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Mrs Dalloway's relationship with other characters

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Abstract

Mrs Dalloway is a novel written by British novelist Virginia Woolf and was published on 14 May 1925 when Britain was dealing with post-World war I trauma. This novel is embedded with feminism at its core with perfect blend of artistic and emotional values in right proportions with a charismatic and substantiates approach to characterise the key imaginary novel character Mrs Clarissa Dalloway.

“Mrs Dalloway is not just a deceptive mixture of impressions from buying flowers and other preparations for a great evening reception. She is not just a middle aged lady who is recalling her past but she is also a wife of prominent labour politician. How much Clarissa felt hurt when Lady Bruton invited only Richard to her lunch and not her? And how happy was Clarissa when Richard comes home with the beautiful bouquet of flowers. Finally not even Peter Walsh who loved her in the youth remained awkward in his game with a pocketknife, in the meantime he was in India, divorced his wife and now is looking for a job in England and prepares to marry a widow of some major in Indian army. And finally Prime Minister comes to the party and swaggers on his own way among people who are trying to hide their snobbish thrill by his appearance.”¹

Virginia Woolf has successfully mesmerised, the role of Mrs Clarissa Dalloway in the minds of the readers and never at any point, there is a glitch or confusion, even though the novel toggles between past and present and has been presented at its best without compromising the knowledge of the readers. Woolf has set a distinct style and approach while presenting this Novel and maintained it throughout the Novel by interlocking all the characters and closely linking every scene like a chaos theory. This novel also displays the might of Britain and its role in colonial era, and may be this novel was instrumental or specifically designed to overcome the stress of post world war. It also shows the role of women in British society and the influence they had over the British

¹ Svetozar Koljevic – engleska knjizevnost, knjiga 3, Zavod za udzbenike I nastavna sredstva, Sarajevo, 1991. p. 273

political hierarchy. The key character Mrs Dalloway comes from British high class socialite background and the other characters revolving around this key character are also of the same level and thus Woolf significantly clarifies that in the late 20's role of a woman was modern, independent and set new benchmarks in the British society.

The Novel also indicates the significant difference between an aristocratic society which Britain possessed with excellence and the lower middle class society, who were the backbone of entire British colonial and industrial success. The difference has been beautifully indicated by co-relating the events with post world war-1 catastrophe.

Woolf indicates that, British aristocratic society was not radically affected by world war-1 and was reaping the benefits of British colonial wealth but the middle class suffered drastically as people had to deal with mental and emotional pain, which the war had gifted to them. However, Woolf beautifully tried to convince the readers that not only the middle class family but wealthy aristocratic society suffered as well by emphasizing the trauma of loneliness, haunting the novel character Clarissa who comes from an aristocratic background.

Introduction

This Novel has a very narrow scheme: On a bright sunny afternoon of June, a lady from high class English society tries to buy flowers for her party. Woolf describes her party as casual and nothing in particular. Readers are taken into a notion that they are only being introduced to the guests in the party. Readers are made to go with the flow of the novel and not at any point there is slight perplexity due to the overlap of narration of other characters simultaneously. Main characters in this novel don't have any tangents and they don't even know each other. In order to solve this issue Woolf follows her characters' destiny at the same time and gives psychological explanation to it. That's the reason; Woolf introduces Septimus Warren Smith and his wife Lucrezia whose lives are totally independent.²

Mrs Dalloway is a socialite and she believes that by throwing a party, she would ease the minds of people from stress and mechanical life. She also believes that parties will help the people to reflect their true character and would help them to laugh, make fun and attain extensiveness. Hence she takes utmost care to organise a party, from selection of right combination of flowers to selection of her guests. This clearly indicates that she is very particular about each and everything and she is a perfectionist when it comes to a party. Her relationship with the guests is the main theme of this novel and she shares a distinctive relationship and has deterministic opinion on each and every individual. The Novel travels back and forth in time and it portrays perfect coordination between each scenario and beautifully links the flow of the story. Hence her opinion about each individual she meets in her party reflects the core values and prominence of each character. Therefore to understand her opinion, the reader must also travel back and forth in time and come to a conclusion. The concept of the novel is maintained throughout and the moulding of every character into another character takes place without compromising the flow of the story.

² Milica Mihajlovic- predgovor, Virginia Woolf's Mrs Dalloway- Svjetlost Sarejevo,1955.p.16,17

Hence it is very easy for the reader to pick up the points which Clarissa wants to explain as a young lady and a middle aged lady. The theme is same even though there is a time difference which portrays young and middle aged characters in insignificant frames of the novel.

