



universität  
wien

# DIPLOMARBEIT / DIPLOMA THESIS

Titel der Diplomarbeit / Title of the Diploma Thesis

„Shared Moments of Being: An analysis of  
multiperspectivity and epiphany in Virginia Woolf’s  
*Jacob’s Room*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, and  
*The Waves*“

verfasst von / submitted by

Matthias Fröch

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Magister der Philosophie (Mag.phil.)

Wien, 2020 / Vienna, 2020

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /  
degree programme code as it appears on  
the student record sheet:

UA 190 344 445

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /  
degree programme as it appears on  
the student record sheet:

Lehramtsstudium  
UF Englisch  
UF Biologie und Umweltkunde

Betreut von / Supervisor:

ao. Univ.-Prof. Dr. Eva Zettelmann



# Table of Contents

List of Figures.....	i
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Methodology and Research.....	2
3. Terminology.....	5
3.1. Multiperspectivity.....	5
3.2. Focalization.....	7
4. On Modernism.....	9
5. Virginia Woolf and her Moments.....	13
6. It is all connected: Looking at the Whole.....	16
6.1. Moments of Being.....	16
6.2. Epiphanies.....	18
6.3. The Whole.....	19
6.4. The Whole Picture.....	21
7. Stories on Being: A Thematic Connection.....	23
7.1. Connectivity and Looking in the Novels.....	23
7.1.1. <i>Jacob's Room</i> .....	23
7.1.2. <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> .....	27
7.1.3. <i>To the Lighthouse</i> .....	31
7.1.4. <i>The Waves</i> .....	36
7.2. Evanescence and Solace in the Novels.....	39
7.2.1. <i>Jacob's Room</i> .....	39
7.2.2. <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> .....	41
7.2.3. <i>To the Lighthouse</i> .....	43
7.2.4. <i>The Waves</i> .....	46
8. Focalization and Epiphanies.....	48
8.1. <i>Jacob's Room</i> – The Narrator-Character's Failed Epiphany.....	48
8.2. <i>Jacob's Room</i> – What am I to do with these?.....	51
8.3. <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> – Peter Walsh's Epiphany.....	53
8.4. <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> – Clarissa's Epiphany.....	56
8.5. <i>To the Lighthouse</i> – Mrs Ramsay's Epiphany.....	59
8.6. <i>To the Lighthouse</i> – Lily Briscoe's Epiphany.....	62
8.7. <i>The Waves</i> – Dinner with Percival.....	66
8.8. <i>The Waves</i> – Creating an Epiphany.....	70
9. What does it mean then, what can it all mean?.....	73

10.	Conclusion .....	78
11.	References .....	80
A.	Appendix .....	83
A.1	Focalization Analysis.....	83
A.2	Abstract.....	96
A.3	Zusammenfassung.....	97

## List of Figures

1	Model of Focalization Structure.....	8
2	Perceiving the Whole through Moments of Being.....	22

# 1. Introduction

Modernist literature is well renowned for the stylistic novelties it introduced and developed. In order to better represent an ever-changing world, differing and subjective points of view were emphasized. Objective truth was no longer deemed attainable and could therefore not be expected to properly represent reality in fiction. As a result, multiperspectivity became a pervading characteristic of the era.

However, multiperspectivity is not restricted to modernism but can in fact be encountered in an abundance of genres and text types. Narratological analyses of multiperspectivity are therefore addressing a central characteristic of fiction in general, thereby adding to the understanding and interpretation of all kinds of texts.

Virginia Woolf, too, employed multiperspectivity to great effect in her novels. Among them are *Jacob's Room*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *The Waves*. They are all characterized by a multitude of differing and ever-changing character perspectives. They also cover a significant timespan in Woolf's creative life. For both of these reasons, these four novels were chosen for analysis in this paper.

The question of perception also occupied Virginia Woolf in her private writings. She describes a pattern that is behind all things, elevated moments of being, and the great influence that the act of looking had on her. All of these phenomena, which stem from her personal experience, can be found in her novels as well. There she navigates the themes of individual perception and unity that are present in her *Moments of Being*.

The question explored in this paper is that of shared perception and how it might work as a unifying influence that catalyses *Moments of Being* or even epiphanies. During their epiphanies, the characters gain a short insight into the whole, a brief look at a universal truth that remains behind a reality of fractured experiences. Since individual and shared perceptions are of such importance for this process, the nature of focalization surrounding the character's epiphanies can be expected to be related to these significant moments.

Therefore, several scenes featuring epiphanies by one or more of the characters will be chosen and analysed according to the changes in focalization preceding and following the epiphanic moment. This will help determine the relation between Woolf's use of multiperspectivity and the phenomena she describes as well as shed light on the nature of Woolf's epiphanies in general.

To achieve this goal, there will first be a focus on the necessary terminology and the narratological approaches towards multiperspectivity and focalization. Afterwards, the modernist mindset will be explored, especially in the context of mimesis and consciousness representation. During chapter six, there will be a closer look at Virginia Woolf's *Moments of Being*, epiphanies, and the whole; and how they can be brought together in the context of this work. The themes of connectivity and evanescence are tightly linked with Woolf's epiphanies. Therefore, there will be an overview on how these themes are explored in the four novels and how they have so far been interpreted. Finally, there will be an analysis of the focalization structure in two significant scenes in each of the four novels and a subsequent interpretation of the findings.

## 2. Methodology and Research

The concern of this work is Virginia Woolf's use of multiperspectivity and its application for the depiction of human connection, *Moments of Being*, and epiphany. For this paper, two passages from each of the four novels in question will be chosen. All of these passages will be concerned with the idea of *Moments of Being* and most of them will end with the description of an epiphany. The texts will first be analysed regarding their focalization. Then, the relevance of the focalization concerning the plot, the characters, and ultimately the nature of the epiphanies will be explored.

Initially, each novel will be classified according to Nünning and Nünning's terminology for multiperspectival texts (44). Then, specific passages which feature characters experiencing epiphanies will be chosen. They will be analysed regarding the modes of focalization present in them. The aim here is to create a complete list of consecutive focalizers throughout each passage. This list will

show whether these focalizers are delegated or non-delegated, at which frequency the focalization changes, and how much each character is involved. Therefore, the length of each instance of focalization by a specific character will be given by counting the lines of text. The number of lines may not be an exact measuring unit, but since it is only used to compare different instances of focalization within the same text, it should provide a suitable way of enabling comparisons.

With this data, claims can be made about the overall number of different focalizers in each passage as well as on the prominence of the role they occupy. This can then be used to identify possible patterns of consistency concerning the relationship of multiperspectivity and the presentation of shared perception and epiphany in the novels. It can be assumed that the way focalization is employed contributes semantically to the character of the epiphany. Given the link of the act of looking, unity, and epiphanies, a second possible hypothesis is that the likelihood of a successful epiphany, i.e., one that provides some form of meaningful insight, is positively correlated with the number of perspectives, or the rate of changes in focalization which precede it.

However, investigating focalization in such a detailed way presents a number of challenges and problems. It is necessary to acknowledge these issues, since it will be impossible to avoid each single one of these investigative pitfalls completely.

In some of the investigated novels, focalizers change rather rapidly, sometimes seemingly in mid-sentence. Keeping track of these changes when documenting every single change of focalization is difficult as it is not always possible to clearly determine the respective focalizer for a single line of text. Another problem can arise if there are enough textual hints to attribute the function of focalizer to more than one character at the same time. The thoughts presented in the text, might, for instance, be the focalized ideas of one character, or they might be the focalized speculations about this character's thoughts, made by an entirely different character. It seems that Virginia Woolf sometimes even employs this consciously, using it as a device to mask the transition between two different focalizers.

This issue is not unique to Virginia Woolf but is a common concern when investigating multiperspectivity. In discussing this problem, Herman and Vervaeck cite the final chapter of James Joyce's *Ulysses*: "If you consider this chapter separately, you could say that Molly narrates what is going on in her mind. However, if you consider this chapter in conjunction with the rest of the novel, you could say that there is an omniscient narrator who quotes or recounts Molly's thoughts" (3). Herman and Vervaeck's solution to this dilemma is always to clearly define the narrative unit that is under inspection and disregard the rest of the text in order to make valid statements. But when examining focalization at the sentence level, as it is sometimes necessary in Woolf's work, this method is insufficient. Additionally, it has to be kept in mind that in consciousness representation it is also the work of a reader to try and imagine who the represented thoughts belong to (Herman and Vervaeck 93).

As there is no way to eliminate ambivalence completely, all instances where the role of the focalizer cannot with any certainty be assigned to one character will be marked as such. Furthermore, whenever possible, for every switch of the focalizer, a short justification will be given.

Another inaccuracy comes with the use of lines as a way of describing the duration of a certain mode of focalization. A sentence might start at the end of one line, then go on for the whole next line and end at the beginning of the third one. When such an instance is counted as a full three lines, then the sum of lines counted will eventually exceed the actual number of lines in the passage. Because of this, only full lines will be counted, meaning that the example above would be counted as an instance of focalization taking up one line of text instead of three. This method is adequate for most of the examples. There are, however, instances of focalization that take up less than a single line. In Woolf's novels, this might happen for instance with information presented in brackets, breaking up the normal flow of the text. In these rare cases, the focalization will still be categorized as taking up the full line.



## 3. Terminology

### 3.1. Multiperspectivity

The critical point of observation in this paper lies at the junction of narrative and stylistic presentation. The act of looking performed by the characters, their converging and crossing rays of vision, is presented through the use of multiperspectivity.

Although multiperspectivity is a structural phenomenon, it can be of great semantic import. As with other formal elements, its presence alone alters the way the narrative is mediated. When multiperspectivity is involved, there happens what might be called a “semantisation of literary forms and structures” (Nünning 31). Multiperspectivity does not exist in a semantic vacuum, since “form is immanently and intrinsically an ideology in its own right” (Jameson 141). Thus, by investigating multiperspectivity, its semantic implications, and the overlap of multiperspectivity with the story-level of the narrative, additional insights might be gained. “The description of multiperspectival narration is therefore not a formalistic end in itself, but instead a way of formulating justifiable hypotheses about the possible effects and functions of literary narrative structures” (Nünning 31).

This provides an opportunity for investigating multiperspectivity in these novels in the context of epiphanies. With multiperspectivity putting additional focus on character perspectives, and these perspectives possibly being instrumental in achieving the epiphanic moment, a certain link between the two may be expected.

A methodical investigation of multiperspectivity, however, depends on a clear definition of the term. While this is by no means an impossible effort, Nünning and Nünning’s assessment that multiperspectivity has been severely neglected as a field of study needs to be taken into consideration (5).

Multiperspectivity in general means the presentation of character perspectives, highlighting the fact that each character has their own view of the fictional world they are experiencing. Multiperspectivity can therefore be a tool for putting the focus on these individual and subjective experiences. This can be used to great

effect when the same fictional event is presented from different perspectives, sometimes even with an added element of synchronicity. The additional meaning created by multiperspectivity often stems from the contrast or even incompatibility of the presented views (Hartner 182).

In addition to this description, Nünning and Nünning present three criteria for multiperspectival texts. In order to be classified as an example of multiperspectivity, the text needs to fit at least one of these criteria. Firstly, there may be two or more narrating instances on the extradiegetic or the intradiegetic level which are contributing to the narrative from their perspective. Secondly, a case for multiperspectivity can be made if the same event is described by two or more focalizers, either at the same time or consecutively. Finally, the third variant of multiperspectivity is a montage-like narrative structure, where different perspectives could also be introduced via different text types (Nünning 8).

Considering Virginia Woolf and the four novels investigated in this paper, the second characteristic is the most fitting for most of the texts. Although there is a case for multiperspectivity on the extradiegetic level in *Jacob's Room*. Most of the time, multiperspectivity in Woolf manifests itself in alternating points of view on the intradiegetic level.

Nünning and Nünning also describe several ways of classifying multiperspectivity in texts as a whole. They look at the number of focalizers present in the text as well as whether these focalizers exist on an intradiegetic or extradiegetic level. Only a few of these categories, however, will be of relevance for this paper. One distinction made is the one between intradiegetic multiperspectival texts, where there are two or more focalizers present, which both operate in the intradiegetic level, and polyperspectival texts, with more than two external or internal focalizing instances (44). The four novels appear to be intradiegetic polyperspectival focalized texts, with the possible exception of *Jacob's Room*, which, as mentioned before, also features extradiegetic focalization.

### 3.2. Focalization

The discussion of multiperspectivity leads to the concept of focalization. Nünning's terminology is useful when describing the novels as a whole, but the textual microstructure will have to be analysed using focalization.

Focalization is a structuralist term. It describes the relationship between objects and events which are perceived, i.e., the focalized, and the agent that perceives them, i.e., the focalizer (Herman and Vervaeck 25). As such, focalization is a way to describe character perspectives. The story is presented through the lens of a specific character's point of view, implying that it is presented in a filtered form, altered by this character's thoughts and perceptions (Fludernik 36).

Several attempts have been made to describe the process of focalization. Genette distinguishes several modes of it. There is internal focalization, which would be the classical case of a single character's point of view, including their own thoughts. External focalization describes a view from outside, with no insight into a character's thoughts and feelings. Zero focalization is a combination of the two, where the focalizer, in this case often an authorial narrator, gains access to the character's minds while still being able to be flexible in their point of view. Genette himself, however, rejected the notion of a focalizing object or a focalized object, preferring to consider focalization as detached phenomenon (qtd. in Fludernik 2009 38).

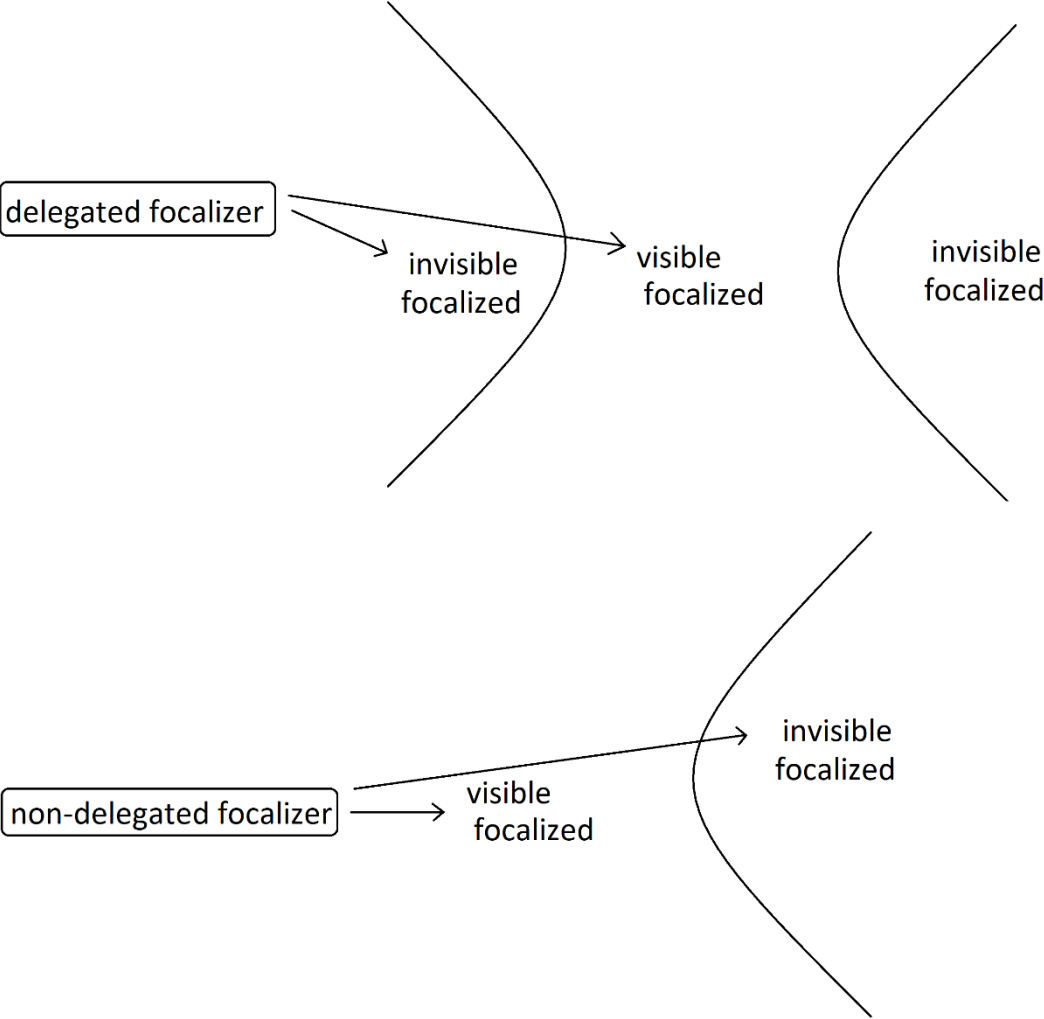
This approach is of limited use when approaching texts like the ones in this paper, since there is almost always a combination of the described cases. The focalizer's thoughts will be presented through internal focalization, while everything else will be presented through the limited possibilities of external focalization. A differentiation of these two variants is therefore impractical when examining character perspectives. Furthermore, any external focalization will inevitably be tinged by the focalizer's ideas, making the distinction between internal and external focalization difficult.

This dilemma is the result of the clashing terminologies of Genette and Bal. While the first seemed to focus on focalization as an act, the latter identified the actors. The distinction between focalizer and focalized was introduced by Mieke Bal. She

also further differentiated between visible and invisible focalized objects. Visible focalized objects are external objects, accessible to the focalizer on the surface level. Whereas their own ideas and thoughts would be invisible focalized objects (qtd. in Fludernik 2009 38).

A proposal by Vitoux was to use the term 'non-delegated' for a focalizer who is situated at the highest level of the narrative. A delegated focalizer would then be a character, or, by extension, any voice that originates within the fictional universe. (qtd. in Herman and Vervaeck 71).

Despite being heavily associated with looking and perception, focalization is actually more focused on thought representation. It is a character's ideas and feelings towards the world they are experiencing that shape their perception of it. As Uspensky put it, "We always talk of focalization and of seeing, but the issue



**Figure 1:** Model of Focalization Structure.

at stake is, usually, access to the consciousness of characters in novels” (qtd. in Fludernik 2009 103).

What also has to be considered is that there will never be a perfectly mimetic representation of a character’s thoughts, since any kind of focalization will be paraphrased by a narrator (Herman and Vervaeck 23).

The model resulting from this consists of a focalizer, who can be delegated or non-delegated, perceiving the focalized, which can in turn be visible or invisible (Fig. 1).

The delegated focalizer within the fictional universe has access to their own thoughts as the invisible focalized as well as access to the visible focalized of their physical surroundings. A distinction between the focalized of the delegated focalizer, however, becomes difficult when one acknowledges the fact that all visible focalized is tinged by the invisible focalized assumptions of the delegated focalizer.

The non-delegated focalizer has access to both the visible focalized and the invisible focalized of other character’s thoughts and feelings.

#### 4. On Modernism

A narratological analysis of several of Virginia Woolf’s novels may not necessarily require more than a brief foray into the topic of modernism. Woolf’s works could very well be examined on their own merit.

However, when examining questions of perception, consciousness representation, and vision, there is a lot that Virginia Woolf has in common with her contemporaries in the literary world as well as in that of art in general. A closer inspection of the motives of modernist artists might therefore prove insightful.

Modernism has come to be used as a term that includes various art movements like naturalism, symbolism, impressionism, post-impressionism, cubism, futurism, imagism, vorticism, dada, and surrealism. Although they are grouped together as such, these movements often differ greatly in their practises and

ideas about art and the world. Yet they still react to the same social and ideological surroundings and may thus be summarized as part of the modernist effort (Whitworth 3). As far as the world of English literature is concerned, modernism is applied to a period starting in the late nineteenth century. Writers who were confronted with a world that was starting to change at an ever-increasing rate were struggling with traditional ways of representing it and began to experiment with new styles (Lewis xvii).

What was most striking about these new styles was the way they produced more abstract, or nonrepresentational, works of art. In literature this manifested itself in a switch to free verse in poetry, the stream of consciousness in prose, and experiments with the breaking of the fourth wall in theatre (Lewis 1). This more abstract approach can also be found in Virginia Woolf's work. She even warned readers how they would have to get used to "a season of fragments and failures" and that they would have to cope with the "spasmodic, the obscure" (Woolf *Essays* 388), showcasing concerns of how this new style might be considered alienating.

