Shiach. New York: Oxford, 2008.

Ford, Boris. *Pelican Guide: The Modern Age*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963.

Entry on Virginia Woolf in Britannica. <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Virginia-Woolf>>

10.12 GLOSSARY

Nonlinear: In Virginia Woolf's context, the word hints at the mixed and complex in life as well as feelings specifically.

Fragmentary: It goes in congruence with the nonlinear, and denotes parts that have an identity of their own. Thus, fragmentary is meaningful.

Impressionistic: It refers to the momentary and the fleeting state of mind. We might also extend it to mean that which is unformed.

Dreamy pressure of the previous day: The expression fits in well with the writing of the Stream of Consciousness. In the context, the new is not entirely new but carries the imprint of the previous day in a shadowy form.

10.13 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1 In what way can Virginia Woolf be called a writer of assertion? Explain.

2. Write a critical note on Virginia Woolf's Modernism.

UNIT 11 *MRS DALLOWAY*: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

- 11.1 Objectives
- 11.2 Introduction
- 11.3 The Main Point of Significance in *Mrs. Dalloway*
- 11.4 A View of the Social Fabric in England
- 11.5 The Perspective of Vacuity and Stasis
- 11.6 Experimentative Plot
- 11.7 Poetic Approach than the Fictional One
- 11.8 Let us sum up
- 11.9 References
- 11.10 Glossary
- 11.11 Questions

11.1 OBJECTIVE

In the previous two units, you have read about the stream of consciousness trend in English fiction, and Virginia Woolf as a novelist in the modernist mode. In this unit, we shall focus on Virginia Woolf's novel *Mrs. Dalloway* as a text focusing upon the states of mind in twentieth century English life. This unit discusses the central character Clarissa Dalloway, an upper-class woman who wonders what is significant and what is ephemeral in her world. With Clarissa as our guide, we shall gain a deeper understanding of the conflicts of her time. It will be our job to ascertain those areas of human experience that engaged sensitive minds of that period. As we confront dilemmas facing a variety of characters in addition to Clarissa, our understanding of the times will be enriched. In this unit, we shall also consider the poetic versus the fictional aspect in *Mrs. Dalloway*. We will note that Woolf relies a great deal on experiment and innovation.

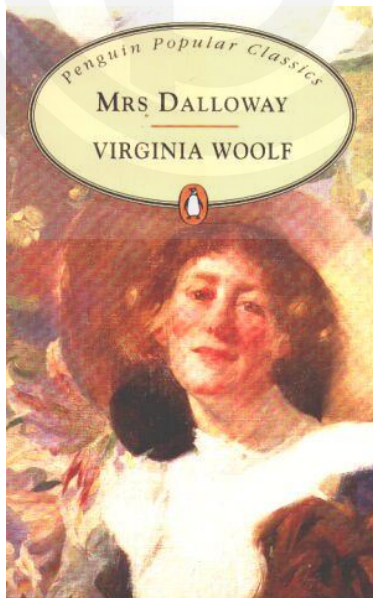
11.2 INTRODUCTION



(picture source: Wikimedia Commons)

As is said in the previous units of this block, a new kind of fiction took shape in the early years of the twentieth century. The reason for novelty lay in the European surroundings marked by issues of loneliness, isolation, doubt and uncertainty. Though a divided society existed, the clash of interests and concerns were muted. Communication between people got badly hit and words did not enjoy the kind of appeal they did in the preceding decades. Were there stories and episodes in life to engage people? Clouds of the First World War could be seen on the horizon. No one knew about the issues behind this problematic phenomenon. The same was reflected in the writing of the time; it went into regions of psychology where answers to the current malaise could be identified. Doubt was key factor in life, and the novel of the period was forced to grapple with the anarchic motivations of human behaviour.

As a novel, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* concentrated on what was called the inner landscape of people's minds. It overlooked the broader macrocosmic reality and wondered about the mysteries of human imagination. The said mysteries pointed towards Romantic writing of the nineteenth century. Yet, the difference lay in the conceptualization of the phenomenon. The Romantic thought of hope and dream was replaced by the modernist emphasis on hollowness and apathy. The question to be considered here is whether *Mrs. Dalloway* was a part of that scene. As we shall see in the following discussion, modernist fiction presented characters not as flesh and blood individuals but as shadows moving around in the contemporary scenario like lost souls. We confront those figures in the form of characters such as Clarissa, Peter Walsh, Septimus Warren Smith, and Lucrezia. They aspire for meaning in life but fail to attain anything tangible in the course of living.



Source www.flickr.com

11.3 THE MAIN POINT OF SIGNIFICANCE IN *MRS. DALLOWAY*

Mrs. Dalloway does not offer statements or descriptions. The author does not seem to be interested in telling a story. It may even be said that there is no story to tell in the novel, indeed the novel can do without it. Only in the background does *Mrs. Dalloway* have a narrative—a sequence of happenings in which characters participate. The individual circumstance and the social situation are suggested through the dialogue that the central character holds with herself. That too, happens in her memory. This method of representation is consciously used by the writer. We note that the writer's choice is to focus on the circumstance of an individual who is driven by the logic of her world. We might contrast this with the traditional fiction form that, among other things, worked at the level of dialogue. In the traditional novel, people talk, discuss, disagree, use satire, or create a climate of happy exchange. All these are conspicuous by their absence in *Mrs. Dalloway*. The novel presents an account of a mental state, the one in which Clarissa finds herself involved. We may wonder whether such a novel would be able to engage the reader. On the other hand, Woolf would insist that her job is to explore and examine a phenomenon she confronts in life. She would take the existing circumstance as a challenge. The assumption is that the alert citizen would need to know the surroundings from an angle of interest and serious concern. If there are spots in society that present a problem, the citizen would pause and think about them. In that process, he would mentally participate to see the dynamic link between one thing and another. That is the point *Mrs. Dalloway* raises.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, there are many characters facing grave issues. The string of their thoughts is held by an omniscient narrator. The thread connecting those characters with Clarissa, is time. They coexist with Clarissa in the London of the nineteen twenties. Also, Clarissa is aware that the world she inhabits is a complex one, ridden with cross purposes. She would come across many people on the road she does not know. But they do exist. This fact might explain the fact that her life, family and neighbourhood also reflect those of others outside her personal circle. The example of Septimus Warren Smith and his wife Lucrezia comes to mind. Septimus is an Englishman and his wife is an Italian. Outside the history of his love affair and marriage there is a sequence of happenings he was a part of. He is a soldier who fought in the First World War. There, he had a friend called Evans. The two fought together on the war front till one day, Evans got killed by a gunshot before Septimus's eyes. Septimus has carried all along the guilt of Evans' death. This gives him a split personality. He hallucinates many a time in the novel seeing the ghost of Evans and he enters imaginatively into the scene of the war far back in time. This gets him in conflict with the sweet and harmonious life with Lucrezia. Because of Septimus's hallucinations, Lucrezia remains concerned all the time about the safe upkeep of her husband and follows to protect him like a shadow. The point made is that Clarissa and Septimus will never meet, yet they constitute an important part of the novel since they coexist in that world. What would it say about the novel except that the narrative in modern fiction is non-linear and integrated on the strength of distant associations?