*"The book was to be more than a story about Clarissa Dalloway; it would be a novel with two main characters and two stories alongside one another. The two characters—Clarissa and Septimus—never meet in the novel, yet they are linked to one another through various characters and because of the value they both give to that "leaf-encumbered forest, the soul."*³

There are instances where the character is not related to the theme but still moulds the importance of one's action onto other and this happens when Septimus takes his life away from him. Though Clarissa never saw Septimus face to face, she gets literally influenced by his act and admires his courage.

Another concept of this novel is that Death is foreseeable and it is dangerous to live since it threatens the very intellectual concept of life. Hence according to Clarissa, Daily life is a threat and one should "throw away" the sufferings and emotional misdemeanour which a human commits on them self.

When she gives an opinion on any individual, it is assumed that she must have done a significant amount of research on that person and she must have known that person for a quite long time because it is not so easy to give an opinion on any individual in reality. This thesis work portrays Mrs Dalloway's opinion about every character in this novel and does not deviate from the topic and nothing is alleged during the course of writing. Only one obvious assumption is made that she must have known the other characters for a quite long time after considering the gravity of her opinion on that particular individual.

³ Gary Carey, Cliff Notes on Woolf's Mrs Dalloway, Wiley publishing, Inc. New York, NY, 2004, p.19

Relationship with the Characters

*“Woolf longed to fill the book with ‘speed and life,’ to ‘give life and death, sanity and insanity’. I want to criticize the social system and to show it at work at its most intense. Indeed ,among the most striking and admirable things about Mrs Dalloway is how far it reaches, how many characters, how much personal history and sheer experience it crams into a book that is- I suppose you could say nominally about woman getting ready for a party during a single day in London. But, in fact it is all here: life, death, sex, love, marriage, parenthood, youth, age, the present and the past, memory, London, war, reason and unreason, loyalty, medicine, social snobbery, friendship, compassion, cruelty, the occasionally apt but more often unfounded snap judgments we make about ourselves, each other, loved ones, strangers, and the world in which chance and fortune have thrown us all together.”*⁴

Clarissa at her party

*“In "Mrs. Dalloway and the Social System" by Alex Zwerdling, the author notes that "[the] sense of living in the past, of being unable to take in or respond to the transformations of the present, makes the governing class in Mrs. Dalloway seem hopelessly out of step with the time" (72). The critic contends that the Great War—with its promise to usher in an era of humanity and a new society—has gone for naught in Britain, as the upper class stubbornly clings to its position at the top of the old world's social order (72). Zwerdling rightly identifies that Woolf depicts the high society as "out of step with the time." However, he chooses not to dwell on how the author illuminates this stifling of social progress: with frequent references to the passage of time, with time being not only linear but, more importantly, cyclical. This usage of repetition in time—buttressed by the bells of Big Ben, Clarissa's constant reflection upon her past, and the implications of a story that occurs in a single day—highlights the aforementioned lack of progress and faults the British upper class for keeping society locked in an endless cycle of trivialities.”*⁵

⁴ Francine Prose, *Mrs Dalloway's reader*, Harcourt, Inc. 2003, p.5

⁵.http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/1786632/repetition_as_social_criticism_in_virginia.htm
by alex zwerdling

Every Individual in this novel is tagged with distinctive and honest opinion, given by Mrs. Dalloway and has been portrayed beautifully. She invites few handpicked guests whom she knew them for quite a long time. She wanted to throw a party to ease the minds of the people and help them forget the suffering which they were undergoing due to the recent World War one. She took this act as a community service and she was very particular in each and every aspect of it. She allowed her guest to be free from the clutches of daily work and assisted them to feel good at her parties.

She is so sceptic about absence of a guest that she thinks her party is doomed. People whom she thought would bring disaster to her party, actually blended nicely with the environment and added flavour to the party and people whom she thought they like her a little bit, actually were heavily criticising her in the party. Hence Woolf also indicates that it is not so easy to judge a person based on facial gesture and body language because what's hidden in their heart is actual reality and will always reflect the same whatsoever be the situation or consequences. Some allegations by Clarissa, on the invite guests were in fact humorous and some were seriously challenging their humble nature. This shows the extent of belief she had in her when it comes to judging people and tagging them with a personalised opinion.

Gist of same gender-attraction in the novel

*Sally was the first person Clarissa ever shared secrets and affection with. Clarissa was fascinated by Sally. Sally was everything Clarissa wasn't. Clarissa obeyed all the rules, Sally broke them. Sally sat on the floor, propped up her knees, and smoked. Once she ran naked out of the bathroom to fetch a sponge she forgot. Sally was a rebel who did the unexpected, the romantic: everything a well-bred, well-mannered young girl at the turn of the century did not do.*⁶

The Novel portrays an emotional bonding between characters and it can also be mistaken as homosexuality behaviour among the subjects. The relationship between Clarissa and Sally Seton is complex as it significantly concentrates on friendship which can also be identified as same gender attraction.