While it might be tempting to view the more abstract approaches of modernist artists as a way of differentiating themselves from earlier, more realistic approaches to art, especially when literature is concerned, the opposite could often be considered more accurate. A hallmark of modernist literature, when examining, for instance James Joyce or Virginia Woolf, is the determination to describe the world as it really is. The representation of reality seems to be executed with a desire for minute accuracy. Compared to realism, the effort to achieve mimesis seems to have increased.

A more accurate description for the efforts of modernist literature would be this: Instead of rejecting realism, modernism is aiming for a realism of presentation. The focus is laid on how the world is experienced by different characters instead of what might be the truth. Modernists do not claim to describe the world as it is, but present it being experienced from different points of view (Watt 288).

The revolutions in form that were mentioned before should thus be interpreted in this light. It serves a representational purpose that in poetry, traditional meters made room for free verse and the stream of consciousness technique rose to prominence in the novel (Watt 290).

These changes happened in service of mimesis and as part of the modernist effort to describe reality. Conventional representation was not replaced with nonrepresentation, but with new systems of representation, which acknowledged the limitations of old conventions. One of the most radical attempts at this is probably Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*, which she herself feared to be "fundamentally unreadable" (Woolf *Letters* 357) due to its structural complexity. This is due to the tendency present in *The Waves* of taking the stream of consciousness technique to the extreme.

This style can be traced back to William James who described the "stream of thought" as a certain state of mind, which would continue to influence modernist writers to later develop and employ the stream of consciousness (Carter 41). It can be defined as "the simulation of associative mental processes in the representation of consciousness using interior monologue, free direct thought and psycho narration" (Fludernik 150). stream of consciousness is an attempt in the accurate representation of thought processes in the human mind.

Individual perspectives and thought processes had in general become a central point of interest for modernist writers. The philosophy of the time depicted humans as receivers of a multitude of external impressions and the newly established science of psychoanalysis offered additional insights into the human brain (Showalter xviii). All these factors called for new ways of approaching character.

This is what the stream of consciousness offered modernist writers. It is a way to present the language of a mind talking to itself, presenting everything this mind experiences – outside distractions, personal thoughts, and the rapid switching between the two. Joyce, Woolf, Faulkner, Richardson, and Proust have all employed it to show unfiltered immediate experiences (Levenson 237).

So far it has been established that modernist authors employ the stream of consciousness to depict the world as it is experienced by the single individual. But to reduce the modernist vision to such a subjective one would not be accurate. Modernism is not simply a retreat inwards, it is rather an attempt of negotiating what lies between the inner and the outer self. It attends to the border that separates them as well as to what connects them (Eysteinnsson and Liska 319). In doing so, individual viewpoints were often merged, compared, or

contrasted in order to serve a greater statement. As Lewis puts it: “the great modern novelists attempt to make out of the fragmented perceptions of individuals a picture of the whole objective world” (158).

Considering the great significance which modernists placed on perspectives it is a logical consequence that they were also very much occupied with the act of seeing. This was partly due to the fact that the advent of modernism coincided with many new technologies that offered new ways of seeing. Among them were photography, the cinema and x-rays. These inventions challenged traditional notions of seeing and identity (Humm 296). Here too, modernists were approaching the topic from their own angle. Modernist ways of seeing are subjective, they entice the onlooker to contemplate the possibility, or impossibility, of objective truth (Olk 3).

This fascination with the visual is also very much present in the works of Virginia Woolf. It is a dominant theme in her novels, evident in her scrapbooks and photographs, and the main topic of over forty essays (Humm 296). *Jacob's Room* can be argued to be about the characters and the narrator looking at the central figure of Jacob Flanders. *Mrs. Dalloway* features prominent scenes where an object, like a plane or a car, draws the looks of many people. The centrality of looking in *To the Lighthouse* is apparent in the title alone, with a lighthouse being an object that is simultaneously looking out and being looked upon. Finally, *The Waves* features, among other passages, in its central scene the six characters looking at a flower.

To combine this focus on vision and the modernist interest in individual viewpoints, Virginia Woolf employs multiperspectivity throughout these four novels. This allows for varied views on the same scenes and different, sometimes even synchronous looks at the same characters and objects. When compared with another modernist approach, Woolf's use of multiperspectivity as a modernist tool becomes even more apparent. In the visual arts, cubist artists like Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque attempted to represent objects simultaneously in their various aspects and from different perspectives in space (Lewis 31). Virginia Woolf, it seems, pursued the same goals in her literary works.

Summing up, Virginia Woolf can be understood as part of the greater modernist quest for a more accurate representation of reality. Her use of the stream of



consciousness technique and multiperspectivity allows for the representation of diverse views on the characters and objects in her novels. As with other modernist writers, these parallel perspectives of immediate experience are not merely fragmented views, but an attempt to reach a better description of what unifies them; a more accurate description of a whole, which is made up of the sum of perspectives experiencing it. Virginia Woolf's use of multiperspectivity happens in the service of mimesis, of representing the world as it is. Woolf's very own approach to this will be discussed in the following chapter.

## 5. Virginia Woolf and her Moments

As mentioned in the previous chapter, seeing and looking was a highly relevant issue for Virginia Woolf. The process of seeing itself and especially the areas where seeing and literature converged were of immense interest to her. This is evident in the way her writing, both fictional and critical, engages with the intersection of vision and narrative (Olk 18). Woolf also professed her interest in vision, observation, perceiving things, and the reality around her in her diary. There she wrote how "The look of things" had "a great power over me" (Woolf *Diary III* 191). Already in her first novel, *The Voyage Out*, Woolf experimented with visuality (Jeftic 109). But it was not just looking on itself that drew Woolf's interest.

Schrimper identifies three main reasons for Woolf's interest in the visual. The first one is that Woolf saw visuals as primary markers of class and social standing. Secondly, it seems that she interpreted the close perception of an object or scene as a remedy against the ephemerality of being, as if looking at something closely enabled one to stop time for a moment. Thirdly, there is a connection between looking, cognition and spirituality to be found in Woolf's works (33). Of these three aspects of vision, two will be of particular interest in this paper. The idea of looking as a way of escaping the passage of time and the link towards spirituality will both be of a certain relevance.

A central personal experience for Virginia Woolf, where looking was heavily involved, is described in *A Sketch of the Past*: "I was looking at the flower bed by

the front door; 'That is the whole', I said. I was looking at a plant with a spread of leaves; and it seemed suddenly plain that the flower itself was a part of the earth; that a ring enclosed what was the flower; and that was the real flower; part earth, part flower" (Woolf *Sketch* 71). This scene from her childhood is remembered as a shock that breached the monotony of life, turning into a moment that felt profound and which would stay with her for a long time. It combines several experiences which would continue to intrigue Woolf. The first one is the visual aspect which has already been discussed. The others are the phenomena she describes as Moments of Being and the theme of connectivity that often accompanies them.

Besides the term "Moment of Being", Woolf used a multitude of similar expressions, which all describe similar moments of extraordinary emotional intensity and consciousness (Wenner 24). During this paper, "Moments of Being" will be the preferred term, since it is the one that is most commonly associated with Woolf.

Woolf then goes further on to elaborate on this idea of a "whole" that is somehow behind all things and which functions as a connective instance: "From this I reach what I might call a philosophy; at any rate it is a constant idea of mine; that behind the cotton wool is hidden a pattern; that we – I mean all human beings – are connected with this; that the whole world is a work of art (...) And I see this when I have a shock" (Woolf *Sketch* 72).

From these two quotes one might distil the basics of this world view which Woolf herself seemed hesitant to call a philosophy. There is, most of the time, a crucial moment of perception, a visual trigger that causes the Moment of Being. Examples for these triggers would be the flower mentioned before, or a puddle in the road that Woolf describes as part of a Moment of Being (Woolf *Sketch* 78). What follows this initial take-off point is the moment itself. These moments were felt by her

"in their full presentness as meaningful, even ecstatic, moments that rose like mountain peaks out of daily life (...). For Woolf, such moments were linked with change, even with enlightenment but they also brought sudden shocks, creating ruptures, gulfs or chasms that severed the past from the present (Briggs 2).

It has to be noted here that this description of Moments of Being as “ruptures, gulfs or chasms” seems to contradict the earlier classification of them as being heightened experiences of connectivity. Woolf herself offers an explanation for this. During childhood, Moments of Being were often experienced as negative and disruptive. But this was due to the fact that she was not fully able to cope with these sudden revelations. She suggests that “as one gets older one has a greater power through reason to provide an explanation; and that this explanation blunts the sledgehammer force of blow.” (Woolf *Sketch* 72). In her later life, the experience of Moments of Being was to her “always welcome; after the first surprise” (Woolf *Sketch* 72).

The moment then mostly ends with some sort of revelation, about something being “the whole” or a “pattern” that connects everything. It reveals insights on the nature of reality and seems to convey some sort of cosmic unity. This connectedness has, to Woolf, a close-knit relationship to art. She claims that “we are parts of the work of art. *Hamlet* or a Beethoven quartet is the truth about this vast mass that we call the world. But there is no Shakespeare, there is no Beethoven; certainly and emphatically there is no God; we are the words, we are the music; we are the thing itself” (Woolf *Sketch* 72). Unity, or the pattern, seem to be inseparably linked to artistic expression.

Being an artist herself, it is to be assumed that Virginia Woolf incorporated this view into her work. She identifies Moments of Being as driving motivation behind her own writing and attests, that “All artists (...) feel something like this” (Woolf *Sketch* 73). Woolf integrated her experiences of Moments of Being into her art, aiming to achieve a representation of the reality she had felt. Stevanato expresses it in reverse; that “Woolf considered the significant wholeness conveyed by art as an expression of this authentic insight into the essential plenitude of being” (99).

This leads to a synthesis of reality being a work of art and the production of works of art which themselves aim to represent this relationship. Woolf herself states, when talking about *The Waves*, that she wants to give “the moment whole, whatever it includes” (Woolf *Diary III* 209). In order to represent this philosophy, to portray this way of experiencing the world as it happens during Moments of Being, all aspects that lead to them have to be included. There has to be an

aspect of vision, a perspective, combined with the plentitude of being which culminates in a very personal, yet unifying experience.

In using the stream of consciousness and employing multiperspectivity, Woolf aims to achieve mimesis of her Moments of Being.

## 6. It is all connected: Looking at the Whole

### 6.1. Moments of Being

Moments of Being were discussed before as meaningful and ecstatic instances that often brought with them an elevated understanding of the world. However, providing a narrow definition of what exactly such a moment is, proves to be a challenging endeavour. This is probably partly due to the fact of moments being both “mesmerizingly memorable and infuriatingly elusive” (Neuhold 7). They might entail significant events, may be spiritual, personal, or aesthetic. But what Neuhold identifies as the common denominator of all moments is how they “appeal to a deep longing for connection between momentariness and eternity” (Neuhold 7).

In this, Moments of Being often assume religious connotations. Sim claims that “special moments comparable to those describes by Woolf occur in the work of a number of modernists”, and by taking on “sacred significance” in a “secular framework”, they are part of a modernist effort to “search for alternatives to orthodox religion” (137). Whether in fact all Moments of Being are religious in nature is uncertain, but there often seems to be an involvement of metaphysical aspects present.

In order to clarify the term further, it might be useful to differentiate between Moments of Being and epiphanies. The latter would then keep most of the religious implications associated with it, whereas the moment remains an instance of nondescript significance. To Fobes, an epiphany involves “insight”, whereas a significant moment is “of importance in a character’s life that need not

(...) necessarily afford him any particular insight or illuminate the nature of his reality" (87). There is, on the other hand, the approach taken by Beja, who sees Woolf's Moments of Being as a certain kind of epiphanies (qtd. in Sim 15).

These contrary positions show how the line between Moments of Being and epiphanies does not appear to be a clear one. They seem to be different, albeit connected, phenomena. Neuhold adds to this discussion by introducing "negative epiphanies", where "nothing happens or the wrong thing happens" (159), and which are the opposite of epiphanies, that do provide some kind of insight or revelation.

Taking all these thoughts on the relationships of Moments of Being and epiphanies into consideration, it seems as if the moment, in Neuhold's sense, as a connection between momentariness and eternity, is a prerequisite for epiphany. A character experiencing a Moment of Being might have an epiphany as a result of the moment, or the moment might go by without a deepening of understanding taking place. Such moments without succeeding epiphanies, or negative epiphanies, can for instance be found in *Jacob's Room*. It might seem at times that the narrator is building up to a revelation, only to stop abruptly and end with a question instead like "What do we seek through millions of pages?" (*Jacob* 77), or to just end the moment there: "Yet over him we hang vibrating" (*Jacob* 12). In the opposite cases, the moment expands to grant the character experiencing it an epiphany.

Summing up, the exact relationship between Moments of Being and epiphanies is still in need of further examination. The model adopted in this paper is however the following. Epiphanies can occur as the result of Moments of Being. But not every significant moment necessarily offers an epiphany to the character experiencing it.

## 6.2. Epiphanies

While the term 'epiphany' was used in the previous chapter, its definition had been presupposed. Although it is tempting to adopt Scholes' circular conclusion: "Epiphany is what is called an epiphany" (60), a short investigation into the term in the context of modernism seems necessary.

One of the earliest scholarly descriptions of an epiphany in a modern text would be that of de Santillana in 1968, for whom epiphany is a "flash of true experience glimpsed in the rushing stream of time, an extra temporal illumination which is necessarily revealed in time and simultaneously transcends it" (qtd. in Stevanato 33). This definition already includes several important aspects. An epiphany takes place in the field of tension between the moment and eternity, it is a short "flash" in a greater, unending "stream of time". It also provides insight into something, which is outside, "extra-temporal", but constitutes some kind of truth, a "true experience".

For Beja, an epiphany is a "sudden spiritual manifestation, whether from some object, scene, event, or memorable phase of the mind – the manifestation being out of proportion to the significance of the strictly logical relevance of whatever produces it" (qtd. in Neuhold 9). This adds the source of the experience to de Santillana's definition and defines the epiphany itself as disproportionate to the thing which triggered it. This source of epiphany has been argued in the previous chapter to possibly be a Moment of Being, which itself was launched by a crucial instance of perception. Beja then identifies four characteristics of epiphanies, namely that "the experience is irrational; it involves intuitive insight; it is authoritative (it cannot be refuted by logical argument); and it is a momentary experience" (qtd. in Fobes 7). Here too, emphasis is placed on the momentariness of the experience as well as the insight it provides. The claim that the insight of the epiphany can not be refuted also aligns with de Santillanas description of it being something "true" and absolute.

Having thus explored the term epiphany, there is furthermore a need to address the criticism this approach to modernism has received. Viewing Modernism only through the lens of epiphanies is sometimes claimed to lead to a "reification of

consciousness (...) thereby maintaining distinction between public and private spheres, and, therefore between the political and personal” which is claimed to lead to “decontextualized, a-historical readings of modernist texts” (Toth 2). While it is certainly of importance not to reduce modernism to its focus on epiphanies, there might be merit in examining the attention which modernist writers paid to them in context. Epiphanies were important to modernist writers, “both as location of meaning and as integral to their formal experimentation” (Toth 2). As this paper specifically investigates the link between meaning and form of Woolf’s epiphanies, there might be some insights to be had.

Wenner also criticises the distinction between Moments of Being and moments of vision, i.e. epiphanies, claiming that no division can be drawn between experience and realization (25). The existence of failed epiphanies and elevated moments that do not seem to grant even temporary insights, however, seems to indicate otherwise.

### 6.3. The Whole

When talking about her very own Moments of Being, Virginia Woolf reports experiencing a “whole” or a “pattern”, which is somehow behind all things (Woolf *Sketch* 71-73). It might be that it is this whole of which the characters in her novels gain a glimpse during their epiphanies, when they see a “ring” (4,79), like in *The Waves*, or when they experience unity and connection.

At first glance, it is not entirely clear whether the whole and the pattern are different concepts. Olk, however, assumes that Virginia Woolf ultimately combines “the conception of holistic unity, ‘the whole’, with that of form, ‘the pattern’” (20) in her aesthetics. For the purpose of this paper, this union of whole and pattern will be assumed and there will be no differentiation between the two. Both terms will, for the most part, be used interchangeably.

This whole, or pattern, is the last concept that needs to be explored in order to investigate epiphanies in the four novels. Virginia Woolf’s epiphanies usually begin at a visual stage and lead to a metaphysical one, combining “phenomenal visuality with inner visuality in that seeing external appearances also means

seeing the hidden truth which lies behind them” (Stevanato 98). This hidden truth, although assumed to be permanent, becomes shortly visible through the epiphany.

The term ‘pattern’ that Woolf sometimes uses seems to place the whole spatially *behind* objective reality. But this does not encompass the entire scope of the concept. For Bromley, the epiphany enables a “dialectic encounter between the material world and a latent ‘elsewhere’ which is contained within and disrupts surface appearances” (21). The whole is not merely behind the surface, but constantly penetrates it. It is as much outside of everyday experience as it is the realization of all experience being encompassed in it.

Woolf also links the unity represented in the whole with art when she writes how we are the words, music, and “the thing itself” (Woolf *Sketch* 72). In this, she seems to follow Kant who postulates that humans can only ever perceive appearances, but not an objective reality. Therefore, art, in being a representation of reality, and reality itself, as experienced by a human being, are fundamentally the same (Lewis 6). What Woolf adopts from this approach seems to be the close and interdependent relationship of art and the reality she is trying to depict, suggesting that the pattern which connects everything, “the thing itself” is art and our perception of it.

This relation of the whole and art also hints at another duality of the concept. As much as art is both created and witnessed, the whole, too seems to exist in a constant flux between being a creative effort of putting the severed parts together and the more passive experience of external unity (Toth 2). This creative effort seems to become especially visible during the second dinner scene in *The Waves* where Bernard concludes their shared experience with the words: “Let us behold what we have made” (*Waves* 129), highlighting their own creative influence on this moment of unity.



## 6.4. The Whole Picture

With the terms of epiphany, the whole, and Moments of Being defined, the final task is their synthesis into a comprehensive picture of their relations.

The experience is related through the perspective of a character. Usually, they are able to define themselves as an entity that is, to a certain degree, different from everything else that surrounds them. Their idea of selfhood necessitates the existence of something that is “other”, against which the experience of “self” can be contrasted.

In looking outwards at this other the characters are able to experience themselves as removed from it, since the act of looking implies both difference and distance. But this is not the only effect that looking can have. It is also the character’s solitary means of establishing a visual connection with the other, thus being, in itself, both uniting and differentiating.