11.4 A VIEW OF THE SOCIAL FABRIC IN ENGLAND

In this regard, let us begin with a comment on Peter Walsh in the novel. He can be called as one of the centres of cognition. His stand in the novel is unique. It is both critical and mildly, accepting. He is not happy with the way things shaped up before his eyes. At the same time though, he is incapable of moulding the course of events to his liking. But without him, the novel would lose its peculiar colouring. He makes a running commentary on other characters as well as events that pass him by. He is particularly focused on Clarissa's choices and plans. It is interesting to watch the movement of the society of his time in the direction of decline. The **social fabric** of English society emerging in his imagination has no life or dynamic. That constitutes the positive part of his role. The negative part is that he has little impact to make on the goings-on. Precisely, this is where a realistic picture of the times gets reflected in the novel.

Peter Walsh is seldom happy or calm. He carries in his mind a running turmoil about winning peace or stability. He is stricken with idealism that gives him tough moments while sorting out life's issues. Many of his ideas might appeal to the reader but he is not able to put them into practice. A lover of Clarissa Dalloway, Peter proves himself to be too attractive for comfort. He draws her close but also confuses her. She cannot cope with his passion or intelligence and settles down in life with "a fool" instead. At least, the foolish Richard Dalloway would afford to Clarissa a lighter uneventful life that she would successfully fill up with small talk and smoothly organised get-togethers—the many inanities the upper-class urban life has to offer. Mark that England is passing through a critical phase of its making, or unmaking at the time.

The party organized by Clarissa becomes an image of the social forces at the helm. It attracts the upper class to Clarissa's place. Everyone attending the party remains confined to **ritualism**. There are people in it who want to tread the path of philanthropy, of settling down as refugees in another country, Canada in this case. We also note that a section on the rise in the existing scenario is the middle class of professionals. We have in mind the two doctors, Holmes and Bradshaw, who study the phenomenon from the angle of sustaining the health of the country, literally and metaphorically. They have an answer for everything and they wield great power in managing abnormalities and distortions. The third section is of politicians and the military bureaucracy. Significantly however, these groups do not include the controllers of the trade and the market. It appears that England has lost initiative to control the colonies it captured in the previous century. *Mrs. Dalloway* offers a window on the country's lean phase. Thus it is only natural that the novel ends on a note of death—a case of suicide by a war veteran.

As suggested in the previous section, *Mrs Dalloway* would hardly fit in with the established nature of the novel form that relies on suspense, anecdotes and verbal exchanges. Instead, Woolf's novel explores the psychological state of specific individuals than offering a view of society through episodes and incidents. What we cull in the manner of locating a declining social fabric, is left to ineffectual interpreters such as Peter Walsh and the political leaders. Yet, we notice the invisible presence of a tension-ridden scenario, which implies the vacuity of a metropolitan city teeming with high government dignitaries as well as Lords and Dukes. The account of these runs parallel to those who suffered in the war and came back to a supposedly normal life as tormented beings.

Check your progress 1

Does Mrs Dalloway engage with the social conditions in early twentieth century Britain?

11.5 THE PERSPECTIVE OF VACUITY AND STASIS

The main line of thought in this novel is highlighted through the get-togethers of the elite in the city of London. Their ritual of meeting in the evenings and sorting out issues, at some level indicates the act of becoming a community. Clarissa's part symbolizes the pattern of life in the city. We see preparations of such a party as the main body of the novel. The event culminates in the ritualistic exchanges at night among the powerful. Virginia Woolf successfully presents the undercurrents of apprehension in the nightmarish experiences of various characters. The sweep of the novel becomes wider as the novel proceeds. It has in its fold the distant colonies of the Western powers, the hierarchy of the ruling sections, the middle classes vying for success and favours, the philanthropic contests of money power, hypocritical behaviour of social climbers, to name a few. These do not exist on surface but could be felt at every nook and corner in London and in the surrounding world. The party suggests it subtly.

Mrs. Dalloway is a serious attempt at exploring the entanglements of modern existence in an atmosphere of instability. All this is deftly woven within the reigning pattern of modernist aimlessness. The one major factor for noting it is the sustained interest in answers that have to be found or invented if sanity is to be restored. Yet, the answers are not given. Perhaps, no answers exist at the moment, as members of the ruling class struggle in vain to gain truth of the phenomenon. To repeat, searching would not bear fruit since those involved in the search are not up to the task of finding a common goal. Weirdly, the dilemma is seen better by Septimus' wife Lucrezia. She is able to define the parameters of failure and fruitlessness, unlike others. Yet, she would not give up. The involved nature of the issue is captured not in the scene of the party, but away from it. In her case, a leap is discerned. In the middle of the satirical tone of the narrator, we notice in Lucrezia, a mention of hope. The image is not long lasting, but it leaves a mark. To quote:

Shuffling the edges straight, she did up the papers, and tied the parcel almost without looking, sitting beside him, he thought, as if all her petals were about her. 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; not Holmes; not Bradshaw; a miracle, a triumph, the last and greatest. Staggering he saw her mount the appalling staircase, laden with Holmes and Bradshaw; men who never weighted less than eleven stone six, who sent their wives to Court, men who made ten thousand a year and talked of proportion; who different in their verdicts (for Holmes said one thing, Bradshaw another), yet judges they were; who mixed the vision and the sideboard; saw nothing clear, yet ruled, yet inflicted. "Must" they said. Over them she triumphed. (129)

In Lucrezia's context, realization of the said vacuity has the angle of a fight. At the moment, she, "a flowering tree," fears "no one," and for that reason snatches a realistic view of the stalemate in front. The power wielded by the two doctors, Holmes and Bradshaw, means nothing to her, nor to the larger society in which they prosper. The two are medical professionals and have been given sanction by the administering system. See that they get legitimacy from the institution of medical

knowledge in the country. However, they run their own logic of “propriety” and general health. It goes to the credit of Woolf that the two doctors are held to ridicule. Ordinary people feel crushed by their presence. Because of them, a line gets drawn between them and the country’s population without means and resources. In the novel, this is a clear case of social criticism pointing at the stasis as well as absurdity of the goings-on at the time.