It is stated in the novel that when Clarissa and Sally Seton kissed each other, Clarissa found it as the most beautiful event in her life and treated Sally as more than a friend. The other classical example is the relationship between Septimus and Evans. The two of them were fighting the same battle and unfortunately Evans lost his life in the battle field which Septimus could not overcome. That incident affected him mentally and it evolved to an extent of taking his own life. However, nowhere in the novel it's been mentioned that they shared such a relationship but the friendship could be complex.

*The memory of Sally's kiss is still precious to Clarissa even though the incident happened long ago. Clarissa can remember that she thrilled in response to another human being's warmth.*⁷

The reason, why Woolf could have introduced such complex bonding in the novel, because it was a post world war era and due to the impact of the war which lasted five

⁶ Gary Carey, Cliff Notes on Woolf's Mrs Dalloway, Wiley publishing, Inc. New York, NY, 2004, p.24

⁷ Gary Carey, Cliff Notes on Woolf's Mrs Dalloway, Wiley publishing, Inc. New York, NY, 2004, p.25

years, men were engaged in combat and women shared the burden of raising children and taking care of household stuff. Women would have enjoyed the companion of other women because of obvious reasons and men would have shared personal thoughts and family issues with fellow comrades. These two scenarios would have enhanced the complex bonding between man and man and woman and woman which Woolf gave a slight touch to it in her Novel. She targeted readers who are post world war one survivors and they would have felt personal and emotional while reading this novel and Woolf has beautifully crafted this idea and splendidly portrayed it without any glitch.

Atheistic dogma in the novel

A reader of this present era would have to imagine the sufferings and hardship which a post world war one survivor would have underwent, at those times. There was economic backdrop and people were shifting to other countries of their choices and everywhere there were families which had lost their loved ones in the battle. It was a human error but ultimately it was passed on to the God and held God responsible for this war. Woolf has clearly mentioned it in the novel, when Clarissa was giving her opinion about religion to Miss Kilman who was trying to convert. She was giving example of the war and held god responsible for it. At one point, the opinion of the common mass of that time was vented out by specifying “where was God when people were killing each other”?

Mrs. Dalloway is aristocratic and wealthy, but one should not stereotype her; she is not a one-dimensional well-bred, well mannered, gently religious lady. Clarissa is a lady in the old sense—but she is also an atheist. This is a surprise and thus Virginia Woolf’s allusion to Clarissa’s being like a nun is ironic; Clarissa is a paradox, a secular nun. Consider how Clarissa’s day to-day acts of living are performed: she does what is expected of her and whatever she does she is very orderly. Her acts are performed with the regularity of a rosary being recited. There is something holy about Clarissa’s observance of day-to-day acts. But what Clarissa seems like, she is not really like. She seems nun-like, her daily acts are performed with religious devotion, yet she is an atheist..⁸

⁸ Gary Carey, Cliff Notes on Woolf’s Mrs Dalloway, Wiley publishing, Inc. New York, NY, 2004, p.23

Clarissa and Peter Walsh

They both made good partners in the novel and were main attraction of the story. In other words they both were main characters in the novel.

This concept of “sharing”—of giving and taking—is central to Mrs. Dalloway. Clarissa rejected Peter because he wanted to share himself and wanted an equal return. Clarissa feared open, total involvement with a man. The concept was foreign and frightening; to her, sharing meant surrender. Marriage to Peter would have been a dangerous, immoral one-sided contract.⁹

Clarissa loved Peter Walsh but she was afraid as Peter was demanding more from her. He was expecting Clarissa to do more and everything which she didn't like.

Clarissa is terribly fearful of the implications of sharing. As we shall see later, Clarissa equates sharing (with a man) with surrender. And Peter would have insisted on sharing an intimacy with Clarissa—and not intimacy in a sexual sense only. Peter would have insisted on a basic, defenses-down, baring-of souls kind of intimacy—the kind of intimacy that exists between absolute friends. It was this exchange, this possession of one another's most secret depths, which frightened Clarissa. Marrying Peter would have cost Clarissa all private thoughts and feelings.¹⁰

She complained about this to Peter but he neglected it. He tried his best to convince her but all went in vain. Clarissa had a unique opinion about Peter because she found him different from others and Peter was also caring. He loved Clarissa so much that he was ready to sacrifice anything for the sake love. Clarissa somehow did not understand his feelings and took his behaviour towards her as complex. She was not feeling comfortable to marry him but instead, liked his companion. She was happy when ever Peter appeared

⁹ Gary Carey, Cliff Notes on Woolf's Mrs Dalloway, Wiley publishing, Inc. New York, NY, 2004, p.25