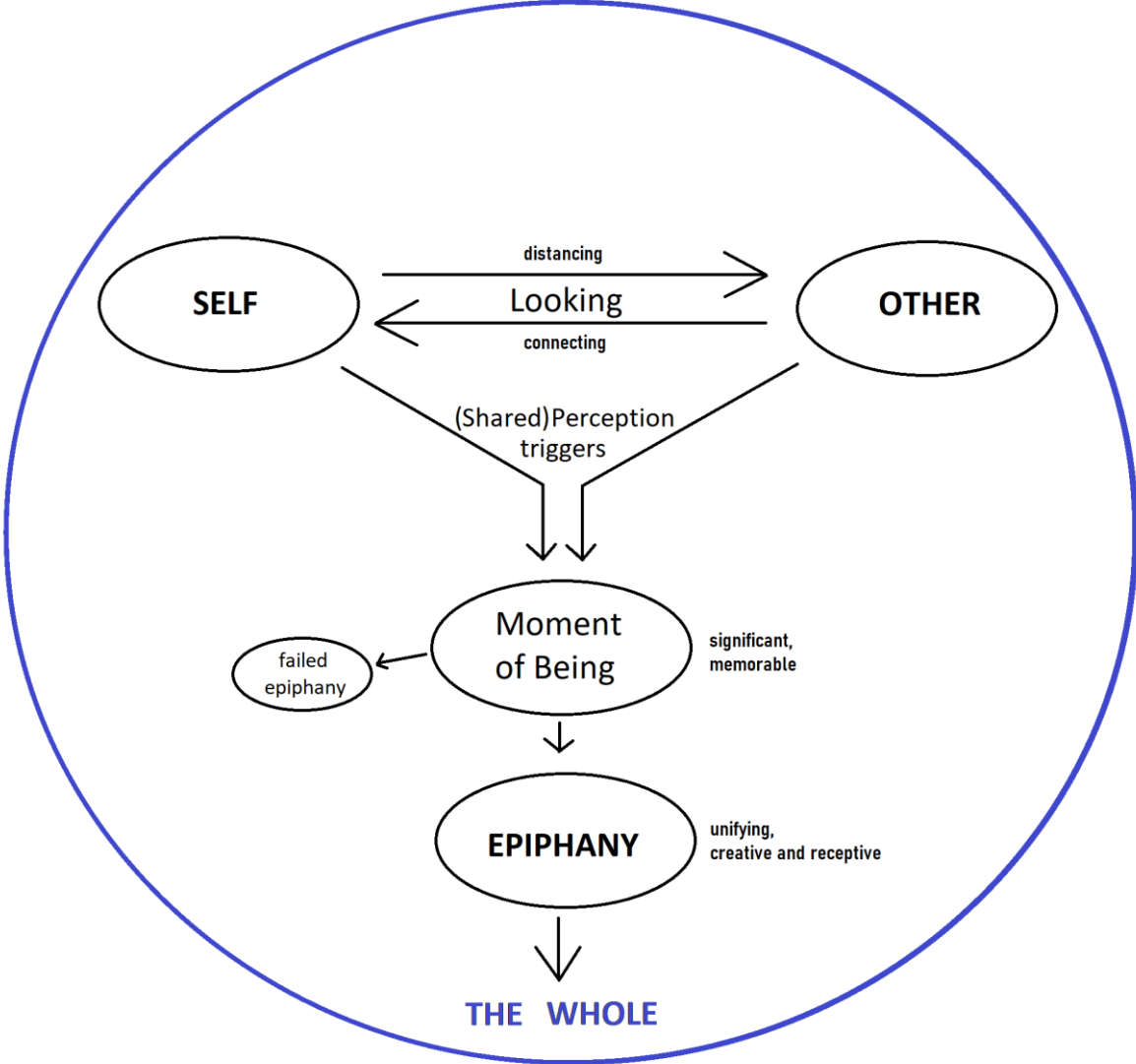
A similar thing may happen when the character realizes that parts of the other perceive themselves as individuals as well. With this realisation, the solid unity of the other is then fractured into smaller parts. Perceiving others as individuals also has another consequence, namely the awareness that they, too, are looking at the world. This awareness of looking eventually leads to instances of shared perception, where one or more characters share their visual experience of the other, sometimes even in awareness of the mutual character of their experience.

These instances of perception and shared perception are what then trigger Moments of Being. They are experienced by the individual as significant events that stand out from their everyday life. During these moments, the characters seem to approach what appears to be some ledge of understanding, which further defines the experience. Either the moment ends, without presenting the character with additional insight besides this moment’s significance, or it continues to eventually become an epiphany.

The epiphany is a short-lived glimpse of the pattern that lies beyond. Being normally confronted with a universe of differences, between the self and a fractured other, during the epiphanies, the characters experience the world as a whole. Often, feelings of connectedness and union are present. During this

moment, the whole is experienced both as something that is being created at this very instant, maybe even through the act of looking together, and as something that is always present behind the ordinary appearance of things.

Fig. 2 is meant to serve as a simple visualization of the relationship between all the phenomena described in this chapter.



**Figure 2:** Perceiving the whole through Moments of Being.

In the image, as well as in this paper in general, there is a persistent focus on the relationship of looking and epiphanies. This is because looking seems to be the predominant way in which shared perception is presented in the works of Virginia Woolf. It is however possible that other means of connection, like other sensory

experiences apart from looking, or as Greer suggests, conversation, can similarly lead to Moments of Being (16).

Shared perception is presented as a uniform experience in this picture. There are, however, a few insecurities surrounding it. Characters do not always seem to be aware of their experience of shared perception. At other times, it is unclear whether what they perceive to be a shared experience is actually shared with someone else, or the characters are outright wrong in their assumptions of connection. This feeds into the central questions of *Jacob's Room* or *To the Lighthouse* concerning the degree to which human connection and intimacy are truly possible or if they are merely imagined.

## 7. Stories on Being: A Thematic Connection

### 7.1. Connectivity and Looking in the Novels

In all four of the novels investigated in this paper, themes of connectivity and looking are present and relevant. In the following chapters, the books will be discussed in chronological order, regarding the approaches towards the problem of human connectivity present in them.

#### 7.1.1. *Jacob's Room*

As far as connectivity is concerned, *Jacob's Room* is a very rewarding novel to analyse. The inability to connect with and understand fellow beings seems to be the main thesis of *Jacob's Room*, with the main character, Jacob Flanders, being the centre of observation. All gazes are concentrated on the figure of Jacob, trying to grasp him, trying to understand him. Apart from this central characteristic, there are also several smaller instances where connectivity, or the inability to connect, are made the subject of examination.

*Jacob's Room* follows the short life of Jacob Flanders up until his death in the war, which is very sudden and unobservable by the reader. It is told through very episodic insights into Jacob's life, which span from his early childhood to his college years and a longer journey to Greece before returning to London. The scenes described appear rather random and tend to have a certain voyeuristic character as well. Lewis writes how "the novel follows Jacob's life, but he is seen mainly at a distance, through the eyes of women who knew him more or less well, and the narrative itself is quite fragmentary" (112). This is a rather fitting description of the structure of *Jacob's Room*. One would, however, have to add that there are some instances of male focalizers as well, Jacob's friend Bonamy for instance (*Jacob* 112). Direct utterances by Jacob, or even insights into his thoughts are very rare. Zwerdling argues that Woolf apparently even removed some lines showing Jacob's interiority between her drafts and the published version (900).

The theme of connection is intrinsic both to the story and the structure of *Jacob's Room* as all looks are centred on Jacob. Jacob is the element of the novel that is responsible for cohesion. Most of the characters are defined via their relation to him (Rogge-Wiest 234). What unites them is not only this relation to Jacob but their (mostly) shared quest of trying to understand him. This is also evident in Jacob's mother. According to Lewis, the whole novel is mostly about Mrs Flanders trying to make sense of Jacob's life after his death (112). At the end of the novel, when she picks up a pair Jacob's shoes, unsure what to do with them, the shoes could be read as just one of the tiny fragments of Jacob's life she has access to. Ultimately, she is unable to connect them to a meaningful picture of her son's life.

Bonamy himself has a similar experience while Jacob is away in Greece. He examines what he knows of Jacob, but fails at describing him in the end, thinking only how "there is something – something" and how he "was fonder of Jacob than of any one in the world" (*Jacob* 112). Bonamy wishes to know Jacob on a deeper level, specifically because he is so fond of him. But trying to decipher who Jacob truly is only leads him back to his own view of him, his own fondness of Jacob. All throughout the novel, attempts to describe Jacob can be found, but they seldom go further than describing him as a young man with one, maybe two

characteristics: “This young man, Jacob Flanders,’ they would say, ‘so distinguished looking – and yet so awkward.’” (*Jacob* 124). Here, too, there is a certain wish to grasp Jacob, paired with the immediate inability to penetrate further than the very surface of his character. The next line seems to describe how all these people, like Bonamy, end up examining themselves and maybe their limited view on him, instead of Jacob *as he is*: “Then they would apply themselves to Jacob and vacillate eternally between the two extremes” (*Jacob* 124). The use of the word “extremes” further amplifies the impression of the huge interpersonal distance that would have to be breached in order to connect with Jacob.

There is another perspective on Jacob in *Jacob’s Room* and that is the one of the narrator. Or, one of the narrators. According to Rogge-Wiest, the novel has a heterodiegetic narrator, but also a narrator observer (234). It is not always entirely clear who the narrator is at any given moment, but in certain instances, the narrator’s thoughts and perceptions are presented very overtly and reveal the presence of the narrator observer. It is this narrator observer who also has an enduring interest in connecting with Jacob, in wholly seeing him. Morgenstern puts it even more clearly: “*Jacob’s Room* is a book about a twenty-five-year-old man – Jacob – and a thirty-five-year-old woman – the narrator” (352).

This narrator often seems to be circling in on Jacob, for instance when describing the streets of London in general, then Soho, continuing with descriptions of various side characters and ending up in Jacob’s Room (*Jacob* 77). It seems as if this narrator-observer shares the other characters’ interest in knowing Jacob and encounters similar problems, being unable to reach Jacob. It might therefore be possible to address her as a narrator-character. The narrator-character even resorts to questions directed straight at the narratee like: “But what brought Jacob Flanders to read Marlowe in the British Museum?” (*Jacob* 84). This reveals how, to this narrator, Jacob’s inner life and his motives remain largely unknown. This peculiarity of having a narrator-observer who actively takes part in the other characters’ quest for connection sets *Jacob’s Room* apart from the other three novels examined in this paper.

There is also a thematic focus on objects that are observed by many people

. There is a mention of Dod's Hill in Scarborough which is described thus: "It was the earth; the world against the sky; the horizon of how many glances can best be computed by those who have lived all their lives in the same village" (*Jacob* 10). Similarly, there is a description of the temple in Athens where "the yellow columns of the Parthenon are to be seen at all hours of the day firmly planted upon the Acropolis" (*Jacob* 118). Lastly there is description of the sky, which "is the same everywhere" (*Jacob* 22) and how different people look up to it for consolation. Jacob himself might be compared with these three descriptions as, like with Dod's Hill or the sky, all eyes in the novel are on him.

So far, all the examples seemed to be more concerned with people's inability to connect to each other. A more positive view on the matter seems to be presented in the following scene with Simeon and Jacob at Cambridge: "And perhaps Jacob said 'hum,' or said nothing at all. True, the words were inaudible. It was the intimacy, a sort of spiritual suppleness, when mind prints upon mind indelibly. (...) Simeon said nothing. Jacob remained standing. But intimacy – the room was full of it" (*Jacob* 34). In contrast to many of the passages mentioned before, this scene seems to depict, albeit short-lived, a moment of connection, of intimacy.

In some instances, the previously mentioned narrator-observer narrates short excursions which are merely loosely connected to the main plot of the story. One such passage consists of reflections on letters and other, technological, means of communication, which "try to penetrate" (*Jacob* 73) the distance between people. Although this passage ultimately seems to call the connecting power of letters or the telephone into question it also includes the more positive notion of how we, "bound together by notes and telephone (...) might talk by the way" (*Jacob* 73). This also outlines the approach of the narrator-observer to the topic. Reaching true intimacy and connection appears to be immensely difficult, but there is yet a possibility of achieving it. Without this optimistic caveat, the whole quest for understanding Jacob would seem insurmountable from the start.

In the previous chapters, the link between looking and connection has already been established. This theme is picked up by a short passage on paper flowers in *Jacob's Room*. These paper flowers, which are used to decorate finger-bowls during dinners, are praised for their ability to connect people by drawing their looks and attention, thus connecting them: "(The invention of paper flowers) is

surely a great discovery that leads to the union of hearts and homes. The paper flowers did no less" (*Jacob* 65). The use of this image of paper flowers to describe the unifying effect of shared perception does not appear to be coincidental. The early editions of *Jacob's Room* featured these very paper flowers on their cover, which was designed by Vanessa Bell, Virginia's sister (Mantex). This, compared with the fact that a flower on a dinner table also serves a critical role in *The Waves*, highlights the importance of this passage on paper flowers.

Summing up, there is a clear theme present in *Jacob's Room* concerning, primarily unsuccessful, attempts at connection. At the centre of these attempts is Jacob himself, but the theme is also repeated in several smaller instances which also help to illustrate the association of looking, shared perception, and intimacy.

#### 7.1.2. *Mrs. Dalloway*

Compared to *Jacob's Room*, there seems to be a greater focus on looking and perception in *Mrs. Dalloway*. There also appears to be a somewhat increased ability to connect with others on a meaningful level. The quest for intimacy and connection to others, is overall depicted as a more promising endeavour.

Setting the tone and establishing the theme of connection in the first half of the novel are several occurrences which are witnessed by a great number of people at the same time. There is the stopping of the prime minister's car, the writing in the air, and the sound of the bell. These events not only serve as very effective devices to link the perspectives of the characters whenever there is a change in focalization, but they also provide suitable examples on how shared experiences can work as connecting instances.

The prime minister's car makes everyone look at it. But even more interesting is what happens afterwards: "for thirty seconds all heads were inclined the same way (...) something had happened (...) for in all the hat shops and tailor's shops strangers looked at each other and thought of the dead; of the flag; of Empire" (*Dalloway* 19). The passing of the car creates a short moment which is shared by all onlookers. They then all think of the same things, namely the experiences of the war and some undefined feeling of Empire, which they all share.

The airplane and the letters that are being written in the sky are comparable to this event, but the people's associations are less solemn. They are not sharing a common feeling of history or cultural belonging, yet they all react in a similar way to the event. Everyone is wondering what the strange letters in the sky are supposed to spell out (*Dalloway* 21). Although this looking at the airplane and guessing the meaning of the text is more mundane in nature, it still serves as a means to reinforce the idea of looking together as an act of connecting. Beer addresses this mundanity in her interpretation of Woolf's approach to connection in saying that to her: "the most fundamental form of connection between human beings is being alive at the same place at the same time" (76). Although Beer contrasts this idea with the focus of traditional stories on friendships and love affairs to define connections between humans, it might also be appropriate to consider it in the context of vision. A sharing of visual experiences mostly depends on a sharing of time and locale.

A more concrete example of being connected is the dynamic between Mrs. Dalloway and her neighbour. Mrs Dalloway repeatedly looks out of her window into the house opposite, watching an old lady go about her day. The connection that is established by this continued observation of each other seems to be confirmed when the old lady opposite finally looks back at Clarissa (Sim 193).

Connectivity occupies Clarissa also apart from her neighbour. She shares her desire to bring things together and make them whole with Mrs Ramsay from *To the Lighthouse*. Clarissa's party and Mrs Ramsay's dinner seem to serve similar purposes. Clarissa's need for creating connection is described like this: "She felt quite consciously a sense of their existence; and she felt what a waste; and she felt what a pity; and she felt if only they could be brought together; so she did. And it was an offering; to combine; to create" (*Dalloway* 134). That this need for creating community is very strong in Clarissa is also reflected in her fears of failing to make the party a memorable instance.

At one moment, Peter Walsh and Clarissa share a curious experience of intimacy. It happens when Peter returns from India and unexpectedly visits Clarissa. There he tells her about his love and pending marriage to a woman he met abroad. As he openly explains to Clarissa the circumstances of this affair his own view of his future wife begins to change:



“And second by second it seemed to him that the wife of the Major in the Indian Army (his Daisy) and her two small children became more and more lovely as Clarissa looked upon them; as if he had set light to a grey pellet on a plate and there had risen up a lovely tree in the brisk sea salted air of their intimacy (for in some ways no one understood him, felt with him, as Clarissa did) – their exquisite intimacy” (*Dalloway* 49).

In Peter’s own words, Clarissa is “looking” at his future wife. He shared his perception of her with Clarissa, which makes them appear to him in a heightened way. This looking together creates an intense moment of intimacy between the two which makes them both consider what could have been. In this moment of connection, Peter starts crying and Clarissa realizes, stirred on by a modicum of jealousy, that she could have been happy, had she married Peter. But this short moment of intimacy, of realisation, of a shared gaze on Peter’s fiancé passes even before Elizabeth enters the room. This passage describes a rather clear link between looking and interpersonal connection. Although the Major’s wife is not physically present, by talking honestly about her, Peter and Clarissa share a perspective on her, which allows them to breach the distance between themselves for a short time.

This instance inspires Peter to further muse on connectivity, leading him to the conclusion how “all this one could never share – it smashed to atoms” (*Dalloway* 59). This realisation is somewhat ambiguous, since Peter later contradicts himself by stating that at his age “one scarcely needed people any more. Life itself (...) was enough” (*Dalloway* 87). Regardless, his first statement indicates at least a fleeting understanding of the importance of shared experience and connection.

Looking is also very much relevant in the relationship of Septimus and his wife Rezia. It is Rezia’s way of trying to reconnect with her husband, who is increasingly succumbing to his mental illness. Making Septimus look at things was even recommended to her by Dr Holmes, as a means of making Septimus interested in things outside himself (*Dalloway* 23). But considering Dr Holmes’ limited grasp of his patient’s condition, this advice might be a coincidence. Because what finally prompts the couple to reconnect and share a final meaningful moment is indeed looking. But it is not Septimus’ interest in the outside world which seems to trigger it but looking together with his wife.

Rezia is making a new hat for a friend and gets her husband to help her choose decorations for it. Concentrating together on this task, on the hat, leads Septimus to think, after its completion: "It was wonderful. Never had he done anything which made him feel so proud. It was so real, it was so substantial, Mrs. Peters hat. 'Just look at it', he said" (*Dalloway* 158). This shared experience of making the hat, of enjoying its beauty together, sparks a final moment of community between Rezia and Septimus. She remembers how, when they met, "anything that struck her to say she would tell him, and he understood at once" (*Dalloway* 160), highlighting the close connection the couple once had, and she feels like now, too, "she could say anything to him" (*Dalloway* 160). Likewise, Septimus "could feel her mind" (*Dalloway* 161), as she was sitting next to him.

This intimate moment between Rezia and her husband is interrupted by Dr Holmes' visit which eventually leads to Septimus' suicide. The mutual understanding of each other, however, does not end immediately: "Rezia ran to the window, she saw; she understood" (*Dalloway* 164). Even after his death, Rezia seems to be closer to her husband than at the beginning of the story. This is further emphasized in her perception of Dr Holmes, which is now more threatening and similar to that of Septimus. She sees the "large outline of his body dark against the window", prompting her to think, "So that was Dr Holmes" (*Dalloway* 165).

All these representations of connection are also bound together in the greater narrative. This happens not just via the connecting images of the plane and the bells mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, but also through the way the novel is structured. The different characters which function as focalizers are all experiencing the same day in London and inevitably see and experience the same things, sometimes even passing each other in the streets. There is of course more interaction between some of these characters, such as Peter and Clarissa, but the main narrative threads of Septimus and Clarissa do not connect, up until the very end, at the party. It is only in its conclusion, that the novel reaches its true unity (Lewis 113).

### 7.1.3. *To the Lighthouse*

*To the Lighthouse* is very much a novel of sight. The last word being “vision” helps drive home this distinction (...) and the entire novel is threaded together by characters observing one another (Schrimper 2). There is rarely a scene where looking is not relevant and mentioned in some way, and connectivity shares this position of importance. “The reality depicted in *To the Lighthouse* seems to be composed of multiple interpenetrating consciousnesses interconnected with one another (...) that interactively create, as well as observe, their environment” (Brown 54). The different perceptions and acts of looking are becoming themselves that which is in turn observed. “Everyone sees and is seen, but Mrs Ramsay and Lily are the keenest observers and, while looking, they are often conscious of being looked at” (Stevanato 142). Because of this prominence, the focus of this chapter will be put on Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe, even though examples could be pointed out for almost any character in *To the Lighthouse*.

One of the most poignant and moving testaments for the quest for human connection in the face of one’s inability of bridging interpersonal distances is given by Lily Briscoe in the first part of *To the Lighthouse*. She contemplates “to fling herself (...) at Mrs Ramsay’s knee and say to her – but what could one say to her? ‘I’m in love with you’? No, that was not true. ‘I’m in love with this all’ (...) It was absurd, it was impossible. One could not say what one meant” (*Lighthouse* 28). She confesses her strong need for connection to Mrs Ramsay, while at the same time admitting the apparent impossibility to do so. Lily can not articulate her own feelings and emotions towards Mrs Ramsay. This fact alone is an almost impenetrable interpersonal barrier. Even more so when one considers that at this point, Mrs Ramsay’s ability to understand Lily, should she be able to articulate her emotions, is not even addressed.

Lily believes that there are certain secrets concealed behind the physical appearance of Mrs Ramsay, but she herself is unable to penetrate further than the surface level. In the following passage, Lily contemplates distance and intimacy between people:

“What art was there, known to love or cunning, by which one pressed through into those secret chambers? What device for becoming, like waters poured into one jar, inextricably the same, one with the object one

adored? Could the body achieve it, or the mind, subtly mingling in the intricate passages of the brain? or the heart? Could loving, as people called it, make her and Mrs Ramsay one? for it was not knowledge but unity that she desired" (*Lighthouse* 70).