We realize that *Mrs. Dalloway* has no actual situations in which characters are caught, even as they struggle to understand their innate nature. The characters navigate their course through the mental activity that keeps them in touch with that they see in front and the effect thereof on their own views. The reader is given to understand that the interaction between the outer world and the individuals' outlook is part of a bigger construct covering a substantial chunk of the existing society. We note, therefore, that all along the novel, there is a spread of the net which is left behind by past circumstances in a character's life. Who is at the centre of it all, calling the shots and strengthening one's own comprehension? The answer is not clearly given.

For Woolf, the crux of social experience is the active participation of an individual self in it. With this is linked the yet more significant dimension of the many individuals, carriers of the many sensitivities and outlooks, who throng the scene. They appear as having originated from a common segment in society but enjoy specificities of their own role and function in that society. Together, the captured individualities become a concrete formation of a living spectacle that they are a part of. This helps Woolf in widening her appeal in the world of the time. The social face of such a culture educates the reader no end, giving him an alert view of the determining structures that are restrictive and dictating.

The different sequences relate with one another on the basis of shared concerns emerging in the said stream. As a consequence, a wider plan comes into view and lets the reader engage with it. After every four, five pages, the scene in the novel changes, as if in a natural course and other sets of character appear. The writer only notes their age, clothes they wear and the manner they adopt to be in the existing flow of life that goes on uninterrupted. The major point of interest in the novel is the person Septimus and his young Italian wife. They are used by the writer as a mythical couple in modern surroundings. There is an air of mystery about them. Septimus has decided to kill himself in public and the wife helplessly watches his odd stance of sticking to his avowed aim.

11.6 THE EXPERIMENTAL PLOT

There is no conventionality in the plot of *Mrs. Dalloway*. It does not exist in the fictional form that the writer is supposed to have inherited from the nineteenth century novel. The novel in the preceding century had firmly established the method of fictional representation. We beheld a story growing under a logic of happenings, and the scene was inhabited by characters that would be in conflict or agreement with one another. In that phase of literary representation, the sequence of happenings began at a specific point with statements and observations serving as the background. The authorial comment and dialogue constituted an important part of the narrative. The element of suspense and surprise added zest to the novel that was meant to entertain and educate readers. In turn, writing necessitated successes and failures of the main characters in order to take the story forward. The curiosity about ‘What next’ moved in a certain direction and the reader became a

willing participant in the imaginatively created scenario. Such an action plan or the plot engaged the reader in the ramifications of the novel's main subject. All this is defied by Virginia Woolf in this novel. If such a defiance were to be key to the novel in the present case, shall we say that *Mrs. Dalloway* does not have a plot in it? Our answer to this question would be largely affirmative.

As if under a scheme, Woolf adheres to the idea of non-plot. She has named the novel after a woman character with a name and a mission—the name being Clarissa Dalloway, and the mission being organizing parties for those who matter, who are placed at the top of the ladder. The mission in the hands of Clarissa is projected through events that occur in a day, from morning till late at night. Clarissa is depicted referentially, not formally or directly. She comes and goes at the convenience of the author who holds the reins of the description in her firm hands. As the novel proceeds, we get to know Clarissa's age on the day she organizes the party, the one we as readers are witness to in the pages of the novel. The word "referential" is important, it brings in the flow of events, if they can be called so, arbitrarily. See how the novel opens:

Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself.

For Lucy had her work cut out for her. The doors would be taken off their hinges; Rumpelmayer's men were coming. And then, thought Clarissa Dalloway, what a morning—fresh as if issued to children on a beach. (5)

What we said in the beginning of this point occurs to us again as we notice this opening. The novel shows a complete departure from the convention of a novel with a plot. Indeed, the novel could have begun at any other moment in life of Clarissa Dalloway. But who is Mrs. Dalloway in the particular sense? We are kept wondering about the character after whom the novel has been named. As such, the reader's expectations do not matter the least, s/he is prepared to take whatever is offered without batting an eyelid. Still, the question remains, "Does the novel have a plot in it?" On a second thought, we might as well say yes, because the buying of flowers, Lucy, the removal of doors for an occasion, and the mention of a morning give the reader something to grapple with. A story and a plot-line do get suggested.

We might be aware that in the course of reading, the reader is kept at a distance from the novel and is to struggle for reaching the meaning built into the narrative. It is particularly so for the reader in India since the life of the nineteen twenties in London is removed many times over for us. The period of the novel is when we were under the yoke of the British. What helps us is that it is written by a woman who is mindful of the subject race (of the Britishers), so to say, and its infirmities. Imagine that in this novel, one of the major characters, Peter, has lived in India for a while and has plans to go back to it in connection with a second marriage. He is an outsider to India and his affair with one or the second woman is limited to the white community. Plot-wise, these complicate matters for the reader. The reason behind the difficulty to make sense of the novel is that the conceived pattern of happenings remains undefined for all, inside the novel as well as the readers.

Check your progress 2

Virginia Woolf has adhered to the idea of the non-plot. Do you agree? Give a reasoned answer.

11.7 POETIC APPROACH THAN THE FICTIONAL ONE

Woolf's approach to human experience lies in a poetic response to how an individual feels in a situation and what s/he perceives at the level of imagination. For any character in this novel, a detail does not denote an idea, but only a sensation on which another sensation of the same kind may be hung. The character is led from there to form an impression. Is this act psychological? The answer in the case of Woolf would be nearer the poetic than the psychological. The poetic and the psychological are clearly differentiated and may require an explanation. Melba Cuddy-Keane has observed:

Woolf valued the plasticity and fluidity of language, seeing its effect on the unconscious as both fertilizing and liberating, in stark contrast to the increasingly analytic and monolithic tendencies of the new professional discipline of English studies. ... Woolf was not attempting to theorize the unconscious. Instead, she focused on the evocative possibilities of unconscious response, and to do so, she wrote in metaphoric, imagistic, and highly suggestive ways (134).*

In *Mrs. Dalloway's* poetic mode, many peculiarities appear when a spectacle is considered. These peculiarities add to the poetic value of the depiction. It may have to do with a word that is only vaguely real. Many a time, an image comes to the rescue of the writer, or a snatch from memory. Woolf is ever vigilant to the emerging shape of a perception and participates in its final capturing. Use of the psychological terrain proves helpful. The writer is half committed to the picture in front but also dares to add an imaginative glance to it. The result is a phenomenon open to intervention. There is an anarchic urge, let us admit, to take things in one's hand and interfere with our own preference. Therein lies the issue of elitism -- the literary effort is seen as a means to realize oneself and dictate to the fiction one's own choice. Rightly, Clarissa Dalloway is recognizable as Woolf's own selfhood, projected more or less indulgently. See Clarissa's interpretation of Peter Walsh and Richard Dalloway. They are denied the right to stand on their own merit and do the bidding of the author-protagonist.