¹⁰ Gary Carey, Cliff Notes on Woolf's Mrs Dalloway, Wiley publishing, Inc. New York, NY, 2004, p.16

on the scene and she would feel delighted and forget herself. She gave Peter a special place in her life and always treated him with great respect and dignity. However, no matter how Peter was to her, she did not want to marry him for a specific reason which Peter could not understand. Her relation with Peter, also made Mr. Dalloway jealous and he would act extra careful in order to impress her. Peter's presence was unique for Clarissa and she would take utmost care in order to make Peter happy and forget the fact that she does not want to marry him. She also made sure that none of her friends would say anything against him or have bad opinion about him. If she doubts such scenarios, she immediately clarifies it by a formal talk and elegant approach. Though Peter Walsh occupied a special corner in her heart, she was against the idea of marrying him and she also discouraged him several times. Woolf portrayed this concept with delicate care and a reader would always want these two characters as couple but could not understand why Clarissa would not like to marry Peter because the reason was not appropriate which could tarnish the image of a marriage. Peter gave his best in his attitude and was always charming in this novel.

Woolf portrayed him as a charismatic character with an essence of love in him which would occupy the minds of the readers throughout the session. Clarissa was an exact pair for him but for some reason, she refused him and this refusal concept made the novel further more interesting.

When Peter returned from India, Clarissa introduced her daughter Elizabeth to him but he felt she did not introduce her to him properly and it was insincere. This scenario made both uncomfortable and Peter immediately left Clarissa and went to a park to relax. Clarissa on later stage found that Peter has not changed and his attitude is same. Peter also asked strange question like whether she is happy with Mr. Dalloway and Peter broke down into tears when he met Clarissa after a long time. Clarissa was expecting Peter to take her along with him but sudden appearance of Elizabeth made them to come on track and they realised things are not the same, now it's a different world they are living in. When Peter attended the party, people who knew him were commenting on him and few of them knew what was happening with him in India. When Clarissa found this, she thought it was a bad idea to invite Peter to the party as everyone would speak about

him. However, Peter attended the party to spend some time with Clarissa and also he wanted to talk to Elizabeth and imagined a life which he had in the past when he was young. He was expecting that everyone would talk about him and hence he went to a private room and spent time in reading books anticipating that Clarissa would come to him and talk to him. Clarissa knew that gesture of Peter and she wanted to meet Peter when the party is in full flow and all her invited guests have arrived. Peter still had a special place for Clarissa and even Clarissa still loved him and liked his company and they both knew the fact that things are different now and there is no alternative for this. The fact is they cannot go back to past and alter things and they must accept the present scenario and lead the life without thinking about the past which could not be altered. This was the very basic fact known to each of them and they very well coped with it. Woolf also describes their attitude towards each other in the party as a mark of good friendship and their eternal friendship made others envy about it.

Clarissa and Mr. Dalloway

Mr. Dalloway or popularly know as Richard Dalloway was Clarissa's husband and Clarissa found him intelligent and passionate about his work. He was a Member of Parliament and worked for backing up government issues and had vivid political agendas which he wanted to spread. He was always accompanied by his colleagues and always looking for ideas to help protect British society.

Clarissa is truly hurt by Lady Bruton's inviting Richard, and not Clarissa, to luncheon. Life is slipping away from Clarissa; she is frail, white-haired, and already, it would seem, is being neglected. Socially, Clarissa does not like to be snubbed by another society lady; as a female, she is jealous that Lady Bruton invited only Mr. Dalloway to her luncheon; and, deep down in her soul, Clarissa is stunned. Even though she does not greatly fear death, she is pained at being neglected so soon after she has been seriously ill; it is as though she was already forgotten¹¹

Most of the time, he would attend party meetings and social gatherings, in order to increase his contacts with the members of government. This lifestyle of his made Clarissa feel lonely at home and often went into depression which encouraged her to arrange parties to unite people and spread the word of happiness. Clarissa was not invited when Lady Bruton hosted a party and Richard attended that party, at the instance Clarissa felt like she is left behind and Richard is too busy to take care of her when it is needed.

Richard always depended on other government officials counselling and Peter felt that Richard is not doing his job properly and he would rather choose his profession as a farmer in the countryside and even Sally Seton felt the same and thought he is not exploring his full potential as a government member. Clarissa admired him for his straight forward views and taking responsibility of a situation. This attitude of his made Clarissa to be attracted to him and finally ended into marriage which lasted a life time. Clarissa was happy with Richard and the way he treated her but felt lonely sometimes.