It is noteworthy that Lily identifies "love" as a possible way to bridge the distance between individual experiences, considering how it is otherwise strongly hinted that some kind of shared perception can be a catalyst for intimacy. It is possible that for Lily, "love" already encompasses this communal experience of looking, especially when one considers her earlier statement of being "in love with this all" (*Lighthouse* 28).

Irrespective of her desire to do so, it seems easier for Lilly Briscoe to connect with William Bankes than with Mrs Ramsay. When they look out on to the bay, they both smile and feel a "common hilarity" (*Lighthouse* 29). A similar experience of shared perception and a resulting intimacy can be found later, when Lily and William are both looking at Mrs Ramsay: "looking along his beam, she added to it her different ray, thinking that she was unquestionably the loveliest of people" (*Lighthouse* 67). As Lily and William both in turn function as focalizers in this instance, it is evident that this moment sparks similar feelings of adoration in each of them, simultaneously showing and increasing their own intimacy.

Even these experiences of intimacy Lily calls further into question: "But who knows what we are, what we feel? Who knows even at the moment of intimacy. This is knowledge?" (*Lighthouse* 323). It seems as if the interpersonal distance can not be bridged, even in a moment of unity. Lily's final judgement on the matter remains, however, ambiguous. At the end of the novel she is confident that she and Mr Carmichael had indeed interpreted and experienced the boating party's journey to the lighthouse in the same way. But considering her previous doubts on the matter, this optimism concerning true intimacy is probably fleeting. It seems as is Lily "creates an illusory yet functional communion with others through the perception of mutually exterior objects" (Scheck 208), resulting in a shared experience that might be consoling, but is ultimately imagined.

What makes Lily's efforts for connection even more interesting, is the existence of the argument to read her as an author surrogate character. Lewis argues that

“her quest for a style and compositional form to represent the Ramsay’s mirrors Woolf’s own quest for a representational technique adequate to the complex family history she narrates” (114). This would also allow for another angle of interpretation of Lily’s fascination with the visual. Being an artist herself, she perceives the world around her in terms of looking, building her understanding of reality around it. For instance, when she realizes that marriage is “a man and a woman *looking* at a girl throwing a ball” (*Lighthouse* 98; emphasis added). Mr and Mrs Ramsay’s marriage, in Lily’s view, is defined primarily, through their act of looking together at their daughter.

Mrs Ramsay is not merely the object of Lily Briscoe’s gaze, but also an observer in her own right. Additionally, she has a great desire for unification. It is her declared goal to create unity when she arranges dinner for all her guests, and after it is successfully finished, Mrs Ramsay contemplates how “there rose to her lips always some exclamation of triumph over life when things came together in this peace, this rest, this eternity” (*Lighthouse* 86). Establishing connection is, for Mrs Ramsay, a way of expressing herself artistically and an act of creation.

The other characters are often aware of Mrs Ramsay’s passion for, and ability to unite, especially by looking and being looked at. Olk compares her in this regard to the titular lighthouse: “Like the lighthouse, Mrs Ramsay attracts projections, views and affections of other characters” (27). This is also reinforced by the fact of Mrs Ramsay being the centre of both Lily’s painting, and of *The Window*, the first part of the novel. In both she is the central figure that draws the gaze and which everything else revolves around.

A good example of the unifying powers of Mrs Ramsay and the other character’s understanding of them is told from Lily’s perspective. She remembers a day on the beach, which seemed to have been transformed by Mrs Ramsay.

“That woman sitting there, writing under the rock resolved everything into simplicity; made these angers, irritations fall off like old rags; she brought together this and that and then this, and so made out of that miserable silliness and spite (...) something – this scene on the beach for example, this moment of friendship and liking – which survived, after all these years” (*Lighthouse* 217).

The scene starts with Mrs Ramsay pointing out an object in the water, which is then looked upon by all three of the characters, inciting a sudden intimacy between Lily and Mr Tansley. In contrast to their usual relationship, the two get along brilliantly. Their being-together, and the moment itself, is held together by Mrs Ramsay looking at them. When one considers that the focalizer of this scene is Lily, who is remembering this happy day at the beach, a further point of view is added. The result is a multitude of perceptions, all focused on this instant. An instant, initiated by Mrs Ramsay who drew their gazes toward the object between the waves, thus creating a moment of connection that was impactful enough to impress itself upon Lily years later.

Furthermore, Lily remembers this scene because she is commemorating Mrs Ramsay. It can be argued that Lily, looking back on the scene, now more closely shares Mrs Ramsay's perspective on herself and Tansley, being, like Mrs Ramsay, an external onlooker. This posthumous sharing of perception would make her feel more closely connected to her deceased friend. But the memory not only enhances Lily's connection to Mrs Ramsay, it also enhances her perception of Mr Tansley and allows her to "re-fashion her memory of him", which then, together with the whole memory, seemed "like a work of art" (*Lighthouse* 217).

But Mrs Ramsay is not merely able to connect others. She seems to be acutely aware of the unifying effects of looking and employs this in connecting with her husband. The relationship between Mr and Mrs Ramsay is complex and would call for a deeper analysis. Here, however, the focus will be placed on one specific scene at the end of *The Window*.

What can be said about Mr Ramsay, without deviating too much from the content matter, is that he appears to be very conscious about being looked at and prefers to be alone. Even in his thoughts, he has a habit of imagining himself alone and lost, for instance as the last survivor of a polar expedition (*Lighthouse* 48). Both his fantasies of being a hero in desperate situations and his aversion to being looked at reflect his deeper worry concerning the impact his scientific work has had and will have after his death. Simultaneously, his inward gaze seems to alienate his wife at some times, prompting her to observe how "he never looked at things" (*Lighthouse* 97).

At the end of the first part of *To the Lighthouse*, Mr and Mrs Ramsay are sitting together in the living room, silently occupied by themselves. During this scene, there are repeated changes of focalization between the two characters and Mrs Ramsay is “becoming conscious of her husband looking at her” (*Lighthouse* 163). They start to communicate in looks and assumptions. Mrs Ramsay speculates that her husband expects her to tell him how she loved him, which she finds difficult to do. This difficulty is a part of their interpersonal distance that needs to be bridged here. “Then, knowing that he was watching her, instead of saying anything she turned, holding her stocking and looked at him. And as she looked at him she began to smile, for though she had not said a word, he knew, of course, that she loved him” (*Lighthouse* 166). In the end, it can be seen how the Ramsay’s marriage is held together by a common understanding of the importance of shared perception. This allows the Ramsay’s to overcome Mr Ramsay’s mostly inward point of view and Mrs Ramsay’s inability to verbally show her emotions toward her husband.

Considering all these examples, connectivity and looking are central motifs in *To the Lighthouse* and virtually no character is completely excluded from this. But there are also the overarching themes of the novel and its structure, which reflect this thematic focus. The titles of each part of the novel, *The Window*, *Time Passes*, and *The Lighthouse* evoke images of seeing and distance (Stevanato 125). In *The Window*, the focus of both the narrative and the majority of looks is the image of Mrs Ramsay and James sitting below the window, which also can, in itself, be seen as a metaphor for the multidirectionality of looking. *Time Passes* is itself the chapter that both connects and highlights the temporal distance between the first and last part of the novel. *The Lighthouse*, finally also reflects upon connection and distance in the juxtaposition of Lily and Mr Carmichael at the house and the boating party on its journey to the lighthouse.

In conclusion, *To the Lighthouse* approaches the problem of connectivity and looking with even closer scrutiny than the previous novels. The whole structure of the narrative seems to be tailored to represent the problem of connection and no character can truly escape its implications. Furthermore, it seems that the character’s increased awareness of their situation coincides with an increased probability of connecting. Lily’s closing vision or the moment of intimacy between

Mr and Mrs Ramsay at the very least hint at the possibility of genuine connection. Mrs Ramsay's observation at the dinner table can thus be read as a representation of the general thesis of the novel: "That was his way of looking, different from hers. But looking together united them" (*Lighthouse* 131)

#### 7.1.4. *The Waves*

What is most striking about *The Waves* is how, out of the four novels, it deviates the furthest from traditional styles of storytelling. The reader is introduced to the six voices of the characters and right from the start the question of what they are actually talking about arises. Are these internal thoughts and speculations, or spoken words describing a physical, external world? This text could represent a conversation about nature, or about a work of art, or not be a conversation at all. The dichotomy of connection and distance is encountered here first in the presentation of the characters. "Whereas the anaphoras 'I see' or 'I hear' suggest unison of voices, the use of the first person respectively separates the speakers" (Olk 168).

Following logically from the structure of the text, the characters tend to define themselves via the objects they witness. The reader learns details about the characters primarily through what they see. This is only natural, since in the almost formulaic prose of *The Waves*, the phrase "I see", is repeatedly used to denote a specific character's point of view.

But apart from that, there is also introspection on vision by the characters themselves. Louis, for instance wishes to be "unseen" (*Waves* 6) behind the hedge and imagines himself becoming one with the greenery. Susan, too, describes herself as short and having "eyes that look close to the ground and see insects in the grass" (*Waves* 7). The defining influence of what one sees on the self seems not to be lost on her.

Rogge-Wiest identifies a general tendency, concerning looking, in the novel. Descriptions of objects and secondary characters in *The Waves* do not primarily serve the description of themselves, but to elaborate on the main characters who are witnessing them (237). It seems that the six main characters of *The Waves*



learn to know themselves via observation of the world and the other characters. This definition of *self* by looking at the *other* necessarily creates a distance between the two. To know oneself, there must be a separation from the others; and this distance is created naturally by looking at them. This turns the gaze into something that simultaneously creates distances, but also into a means to bridge them. It is in this space created by looking, which is experienced as both self-defining and unifying by the characters, that *The Waves* discusses the problem of connection. Concerning this, Bernard himself observes “It steals in through some crack in the structure – one’s identity. I am not part of the street – no, I observe the street. One splits off, therefore” (*Waves* 64).

This dichotomy of defining oneself over distance to the other, while being an inseparable part of it, induces a rhythmic pattern of approach and withdrawal that is probably not incidentally reminiscent of waves on the shore. Or, as Olk puts it, “The characters’ thoughts and consciousnesses in *The Waves* are hence not primarily floating together, but also separating into selfhood and privacy” (167). Already alluded to through the waves in the first part of the frame narrative, this issue of connectivity and distance is still relevant in Bernard’s monologue at the end where he asks, “‘Who am I?’ I have been talking of Bernard, Neville, Jinny, Susan, Rhoda and Louis. Am I all of them? Am I one and distinct?” (*Waves* 162). This repeated movement from identity to communion, and back, creates “wavelike oscillations between fragment and wholeness” (Hinnov 215).

So far it has been established, that the need for identification seems to be a dividing factor in *The Waves*. The antagonistic force to this would be the need for connection, and this need seems to be inspired by another desire: the need to create. In the same way that looking seems to have a distancing effect, looking together seems to have a unifying and creative influence.

During the first dinner scene, before Percival’s death, Bernard muses on how they are being drawn together “into this communion by some deep, common emotion”, which he presumes to be love, before realising that they had come together “to make one thing (...) seen by many eyes simultaneously” (*Waves* 70). This making of something, creating a moment together by subjecting it to their combined looks is what calls these characters together. “Their urge to be together is an urge to create, and the object they make is fundamentally collaborative,

gaining 'contributions' from each eye that gazes upon it" (Greer 7). The red carnation on the table works as a representation of this motif. Under the united gazes of the six characters it becomes "a whole flower to which every eye brings its own contributions" (*Waves* 70).

Ultimately, this need to create, combined with an awareness of the influence of looking at something, of experiencing something together, is very reminiscent of both Mrs Ramsay and Mrs Dalloway. Their ambitions concerning their respective dinners and parties is also rooted in the desire to connect and create. In *The Waves*, this way of connecting is explored almost methodically, especially in the second dinner scene, after Percival's death. Here, the six voices speak up alternatingly, almost in unison, looking not merely at a flower any more but perceiving their lives, together. Doing this, they create out of "marriage, death, travel, friendship, (...) town and country; children and all that; a many-sided substance" (*Waves* 129).

The symbol of the ring is also rather prevalent in *The Waves*. Its importance is highlighted by it being the first object that is observed by one of the characters: "I see a ring", said Bernard" (*Waves* 4). The ring can be interpreted as a representation of unity. It is evoked in several instances throughout the novel. The circling motion in which the focalization turns between the characters alludes to the ring. As does the framing narrative, which likewise encircles the rest of the novel, depicting nature on an ordinary day, which is bound to repeat itself over and over (Tanger 241). Finally, the ring, and also the related symbol of the flower, connect to Virginia Woolf's description of a Moment of Being where "a ring enclosed what was the flower" (*Woolf Sketch* 71).

Comparing the presentation of connection in the four novels, there are two main conclusions that might be drawn. Firstly, there is ample thematization of it in all of them. From Jacob as metaphor for the inability to connect, over the converging viewpoints in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, to *The Waves*, where even the title alludes to the rhythm of withdrawal and connection-seeking that defines its characters. Secondly, there seems to be an increase in the character's ability to make meaningful connections with others. In *Jacob's Room*, it seems impossible, *Mrs. Dalloway* hints at the possibility, Lily, in *To the Lighthouse*, at

least believes she experiences it, until the communion of the characters of *The Waves* during the second dinner seems authentic.

## 7.2. Evanescence and Solace in the Novels

Somewhere wedged in between the search for connectivity and the experience of Moments of Beings, or even epiphanies, lies the theme of ephemerality. Brombert even situates a “fear of imminent calamities” and “horrors of individual and collective destruction” (429) in Woolf’s work. Considering *Jacob*, *Septimus*, *Mrs Ramsay*, and *Percival*, all of the four novels feature the demise of one of their main characters. Even though the term “main character” is not an accurate way of describing *Percival*. Marcus argues that *Jacob’s Room*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *The Waves* are constructed around a “central absence”, making them “elegies for the dead” (84).

But even when considering a less stark approach, the characters in all four novels discussed here are aware of and confronted with the finite nature of existence, and this seems to influence them all to varying degrees.

In general, however, acknowledging their fate in the face of evanescence proves to be a driving force behind the urge to connect with others. This connection through shared perception, and the Moments of Being and epiphanies that are triggered by it, might then offer some sort of solace for the characters experiencing them. Looking together, moments of being, and solace in the face of ephemerality are inseparably linked. Williams links here Schopenhauer’s beliefs with those of Woolf in that temporary alleviation to suffering may be found, among other things, in aesthetic perception (1).

### 7.2.1. *Jacob’s Room*

Koulouris calls *Jacob’s Room* “one of the most important of Woolf’s texts on the concept of loss” (69). Despite this, direct references to evanescence in *Jacob’s Room* are scarce, but present. There is, for instance, a description of the sky,

which is the same everywhere and makes “consolation, and even explanation, shower down from the unbroken surface”, from which “travellers, the shipwrecked, exiles, and the dying draw comfort” (*Jacob* 22). Two other scenes seem to represent a fear of the passage of life without achieving meaningful interactions: “It’s not catastrophes, murders, death, diseases, that age and kill us; it’s the way people look and laugh, and run up the steps of omnibuses” (*Jacob* 64). This anxiety of missing out on meaningful moments and interactions is also present in the narrator’s monologue on communication: “Am I doomed all my days to write letters, send voices, which fall upon the tea table, fade upon the passage, making appointments, while life dwindles, to come and dine?” (*Jacob* 73). Finally, there is Jacob and Sandra’s ascent to the Acropolis. The reader never discovers what exactly happened during this evening, apart from these lines: “There was the Acropolis; but had they reached it? The columns and the temple remain; the emotion of the living breaks fresh on them year after year; and of that what remains?” (*Jacob* 129). This part casts Jacob and his life and story in stark contrast to eternity, represented by the ancient stones of the Acropolis.

The other great pursuit of the problem of evanescence in *Jacob’s Room* happens in the form of the war. The first world war and Jacob’s death during the conflict abruptly end the story and leave it figuratively in tatters. Only fragments of Jacob’s life are accessible, and they do not seem to be enough to really know and understand him.

At one point, a short story of a couple is told by a minor character. She is upset about the fate of the young would-be lovers whose lives were similarly disrupted by the war. She ends with: “And now Jimmy feeds crows in Flanders and Helen visits hospitals. Oh, life is damnable, life is wicked” (*Jacob* 76). “Feeding the crows in Flanders” is probably a euphemism for Jimmy having died in the war, since some of the battles with the heaviest casualties happened in the Belgian region of Flanders (Lewis 112). Jacob’s surname can probably also be read as an allusion to this region.

The problems addressed in *Jacob’s Room* remain unresolved. There is no answer to the horrors of the war or any other source of solace. With the last scene, everything is left unfinished, left dangling like Jacob’s shoes from his mother’s hands. It is probably no coincidence that this lack of solace, and anxiety

in the face of meaninglessness, coincides with the general inability of the characters in *Jacob's Room* to connect.

### 7.2.2. *Mrs. Dalloway*

Although all characters in *Mrs. Dalloway* are struggling with the impermanence of being on some level, the most fleshed out of these conflicts is that of Clarissa Dalloway herself. She has the curious feeling of being “invisible” (*Dalloway* 11) and struggles with the fact that there would be “no more marrying, no more having of children” (*Dalloway* 11) for her. A similar inspection of ephemerality happens when she discovers that only her husband was invited to a social event, while she is being disregarded. This echoes her previous feeling of growing invisibility and elaborates on her anxieties. Clarissa admits how she “feared time itself” (*Dalloway* 32) and how, as she grew older, her bed would be “narrower and narrower” (*Dalloway* 35). It seems as if Clarissa Dalloway is not only affected by a fear of death, but also by an anxiety of life before death not being lived to its potential. She is aware that at her age, many defining events in her life have already taken place and she herself will probably become more and more insignificant. Freedman describes this feeling as Clarissa being haunted “by the spectre of insufficiency” (203). Webb puts it even more drastically: “In *Clarissa Dalloway* Woolf presents us with a character who has half-consciously produced a reading of herself as dead” (280).

Clarissa, however, is able to combat these feelings. She derives solace from the knowledge of being connected to others and the external world:

“Did it matter that she must inevitably cease completely; all this must go on without her; did she resent it; or did it not become consoling to believe that death ended absolutely? But that somehow in the streets of London, on the ebb and flow of things, here, there, she survived, Peter survived, lived in each other, she being part, she was positive, of the trees at home; of the house there” (*Dalloway* 9).

There is something in the feeling of communion with the other that lessens the impact of looming death to Clarissa. When she feels connected to others, or the

whole of existence in general, the spectre of insufficiency as well as the impermanence of life lose their threatening impact. By experiencing the world thus, Clarissa is able to accept her own mortality, which in turn allows her a “momentary feeling of sufficiency” (Mendes 42).

It could be argued that this is Clarissa Dalloway’s driving motivation behind hosting her party. She herself feels like this: “and she felt what a pity; and she felt if only they could be brought together; so she did. And it was an offering; to combine, to create” (*Dalloway* 134). Enabling connectivity at her party is what Clarissa views as her gift. It is her way of artistic creation. In Clarissa’s view, the party is a success, if she experiences the heterogenous crowd of guests as a unity (Rogge-Wiest 231). Creating this union can be seen as her way of coping with the ephemerality of her own life.

During the story, this mechanism is challenged by the death of Septimus interrupting the party. At the very time when Clarissa is uncertain whether unity would be achieved, whether the party would be a success, she overhears Lady Bradshaw talking about Septimus killing himself and finds herself thinking: “in the middle of my party, here’s death” (*Dalloway* 201). At first, Clarissa is shocked. But after a short moment, she begins to identify more and more with Septimus in his last moments, trying to share his point of view. This exercise in trying to connect with him seems to set her back on track, enabling her to view the party as a success.

The other characters encounter similar issues in their own ways. Peter Walsh, being of a similar age to Mrs Dalloway seems to also have similar problems to her. He is uneasily aware of how other people perceive him, which would make it harder to admit to himself his desire for connection. He repeatedly feels a need to reassure himself of his independence in the face of judgement by others: “As for caring what they said of him – the Dalloways, the Whitbreads, and their set, he cared not a straw” (*Dalloway* 55). But Peter Walsh is presumably able to overcome these reservations, since he does indeed attend Clarissa’s party and connects with Sally over their shared past; finding solace in the face of his dwindling youth.