Psychology lends breadth to characterization in a general sense and it conveys to the reader that individuals act in a specific way bound as they are by a logic that is built into them. Thereon, the activated sensibility takes over and begins movement in whichever direction it might, depending on the existing circumstance.

Woolf does not distinguish between the supposedly positive and negative characters. It is due to the psychological dimension of the stream of consciousness mode. All characters have a mental make-up that evolved in the process of social living in the past. They have one or the other episode to refer to in their moment-to-moment activity. As characters proceed along their chosen path,

Clarissa Dalloway for buying flowers in the beginning of the day for instance, they are constantly reminded of some happening in the past. Woolf lets the reader know that no one is ever alone, or with a blank mind. All are walking as actively participating in the world, so to say, and with stray principles to guide them. This enables the observer, the writer included, to remain free from the act of judging whether people are right or wrong, acceptable or unacceptable. The element of tolerance and appreciation is inherent in the writer's outlook keeping it from being judgmental and maintaining a safe from norms and prejudices.

We have consistently used the word modernist in our discussion. That seems yet more relevant with respect to the supposed plot. The twentieth century necessity of focusing on the moment and keeping away from concrete comment is the point at issue. "Necessity" is a heavy word. It brings in the compulsions of life the various characters bear with while integrating with the fellow beings. Yet, the said integration does not take place in a meaningful sense. Most persons walk alone. They meet their old acquaintances as a chance happening. It is true that individually they carry a whole world inside them. Do we not see that the choices they made guided them minimally since they were extraneous to their temperament? Another set of choices would have equally well served the purpose. Boredom and dullness, as is the case with the meetings in which Mr. Dalloway and the group he is part of engage.

The novel follows the pattern of modern-day rituals. These are shown at the level of the family, the roadside happenings, the discussions and exchanges taking place during lunches of the rich and privileged. The reader is kept wondering about the rationale of the incidents chosen by the author. The non-plot may be an important factor in that regard. Perhaps this creates aesthetic needs of being evocative and experimental. When narrative is pushed to the background, the image takes over and poetic suggestion is deployed to give cohesion to the disparate situations. The poetic mode contributes to the complexity of representation as it does not allow a statement and an observation to enlighten the social scene. There appears a kind of vested interest in leaving the issues unresolved. We may consider that this perhaps is at the root of the novel's modernism. The non-novel trait of representation coupled with internally rich poetic images renders the account inaccessible to the reader whose rationality is constantly under attack from free-flowing and wayward comments.

Check your progress 3

Would it be true to say that being a stream of consciousness novel *Mrs. Dalloway* has no link with life outside memory? Discuss.

11.8 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have particularly focused upon the departure of *Mrs. Dalloway* from the conventional fictional form. It leaves the sequence of incidents and the overall plot structure and takes liberties with the novel form. The novel dwells on sharp and telling images of a society that has no future to look forward to. It is also highlighted that something wrong has occurred to the social fabric of England, leaving it without verve and dynamism. In those parts of the novel where satire is used for attacking priorities, the reader is left to wander aimlessly in an atmosphere of doom. At the end of the novel, Clarissa is sidelined and stasis has taken over. Likewise, the death

of Septimus has a paralyzing effect on the novel's descriptions. It stands to reason that the deployment of the poetic in preference to the accepted prose depictions takes the novel away from a concrete rendering of the phenomenon to the realm of uncertainty and dismay. There is much in the interpretation that is closer to mental states than to a passionate attempt at winning significance.

11.9 REFERENCES:

Cuddy-Keane, Melba. *Virginia Woolf, The Intellectual, And The Public Sphere*. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2003.

Woolf, Virginia. *Mrs. Dalloway*. Maple: Noida, India. Rpt. 2020.

11.10 GLOSSARY:

Social fabric: The term denotes more than a pattern. It is a metaphor and has built into it a design, a combination of colours and shades as well as a quality of the threads woven into the structure. In that sense, *Mrs. Dalloway* as a novel is rich in connotation. That is why a whole discussion is accorded to the idea in the unit.

Ritualism: This has reference to the party organized by Clarissa. We are struck by the mechanical movement of the characters attending the party in which greetings are exchanged as a matter of routine. There is little genuineness about them.

Anarchic motivations of human behaviour: Anarchy indicates lack of discipline or accepted notions of behaviour.

Vacuity and Stasis: We may grasp these from the activities the characters in the novel engage in. None in the novel has a sense of purpose. The reference to a gap of twenty years in the age of Clarissa tells little about the ground she may have covered in life. The same could be said about the empty and airy efforts of Peter Walsh wishing to settle down in life.

Proportion: A heavy word. It is a euphemism for normalcy and rightness of values. Dr. Bradshaw hides much behind the use of this word.

11.11 QUESTIONS

1. Write a critical note on Septimus Warren Smith.
2. In what ways does *Mrs. Dalloway* depart from the traditions of the nineteenth century realist novel?
3. Consider *Mrs. Dalloway* as a modernist novel.

UNIT 12 *MRS. DALLOWAY*: THEMES AND CONCERNS

- 12.1 Objective
- 12.2 Introduction
- 12.3 The First World War as a Crucial Issue
 - 12.3.1 The Reach of the Colonies and the Problems
 - 12.3.2 Effects of the War on the Common people
 - 12.3.3 Influence of the Phenomena on Literature
- 12.4 The Medical Profession
- 12.5 Love and Madness
- 12.5 Idealism and Humanism
- 12.7 The Social Critique
- 12.8 Let us Sum Up
- 12.9 Bibliography
- 12.10 Glossary
- 12.11 Unit End Questions

12.1 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you would have gained a view of the issues and themes in *Mrs. Dalloway*. They relate to the society and culture of the time in which the novel was composed. Written in the early nineteen twenties, *Mrs. Dalloway* reflects a deep awareness of the destruction and devastation caused by the First World War. Social critique is another issue that the novel grapples with. The unit also focuses upon madness, love and the distorted values pursued by the medical profession. All those combine with the pressures working on the common people and making them insecure. The unit attempts a brief analysis of these ideas and related concerns.