¹¹ Gary Carey, Cliff Notes on Woolf's Mrs Dalloway, Wiley publishing, Inc. New York, NY, 2004. p37

Richard was very careful when he had to deal with Clarissa and he would do exactly what she had expected. He would show up his perfectionist skills and convince Clarissa that she means everything to him. This attitude of him towards her was a key point in Clarissa's life and it made her keep going despite of the fact that she suffered from loneliness and she would forget the suffering she was undergoing. She accepted the fact that this is how her life is meant to be and she was looking for freedom which Richard gifted her. She was happy but could not tolerate it in the long run as the side effect was loneliness which she didn't expect this would happen to her when she was young.

However Richard supported Clarissa's ideas about life and her philosophy on the way life it should be according to her. This signifies the support given to her by her husband and also indicates the scenario which post world war one had done to the society. In that period of time, people were depressed due to the after effect of the war and one of the traumas it left behind was loneliness. Woolf described it through her novel and also pointed out that men were responsible for everything and even for their own kith and kin's personal life. But men had a chance to sort the things and even convince their women to sustain relationships. Clarissa and Richard's example was a classical illustration to describe and obtain an image of husband and wife relationship which lasted long despite odd events. Woolf says that they were not meant to marry each other but somehow became life partners because both believed in sustainability. They often had casual talks and discussed various topics which show they both had good understanding and believed in a good relationship.

Woolf sets a benchmark by introducing such relations in the society and also it is expected that such relationships, might have been there during her time. The post world war one era was a complex era since because all relations were mixed up and the society was in total chaos. People were searching for happiness and well being which has been portrayed significantly in the novel. The pride they had over the colonial concept of living and the attitude of government officials clearly indicates that the novel is enriched with such deterministic ideas. Despite the odds, Clarissa had her best time with Richard and even he was co-operating with her in every aspect he can.

In other words, he did his best to convince Clarissa that he loved her the most and he admired her work, she did for the society by organizing parties.

She says she likes life so we must consider what her sense of life is. At her parties people gather and talk and this satisfies Clarissa.. They keep one another at a certain social distance. Of course Clarissa enjoys party situations with their observed, good-mannered, friendly distances. This metaphysical distance around one is what supremely matters to her. Parties are Clarissa's gift; these are her own words—her gift—meaning her special talent—and her special present to life.¹²

When Clarissa hosted the party, all delegates were invited and Richard did his best to keep them in company. He attended everyone and was humble and welcoming. He knew, Clarissa's theme of the party and co-operated very well, also giving his personal touch to it. Throughout the party, Richard knew that Clarissa wanted to meet Peter and have a word with him, so he was helping her to handle the guests and at one point he was organizing the entire event so that she can have free time. This explains that he had a huge respect and reliance in her and also admired her feelings.

¹² Gary Carey, Cliff Notes on Woolf's Mrs Dalloway, Wiley publishing, Inc. New York, NY, 2004. p41

Clarissa and Sally Seton

Clarissa and Sally Seton were best friends when they were young. They would share everything and discuss various topics. They both lived together when Clarissa was at Burton. Sally chose to live with her because, it might be due to Sally was reasonably poorer than Clarissa and she was enjoying the aristocratic life which Clarissa offered her.

“She remembered Sally sitting on the floor, smoking, saying that she was descended from Marie Antoinette, and being so utterly crude that Clarissa's family thought her untidy. Clarissa learnt from Sally about life, sex, men, politics and tricks to compromise certain things from which she was shielded at Burton, her home before marriage. Her feelings for Sally were protective and pure. She remembered the excitement she felt the nights Sally dined with them and the exquisite moment they shared when, as they were walking, Sally stopped to pick a flower and kissed Clarissa on the lips. A moment later, Peter Walsh and Joseph, an old family friend, had intruded, perhaps purposely, since Peter was prone to jealousy. Clarissa was horrified at the intrusion.”¹³

The friendship between these two characters is complex and reader cannot jump to a conclusion that they shared homosexual relation. Clarissa considered her as a best friend and loved to be with her when she was young because Sally Seton was a bold lady and she was of rebellious nature, she would have a cigar and run nude down the hall which was not condoned by Clarissa's relatives and family members.

This attitude of her taught Clarissa to face life as it is meant to be and enjoy every moment of it by breaking all rules and regulations which the family imposed on her. She took this act as an essence of freedom and gave her best to live with it. She was a good companion to Clarissa and they both had beautiful time together which has been strikingly described in the novel.