Similar to *Jacob’s Room*, there is of course also a significant focus on the war in *Mrs. Dalloway*, which brings with it its own implications about ephemerality and

meaning. Septimus, the returned soldier suffering from delayed shell-shock exhibits “anguish about mortality and immortality; and (...) acute sensitivities to his surroundings, which have gone over the line to madness” (Showalter xxxvi). Apart from a short uplifting moment with his wife, Septimus is too dominated by his fears to make successful attempts at connecting. His inability to overcome these barriers is further reinforced by his anxieties of being looked at: “It is I who am blocking the way, he thought. Was he not being looked at and pointed at (...)?” (*Dalloway* 16). When one considers the way that Clarissa’s and Septimus’ stories seem to mirror each other before converging, one might conclude that this is one of the things that sets them apart: Mrs Dalloway is successful in coping with her fears after successful connection, while Septimus is denied this experience by his anxieties.

### 7.2.3. *To the Lighthouse*

“The novel itself is structured round a series of images which suggest the strife between permanence and evanescence, (...) and Woolf’s prose captured the extraordinary pulsing and momentary vacillations and vibrations between stability and flux, the momentary and the eternal, the trivial and the grave in daily life” (Drabble xvii). Examples for this thematic focus can be found a lot in the text. Many characters are contemplating evanescence; the sound of the waves, eating away at the island’s bedrock is ever-present, there are skulls and lost things, and even the three-part structure of the novel is a definite pointer in this direction (Drabble xvii).

The three parts of *To the Lighthouse* encapsulate the feeling of evanescence. There is the interplay of contrast and similarity between *The Window* and *The Lighthouse* which highlights how nothing can stay the same, even if it seems to be as mundane and innocuous as the summer day described in *The Window*. Between the two, there is *Time Passes*, which feels as if time itself is waging war against the house and its former inhabitants. Especially when considering that the war is indeed taking place during this time and several of the characters die before the beginning of the third part. It is in this structural frame that the characters of *To the Lighthouse* encounter and navigate feelings of ephemerality.

The character who is probably most overtly occupied with the finite nature of life is Mr Ramsay. His battle is with the question whether his impact on the scientific community was noticeable or whether he and his work will be forgotten immediately after his death. He laments how “the very stone one kicks with one’s boot will outlast Shakespeare” and “his own little light would shine, not very brightly, for a year or two” (*Lighthouse* 50). It is rather characteristic for the dramatic Mr Ramsay to compare himself to Shakespeare before doubting his own significance.

His observation of standing “thus on a spit of land which the sea is slowly eating away” (*Lighthouse* 61), is curiously reminiscent of a similar statement by his wife who is reminded of the “destruction of the island” (*Lighthouse* 24) by the sound of the waves. Incidentally, it seems that it is only with the help of Mrs Ramsay, that Mr Ramsay manages to cope with his feelings of insufficiency. He repeatedly “demands sympathy” from her in order to be restored and finds “consolation in trifles so slight compared with the august theme just now before him” (*Lighthouse* 62). For Mr Ramsay, relief seems to stem from the contrast of his own grave views and thoughts with the much simpler, domestic sphere represented by Mrs Ramsay. But considering Mrs Ramsay’s ability and interest in creating connection and unity, it is more likely that it is these attributes that help Mr Ramsay in overcoming his doubts in himself and face the eventual glowing out of his personal and intellectual light. Their last scene together, reading in the evening, would also point in this direction.

Despite Mrs Ramsay’s affinity for human connections and awareness of the power of looking, she is not immune to the subduing influence of the passage of time. She knows that “no happiness lasted” (*Lighthouse* 87) and describes life as her “old antagonist” (*Lighthouse* 107). The central struggle, where Mrs Ramsay is dealing with this, seems to be happening during dinner, which to her is comparable to an act of artistic creation. At the beginning of it, she is still full of doubt and hesitation, asking herself what she had done with her life (*Lighthouse* 107). But during the dinner she carefully chooses talking points, administers looks, and conducts the general flow of the evening in her aim to establish a sense of communion among herself and the guests. Her achievement of this goal is hinted at by her growing change of appreciation for her guests, until she finds



that she really likes Mr Carmichael, or Mr Tansley (*Lighthouse* 148). Even though Mrs Ramsay realizes when leaving the room that this moment had become “already the past” (*Lighthouse* 150), she is still left with a sense of achievement. In this dinner, this merging of viewpoints, she has created something which she believes to be lasting.

“They would, she thought, going on again, however long they lived, come back to this night; this moon; this wind; this house; and to her too. It flattered her, where she was most susceptible to flattery, to think how, wound about in their hearts, however long they lived she would be woven; and this, and this, and this, she thought, going upstairs, laughing, but affectionately, at the sofa on the landing (her mother’s) at the rocking-chair (her father’s); at the map of the Hebrides” (*Lighthouse* 153)

Mrs Ramsay seeks to survive, so to speak, not merely in the memory of those who witnessed this evening together with her, but in the very place, in the very experience they shared. This seems to provide her with comfort.

Since Lily Briscoe and her vision will be discussed more thoroughly at a later point of this work, her relation to evanescence will only be superficially investigated here. Looking out onto the sea, together with Mr Bankes, triggers a feeling of sadness in Lily. Interesting here is how the idea of things being apart is connected with a feeling of ephemerality. Lily feels sad because “the thing was completely partly, and partly because distant views seem to outlast by a million years (...) the gazer” (*Lighthouse* 30). The view which Lily is experiencing will still be here, even when she is long gone. But it is also only part of all the possible views that can be had during this time. It is a separated part of some greater experience. It could be argued that the relationship of shared viewpoints, connectivity, and solace, in the face of an eternity which one may never experience, is already fully encapsulated in this fleeting experience on the cliff. Considering her desperate desire to connect to Mrs Ramsay (*Lighthouse* 70), Lily Briscoe seems to be highly conscious of how connectivity would help her come to terms with transience; and *To the Lighthouse*, as a whole, seems to reinforce this relation.

#### 7.2.4. *The Waves*

“The novel considers how the characters (...) develop their separate identities from childhood to maturity, alternating between the sense of belonging to each other, the necessity of becoming single individuals through mutual differentiation, and the threat of death” (Stevanato 155). With *The Waves* following the lives of its main characters for a significant portion of their lives, the predominance of themes of ephemerality is to be expected. It is evident in the characters’ thoughts and the structure of the novel, as well as in some important events.

As with the opposition of intimacy and individualisation, *The Waves* is a novel of contrasts also in its structure. The main narrative is interspersed with descriptions of nature over the course of a day. Referencing Woolf’s own comments on this, describing these scenes as “essential; so as to bridge & also give a background” (Woolf *Diary III* 285 [sic]), Parsons situates them as evoking the “immutability of nature and the elements”, and providing a “temporal continuity against which the ‘perishable hours’ of the different lives can be mapped and paralleled” (vii). The impermanence of the characters, their thoughts and actions, is made more visible by contrasting them with a scenery which will outlast them, unchanged.

There is also a pervading theme of death and decay, reiterated by images of decomposition that tonally break the description of an otherwise pristine and idealized natural world: “Down there among the roots where the flowers decayed, gusts of dead smells were wafted; drops formed on the bloated sides of swollen things” (*Waves* 41). Accepting its brevity as a natural part of life, hinted at in the interlude, becomes a central challenge for the characters in *The Waves*.

Of all the characters, Bernard seems to be most aware of their “ephemeral passage”, for instance when he accuses passers-by of “ignoring their doom” (*Waves* 63). But the others too are naturally occupied with it. Louis, for instance, contemplates how he will “walk the earth these seventy years” (*Waves* 21), betraying an understanding of the impermanence of his existence. Even early on, efforts are being made to combat these feelings. Sitting together in the lawn with Bernard and Percival, Louis aims to “fix this moment” (*Waves* 21), trying to make it endure. His efforts are reminiscent of Mrs Ramsay’s abilities of creating moments that stay with the ones she has shared them with. Louis’ attempt seems

to be thwarted, however, by Percival leaving their circle prematurely. Paying close attention to detail, there might already be a hint of Louis understanding the importance of perception in his endeavour, as he takes “the trees, the clouds, to be witness” (*Waves* 21) of where they had sat together.

In the end, it seems to be Bernard who finds the most adequate way of describing their experiences, remembering “how life withers when there are things we cannot share” (*Waves* 149). There is evidence to suggest that the six characters obtain something from their communion during the first, and especially the second dinner scene. It seems that is this experience of connection that inspires Bernard to his ending monologue and emboldens him to cry out: “Against you I will fling myself, unvanquished and unyielding, O Death!” (*Waves* 167). In their shared viewpoints and perception, they find solace in the acceptance of their mortality.

This is further emphasized by the fact that the very reason for their getting together is the memory of their deceased friend Percival. It is Percival’s death that binds them together, as much as it is their own death. Remembering Percival serves as the character’s *memento mori*, inciting a struggle they seem to overcome when they realize, despite all their individualities, their common experience of life, and eventually, death.

The discussion and examples in this chapter outlined the link between connection and the character’s ability to have a more positive experience of their own place in the world. The approval and solace they receive seem to stem not just from being connected to others, but from the phenomenon that follows and accompanies it. Taking part in an experience of community and especially experiencing shared perception allows the characters to cope with their mortality.

## 8. Focalization and Epiphanies

### 8.1. *Jacob's Room* – The Narrator-Character's Failed Epiphany

It is difficult to pinpoint which type of multiperspectivity applies to *Jacob's Room* as a whole. Woolf's "technique of multi-perspectival impressionist sketching" is likened to camera movements by Liu (612). This already hints at the possibility that multiperspectivity in *Jacob's Room* is a mere difference in *spatial* perspectives. Rogge-Wiest concludes that the novel does not constitute a multiperspectival text at all, neither stylistically nor narratively. The argumentation for this assessment is that despite the multitude of characters present, none of them are fleshed out enough to be allotted a true *figural* perspective (233).

Despite this, there seems to be focalization on the invisible focalized of character's thoughts. Due to the frequent brevity of these instances of focalization, however, it is difficult to assign a definitive focalizer to these thoughts. Often, the insight granted is too short to justify a focalization by the character themselves. Assigning the focalization to the non-delegated focalizer, who is also able to convey the invisible focalized of characters within the narrative, would probably suffice in such cases. Especially when, as in most of the cases, the focalization before and after the questionable part seems to be handled by the non-delegated focalizer as well.

But in *Jacob's Room*, there seems to be another mediator of the narrative. Rogge-Wiest describes them as a Narrator-Observer (234). In their view on the visible focalized, the narrator-observes does not seem to be bound to the same interfictional rules of space that other characters have to abide by. This ability to change the visible focalized in such a rapid and unhindered way is what the narrator-observer shares with a non-delegated focalizer. But what makes them a delegated focalizer is the way in which they tinge the focalized with their own ideas and comments. Lacking the detachment of a heterodiegetic narrator, they also seem unable to focalize on the invisible focalized of other character's thoughts and feelings, being only able to express them in terms of speculation.

Since the narrator-observer also seems to share the other character's interest in grasping Jacob, they could also be termed a narrator-character. It is this narrator-character who fails to catch a glimpse of the whole or achieve an epiphany in the two scenes from *Jacob's Room* examined in this paper.

The passage from page 55 to 57<sup>1</sup> is chosen because it seems to be the part where the narrator character comes closest to their goal of grasping Jacob. In terms of focalization, the text begins contradictory enough. There is a description of Clara Durrant's very personal diary entry, which would usually support the notion of her being a possible focalizing instance here. But even more dominant than Clara's feelings seem to be those of the narrator character who repeatedly comments on her actions. What seems to be presented here is the visible focalization of Clara's spoken words and writing, while her thoughts may just be conjecture by the narrator character.

This relationship between Clara and the narrator-character is then repeated in staccato for more than five other characters and their views on Jacob. All the views expressed there might be examples of individual delegated focalization by the characters. But following Rogge-Wiest's argumentation of them being not fleshed out enough and considering the implied personal involvement of the narrator-character in describing them, delegated focalization by the narrator character seems to be more likely. Her intervention becomes visible in comments such as: "no doubt she meant" (55), highlighting the speculative nature of the thoughts presented.

This pattern is broken when Jacob himself seems to become the delegated focalizer over three instances where his thoughts are presented in brackets, leaving no space for additional interpretation by the narrator-character. These snippets of focalization by Jacob are interrupted by bits of dialogue. Assigning a focalizer to these parts is difficult, owed to their brevity, them being direct speech, and being wedged in between Jacob's bracketed thoughts.

The short passage finally ends with an uncharacteristically overt presence of the narrator character. Direct invitations towards the narratee, such as "Then consider the effect of sex" (56), and the use of a connecting "we" in "Yet over him

---

<sup>1</sup> The line-per-line analyses of focalization are located in the appendix.

we hang vibrating” (57) indicate that the presented voice is not that of a non-delegated focalizer.

The scene covered in this analysis can be seen as one of the closest attempts by the narrator-character to achieve an epiphany. In this case, Jacob himself, being observed by all other characters, connecting them, yet remaining out of reach, can be viewed as a substitute for the whole. At the end, however, there is no epiphany, the narrator-character merely hangs over him, “vibrating” (57), which indicates a certain closeness as well as an insurmountable distance.

According to the theory, different viewpoints and the intersection of gazes would heighten the chances of an epiphany taking place. And indeed, at the first glance, many perspectives are being presented on the first page of the passage alone. There are seven individual comments by character on Jacob. This high density of possible points of view is, however, contradicted by the analysis of focalization. Instead of true character focalization on the invisible focalized of their own thoughts on Jacob, the narrator-character seems to be the focalizer. They present statements made by the characters tinted by their own point of view.

Additionally, there is one of the rare instances of delegated focalization by Jacob himself. The brackets used to fence in his thoughts advocate the notion that there is as little mediation as possible going on. These snippets of Jacob’s innermost feelings, or, more accurately, his immediate reactions to the dialogue taking place, indicate a certain closeness to Jacob being reached in this part. But these few direct thoughts of Jacob remain what they are. Merely small glimpses into something bigger and deeper that remains hidden.

These small insights into Jacob’s thoughts is all the narrator-character, and by extension, the narratee, get access to, everything else remains “mostly a matter of guess work” (57).

Apart from the fact that the character’s inability to make sense of Jacob Flanders’ life constitutes one of the main focal points of the novel, this scene allows for a narrower exploration of the mechanisms behind this failed connection. During the whole scene, there are no converging viewpoints or focalization on the same focalized, invisible or visible. What appears to be differing character perspectives is merely the narrator-character’s summary of statements on Jacob made by

others. It might be that this lack of true multiperspectivity and diversity in character focalization causes the moment to fail. In the absence of epiphany, Jacob, and the whole, remain elusive.

## 8.2. *Jacob's Room* – What am I to do with these?

The passage in question is taken from the conclusion of the novel. Although calling the end of *Jacob's Room* a "conclusion" would probably be an exaggeration. As in the first part that was examined, there is no moment of being, or even epiphany here. What makes the passage interesting is this very lack of closure at the point of the novel where one would expect to have gained the most insight into its titular character. Arguably, the chances of truly connecting with Jacob have even diminished compared to the first scene that was analysed.

The investigated text spans from page 131 to 143, encompassing everything that is described between Jacob's return to London and the end of the novel. These parts have been chosen because there is a range of implied character perspectives, mostly on Jacob, which are similar to the short statements before the first failed epiphany.

The focalization during the first fifty-five lines is for the most part made up of alternating sequences of focalization by either Bonamy or the narrator-character. It seems, however, that the narrator-character's involvement is rather limited. They allow themselves only the two comments: "The sharpest of knives never cut so deep" (132), and "Not Clara Durrant" (133). The rest does indeed seem to feature Bonamy as the focalizer on both the visible Jacob as well as his own thoughts and impressions of Jacob.

For the next ten pages until the end of the novel, there are only two modes of focalization. There is a non-delegated focalizer and the narrator-character as delegated focalizer. But the latter is very underrepresented. There are merely twenty-nine lines of focalization by the narrator character in total, while the non-delegated focalizer is present for over three hundred lines.

The narrator character can be identified by either their comments, as in “Oh, here was Mrs. Cowley Johnson” (133) or their insecurities about another character’s invisible focalized thoughts such as “But Jacob might have been thinking of Rome” (138) or “which perhaps the living may have envied” (140). These short moments of visibility are rare and the rest of the narration seems more distant and matter-of-factly. This impression intensifies towards the end, where non-delegated focalization makes up almost a third of the whole investigated passage.

Ultimately, this passage is rather similar to the one examined before. Despite the presence of a great number of characters, no connection or unifying event takes place, decreasing the chance for significant shared perception and resulting moments of being or epiphanies.

There seems to be somewhat of an intersection at the beginning, where both Bonamy and the narrator-character seem to be present and functioning as focalizers to some extent. But despite Bonamy’s best efforts, he is unable to come through to Jacob. Even though he manages to infer that Jacob might be in love, he does not get any additional answers as to who the woman in question might be. The narrator-character then comments Bonamy’s doomed guesswork with the words: “Not Clara Durrant” (133). It almost seems as if the narrator-character is satisfied with the knowledge of knowing at least more about Jacob than Bonamy does, since there is no focalization via the narrator character where Jacob is the focalized. It can be speculated whether a truly shared effort of Bonamy and the narrator-character might have yielded more insights into Jacob’s character.

The following scenes offer perspectives of, but not focalization by, several of the people that influenced Jacob’s life such as Clara Durrant, Julia Eliot, Fanny Elmer, Sandra, Reverend Floyd, and Mrs Flanders. Their experiences are interspersed with hints at the political changes at the eve of the war. But all their experiences are presented through the more distanced voice of the non-delegated focalizer.

As the narrative comes to a close, it seems that the narrator-character realizes their inability to fully grasp Jacob. Over the course of the last few pages, the narrator-character’s involvement diminishes until they seem to vanish completely. With their quest failed, they leave the narratee alone with the non-delegated



focalizer. This adds to the emptiness conveyed in the last scene of the novel. The narrator-character, who shared the narratee's interest in Jacob, is gone. The remaining two characters, Bonamy and Betty Flanders, lack their own distinct character perspectives. Isolated in this way, one feels like holding up what little narrative strands of Jacob's life were provided, asking, like Mrs Flanders: "What am I to do with these" (143).

In Conclusion, *Jacob's Room* seems to offer little in terms of Moments of Being, epiphanies, or even connection. But the interesting thing about the novel is that this lack of significant insights into both Jacob Flander's life and the whole seems to correlate with the narrator-character's inability to connect, and the lack of distinct focalization by the many characters present in it.

### 8.3. *Mrs. Dalloway* – Peter Walsh's Epiphany

*Mrs. Dalloway* would fall into the category of an intradiegetic polyperspectival text. In slight contrast to *Jacob's Room*, most of the delegated focalizers are characters that are directly present within the fictional universe. Yet there are also instances of non-delegated focalization.

The first scene of the novel that will be analysed is the dialogue between Peter and Clarissa after his return from India, and Peter's experiences after that when he is walking in the streets of London. At a certain moment, Peter feels "understanding; a vast philanthropy; and finally, as if the result of the others, an irrepressible, exquisite delight" (57). Although this experience is not described as the realization of a greater unity, it endowed Peter with an undefined understanding. This combined with the world seeming like an island to him (56), which can be interpreted as a place where things are more closely connected, make it a moment that might have given Peter a glimpse of the whole. It therefore is worth a closer investigation.

Since Peter's thoughts and emotions on his walk through London are mostly a reaction to his reunion with Clarissa, their conversation has been included in the perspective analysis. Because of this, the analysis will cover the pages 43 to 62.

The epiphanic moment, however, happens on page 57. The rest is merely included because Peter's focalization does not end immediately afterwards.

The first striking observation, especially when compared to the previous analyses of *Jacob's Room* is the lack of a non-delegated focalizer. Throughout the whole passage, the only kind of focalization is a delegated one by either Clarissa or Peter. During the conversation, they distribute their times as focalizers rather evenly. It might be assumed that the focalization here corresponds to the speaking roles of the two characters. But this is not the case. Dialogue by both of the characters is presented as the respective other character's visible focalized as well as their own. Which means that the same character might continue speaking while the focalization between the two changes. As a result, what is said is almost simultaneously presented from both of their points of view.