12.2 INTRODUCTION

As is clear from discussions in the previous units in this block, *Mrs. Dalloway* provides a picture of mental states in the early twentieth century English society. The mental states in question are of specific individuals bearing stress of the given circumstance. We are face to face here with those who made a grade in life and the others who became losers in the conflict-ridden, market-driven society of the time. As we get close to the specific individuals, we know that most of them merely react to their situation, not engaging with it. Their struggles are behind them; to them they refer in the depth of their minds. Mark the two distinct levels. One is that they have a history of actions, and two, their present moment is without any motivation to achieve a new aim. What do we make of such a novel? The writer tells us about the presence of a process of **self-evaluation and assessment** in the modern man. As readers, we are expected to go over the modern man's condition

forged by his struggles. Indeed, modern man's struggles are clues to the themes and concerns of the novel.

In the twentieth century social situation, modern man faces the issue of inaction. It may have to do with the absence of jobs caused by the economic crisis of the day. Another factor could be the rising literacy and increased consciousness about the working of society. Since outlets for jobs are not available, the common citizen not only feels helpless but also becomes **inward-looking**. This fact has struck the writer who wishes to understand the mental make-up of the citizen. When we think of *Mrs. Dalloway* as a novel capturing the new circumstance, we relate to the characters at the level of their thoughts and feelings. We recognize that both the author and her characters focus upon what to do in an environment of non-action.

This takes us to the concrete situation in the first few decades of the twentieth century that witnessed upheavals in the economic and social spheres. Isn't that the subject of the novel at hand? That sure appears to be the case. We also note that it is vitally connected with the First World War when the economic crisis of the time compelled England and other countries of Europe to retain hold on the markets spread over the world, particularly to exploit resources of the colonies caught in the imperialist structure. We are made to wonder about the cut-throat competition intensifying in the European world. However, politics of the time failed to resolve the issue of economic clashes. In that sense, the First World War was a 'natural' outcome.

The state of social life being an important concern of literature, writers **empathized** with the suffering humanity that was in pursuit of livelihood, sense of purpose and tangible goals. This is indirectly highlighted in the novel. The narrative carries symptoms and signs of the malaise that the said **social stalemate** may have caused.

The documentary style of the novel made it incumbent upon the writers to consider the weakening bonds between individual and social groups. Psychology added to the complex nature of the fictional representation; characters in the novel began to be explored differently. Men and women were shown as thinking more than ever before and laying bare their internal processes. The element of memory was adopted in these novels to cover aspects related to religion, morality and ethics. The latter had lost credibility against the background of leaps in science, historical analysis and secular thought in the preceding century. Another major player in the period was the sense of doubt and self-doubt; it made society appear shaky and uncertain. One of the indicators of this phenomenon was the use of the stream of consciousness trend. The first unit of the present block has dealt with it in detail.

12.3 THE FIRST WORLD WAR AS A CRUCIAL ISSUE

The First World War is a historical event that is most significant in one's understanding of twentieth century experience. It had far reaching consequences. It reconfigured existing values - in life and literature.

12.3.1 Reach of the Colonies and the Associated Problems

Think of the ending of the First World War in 1918 and of the years following it. In that span, the world had radically changed from a **chaotic phenomenon** to a deeply divided world. It was bad enough in the recent past, and it became worse in the years that followed the War. Europe was highly industrialized and followed capitalism as its chosen economic path. The countries in the continent had colonies in South America, Africa, Asia, and the Far East. All of a sudden, one witnessed a scene in which the old political structure had weakened. Particularly, England lost its sheen and was faced with the challenge of managing its colonies in the new situation when the capitalist answer of merely exploiting the local populace did not seem to deliver. This rings true in some parts of *Mrs. Dalloway* and Woolf refers to the suppression of people in the colonies. At the same time though, Woolf gives all the chances to the upper sections in England to establish themselves as rulers with qualities of etiquette, high culture, and enriched tastes. It became incumbent on the literary field in England to rethink its creative strategies and adapt it ideologically to the existing scenario.

12.3.2 Effects of the War on the Common People

In the context of the War, the war-veteran Septimus Warren Smith becomes a symbol of the modern-day violence and cynicism. That is where the First World War comes out in its true colours. At first, it appeared a necessary event to Septimus. In spite of losing his close friend Evans on the front, Septimus remained unruffled by the loss and thought of bright prospects. He thought nothing of the destructiveness he witnessed first-hand. We are given the following picture of the War that affected Septimus' mind superficially, first in an ordinary sense and later in a fearsome way:

For, now that it was all over, truce signed, and the dead buried, he had, especially in the evening, these sudden thunder-claps of fear. He could not feel. As he opened the door of the room where the Italian girls sat making hats, he could see them; could hear them; they were rubbing wires among coloured beads in saucers; they were turning buckram shapes this way and that; the table was all strewn with feathers, spangles, silks, ribbons; scissors were rapping on the table; but something failed him; he could not feel. Still, scissors rapping, girls laughing, hats being made protected him; he was assured of safety; he had a refuge. (76)

See the effect of the War on Septimus' mind. In the middle of peace, he has the "thunder-claps of fear." When he looks at a normal scene of the market, "something fail[s] him," and he cannot "feel." That is only the beginning but it anticipates a deep malady forming in him. After marrying Lucrezia, the two plan to have a child. But something has gone wrong with his physical impulse and he cannot attain arousal, even as there is no medical reason for the problem:

"So there was no excuse; nothing whatever the matter, except the sin for human nature had condemned him to death; that he did not feel. He had not cared when Evans was killed; that was worst; but all the other crimes raised their heads and shook their fingers and jeered and sneered over the rail of the bed in the early hours of the morning at the prostrate body which lay realizing its degradation..." (80)

Death of Evans is disturbing enough. It jolts Septimus completely, making him confront a sense of vacuum. It is the loss of a friend and the sweetness of a climate the two friends created with each other's help. They would invent games in the middle of gunshots and smoke, and the killings would move to the background. But did they? That is indicated by "all the other crimes ... [that] jeered and sneered over the rail of the bed." The long sentence in the description follows the rhythms of a flow. And those would not cease when peace in the formal sense returned. The ending of the sentence with "the prostrate body which lay realizing its degradation" is a whole different construct of deathliness spreading all over the place. It goes to the credit of Virginia Woolf's creative skills that take the reader suddenly into the middle of "degradation." Septimus feels it crawling over his mind and disturbing his normal perceptions. From this point, the long hallucinations are not far.