¹³ <http://www.gradesaver.com/mrs-dalloway/study-guide/section1/>

Clarissa gave her “soul” absolutely and exclusively to Sally. Sally gave her “soul” to Clarissa—but she offered, freely, just as much of herself to everyone else. When Sally kissed Clarissa, she gave the kiss impulsively. Clarissa, however, did not accept the kiss as an impulsive gesture. Clarissa accepted Sally’s kiss as a treasure; she accepted it as though a ceremony had been performed and a gift had been bestowed. Nevertheless, Clarissa does not seem to see anything unjust or wrong in this disproportionate exchange.¹⁴

The both kissed each other during a party time and Clarissa found that moment as one of the best in her life and was mesmerised by that act but unfortunately they were disturbed by Peter and his friend which irked her and hated the most. This stance indicates that she was more than a friend to her and they both shared special relationship. Clarissa later found that Sally Seton represents the concept of true love for her and also it went unfulfilled due to un-avoidable circumstances. She regretted it the most but she knew the consequences which she might have to undergo and also she has to face her orthodox aristocratic family which would do anything to separate them.

Hence, in the end, it has been termed as unfulfilled love by Woolf and gave this story a twist by introducing Richard Dalloway in their lives. Sally and Peter were good friends and they use to make fun of Mr. Dalloway in front of Clarissa when they were young. At that point Sally understood that Peter disliked Richard and would do anything to separate them.

Clarissa verified her stand on Richard and that made Peter to realise that things went out of “his” control and Sally maintained low profile since then. She later married a wealth man and had children, also she was known as Lady Rosseter and maintained high public profile. Hence Woolf tries to explain that such relationships did existed that time but were suppressed by worldly facts and women had to opt for a better survival instinct so that they could continue living without facing odds.

¹⁴ Gary Carey, Cliff Notes on Woolf’s Mrs Dalloway, Wiley publishing, Inc. New York, NY, 2004, p.24

When Sally attended the party as Lady Rosseter, Clarissa was surprised and she discovered that Sally still had that old ability of outrageous claims and rebellious attitude which made Clarissa to admire her. Sally gave good company to Peter at the party, which Clarissa found very pleasing because she did not want Peter to feel as odd man out.

According to Woolf, the relationship between Sally and Clarissa was a main theme when the story went to flashback situation. Woolf knew that readers would anticipate something new and interesting, which Woolf delivered beautifully without disturbing the minds of her readers. She did her best to inscribe the possible way of love which existed and the complex relationships which people shared. The rate, at which the relations are balanced is so perfect that a reader can never guess an outcome and come to a conclusion which can make the novel sluggish. The theme is delivered to the readers in an acute perfection and any reader would enjoy reading this novel especially when the scenario of relationship between Clarissa and Sally occurs because it is filled with innocence and charismatic nature. The two characters play a vital role, when this novel travels back in time. The energy levels and the attitude, which has been showcased, as a young dynamic youth, fits well with these two characters because Sally is of rebellious nature and Clarissa is an aspiring break free attitude goer and these two distinct features have been portrayed well.

In the end Clarissa finds that Sally is not attractive anymore as she became too old and she lacks energy in her spirit but retains her attitude and charismatic character which is the best part of her. However when Clarissa saw her in the party, she got some relief because she knows she will add some flavour to the party and make this party a huge success. She was even happier when Sally gave company to Peter and eased his sufferings. This brought a sign of relief to Clarissa and she got confidence to give her commitment to the party. The role which Sally played in her party was priceless according to Clarissa and Woolf used this terminology to ease the minds of the readers that everything will be going to be all right and everyone at the party will have nice time thus meeting the objectives of Clarissa.

Clarissa and Septimus

Septimus was a world war one veteran and a volunteer who joined the army for a good cause. He was devastated emotionally when his friend/fellow officer Evans died in front of him and that incident jeopardise his whole life. He became vulnerable to high frequency sounds and sudden noises which is a clear indication that he is suffering from mental disorder.

“The main critical issue in evaluating this novel is a question about how Clarissa’s world from the beginning to the end permeates with Septimus’ world and merges into unique vision of life. There is no doubt in imaginative cogency of final completion of these two themes, completion in which the news of Septimus’ death will temporarily tint Mrs Dalloway’s reception, and soon after our main character Mrs Dalloway will realize that there is no point in disturbing her inner peace by pitting that young man, it is better to come back to the party and to her guests than to think about that unhappy man who has killed himself. This ironical triumph of minor and warm life comedy over large and cold life tragedy is even more emphasized by afterthought of Clarissa Dalloway that somehow she is very similar to Septimus, a long time ago she was also at the crossroads of big romance with Peter Walsh and smaller and happier marriage choice of her present husband. The difference is of course that she chose smaller happiness and Septimus chose a very big step, he has thrown away everything while they are still living.”¹⁵

However, Woolf has linked Septimus and Clarissa like a chaos theory which was new at that time. The concept was to design a craft which would portray both these characters in such a manner that it would tell the readers that when it comes to emotional darkness, everyone is well connected by some means knowingly or un-knowingly.