On page forty-nine there is again an instance where Clarissa's thoughts are presented in brackets. Since this short silent utterance is distinguished from the rest of the text by the use of brackets, it can be assumed to be a short instance of internal focalization that disrupts Peter's focalization. Additionally, the context makes it unlikely that the sentence "all the same, he is in love, thought Clarissa" (49) is mere conjecture on Peter's side. It does seem that Virginia Woolf sometimes employs these brackets to indicate disruptions in focalization, as this was already the case in the second analysis of *Jacob's Room*. There is, however, no clear pattern since text in brackets can also appear without an accompanying change in focalization.

After the first initial, rapid, changes in focalization, there is a long part where Peter is the sole focalizer, not even being interrupted by a non-delegated one. The last change of focalization before that poetically happens in the very moment Clarissa Dalloway hears the door shut behind Peter and continues with him mulling over the last words he had heard her say.

The dynamic between Peter and Clarissa during their conversation has already been discussed in the chapter on connection in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Sharing his perception of Daisy with Clarissa elevated his wife-to-be in Peter's eyes. They then both have a very intensive moment where Peter starts crying and Clarissa questions her choices in life, only to be interrupted by Elizabeth entering the room.

The feeling that they are both examining the same things, the fact that Peter is in love and their common past, is enhanced by the multiperspectivity in this scene. Since the changes in focalization are not aligned with who is speaking, a second layer of meaning is added to each talking point. The two characters can reflect on both their own and the other's utterances. The focalization in this scene provides an almost panoramic insight into the development of Peter's and Clarissa's emotions.

What emerges from this conversation could be called a significant moment already, as it deeply affects both characters. But interestingly, Peter Walsh's even more profound experience happens afterwards, when he walks the streets of London alone, during a passage that only features him as the sole focalizer. Yet there are two possibilities on how Peter's epiphany can still have been influenced by shared perception.

His walk, and more importantly, his thoughts during it are heavily concerned with what he and Clarissa talked about. The long stretch of delegated focalization by Peter is also a very distinct continuation of the back and forth in focalization from before. The two instances are closely linked by Clarissa shouting her invitation towards the closing door and this invitation being the first thing that is presented via Peter's focalization. Through this fluid transition, any influence the shared perception during the conversation might have had, is taken over to the following passage.

The second influence is one that is not directly visible through the focalization. Shortly before his epiphany, Peter Walsh comes across the monuments of great men who are "looking ahead of them, as if they too had made the same renunciation" (56) and Peter feels that "he, too, had made it, the same renunciation" (56). It seems that whatever experiences he imagines them to have had, he has shared. This imagined identification with the marble stares of the statues might be what triggers his epiphany. However, Peter concludes that he "did not want it for himself" (56), this marble stare. He directly refuses to share it. Ultimately, whether the looks of the statues have any impact on Peter's epiphany remains unclear.

The reason for his epiphany that is given in the text itself is "because nobody yet knew he was in London, except Clarissa, and the earth, after the voyage, still

seemed an island to him” (56). The focus on his solitude triggering the moment seems to contradict the need for connection. But it is to be taken into account that after the epiphany Peter realises how “all this one could never share – it smashed to atoms” (59). Possibly, the more important part here is not his being alone, but the part of “except Clarissa”. It is Clarissa with whom he has shared an intimate moment. It is her with whom he has shared his perception of the world. After he has had time to reflect on it, it was this conversation with her that seems to have sparked his epiphany.

It is also noteworthy that during his walk, Peter Walsh feels the weight of his own and Clarissa’s life’s brevity upon him. “No! No! he cried. She is not dead! I am not old” (54-55). Whereas after his epiphany he discovers that “he had not felt so young for years” (57), which is a further indication of the impact the moment had on him.

#### 8.4. *Mrs. Dalloway* – Clarissa’s Epiphany

The second epiphany from *Mrs. Dalloway* analysed here is the one of Clarissa herself. Although she describes similar experiences happening in her past, where “the world felt closer” and she felt “some pressure of rapture” (35), what happens to her during the party seems more profound, especially when considering that it is not just something that Clarissa recalls from her past.

Additionally, the party is the one scene of *Mrs. Dalloway*, where all plotlines, whose characters had previously only chanced upon each other on the streets of London, finally converge. The fact that connecting people is also Clarissa’s stated goal in hosting her party: “and she felt if only they could be brought together; so she did it. And it was an offering; to combine, to create” (134), provides an indication within the story that points towards the relevance of connection during the party. Adding to all this the many character perspectives present during the event makes this scene a fertile ground for investigating both multiperspectivity and epiphany. The analysis of focalization will therefore cover the whole duration of the party, from page 181 to the end of the novel at 213.

What is most striking about the focalization during Clarissa's party is that the scene has the highest number of different delegated focalizers compared to any other passage. There are eight characters as delegated focalizers in total. Considering the ambiguity of several passages, there might also be a non-delegated focalizer.

The whole passage can be roughly divided into two parts. In the first part, there are a lot of fast-paced changes between focalizers that are little more than side characters, like the housing staff or some of the guests. During the first part, there are also more instances of very short focalization by a character, with Jenny or Ellie being delegated focalizer for a mere three lines. When the second part begins is difficult to ascertain, but gradually, there is an increasing tendency for one of the main characters, like Peter or Clarissa, to be delegated focalizers.

The non-delegated focalizer is very difficult to locate. There are two cases where it is unclear if the story is viewed from the perspective of the non-delegated focalizer or from a delegated focalizer, whose presence is merely revealed later. These cases are the non-delegated focalizer on page 182, whose perspective might already be Peter Walsh's, as well as the non-delegated focalizer on page 188. Something similar happens on page 197, where the delegated focalizer, Sally, is only revealed after thirty-eight lines – more than two thirds of the total focalization. The detailed characterization of Lady Bruton might be delivered from a neutral position or heavily influenced by Sally's perception.

This raises the question if it is at all appropriate to locate a non-delegated focalizer here. The focalization can be attributed to Sally, but only retrospectively. The reader, coming across this passage, would probably assume the voice to be a neutral one, before gradually realizing that it belongs to Sally. These perceived gradual shifts in focalization between a non-delegated and a delegated focalizer showcase the difficulty to discuss focalization based on the text alone. The process of mediation and the creative interpretation by the reader play an important role for focalization.

As for interpreting Clarissa's party in the light of these findings, there is certain evidence of shared perception taking place. The very structure of the focalization makes it difficult to ascertain definitive character perspectives to some thoughts and feelings. As a result, the multitude of impressions and feelings at the party is

presented in a kaleidoscopic fashion, as if thoughts started in one mind were finished in another. These individual experiences of the event create a coherent picture of the event, as if it was presented through one unified mind. The only exception here seems to be Clarissa herself, whose initial concern is that her party would be a failure.

At first she seems to overcome the anxiety concerning her party when Mr Lyon pushes back the curtain (186), only to be upset again by the news of Septimus' death. This is then followed by Clarissa's struggle with the death of this man she didn't know, and her subsequent epiphany. As an almost immediate reaction, she very vividly imagines the death of Septimus: "Up had flashed the ground; through him, blundering, bruising, went the rusty spikes" (202). Relevant here is Clarissa's attempt to share and relive Septimus' last moments. Whether the moment is truly shared is questionable since although she is rather accurately describing the physical details, she ascribes to Septimus a certain content with his own death, which does not correlate with Septimus' actual experience. Nevertheless, Clarissa makes some noteworthy observations, describing death as "an attempt to communicate" in the face of the "impossibility of reaching the centre" (202). This imagery correlates very well with the overarching themes of connection and perceiving the whole in the four novels.

The connection that Clarissa feels towards the unknown Septimus is not arbitrary. The whole structure of the novel seems to be mostly centred around their perspectives. *Mrs. Dalloway* is mainly the story of Clarissa and Septimus. Throughout the novel, their gazes cross when they are looking at the prime minister's car, the airplane, or listening to the bells. Even though they react very differently to all these stimuli, there is a certain element of shared perception here, underscored by the accompanying changes in character focalization. The novel reaches its logical conclusion when the threads of their plotlines finally merge and prompt Clarissa, during her party, her brave attempt in connecting, to have her epiphany.

During her epiphany, Clarissa seems to go through a rather characteristic progression. First, after imagining Septimus' last moments, she remembers how "they would grow old", thinking about herself and her friends. This contemplation of her own ephemerality is after some time followed by an idea she had described

earlier, how she would survive “in the streets of London, on the ebb and flow of things” (9), this time expressed as Clarissa seeing “something of her own” (203) in the sky above Westminster. This again betrays Clarissa’s apparent understanding of the ever-connected nature of her reality. The lady in the opposite window, looking back, seems to confirm her impressions. Eventually, possibly out of the understanding provided by this moment, she is reminded of the value she herself puts into life, describing it as “all this going on” (204), and is able to resume her participation in the party.

What happens to Clarissa during this epiphany seems to match a past idea of hers that is at one point remembered by Peter Walsh.

“Odd affinities she had with people she had never spoken to, some woman in the street, some man behind a counter – even trees, or barns. It ended in a transcendental theory which, with her horror of death, allowed her to believe, or say that she believed (for all her scepticisms), that since our apparitions, the part of us which appears, are so momentary compared with the other, the unseen part of us, which spreads wide, the unseen might survive, be recovered somehow attached to this person or that, or even haunting places, after death. Perhaps – perhaps” (167).

The theme of connection, fear of death, and ultimately a kind of solace found in the believe that she could survive as part of something greater are all also present in Clarissa’s epiphany during the party. An epiphany that might also be facilitated by her imagines sharing of Septimus’ death, whose perspectives had run parallel to hers throughout the whole novel.

### 8.5. *To the Lighthouse* – Mrs Ramsay’s Epiphany

*To the Lighthouse* is an intradiegetic polyperspectival text. Most of the narration is presented via delegated focalizers who heavily influence the presentation of the action and, over longer stretches of text, mostly limit themselves to focusing on their own invisible thought processes.

Mrs Ramsay has her epiphanic moment at dusk, when the titular lighthouse is lit up for the evening. The build-up for her epiphany, the moment, or, in this case, probably moments, takes up most of chapter eleven in the section “The Window”. Therefore, the investigated passage will comprise of the whole chapter (*Lighthouse* 85 – 89).

Considering Mrs Ramsay’s great ability for connection and her resulting affinity to Moments of Being and experiencing the world as whole, there are several other scenes that would lend themselves to investigation. The dinner and Mrs Ramsay’s subsequent joy at her creation might also have been a possible choice. This scene, however, seems to offer central insights into Mrs Ramsay’s experience of the world and since it prominently features the lighthouse as well, it can be assumed to be a key moment of the novel. The length of the perspective analysis results rather naturally from the clear borders of the scene within the narrative and the structural fencing provided by the beginning and end of the chapter.

The main focalizer of this chapter is most definitely Mrs Ramsay, as she fulfils this role in 108 out of the 137 lines. The rest of the time is taken up by Mr Ramsay and three short instances where a non-delegated focalizer takes over. This non-delegated focalizer seems to be the most interesting aspect of this passage, since they are the only thing that separates what would otherwise be a prolonged inner monologue by Mrs Ramsay. The presence of this non-delegated focalizer is not very obvious and could, also owing to the brevity of their appearance, easily be missed.

What betrays the existence of this non-delegated focalizer is their knowledge of things that are directly stated to be concealed from Mrs Ramsay. The non-delegated focalizer describes Mrs Ramsay’s looks and actions, which directly contradict what Mrs Ramsay experiences in her own focalization. At one point, she even stiffens and purses her lips “without being aware of it” (*Lighthouse* 87). This indicates the impossibility of Mrs Ramsay being the focalizer here, as she would not be able to comment on things outside of her knowledge. A non-delegated focalizer, however, can focalize on both Mrs Ramsay’s visible facial features as well as on her invisible lack of knowledge of her pursing her lips.



The non-delegated focalizer's role of breaking up Mrs Ramsay's thoughts is then twice adopted by Mr Ramsay in two parts that are longer than the non-delegated focalizer's, but still notably shorter than Mrs Ramsay's focalization.

The analysis of the perspectives in this scene at first seems to contradict most of the assumptions that have been established so far. If there were a link between shared perception, Moments of Being, and epiphanies, then why would one of Mrs Ramsay's most significant moments in *To the Lighthouse* result from a situation where she finds herself, for the most part, alone?

But in the particular character of this loneliness lies the answer to this question. Alone in the evening, Mrs Ramsay feels "all the being and the doing (...) evaporated" (85) and experiences her self as something which is detached from her immediate surroundings. This detachment of hers is emphasized by the sudden change in focalization to the non-delegated focalizer which puts her actions ("although she continued to knit") (85) and her thoughts ("this self having shed its attachments") (85) into sharp contrast. Lost in thought, she contemplates the problem of connection and how people are "unfathomably deep" (85) and will therefore never be fully known to each other. While she is enjoying the solitude of her own thoughts, there is a second instance of non-delegated focalization before Mrs Ramsay glances up at the lighthouse beam for the first time.

Looking at the light, she contemplates how one "could not help attaching oneself to what one saw" and how she often "became the thing she looked at – that light for example" (86). Already, Mrs Ramsay is so detached from her own self, that she finds it easy to associate herself with the world around her. The searching, almost looking light of the lighthouse adds its own significance to the scene. Mrs Ramsay, identifying with the light as much as with herself would then be looking at herself through the lighthouse beam. This adds an element of multiperspectivity to the scene, a fact which is, if not directly expressed through focalization, strongly implied.

Mrs Ramsay then seems to become aware of the intensity of the moment she is experiencing and, as if shying away from it, exclaims "We are in the hands of the Lord" (86), which instantly annoys her. But she manages to resume the experience by looking at the next stroke of the lighthouse which "seemed to her like her own eyes meeting her own eyes" (86). She begins to experience feelings

of unity and connection but is again distracted by the unwelcome words she uttered before. Contemplating on why these words would come to her, she arrives at a state of world-weariness and laments how “No happiness lasted” (87).

The focalization changes one last time to the non-delegated focalizer and then to Mr Ramsay before Mrs Ramsay looks at the lighthouse beam for the third time. This time, she is flooded with “waves of pure delight” (89) which prompt her to say: “It is enough! It is enough!” (89).

Assuming this last experience as the high point of her moment, as the epiphany that allows her to realize how she had known “exquisite happiness” (89), it is of interest to examine how she has arrived there. At the beginning of the scene, Mrs Ramsay is starting to feel at one with the world around her and especially identifies with the lighthouse. This relationship could be interpreted as an implied instance of shared perception. The non-delegated focalizer emphasizes her detachment from the physical reality around her. After being distracted twice, and, as a result, contemplating evanescence, Mrs Ramsay finally has her epiphanic moment which is again triggered by the linking of her gaze and that of the lighthouse beam.

The two instances of focalization by Mr Ramsay seem to contribute little to his wife’s experience except adding a second point of view on her as the visibly focalized. However, it is noteworthy that while Mrs Ramsay is lost in thoughts, he experiences her as unapproachable. This changes after Mrs Ramsay has had her epiphany and is able to “give him of her own free will what she knew he would never ask” (89). This last part hints at the possibility that Mrs Ramsay’s epiphany did not merely impart some form of deeper understanding, but also has direct consequences on her actions.

## 8.6. *To the Lighthouse* – Lily Briscoe’s Epiphany

Lily Briscoe has her vision at the very end of *To the Lighthouse*. It is the culmination of her personal and artistic development as well as of the novel as a whole and therefore a fitting choice for the second analysis in the novel. The epiphanic moment itself seems to be limited to the last page (*Lighthouse* 281),

but the relevant instances of multiperspectivity are much more difficult to pinpoint. Almost all of the third part of the novel takes place during the boating party's voyage to the lighthouse. The juxtaposition of the characters remaining on the island and those going to the lighthouse naturally creates an opposition of perspectives. It would therefore be possible to analyse the focalization of the entire "The Lighthouse" part. But since the boating party does not actually leave until the beginning of chapter three, the analysis of focalization will span from there to the end of the novel (212 – 281).

The structure of "The Lighthouse" is rather asymmetrical when it comes to character perspectives. It can be roughly divided into two locales: The lawn in front of the house and the sailing boat. The only character focalizer at the house is Lily Briscoe. On the boat, the focalization repeatedly changes between Cam, James, and Mr Ramsay. Despite this, when comparing the lines for each locale, they seem to even out rather closely, with 1142 lines for the house and 1092 lines for the sailing boat. The division between sailing boat and the lawn is also consistent with the individual chapters. Each new chapter changes the place of the action.

Since she is almost the only focalizer during her chapters, Lily remains the main focalizer during this analysis. For the most part, she seems to focalize on her own invisible thoughts, her visible picture, Mr Carmichael, and the sailing boat. There is just one instance which is marked as being focalized by a non-delegated focalizer (121), although the only reason for this would be that the thoughts presented do not sound like Lily's own voice. Given the limited knowledge of Lily's full personality and how she would describe herself, this assessment remains, however, questionable.

On the boat, there are some instances of focalization that also seem worthy of discussion, namely the passages where, in the analysis, both Cam and James have been marked as focalizers. It is possible to assign these passages to a non-delegated focalizer who has access to both the invisible focalized of Cam's thoughts and of James' thoughts. There is, however, a very clear focus on the idea that they are, indeed, sharing these same thoughts during this moment. Lines like "James thought, and Cam thought" (220) and "their father, they knew" (220) seem to show, in their repetition of the description of shared knowledge,

that it might indeed be more accurate to define both Cam and James as focalizers here. Regardless of the classification concerning focalization, there are clear borders as to when the siblings seem to share their thoughts and impressions and when they are separated. These borders are mostly defined by the use of pronouns, allocating the thoughts to either both or one of them.

Mr Ramsay's perspective is rather under-represented. He only appears as delegated focalizer in three instances during chapter four. There are, however, attempts by Cam and James to describe their father's thoughts. But these attempts are overtly indicated to be mere speculation, for example: "he might be thinking, We perished, each alone, or he might be thinking, I have reached it. I have found it, but he said nothing" (279).

Overall, the perspective structure is dominated by the dichotomy of the island and the boat. There are several instances where either of them is the visible focalized from one of the perspectives on the other side. Other peculiarities are the contrast of Lily's singular perspective during her chapters compared with the three character-voices on the boat and the possibly shared role of the delegated focalizer by Cam and James.

Surprisingly, the most remarkable finding of this analysis has little to do with Lily Briscoe, even though it is her who experiences the epiphany. The fact that Cam and James are being delegated focalizers at the same time reveals much about the nature of their connection. What these instances of focalization show is that the siblings do indeed share the same thoughts for a while. This community of feeling is something which other characters, most notably Lily Briscoe, aspire to. And when it does happen, there are often not enough perspectives involved to conclusively categorize the experience as mutual, leaving room for the possibility of the connection being purely imagined. With Cam and James, however, the focalization highlights the mutuality of their thoughts.

Another hint at the shared nature of their feelings is their pact to resist the tyranny of their father. It is not only mentioned during their shared focalization "they vowed (...) to resist tyranny to the death" (220), but also during each of their individual perspectives. James thinks how "the compact would be left to him to carry out" (227) and Cam reminds herself how they "must fight tyranny to the death" (227). In general, it seems that what unites the siblings in their thoughts is the resistance

against their father and their shared views of him. As long as they are both focusing on Mr Ramsay, their feelings, which are their feelings towards him, remain similar. But when they are distracted or starting to develop a more positive attitude towards their father, they cease to be joint focalizers. This happens, for example, during the first switch in perspective on page 223. Cam becomes the sole focalizer at the very moment she starts to feel proud of her father. Since both of them develop a more positive attitude towards Mr Ramsay over the course of the trip, it is therefore not surprising that the longest instance of their joint focalization happens already in chapter four. This might also be the reason why this intimate connection between Cam and James while looking at their father does not seem to lead to a significant moment or epiphany, besides a deepened and diversified understanding of Mr Ramsay and their relationship towards him.