12.3.3 Influence on Literature

In the post-War period, literary principles of projecting reality as it is had become untenable. They made writing subservient to social change and that caused raising of eyebrows. The post-War reality of the regime did not look kindly at literature with political implications. The emphasis had to be on acceptance and self-criticism rather than on the curiosity to know and understand the circumstance. It is illustrated by fiction that dwells upon fantasy, loneliness and the helpless mental state. These were the dominant features of modernism that offered the least challenge to the powers that be. The elite of the society would keep their eyes focused upon immediate and distant economic goals.

Check your progress 1

How does Mrs. Dalloway engage with the trauma caused by the First World War?

12.4 THE MEDICAL PROFESSION

In the novel, we have Doctor Holmes and Doctor Bradshaw providing medical advice and treatment to the needy. The former is a general physician and the latter, a specialist. They are trained well to talk and explain the health issues connected with the well-being of citizens. Woolf deploys subtle mimicry to portray them. Later, it turns into a sharp satire. It is made clear by Woolf that the field of medicine has no serious concern for public health. It is more of a sham than a genuine pursuit to serve the noble cause of providing care. Holmes and Bradshaw pay little attention to the requirements of patients. In treating Septimus, Dr. Holmes has no sympathy for the patient and is easy in his approach. He finds Septimus over-anxious to perform in bed and fails to address his mental condition. For him, Septimus' ailment is a simple matter. He terms Septimus' condition a part of human nature and believes there is nothing the matter with him. Also, he eyes Septimus' wife Lucrezia with interest and is not bothered to pay heed to the patient's fears related to his visions. On his side, Septimus does not trust him and has angry outbursts off and on. He does not like Dr. Holmes one bit. We are told the following about Septimus by the author-narrator:

Human nature, in short, was on him (Septimus)—the repulsive brute, with the blood-red nostrils. Holmes was on him. Dr. Holmes came quite regularly every day. Once you stumble, Septimus wrote on the back of a postcard, human nature is on you. Holmes is on you. Their only chance was to escape, without letting Holmes know; to Italy—anywhere, anywhere (79)

Later, Lucrezia is more worried seeing the condition of Septimus deteriorate further. The vision of Evans' ghost gives Septimus a mix of perspectives too difficult to handle. Lucrezia does not know what to do when she hears him speak the following:

“Communication is health, communication is happiness, communication—” he muttered. “What are you saying, Septimus?” Rezia asked, wild with terror, for he was talking to himself. She sent Agnes running for Dr. Holmes. Her husband, she said, was mad. He scarcely knew her. “You brute! You brute!” cried Septimus, seeing human nature, that is Dr. Holmes enter the room. “Now what’s all this about?” said Dr. Holmes in the most amiable way in the world. “Talking nonsense to frighten your wife?” But he would give him something to sleep. And if they were rich people, said Dr. Holmes, looking ironically round the room, by all means let them go to Harley Street; if they had no confidence in him, said Dr. Holmes, looking not quite so kind. (82)

We can see here the author's opinion about doctors—they are non-serious while treating patients. Dr. Holmes' attitude towards Septimus is cynical. He is clear that being of low economic status, Septimus does not deserve more than he is getting. The doctor's eye is on the patient's pocket.

Still worse is the case of Dr. William Bradshaw who is presented in strongly critical terms. Woolf characterizes him as follows:

Sir William ... had worked very hard; he had won his position by sheer ability (being the son of a shopkeeper); loved his profession; made a fine figurehead at ceremonies and spoke well—all of which had by the time he was knighted given him a heavy look...He could see the first moment they came into the room (the Warren Smiths they were called); he was certain directly he saw the man; it was a case of extreme gravity. It was a case of complete breakdown-- complete physical and nervous breakdown, with every symptom in an advanced stage, he ascertained in two or three minutes (writing answers to questions, murmured discreetly, on a pink card). How long had Dr. Holmes been attending him? Six weeks. Prescribed a little bromide? Said there was nothing the matter? Ah yes (those general practitioners! thought Sir William). It took half his time to undo their blunders. Some were irreparable). (83-4)

In this quote, Woolf has drawn the reader's attention to Bradshaw's social background that affected his value system. The son of a shopkeeper coming to the medical trade and aiming to rise high in the general esteem is his chosen course. The three traits mentioned by the author—sympathy, tact, and understanding of the human soul—define Bradshaw aptly. These have been acquired by him with hard work and application. For him, the knowledge of medicine has crystallized into a valuable acquisition called expertise. His language, too, is affected by his standing in the profession; it makes him view Septimus and Lucrezia as a social category, "the Warren Smiths they were called." He also brushes aside the general practitioners as people who take "half his time to undo their blunders." The authorial intent in the context is to expose the hollowness of the medical profession, a stream of social life with no relation whatsoever with the common good.

Check your progress 2

1. Write a note on the two doctors Dr. Holmes and Dr. Bradshaw, keeping in view their attitude towards the patients.

12.5 LOVE AND MADNESS

Love is a major theme in *Mrs. Dalloway*. The emotion captured in the novel looms large in the general scheme of things and affects them variedly. **It gives people a purpose beyond social or national boundaries.** Within it, individuality comes into play and achieves the status of rich, passionate living. Between Septimus and Lucrezia, love prospers, giving the two lovers stability and commitment. Traumatized by war, Septimus meets Lucrezia in the market in Italy. Soon, the two fall in love and decide to tie the knot. Lucrezia likes Septimus's quiet ways and innocence as well as his penchant for literature. On his side, Lucrezia attracts him for her soft charm and industrious nature. She works earnestly for livelihood. Following their marriage, they shift to England and set up home there. Contrary to expectations though, life does not prove to be simple

and cozy for them. The villain in this case is Septimus's memory of the War. Initially, it stayed in his subconscious; he thought all was left behind and he could settle down peacefully with his wife. We may call it love of the natural kind based on attraction, urge and inspiration.