¹⁵ Svetozar Koljevic – hirovi romana, sve uzi mostovi o umetnosti-o impresionistickom romanu Virdzinije Vulf, Svjetlost Sarajevo, 1988, p.244

' As a contrast to Clarissa, Virginia Woolf presents Clarissa's split personality namely Septimus Warren Smith who represents dark side of Clarissa. Septimus was a young man who was mentally ill because of the trauma caused by the after effects of world war one. Clarissa managed to avoid precipices which were lurking her but Septimus plummet in real life un-ready by the shock which broke him mentally. Under the impression of the death of unfortunate Septimus, who throws himself out of the window in order to avoid detention at hospital, Clarissa experiences langsyne prepared moment and overviews all her life which Virginia Woolf describes as a monologue. An unknown man did something what she was not able to do which makes her to admire him. At one moment she even envied him by feeling the emptiness of her own life.¹⁶

Woolf states that Septimus was the mirror image of Clarissa and both represented same theme. Woolf chooses the word "doppelganger" when she represents these two characters and signifies that both were alternate characters. Like Septimus, Clarissa had a darker side of her and extreme internal personality but she rather opted for social and singular outlook phenomenon. Though she had the qualities of Septimus, she cannot live like him and accepted the fact that life must go on and she has a responsibility to take care of the society by her own way, that is, by giving a party. Both these characters have social stigma attached to them due to the war and Clarissa could not overcome the consequences war. Emotionally both suffered but Clarissa stood her ground and coped up well rather than breaking down like Septimus.

Septimus Warren Smith won many medals during world war one and earned many friends. Loss of one good friend made him mentally unstable and he was drawn into a conclusion that he can no longer feel. He became sensitive to extreme colours and natural beauty and would vent out awkward thoughts if he comes in contact with those. He married Lucrezia in order to make his life perfect and to move on with it but he fails to achieve it because of horrors he faced during war. Septimus and Lucrezia moved back to London for a better living and he wanted to do the same job which he left before the war, he was interested in Shakespeare novels and would make earning out of it.

¹⁶Dr Vida Markovic- Engleski roman XX vijeka, Naucna knjiga Beograd 1963,p.114

Clarissa shares a similar background in her core life but never lost her conscious like Septimus. Her view about human dark side is so strong that it almost matches with Septimus's point of view. At one stance, both shared same point of view about life and both hated how human beings are living with it. They both regretted that art of life is gone from the hearts of people and it's been replaced by misdeeds and grief and the very concept of leading a life is a disaster. They believed that living a life is very dangerous and has no meaning if it has lost the essence of it. A human can never lead a successful life if the qualities of living standards are not met by hook or by crook.

Septimus and Clarissa, in other words, are same people with different scenarios and shared the same insanity levels but Septimus was honest to display his feelings where as Clarissa disguised it and lived along with her feelings without telling it to anyone. Woolf thus points out that when a human is broken mentally, they have two choices. First choice is to vent it out and the second choice is to live with it, Clarissa chose the second one and Septimus chose the first one. This was deliberately presented in the novel in order to tell the readers that life always gives choices and it is up to the person to opt for the best one and which best suits them. Reader can imagine the life and the nature of choices one has to make by analysing the two characters in a significant manner with inner thoughts. This was an attempt by Woolf to help her readers to explore their minds and come out with a conclusion, in order to help them to come out from post world war one trauma.

*The clock began striking. The young man had killed himself; but she did not pity him; with the clock striking the hour, one, two, three, she did not pity him, with all this going on. There! the old lady had put out her light! the whole house was dark now with this going on, she repeated, and the words came to her, Fear no more the heat of the sun. She must go back to them. But what an extraordinary night! She felt somehow very like him — the young man who had killed himself. She felt glad that he had done it; thrown it away. The clock was striking. The leaden circles dissolved in the air. He made her feel the beauty; made her feel the fun. But she must go back. She must assemble. She must find Sally and Peter. And she came in from the little room.*¹⁷

¹⁷ Virginia Woolf – Mrs Dalloway, Harcourt, Inc, Orlando, Florida, 1981, p135

When Clarissa comes to know about the death of Septimus and the nature he died, insanity occupies her mind and she compares her life with him. She admires Septimus act and she praises him that he was honest with his life and finds him as a source of inspiration. While looking out of her window, to seek answer for Septimus death, fortunately she encounter an old lady whom she never met or saw and surprisingly that old lady was her own neighbour. At that point she admires that old lady's privacy and gives importance to privacy by thinking that humans deserve privacy and should occupy their own space without allowing others to influence it. That old lady then switches off her room lights and there comes complete darkness, suddenly Clarissa realises that Septimus death should not influence her in any wrongful act and she must return to her part as the old lady had returned to her sleep. Thus she returns to her party and enjoys every bit of it. Woolf thus condemns the act of Septimus and hits the readers that one should return back to daily routine and should not be concerned about others act or misadventures.