Lily, however, does experience an epiphany, as she states herself how she has found her "vision" (281) and is able to finish her painting. It seems that in Lily's mind, Mr Carmichael plays an important role in achieving this final moment. Throughout her focalization, Lily restrains herself from talking to Mr Carmichael but imagines that he is fundamentally sharing the thoughts she is having at the moment: "A curious notion came to her that he did after all hear the things she could say" (242). At the end, Lily is convinced that "they had been thinking the same things" (280). If she was right, this would present a rather clear case of shared perception leading to an epiphany. However, Mr Carmichael never functions as a focalizer during the whole passage. Since only Lily's thoughts on the matter are presented, there is no way of knowing if Mr Carmichael did indeed share her viewpoints or if Lily merely imagined him to do so.

This lack of evidence becomes noticeable when compared to James' and Cam's connection. They arguably even shared their roles as focalizers. Yet, Lily and Mr Carmichael's relation can still be interpreted in two ways. The positive spin would be that James' and Cam's focalization is sufficient to show that interpersonal connection is possible to such a degree, and one can therefore rightfully assume that the same happens between Lily and Mr Carmichael. The lack of focalization by Mr Carmichael, on the other hand, is a significant pointer in the direction of Lily merely imagining things.

This is, however, not the only imagined shared perspective which Lily might be taking during this scene. While painting on the lawn, she reminisces several events in the past and relates them to her relationship with the late Mrs Ramsay. In doing so, she almost enters into a dialogue with Mrs Ramsay in her thoughts: “She imagined herself telling it to Mrs Ramsay” (153). These interactions seem to help her come to terms with Mr Ramsay’s influence, and lack thereof, on her own life and that of others, such as Paul and Minta. But they might also constitute an acquisition, or a sharing, of Mrs Ramsay’s perspective, or at least of what Lily imagines it to be. Interestingly, this is not restricted to Mrs Ramsay. At one point, Lily sees Mrs Ramsay through William’s eyes: “She saw, through William’s eyes, the shape of a woman” (239).

But the gazes that have the most influence on the whole experience for Lily seem to be the ones that are exchanged between the island and the boat. She repeatedly walks to the edge of the lawn to look out at the boat (219, 246, 230). Likewise, Mr Ramsay and Cam also look back at the island (224). An added tension to this relation are Lily’s feelings towards Mr Ramsay, with whom she desperately wishes to connect, overcoming her initial reluctance to indulge his pleas for sympathy (273).

It might be that it is this intersection of looks and mutual awareness, which is reinforced by the strict geographical separation during the individual chapters, plus the additional, possibly imagined viewpoints of Mr Carmichael or Mrs Ramsay, that lead to Lily Briscoe’s final vision. Especially since the arrival of Mr Ramsay at the lighthouse is indeed witnessed by both Lily and Mr Carmichael, who, at least this once, shares Lily’s assessment: “They will have landed” (280).

## 8.7. *The Waves* – Dinner with Percival

According to Rogge-Wiest, *The Waves* is an intradiegetic multiperspectival text (236). The character’s thoughts and feelings are presented with a minimum of influence by the narrator. The only things that give away the presence of an instance above the characters are the “(character) said” inquit-formulas. They also help, in contrast to the previous novels, to identify the individual speakers,

since each individual stretch of focalization by a character is clearly indicated. There is also no other form of focalization present, except for during the interludes.

As discussed in the chapter on connection in *The Waves*, the characters of the novel are torn between their need for both unity and individual identity. This is also reflected in the focalization. It could be argued that there is no such thing as a visible focalized in *The Waves*. The characters' thoughts seem so far removed from the actual fictional universe and their presentation of it is so diluted and tinted that even the moments where something external is being focalized, it is difficult to classify it as the visible focalized. This impression fits quite well into the prevailing theme of a dichotomy between union and identity.

The information about things outside of the character's minds is rather rudimentary and it is never quite clear what is actually happening. Despite the frequent use of "(character) said", what is represented mostly does not seem to be actual words, or even thoughts, but instead a representation of the larger structure of the character's emotions. This is enhanced by the uncertain time frame of these thoughts, which seems to create an illusion of simultaneity (Rogge-Wiest 236).

Possibly owed to the characters' inherent affinity towards connection as well as their often introspective thoughts, *The Waves* is littered with significant moments that seem to present the character's with some sort of insight. The greatest manifestations of these moments, however, are the two dinner scenes. One together with Percival, the other, years later, after his death. Both of these scenes have at their heart an epiphany that appears to be shared by all of the six main characters.

The first scene that is being analysed is therefore the whole chapter of the first dinner scene, covering the pages 62 to 81. The actual epiphany presumably begins with the arrival of Percival on page 68 and ends with the closing of the chapter.

The focalization in the chapter starts with a long part of delegated focalization by Bernard. This is by far the longest bit of continued focalization by a character during this chapter. Had the borders of the scene been drawn narrower, there

would have been a possibility to exclude this focalization by Bernard from the analysis since it takes place on Bernard's way to their meeting place. The actual dinner starts with Neville's focalization.

From there on out, there are a few instances of character focalization of comparably medium length by Neville, Louis, Susan, Rhoda, and Jinny. But even these slightly longer parts are already broken up by very short snippets of focalization from time to time. The following pages, 69 and 70, feature very short instances of character focalization, sometimes only lasting for a single line. The longest delegated focalization is assumed by Bernard, which covers a mere eight lines before Jinny takes over.

After this passage of fast-paced changes in focalization, a series of longer segments follows until page 75. From there on out, there is no discernible pattern in the length of focalization. There are many shorter instances, though none of them are below two lines, and the longer instances are also not as long as most of the ones before were. It is notable, however, that Bernard tends to be the focalizer for both longer stretches of focalization and to be the delegated focalizer more often than the others, even without counting his initial focalization of 170 lines.

These patterns of focalization changes reflect what is happening in the story. They seem to correspond with the emotional state of the characters and the progress of their epiphany. The long focalization through Bernard on his way to the restaurant can serve as a backdrop to what is to follow. The multitude of voices present at the table contrast his long, singular one. Likewise, Bernard is preparing himself in his thoughts for the meeting with the others.

The chapter then continues with some of the characters waiting while others are still arriving. The instances of focalization here have about paragraph length. What is interesting, however, is the focalized. Although it can be argued that the focalized in *The Waves* is always invisible, due to the extremely personal and heavily commented perspectives, during this part there is a great focus on the other characters. Each delegated focalizer, be it Neville, Louis, or Susan, is occupied looking at the other characters, either sitting with them at the table or just arriving. In their thoughts, they compare themselves to the others, like Susan describing her and Rhoda's different reaction to Jinny's arrival "Rhoda sees her



with surprise (...) And I feel her derision steal around me” (67). This part is characterised by their attempts to describe and categorize the others in order to assert their own identity.

When Percival finally arrives on page 68, he is immediately seen by Rhoda, Neville, Jinny, and Bernard. The frequency of the focalization changes increases. Before that, Bernard predicts what is about to happen: “We who have been separated (...) now come nearer” (68). After the initial trigger of Percival’s appearance, on whom they are all focused, who they are all looking at, the characters present, in a kaleidoscope of voices, images from their childhood and their lives up to that point. They seem to attempt to lay down the essence of their experiences in front of the others. Bernard describes the process like this:

“We have come together (...) to make one thing, not enduring – for what endures? – but seen by many eyes simultaneously. There is a red carnation in a vase. A single flower as we sat here waiting, but now a seven-sided flower, many-petalled, red, puce, purple-shaded, stiff with silver-tinted leaves – a whole flower to which every eye brings its own contribution” (70).

It is Percival that brings them together, but the real communion is reached by this sharing of experiences. After the initial shock of meeting, they now look upon all their lives together and individuality dissolves into communion. The fast paced-changes in focalization signify both the simultaneity of their perspectives and the shared nature of the event.

Over the following pages, this conversation seems to intensify. The characters are again talking about their lives and about each other, but there is one critical difference. They are now talking directly to each other. Before the arrival of Percival, they had talked about each other using the third person, now it is the second: ““But when you stand in the door,’ said Neville, ‘you inflict stillness”” (71). Until they finally realise, just before Percival leaves, that, as Rhoda says, “one thing melts into another”, that their “senses have widened” (75), as Jinny puts it, or in Louis’ words, that “All are merged into one turning wheel of single sound” (75).

The experience continues, even as Percival leaves. Rhoda, Louis, Jinny, and Neville also touch upon the subject of ephemerality. While Rhoda and Louis focus on death: “Death is woven in with the violets” (78), Jinny and Neville seem to

have a more positive approach: “We have scarcely broken into our hoard” (78). It is unclear whether this reflects personal differences that are again beginning to assert themselves, or if the issue is being brought up by Rhoda and Louis, and then resolved by Jinny and Neville.

Before their epiphany ends, before “the chain breaks” (79), all voices again come together in quick succession to describe what this moment entails. They speak of forests and far countries, happiness, love, hatred, weekdays and what is to come (80). It seems that during this shared moment, during this shared epiphany, some greater knowledge of connection is imparted upon them. They perceive themselves, the world, and everything in it as a whole that is contained within this one moment. Even more fundamental, however, seems to be Bernard’s insight following this: “We are creators” (81). He acknowledges that this epiphany did not simply come over them but was created by their joint effort. Sparked by Percival, by them looking together, but brought to fruition by their shared experience of life.

## 8.8. *The Waves* – Creating an Epiphany

The second dinner scene is both structurally and substantively similar to the first one. It depicts a meeting of the six main characters and has a shared epiphany at its centre. As with the first part, the perspective structure of the whole chapter will be analysed. It therefore does not only include the perspectives leading up to the epiphany which happens around page 129, but also the aftermath of it. The pages covered in the analysis are therefore the pages 119 to 131.

The first delegated focalizer of this chapter is again Bernard, although the duration of his focalization is considerably shorter this time. Bernard is also again the only one whose focalization takes place before the actual meeting. Only when Neville takes over as the delegated focalizer can all other characters be presumed to be present as well.

What follows are longer stretches of focalization by each of the six main characters. All of them function as focalizers once and Bernard and Rhoda even a second time. After the last longer focalization by Bernard, where he reflects on the state of mind of the others and starts to describe the present moment, the

rest of the characters chime in in quick succession. Over the next pages, the individual perspectives rarely exceed a single digit number of lines. When they do, the focalizer is mostly either Rhoda or Bernard.

At the end of the chapter, there is again a longer stretch of focalization by Bernard. This last instance of focalization is also relevant because the focalizer does not change until the end of the novel from this point on. The last chapter following this one only features Bernard as the delegated focalizer, and the end of this chapter can be viewed as a method of linking the two.

The focalization through Bernard at the start of the chapter indicates a certain awareness of what is about to happen. Bernard knows that when he joins his friends “another arrangement will form, another pattern” (119) and tries to prepare for the “shock of meeting” (119). Just like before the previous dinner, it is Bernard who sets the stage for it. He is arriving, coming out of his own individual life, to merge with the others. But at the same time he fears the intensity of the experience.

This latent understanding of the process they are about to undergo, and this underlying knowledge of the whole are not limited to Bernard. Shortly before the shared moment, Rhoda describes how there are times “when the walls of the mind grow thin; when nothing is unabsorbed, and (she) could fancy that we might blow so vast a bubble that the sun might set and rise in it” (127). It seems that in their continued struggle between individuality and unity, the characters of *The Waves* have gained a certain understanding of the whole, even outside of single epiphanies.

The following, slightly longer, stretches of focalization by all the characters depict them presenting their lives so far. They talk about how they differ from each other and how they themselves have changed since the last meeting. In contrast to the last dinner, however, they employ the second person right from the start when addressing each other, instead of using it only further on during the experience. This indicates a certain growth in their views of each other. As with Bernard’s apprehension at the beginning, they do not need to start this common experience from scratch but are able to build on their past shared experiences. Despite this, these initial longer focalizations, especially those of Neville and Susan, are characterised by an almost antagonistic need for interpersonal comparison.

After all the characters have presented their lives to the others, it is Bernard who seems to capture the moment. He describes how they have all managed to overcome their “egotism” (127) and how “Anxiety is at rest” (127). This seems to be the instance where the perspectives truly start to merge. Because what follows is a quick succession of all the characters describing this very moment. The text reads as if it was uttered by a single mind. Rhoda, for instance, continues a thought started by Jinny: “As if the miracle had happened,’ said Jinny, ‘and life were stayed here and now.’ ‘And,’ said Rhoda, ‘we had no more to live’” (127).

Following this, the instances of focalization become longer again. Ephemerality is a central theme in the character’s thoughts here. Rhoda imagines Neville to sigh because of Percival’s death, Bernard admits that his “conviction of immortality” (128) has gone, and Louis invokes God to keep them safe while they sleep (129). The frequency of focalization increases again during what can be classified as the central epiphany of the scene. It is characterised by two emotions. First, an experience of unity and the whole, and second, a feeling of having triumphed over evanescence. To Rhoda, “The structure is now visible” (129) and Bernard beholds a “many-sided substance” (129). The final facet of the experience is added by Bernard who acknowledges their combined creative effort that lead to this epiphany. He says, “Let us behold what we have made” (129).

From there on out, the instances of focalization are again mostly longer than single lines. Death is still addressed, but the tone is now different. “I cannot hear death tonight” (130), says Louis. The effect of the experience is slowly wearing off and being replaced with a feeling of depletion. Neville says that they are in “a passive and exhausted frame of mind” (131), which Jinny describes as being “After (their) fire” (132). This exhaustion, like Bernard’s apprehension at the beginning, is probably owed to the overall intensity of the experience. With the fading of their union, their own individuality also begins to assert itself again. To Louis they are forever “divided” (130) and “Rippling and questioning begin. What do I think of you – What do you think of me? Who are you? Who am I?” (131).

The epiphany during the second dinner scene is very similar to the first one in both focalization and themes. There are, however, a few notable differences. All of the characters seem to be able to draw on their previous experience of shared perception. They appear apprehensive before the epiphany and aware that, as it

ends, their union will also again be severed. It is possible that this awareness of the coming epiphany is a shared experience in itself. It allows them to truly create this moment together in a united effort. A Moment of Being that lets them experience the whole, and to triumph “over the abysses of space” (129).

## 9. What does it mean then, what can it all mean?

So far, the novels have been analysed in isolation. In service to a deeper understanding of multiperspectivity and epiphany in Woolf’s texts, the following chapter presents an attempt to combine the findings of the previous analyses.

Looking at the four novels chronologically the use of non-delegated focalization decreases. This is both reflected in the number of lines during the analyses as well as in the general impression that is conveyed when reading the novels. *Jacob’s Room* features the most frequent instances of non-delegated focalization. *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* are somewhere in the middle. Both feature passages that are often not clearly identifiable as being focalized by a non-delegated focalizer. *The Waves* finally limits the use of the non-delegated focalizer completely to the frame narrative.

At the first glance, it also seems that the frequency of changes in focalization increases throughout the novels. *Jacob’s Room* does not have many different character perspectives while *The Waves* often features multiple instances of focalization that merely last a few lines of text in a row. However, a close analysis of the passages examined in this paper does not support this assumption. Counting the total number of lines in each passage and dividing it by the number of individual instances of focalization does not result in a clear and gradual decline in the frequency of focalization changes from *Jacob’s Room* to *The Waves*. But this is not to say that such a grading cannot exist. The method employed in this paper merely seems insufficient to answer this particular question conclusively. Since the passages were already pre-selected for their peculiarities concerning focalization, they probably cannot be seen as representative for the novels as a whole. The varying lengths of the passages pose an additional problem. While it remains likely that there is an increase in the

frequency of focalization over the course of the four novels, a more comprehensive analysis is needed to make a conclusive statement on the matter.

There is, however, an increase in the number of different characters that function as delegated focalizers. In *Jacob's Room*, the most prominent delegated focalizer is the narrator character, who is comparatively rarely replaced by other delegated focalizers such as Jacob or Bonamy. In *Mrs. Dalloway* there is a balance between the two main characters, Clarissa and Septimus, as well as longer stretches of focalization by others such as Peter and Rezia, and even shorter parts by minor characters. *To the Lighthouse* takes a similar approach but the number of characters who take over the role of focalizer for more than a few lines increases in comparison to *Mrs. Dalloway*. *The Waves* features fewer overall characters, but the focalization is more or less equally divided between them.

Overall, there is an increase in different character perspectives over the course of the four novels. The individual focalizers are also increasingly fleshed out and given more space to present their points of view.

All of the things mentioned so far correlate with an increased ability of the characters to connect both to each other and the whole. As a result, there is an increased likelihood of significant moments and an increased number of successful epiphanies.

The importance of human connection is already central in *Jacob's Room*, even though the novel as a whole presents a rather negative outlook on the matter. The narrator-character makes attempts at connecting with Jacob, but the lack of true multiperspectivity and the scarcity of different character perspectives prevent any chances for an epiphany. It is interesting that the first of the four novels has a significant focus on connection while at the same time featuring such a pessimistic depiction of it. In the other three novels, human connection never comes easy and several characters like Lily in *To the Lighthouse* (70) or Neville in *The Waves* (121) openly lament the impossibility of truly knowing other people. But this experience is always contrasted with increasingly successful attempts at connection and moments of unity.

Peter Walsh's moment in *Mrs. Dalloway* imbues him with an undefined understanding of something. It is not a clear case of an epiphany and only loosely

connected to the remarkable use of focalization changes in his conversation with Clarissa. Her epiphany on the other hand feeds off the multiperspectival structure of the whole novel. During the story, share their points of view on several events happening in London. The coming together of all these experiences at Clarissa's party is what enables her to carry on and find solace in the thought that she would survive as being a part of the whole. Hers is probably the first real epiphany analysed here as it results from shared viewpoints and intimacy; and leads to a realization of unity that impacts Clarissa's further views and actions.

*To the Lighthouse* further elaborates on the issue of human connection mainly by posing the additional question if human connection, even if it appears possible or successful, can ever be real or is only ever imagined. This problem of conjecture was already openly addressed in *Jacob's Room*, where the narrator-character guesses what characters might be thinking (138) and in *Mrs. Dalloway*, when Clarissa was wrong in her assumptions about Septimus' death. *To the Lighthouse*, however, offers two contrasting interpretations. The first one, supported by Cam's and James' joint focalization is that human connection is, after all, truly possible in the sharing of a certain point of view. The second one, Lily's epiphany, seems to suggest that it does not matter if the connection is real or imagined in order to lead to a successful epiphany. Additionally, there is Mrs Ramsay's epiphany where the implication of multiperspectivity in her split perspective on herself and the whole, observed through herself and the lighthouse beam, is enough to trigger an epiphany. Altogether, *To the Lighthouse* puts the idea of a strict connection between multiperspectivity and connection into question, but at the same time reinforces the importance of intimacy and shared perspectives, be they real or imagined.

The unique perspective structure of *The Waves* combined with the frequent musings on and insights into the whole by the characters again bolster the claim that there has to be a link between the structure of focalization and the likelihood of successful epiphanies. *The Waves* takes it even further by having its characters be increasingly aware of the connection between shared perspectives, the pattern behind appearances, and the power of shared moments to offer solace in the face of ephemerality. The moment during the second dinner thus becomes an almost deliberate attempt at experiencing an epiphany. While

the characters in all of the novels are aware of the problem of connection, the characters in *The Waves* are able to achieve what Lily suspected to be possible when she felt “that if they both got up, here, now on the lawn, and demanded an explanation, why was it so short, why was it so inexplicable, said it with violence, as two fully equipped human beings from whom nothing should be hid might speak, then beauty would roll itself up; the space would fill; those empty flourishes would form into shape” (*Lighthouse* 243).

So, additionally and corresponding to the evolution of the structure of focalization throughout the novels, there is also a change in the way the characters experience epiphanies. These monumental moments turn from something elusive and out of reach to a conscious, shared, and creative effort.

This paper has also provided an opportunity to highlight some of the shortcomings of current narratological terminology and its usefulness to describe focalization. The different systems of description and classification provided by Vitoux, Genette, Bal, and Nünning appear to be tailored to more traditional perspective structures, i.e. with less frequent changes in focalization, or those that have focalization changes that correlate more clearly with the structure of the text, like changes between chapters.