The simple story of Septimus and Lucrezia soon takes a disturbing turn when the former is visited by the ghost of his comrade-in-arms, Evans, on the war front. Septimus saw him dying in front of him. The incidence of death did not sink in. After marriage with Lucrezia, Septimus one day sees him walking towards him in London. It is a hallucination. But how would he see the difference between a visual image of him and the reality that he is dead. He takes the image as real. This is the onset of madness. The question is whether he starts seeing ghosts because his emotion of love for Lucrezia gave him a heightened mental state? Love is ethereal and half imagination. Lovers cannot distinguish between the real and the imaginary as easily as normal people would. In the present case, it is not easy to match the real with the imagined in a world that was rocked by processes of death and destruction. Without one's clear knowledge, the country and the city of London have undergone change in the post-War period. The political set up, the overall regime as well as power equations stand radically altered in the aftermath of a deeply shaken environment. That seems to be the background of Septimus's madness. He fought well in the War and earned laurels for his bravery. But that was also the time when he sensed the futility of war in the existing scenario. For a short while, the company of Lucrezia worked as balm for him. But not any longer. The image of the ghost of the friend and that of the loving wife alternate to distress him in crucial moments such as the viewing of children, or unknown men and women relaxing on benches in the park. This is the time when Lucrezia tries to pull him out of the frenzied state. Entirely devoted to him, Lucrezia is ever mindful of his reactions to the two doctors he consulted for his ailment. They treat him solely for his hallucinations whereas his ailment is unique. It is caused by the larger phenomenon of killings in the battlefield. That resulted in Septimus' split personality. In the novel, this issue is raised through Lucrezia's dismay. As the husband and the wife wander in the park and prepare to meet the doctor, Lucrezia faces the dilemma. Read the following:

She frowned; she stamped her foot. She must go back again to Septimus since it was almost time for them to be going to Sir William Bradshaw. She must go back and tell him, go back to him sitting there on the green chair under the tree, talking to himself, or to that dead man Evans, whom she had only seen once for a moment in the shop. He had seemed a nice quiet man; a great friend of Septimus's, and he had been killed in the War. But such things happen to everyone. Everyone has friends who were killed in the War. Everyone gives up something when they marry. She had given up her home. She had come to live here, in this awful city. But Septimus let himself think about horrible things, as she could too, if she tried. He had grown stranger and stranger....He saw things too—he had seen an old woman's head in the middle of a fern. Yet he could be happy when he chose. They went to Hampton Court on top of a bus, and they were perfectly happy....Suddenly he said, "Now we will kill ourselves," He would argue with her...and explain how wicked people were; how he could see them making up lies as they passed in the street...He knew the meaning of the world, he said. (59)

Trauma of the two is set against the trite circumstances of the rest of the characters in the novel. Both madness and love in this case become a background against which the ups and downs of the London elite can be viewed.

Woolf extends the scope of the phenomenon of London life. Initially, it is a mix of sentiment and the fluctuating fortunes of love in a real situation. The deployment of the Stream of Consciousness technique helps in deepening the impression of a tortuous scenario. The cause of the individual pain lies distant from where Septimus Smith and Lucrezia stay in the city:

“Was it that she had taken off her wedding ring? "My hand has grown so thin," she said. "I have put it in my purse," she told him.

He dropped her hand. Their marriage was over, he thought, with agony, with relief. The rope was cut; he mounted; he was free, as it was decreed that he, Septimus, the lord of men, should be free; alone (since his wife had thrown away her wedding ring; since she had left him)...The supreme secret must be told to the Cabinet; first that trees are alive; next there is no crime; next love, universal love, he muttered, gasping, trembling, painfully drawing out these profound truths which needed, so deep were they, so difficult, an immense effort to speak out, but the world was entirely changed by them forever.

No crime; love; he repeated, fumbling for his card and pencil, when a Skye terrier snuffed his trousers and he started in an agony of fear. It was turning into a man! He could not watch it happen! It was horrible, terrible to see a dog become a man! At once the dog trotted away. (60)

Woolf has taken care to maintain the semblance of the stream of consciousness in which social events are structured. Woolf relies on the impressions social living leaves on the mind of Septimus. That is how Septimus holds a dialogue with himself in flesh and blood. Towards the end of his observations, the flow is broken by chance of the dog “trotting away.” On the writer’s part, this is a conscious act. The flash of madness in which love is constituted along with the general malaise serves the purpose of dramatizing the scene. Yet, the serious point is made about the mental states the shaken environment has caused. In it, both marriage and love are negated. The wedding ring taken off by Lucrezia points towards the irrelevance of marriage. All of a sudden in the sequence of description that holds Septimus in its fold, we have important issues coming up before our eyes using the supposed “war hero” as a case:

Heaven was divinely merciful, infinitely benignant. It spared him, pardoned his weakness. But what was the scientific explanation (for one must be scientific above all things)? Why could he see through bodies, see into the future, when dogs will become men? It was the heat wave presumably, operating upon a brain made sensitive by eons of evolution. Scientifically speaking, the flesh was melted off the world. His body was macerated until only the nerve fires were left. It was spread like a veil upon a rock. (60)

Once again, the attack is sharp on the reigning sections of society. It is launched through the consciousness of Septimus. Mark the makings of the scene in the hands of a heated mind, excited

by a plethora of developments in the country's body politic. Septimus's vision is blurred. Woolf has used the terminology of science to pour scorn on those who wield power and make the argument to suit their interests. The disenchantment of the author with the goings on in her world takes effect by remarks such as "It was spread like a veil upon a rock."

Check your progress 3

1. Septimus Warren Smith's madness is depicted with utmost sympathy and concern. Comment.

12.6 IDEALISM AND HUMANISM

Both these aspects of life form the core of *Mrs. Dalloway* as an exploratory piece of fiction. We might see them as compelling reasons working behind the descriptions, particularly those of Clarissa and Peter Walsh. Clarissa is in search of an identity. Let us keep in mind that she is referred to in the title as somebody's wife only, as if she had no name of her own. Is it true that she has drawn any degree of authenticity from the man she married, Richard Dalloway? He is nondescript, except that he puts her at ease without making her self-conscious. On the first occasion, she in fact forgot his name and called him Wickham. To Peter and a few others, it was hilarious:

For of course it was that afternoon, that very afternoon, that Dalloway had come over; and Clarissa called him "Wickham"; that was the beginning of it all. Somebody had brought him over; and Clarissa got his name wrong. She introduced him to everybody as Wickham. At last he said "My name is Dalloway!"—that was his first of view of Richard—a fair young man, rather awkward, sitting on a deck-chair, and blurting out "My name is Dalloway!" Sally got hold of it; always after that she called him "My name is Dalloway!" (55)

The answer to the question asked about authenticity is that Richard Dalloway has no important part to play in Clarissa's life, that he exists in the novel only because Woolf uses him as a prop. Through him, she can tell the reader that the central character of the novel represents loss of identity and purpose. What about Peter Walsh, then, the person Clarissa has thought about all her life as one who could give her close company and guide her?