Clarissa and Elizabeth

Elizabeth is Clarissa's "only" daughter and she loved her a lot. Elizabeth is portrayed as a distinct character unlike Clarissa and the flavour of mother and daughter relationship is beautifully represented here, in this novel. Elizabeth is honest with her opinions and very straight forward with Clarissa and also, they both have difference of opinion and quite often Elizabeth doesn't necessarily agree with Clarissa. But still, the bond between them remains stronger because of obvious reasons and so the novel, never points out any gross argument between them thus maintaining the flavour. Elizabeth is religious and has a strong desire to help needy people who are misled and tries to bring them back on track using religious sympathy and compassion. She is very much interested in religious convention and believes things could take a good course through those conventions. But Clarissa is quite opposite to this ideology of Elizabeth and in this novel, it is often seen as Clarissa, trying to advice her, that such convention leads to nowhere. However Elizabeth is strong with her ideology and continues to help people and believe in religious convention. The novel flaunts a formal discussion between mother and daughter about the party and the discussion pin points to a conclusion that Elizabeth is not at all interested in attending parties and does not believe in such gatherings and hence gives out blunt culmination that Elizabeth is not very keen to attend this particular party. In the end Elizabeth changes her mind and rushes to attend her mother's hosting party. This renders the love and affection she has with her mother and she really cares about her mother's thoughts and opinions. When she joins the party, it adds absolute essence to the party and Clarissa becomes confident with the purpose of her party. Elizabeth gives good company to the guests and the evening turns into blissful gathering and also gives an opportunity for Mr. Dalloway to understand her daughter and have an insight on her thoughts.

Clarissa and Miss Kilman

Why Clarissa hates Miss Kilman is not entirely clear but already we can guess at a little: Clarissa was very ill and her daughter Elizabeth represents youth, the essence of aliveness, and the extension of Clarissa. Clarissa has never “possessed” Elizabeth, nor has Richard, but now, to Clarissa, it seems that Miss Kilman is devouring Elizabeth. This concept of owning, that was so odious about Peter’s personality, has dangerously reasserted itself just when Mrs. Dalloway is growing old and the world is changing and she becoming a stranger to it.¹⁸

Miss Kilman was a lost kind of person with her conscious and needed support of Elizabeth, who helped her to regain strength by spiritual means. She in turn supported Elizabeth’s ministry to God and gave good company when it comes to spirituality. Miss Kilman and Clarissa, at one point, argue about the existence of faith and Clarissa clarifies her stances by giving her statement as religion is just a waste of time and leads to nowhere. By this abrupt statement of Clarissa, Miss Kilman gets offended and decides to end this argument and further when she gets an opportunity to talk to Elizabeth, she expresses her concern about that statement and attitude of Clarissa. This picture, in broad sense is delivered in the novel in such a way that it maintains the atheism aspects and importance of religious congregations. The purpose of this setup is to give readers, a chance to explore their stance on this issue and realise where they actually are and how strong their religious sentiments are.

¹⁸ Gary Carey, Cliff Notes on Woolf’s Mrs Dalloway, Wiley publishing, Inc. New York, NY, 2004. p42

Conclusion

The party ends successfully and all characters enjoy in the end, and thus the party becomes grand success hence serving the motive of Mrs Dalloway. The grand finale was immense success and it really satisfied the readers, in other words it was a happy ending. Though the loss of Septimus was inevitable in the end, since because the character has to be sacrificed in order to raise sympathy among readers and add distinct flavour to the novel. The topic becomes talk of the town and Woolf beautifully renders it and most of the time occupies the mind of the readers. Others characters do add their essence to the party and brings out the joyful colours which represents the importance of social life, dignity and self respect in every aspect. Woolf surprises the readers by including ruling class royals and British Prime minister in Clarissa's party. This shows the seriousness of a social life at those times and how important it is for them because social gatherings were considered the only places, in those times (during post world war era) where people could meet and develop business contacts and improve strategic planning. All the characters who attended the party did enjoy the party and as per the novel, everyone was happy.

This novel is an insight of a person which portrays the human nature and issues surrounded by it. Although this novel was written during post world war 1 era, it still satisfies the expectations of a reader. It has got all flavours which a reader wants and satisfies the minds of every distinct reader. This novel is indeed a great piece of art work and never at any point confuses or causes any kind of glitch, to the readers. It is an example of flawless execution of thoughts, transformed into words and sets benchmark for other similar novels.

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