Apparently, Clarissa and Peter Walsh do not register as a tangible presence in the novel since the writer has focused on loss and emptiness. The aim is to capture the essence of an empire. The imperialist project swallowed whole generations of men, enabling it to grow in size and worth. Peter's imagination is particularly suited to dream about what he considers a failed mission, one that could be rejected in favour of attaining fulfilment through intimate friendship and bonding. It starts with Peter going over his personal history and gradually merging it with that which ensued.

See how in the early pages of the novel, he interprets his personal experiences followed by a counter-spectacle through the stream of his consciousness:

He was not old, or set, or dried in the least. As for caring what they said of him—the Dalloways, the Whitbreads, and their set, he cared not a straw—not a straw (though it was true he would have, some or other, to see whether Richard couldn't help him to some job). Striding, staring, he glared at the statue of the Duke of Cambridge. He had been sent down from Oxford—true. He had been a Socialist, in some sense a failure—true. Still the future of civilization lies, he thought, in the hands of young men like that; of young men such as he was, thirty years ago; with their love of abstract principles; getting books sent out to them all the way from London to a peak in the Himalayas; reading science; reading philosophy. The future lies in the hands of young men like that, he thought. (45-6)

Here, Peter Walsh is taking up the point of a social system in which individuals search for roles. Peter needed that guidance when young. Later, he became “old, or set, or dried.” Nothing could be more damning for a person than the description of having wasted life's journey. In the context, he refers to the institutions influencing his career.

12.7 THE SOCIAL CRITIQUE

At the age of fifty when Peter is no longer young and is incapable of pursuing meaningful goals, he nostalgically recounts ideals such as engaging with the future of civilization, the love of abstract principles, procuring books to peruse, reading science, reading philosophy, and so on. Woolf follows his mental track to expose the system that goes by success and earning laurels than making a mission of doing that which one's heart might go after. The ordinary human concerns are crushed under the heavy heels of the deeply structured social machine. In the imagination, the past is seen to have entered the present and the present is working to replicate the same old story. The view is projected as follows:

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

...

I can't keep up with them, Peter Walsh thought...on they marched, past him, past every one, in their steady way, as if one will worked legs and arms uniformly, and life, with its varieties, its irreticences, had been laid under a pavement of monuments and wreaths and drugged under a stiff yet staring corpse by discipline. One had to respect it; one might

laugh; but one had to respect it, he thought. There they go, he thought. There they go, thought Peter Walsh, pausing at the edge of the pavement; and all the exalted statues, Nelson, Gordon, Havelock, the black, the spectacular images of great soldiers stood looking ahead of them, as if they too had made the same renunciation (Peter Walsh felt he too had made it, the great renunciation) ... (46)

Connect this quote with the previous one and mark that the point of an overall social dimension has been given here a wider scope. It indicates a journey from self-aware individuality to the inclinations of a whole nation. The form, the aesthetic and the guiding principle cannot be missed. These strengthen the realism of a peculiar kind. Indeed, the weakened and emptied individuality of Peter has been given a rationale—no person in England in the latter half of the nineteenth century would be encouraged to realize his dreams. See the lionization, so to say, of the military commanders and war victors and think of the bent of the upper sections in the country. What the propaganda in newspapers or political rallies would not achieve is done by the statues that are symbols of modern-day heroism. Boys marching with “their eyes ahead of them” send out a message of the desired social endeavour geared to work nobly for specific ideals—“duty, gratitude, fidelity, love of England.”

Even as this goes on in the manner of Peter’s imaginative flight, it emanates from the author who is committed to an alternative paradigm. Peter the lover and Clarissa the lover’s obvious aim would miss their subconscious wishes in the flow of the campaign stressed effectively in the society around them. In the situation, Clarissa would find a safe bet in marrying Richard Dalloway and Peter will keep hanging helplessly, his sense of incompetence reflected in the movements of the knife he always carries. Symbolically, he would never be able to wield the knife emblematic of his initiative. Thus, the two lovers in the novel, Peter Walsh and Septimus Warren Smith would work in vain to realize themselves—they would not be a match for the ideological onslaught of the society of the time. The former lover languishes in the middle of minor episodes of failed marriage, the latter faces violent threats posed by war and madness.

12.8 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have discussed themes chosen for treatment by Virginia Woolf in her novel *Mrs. Dalloway*. Our contention is that Woolf was deeply engaged with specific questions that arose in the initial years of the twentieth century. Questions related to the First World War, love and social alliances, madness, and the medical profession. The medium used by Woolf was the interiority of the individual mind where clashing ideas could influence the decisions and action of men and women. The central issue emerging from the discussion was the author’s disenchantment with her world where forces of money and war had the upper hand. That left the people of the time helpless, uncertain and disturbed.

12.9 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cuddy-Keane, Melba. *Virginia Woolf, the Intellectual and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Humm, Maggie. *The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and the Arts*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010.

Woolf, Virginia. *Mrs. Dalloway*. Maple: Noida, India. Rpt. 2020. All page numbers in the unit refer to this edition.

12.10 GLOSSARY

self-evaluation and assessment: these are the processes of the mind. In them, the individual goes over his decisions and choices and matches them with the results he sees. Meanwhile, the world outside remains unchanged.

inward-looking: the individual cuts himself off from that which is in front.

empathized: feeling deeply sympathetic with another person.

social stalemate: the condition in which rituals are blindly observed.

chaotic phenomenon: the situation where things have no connection with one another.

It gives them a bonding and purpose beyond social or national boundaries: the context is of love. The emotion does not consider larger consequences and is rooted in the sweetness of the company one is in love with.

12.11 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1. Write a critical note on the dilemmas faced by Peter Walsh in *Mrs. Dalloway*.
2. How does Clarissa come to terms with her married life in the novel? Is it done through organizing parties and get-togethers alone? Explain.



ignou
THE PEOPLE'S
UNIVERSITY