When talking about Virginia Woolf, or other authors with similar modernist styles, such as Joyce, this terminology is not sufficient. Focalization changes on the sentence level, such as overlaps, disruptions, and rapid changes cannot be accounted for properly. These phenomena call for an analytic precision that cannot be provided by the given narratological tools. This is also due to the very nature of the stream of consciousness technique. Free indirect thought, which might be employed during the simulation of associative mental processes, i.e., the stream of consciousness (Fludernik 150), has, in the words of Leech and Short “a rather odd status in terms of truth claims and faithfulness. (It is) not claiming to be a reproduction of the original speech, but at the same time being more than a mere indirect rendering of the original” (qtd. in Rundquist 4). This can further muddy the distinction between delegated and non-delegated focalization.

However, to simply call for narrower and more exact definitions would fail to address the core issue. As Herman and Vervaeck pointed out when discussing



the final chapter of *Ulysses*, the classification of focalization depends very much on the context. A change in the length of the narrative unit under examination might lead to a change in the interpretation of focalization (3). What this further implies is that each reading of passages like these will result in different interpretations.

Especially in *Mrs. Dalloway*, there were focalizers that would only be revealed half a page later, highlighting the creative and interpretative effort required by the reader in order to determine the point of view presented at any given moment. In such cases it seems likely that the reader would gradually adjust their understanding of whose perspective is presented in the text. So, instead of more exact units of measurement, there appears to be a need to address the vagueness in focalization that results from both reader interpretation and a high frequency in focalization changes. The shorter the individual instances of focalization are, the less textual hints there may be to properly identify the focalizer. The reader is left to make inferences on the basis of the context and come up with their own conclusions.

An analysis of focalization would therefore have to address the reader's possible conclusions as well. These multiple possibilities of focalization should, however, are not to be confused with the possible worlds theory by Ryan which describes "a number of subworlds, created by the mental activity of the characters" (qtd. in Surkamp 113). In the cases discussed here, such as those on *Mrs. Dalloway*, the plurality of possibilities stems from different interpretations of the textual and narrative context. A comprehensive terminology would need to provide a way to address these inaccuracies, since the accuracy of determining individual focalizers seems likely to decrease with the length of the individual instances of focalization that are being analysed.

Considering the clear structure of *The Waves*, it seems that Woolf was aware of this issue, choosing to clearly indicate every focalizer in the novel. While this was certainly not the only reason for so distinctly indicating every voice in *The Waves*, it still serves as a reminder for how crucial the identification of different perspectives was to Woolf in her work. This increasing focus on perspective structure that is thus evident in the four novels places Woolf firmly in the centre of the modernist endeavour of a mimesis of perception. The importance of looking

in reaching her Moments of Being is continually explored in her novels and multiperspectivity is more than a stylistic choice. The changing focalizers are an expression of the modernist view of a subjective reality and are therefore crucial in representing the real world. The observer is both artistically creating and experiencing the world around them and is thus forming the unity of the whole. This is a process that Woolf both situated in the real world as well as recreated in her writing. It is therefore not surprising that Bernard, at the end of *The Waves*, and Woolf reach similar conclusions: "Let us behold what we have made" (*Waves* 129), for "we are the thing itself" (*Woolf Sketch* 72).

## 10. Conclusion

Over the course of the four novels, a co-evolution of focalization and the story can be observed. The characters become increasingly successful in experiencing epiphanies and significant moments that allow them to glimpse the whole and occasionally offer solace in the face of ephemerality. Accompanying this development is a noticeable decrease in focalization via a non-delegated focalizer. The amount of delegated focalization through characters within the story increases from *Jacob's Room* to *The Waves*. There is, however, no noticeable increase in the frequency of focalization changes. But this might be due to the limited nature of the analyses undertaken in this work.

The close analysis of the focalization structure of Woolf's novels has furthermore revealed a need for more sophisticated tools to describe focalization. In order to properly work on focalization in Woolf's texts, there needs to be a way to address mid-sentence changes, or interruptions in focalization. Additionally, there is a need for ways to properly address vagueness in focalization as well as the multiple ways such vague passages might be interpreted by the reader.

As far as the nature of epiphanies in the four novels is concerned, there is a certain development to be identified. The characters seem to be increasingly successful in achieving meaningful and insightful moments. In *Jacob's Room*, the epiphany, symbolised by Jacob, seems to be completely out of reach. In *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, the epiphany is a very personal experience that

is somehow rooted in connection and very much associated with looking. But the experiences of Mrs Dalloway and Lily Briscoe both betray misconceptions about the depth of their perceived connection to others. In *The Waves*, on the other hand, the clear perspective structure allows to classify the character's epiphanies as truly shared experiences.

All of these depictions of epiphanies are related to a shared experience, be it real or imaginary, or happen in connection to looking, and converging viewpoints. But they also demonstrate the difficulty of trying to define a universal step-by-step path for the characters to something that is ultimately a very subjective experience. It is in this area of tension, the subjective experience of unity, that Virginia Woolf's characters have their epiphanies and experience the whole.

## 11. References

### Primary Sources

- Woolf, Virginia. *Jacob's Room*. 1922. Ed. Suzanne Ratt. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007.
- . *Mrs. Dalloway*. 1925. Ed. Stella McNichol. London: Penguin Books, 2000.
- . *The Waves*. 1931. Ed. Deborah Parsons. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2000.
- . *To the Lighthouse*. 1927. Ed. Margaret Drabble. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.

### Secondary Sources

- Brombert, Victor. "Virginia Woolf – 'death is the enemy'" *Hudson Review*. 63/3 (2010): 429-444.
- Bromley, Amy. "Virginia Woolf's surrealist situation of the object" *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*. 85 (2014): 21-23.
- Brown, Paul Tolliver. „Relativity, quantum physics, and consciousness in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*" *Journal of Modern Literature*. 32/3 (2009): 39-62
- Beer, Gillian. *Virginia Woolf: The common ground*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1996.
- Briggs, Julia. "This moment I stand on: Woolf and the spaces of time" *Reading Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Julia Briggs. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2006.125-140.
- Carter, Mia. *Modernism and literature*. London: Routledge, 2013.
- Drabble, Margaret. Introduction. *To the Lighthouse*. By Virginia Woolf. New York: Oxford UP, 1999. xii-xxxi.
- Eyesteinsson, Ástráður, and Vivian Liska. *Modernism*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins Pub., 2007.
- Fludernik, Monika. *An introduction to narratology*. New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Fobes, Alexander S. "F. Scott Fitzgerald, Virginia Woolf, and the watch for spots of time" *F. Scott Fitzgerald Review*. 11 (2013): 80-98.
- Greer, Erin. "A many-sided substance: the philosophy of conversation in Woolf, Russel, and Kant" *Journal of Modern Literature*. 40/3 (2017): 1-17.
- Freedman, Ariela. *Death, men, and modernism. trauma and narrative in british fiction from Hardy to Woolf*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Hartner, Marcus. Narrative theory meets blending: multiperspectivity reconsidered. *REAL* 24 (2008): 181-93.
- Herman, Luc, and Bart Vervaeck. *Handbook of narrative analysis*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2005.
- Hinnov, Emily M. "'To give the moment whole': the nature of time and cosmic (comm)unity in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*" *Virginia Woolf and the natural world*. Ed. Czarnecki, Kristin, and Carrie Rohman. Clemson: Clemson UP, 2011. 208-213.
- Humm, Maggie. "Woolf and the visual" *A Companion to Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Jessica Schiff Berman. Chichester; Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2016. 291-304.
- Jameson, Fredric. *The political unconscious. narrative as socially symbolic act*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1981.

- Jeftic, Karolina. *Literatur und moderne Bilderfahrung: zur Cézanne-Rezeption in der Bloomsbury Group*. Paderborn: Schöningh and Fink, 2011.
- Koulouris, Theodore. "Jacques Derrida in Virginia Woolf: death, loss and mourning in Jacob's Room" *Pacific Coast Philology*. 46 (2011): 56-79.
- Levenson, Michael. *Modernism*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2011.
- Lewis, Pericles. Preface. *The Cambridge introduction to modernism*. By Lewis. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007.
- Liu, Yuexi. "Finding a voice through cinema: Virginia Woolf's 'Jacob's Room' and Evelyn Waugh's 'The Balance'" *English Studies*. 98/6 (2017): 608-623
- Mantex Information Design – Hogarth Press First Edition Book Jacket Designs. Mantex Information Design. 2016. 26.11.2019. <<https://mantex.co.uk/virginia-woolf-jacobs-room/>>.
- Marcus, Laura. *Virginia Woolf*. Tavistock: Northcote House. 2004.
- Mendes, Leonardo. "Death and contentment in Virginia Woolf's war novels" *Revista do Curso de Letra da UNIABEU*. 1/3 (2010): 38-45.
- Morgenstern, Barry. "The self-conscious narrator in Jacob's Room" *Modern Fiction Studies*. 18/3 (1972): 351-361.
- Neuhold, Birgit. *Measuring the sadness: Conrad, Joyce, Woolf and european epiphany*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2009.
- Nünning, Vera and Nünning, Ansgar. *Multiperspektivisches Erzählen: Zur Theorie und Geschichte der Perspektivenstruktur im englischen Roman des 18. Bis 20. Jahrhunderts*. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2000.
- Olk, Claudia. *Virginia Woolf and the aesthetics of vision*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014.
- Parsons, Deborah. Introduction. *The Waves*. By Virginia Woolf. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth, 2000. v-xvii.
- Rogge-Wiest, Gudrun. "Perspektivischer Realismus und darüber hinaus: Multiperspektivisches Erzählen und Perspektivenstruktur in *Jacob's Room*, *Mrs. Dalloway* und *The Waves* von Virginia Woolf" *Multiperspektivisches Erzählen: Zur Theorie und Geschichte der Perspektivenstruktur im englischen Roman des 18. bis 20. Jahrhunderts*. Ed. Vera Nünning and Ansgar Nünning. Trier: WVT, Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2000. 225-242.
- Rundquist, Eric. *Free indirect style in modernism: representation of consciousness*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2017.
- Scheck, Dominic. "Sundered Waters: isolated consciousnesses and ostensible communion in Woolf's narration" *Virginia Woolf and the natural world*. Ed. Czarnecki, Kristin, and Carrie Rohman. Clemson: Clemson UP, 2011. 208-213.
- Scholes, Robert. *In search of James Joyce*. Urbana, Illinois: U. of Illinois P., 1991.
- Schrimper, R. Michael. "The eye, the mind & the spirit: why 'the look of things' held a 'great power' over Virginia Woolf" *Journal of Modern Literature* 42/1 (2018): 32-48.
- Showalter, Elaine. Introduction. *Mrs. Dalloway*. By Virginia Woolf. London: Penguin Books, 2000. xi-xlvi.
- Sim, Lorraine. *Virginia Woolf: The patterns of ordinary experience*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2010.
- Stevanato, Savina. *Visuality and spatiality in Virginia Woolf's fiction*. Oxford: PeterLang, 2012.

- Surkamp, Carola. "Die Perspektivenstruktur narrativer Texte aus der Sicht der possible worlds theory: Zur literarischen Inszenierung der Pluralität subjektiver Wirklichkeitsmodelle." *Multiperspektivisches Erzählen: Zur Theorie und Geschichte der Perspektivenstruktur im englischen Roman des 18. Bis 20. Jahrhunderts*. Ed. Vera Nünning and Ansgar Nünning. Trier: WVT, Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2000. 111-132.
- Tanger, Marilyn. „Looking at The Waves through the symbol of the ring“. *VWQ* 4 (1974): 241-251.
- Toth, Naomi. "Disturbing epiphany: rereading Virginia Woolf's "moments of being" *Etudes Britanniques Contemporaines: Revue de la Société d'Etudes Anglaises Contemporaines*. 46 (2014): 1-26.
- Watt, Ian P. *The rise of the novel: studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1974.
- Webb, Caroline. "Life after death: the allegorical process of Mrs. Dalloway" *Modern Fiction Studies* 40/2 (1994): 279-298.
- Wenner, Claudia. *Moments of being: Die Psychologie des Augenblicks bei Virginia Woolf*. Frankfurt a. M.: Iberoamericana Vervuert. 1998.
- Whitworth, Michael. Introduction. *Modernism*. By Whitworth. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2007. 3-60.
- Williams, Melissa. *Life stand still here: Schopenhauerian transcendence in Mrs Dalloway, To the Lighthouse, and The Waves*. Claremont: ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2013.
- Woolf, Virginia, *A reflection of the other person: the letters of Virginia Woolf, Vol.4: 1929-31*, London: Hogarth Press, 1978.
- . "A Sketch of the Past." *Moments of being*. Ed. Jeanne Schulkind. London: Hogarth Press, 1985. 61-138.
- . *The diary of Virginia Woolf Vol.3: 1925-1930*. Ed. Anne Olivier Bell. London: Hogarth Press, 1980.
- . *The Essays of Virginia Woolf, Vol. 3: 1919-1924*. Ed. Andrew McNeillie. London: Hogarth Press, 1988.
- Zwerdling, Alex. "Jacob's Room: Woolf's satiric elegy" *ELH* 48/4 (1981): 894-913.

## A. Appendix

### A.1 Focalization Analysis

#### *Jacob's Room* - The Narrator Character's Failed Epiphany

Relevant use of MP: 55 – 57

Pages	Lines	Focalization	Focalizer	Hints/Comments	First/Last Word
<b>V</b>					
55	37	delegated	Narrator-Character	The narrator-character seems to comment on the other character's statements. „—what?“ (55), „And moments don't“ (55) Problem: Possible invisible focalized of f.i. Clara's thoughts. Might be conjecture by the NC.	I/love
56	5	delegated	Jacob	Text in brackets	I'm/coat
56	1	delegated/non-delegated	Narrator-Character/Jacob /non-delegated focalizer	Very unclear. Possibly not Jacob, because it would make the brackets before and after less meaningful	I/Beethoven
56	3	delegated	Jacob	Text in brackets	Bonamy /French men
56	2	delegated/non-delegated	Narrator-Character/Jacob /non-delegated focalizer	Very unclear. Possibly not Jacob, because it would make the brackets before and after less meaningful	I/Tennyson
56	3	delegated	Jacob	Text in brackets	The/ London
56	2	delegated/non-delegated	Narrator-Character/Jacob /non-delegated focalizer	Very unclear. Possibly not Jacob, because it would make the brackets before and after less meaningful	for/Saturday

56	1	delegated	Jacob	Text in brackets	What's/ Saturday
56	19	delegated	Narrator Character	Direct addresses: „Then consider“ (56), „Yet over him we hang vibrating“ (57)	Then/vi brating

*Jacob's Room* - No Epiphany at the end of *Jacob's Room*

Relevant use of MP: 131 (XIII) – 143 (XIV)

Pages	Lines	Focalization	Focalizer	Justification/Additional Information	First/ Last Word
<b>XIII</b>					
131	10	non-delegated	x	Might be Bonamy already, or the narrator-character, but there is no way to know	The/silent
132	32	delegated	Bonamy	„thought Bonamy“ „‘Urbane’ on the lips of Jacob had mysteriously all the shapeliness of a character which Bonamy thought“	He/blushed
132	1	delegated	Narrator-Character	„The sharpest knives never cut so deep“ The comment on Jacob's reaction hints at the narrator-character's presence. It is unlikely that Bonamy would compliment himself in such a way.	The/deep
132	8	delegated	Bonamy	Focalization of Bonamy's invisible thought paired with the narration following his physical movement away from Jacob	As/creature
133	1	delegated	Narrator-Character	„Not Clara Durrant“ Directly comments on Bonamy's thoughts. Bonamy does not have this information.	Not/Durrant
133	3	non-delegated	x	Might be Clara as delegated focalizer, but it's not really fleshed out.	The/Clara and



133	5	delegated	Narrator-Character	Switch possibly mid-sentence, seems to be the NC's summary of Mr Bowley	kind/back
133	9	non-delegated	x	focalization in quick succession of Clara and Mr Bowley's invisible focalized, without revealing much about their perspective.	Little/hair,
133	4	delegated	Narrator-Character	„which was a flight for Bowley“ Could again be a comment by the NC, mocking Bowley's dullness. Similar with „as everybody must“	which/must
133	12	non-delegated	x		but/come
133	1	delegated	Narrator-Character	„Oh, here was Mrs Cowley Johnson...“	Oh/Johns on...
134	35	non-delegated	x		And/tut!
135	2	delegated	Narrator-Character	NC commenting on Mr Bowley's words.	a/studs
135	27	non-delegated	x		Julia/table
136	1	delegated	Narrator-Character	„for she was pregnant – no doubt about it, Mother Stuart said“ The non-delegated focalizer would know about her pregnancy as a fact. But the fact that Mother Stuart seemingly says it might again point to non-delegated focalization.	for/said
136	19	non-delegated	x		recommending/laughing
136	4	delegated	Narrator-Character	Lack of knowledge of what Jacob, is drawing, of what makes him grind the pebble this emphatically	which/corner
136	61	non-delegated	x	„She meant Alceste“ – Seems like a comment by the NC, but why would they have a clearer idea of what Sandra meant than the non-delegated focalizer?	It/her

138	2	delegated	Narrator-Character	Mere Conjecture about Jacob's thoughts	But/Park
138	43	non-delegated	x		The/quietness
140	8	delegated	Narrator-Character	Uncertainty concerning the envy of the living, possibly personal comment on the looks of the politicians	which/history
140	128	non-delegated	x		Timmy/shoes

*Mrs. Dalloway* - Peter Walsh's Epiphany

Epiphany: 57

Relevant use of MP: 43-62

Pages	Lines	Focalization	Focalizer	Justification/Additional Information	First/Last Words
43	19	delegated	Clarissa	During the dialogue, the changes in focalization are rather overtly indicated via the respective invisible focalized	Heavens/Letter
44	8	delegated	Peter		And/blade
44	13	delegated	Clarissa		Exactly/me
44	21	delegated	Peter		Here/asked
45	10	delegated	Clarissa		Now/Bourton
45	7	delegated	Peter		They/said
45	3	delegated	Clarissa		But/her
45	26	delegated	Peter		Of/lake
46	17	delegated	Clarissa		For/rose
47	22	delegated	Peter		Stop/openly
47	24	delegated	Clarissa		His/job
48	16	delegated	Peter		Millions/said
49	16	delegated	Clarissa		That/asked
49	6	delegated	Peter		Now/Clarissa
49	1	delegated	Clarissa	In brackets, „(all the same, he is in love, thought Clarissa.)“	All/Clarissa
49	12	delegated	Peter		She/intimacy
50	18	delegated	Clarissa		She/silly
50	14	delegated	Peter		I/knee
51	30	delegated	Clarissa	Change at the beginning possibly mid-sentence	And/Peter

51	22	delegated	Peter		And/landing
52	6	delegated	Clarissa		My/door
52-62	306	delegated	Peter	The epiphanic moment happens on page 57, but Peter is the focalizer until page 62.	Remember/over

*Mrs. Dalloway* - The Party

Epiphany: 202-204

Relevant use of MP: 181 - 213

Pages	Lines	Focalization	Focalizer	Justification/Additional Information	First/Last Word
181	13	delegated	Lucy	„and feel whoever came in must think how clean“	Lucy/less?
181	37	delegated	Mrs Walker	„Did it matter, did it matter in the least, one Prime Minister more or less?“ Unclear if these are only Mrs Walker's thoughts or Lucy's too.	It/dog
182	3	delegated	Jenny		But/tokay
182	38	non-delegated	x	Might also be Peter Walsh already, since there already is some opinion expressed	There/children
183	7	delegated	Peter	„He should have stayed at home and read his book, thought Peter“	How/one
183	32	delegated	Clarissa		Oh/Open
184	65	delegated	Ellie		Was/Again
186	64	delegated	Clarissa		And/name
188	3	delegated	Ellie	„What a thing to tell Edith!“	The/Edith
188	15	non-delegated	x	Same case as above. Either it is non-delegated, or Peter Walsh is just revealed as observer very late	One/Minister
189	67	delegated	Peter		Lord/love
191	166	delegated	Clarissa		Indeed/

					boating
196	19	delegated	Lady Bruton		Richard/lady
197	48	delegated	Sally	Sally is revealed rather late, „But was it Lady Briton (...) Lady Rosseter asked herself“	Lady/gone
198	190	delegated	Clarissa		l/room
204	25	delegated	Peter		But/wept
205	19	delegated	Sally		
206	35	delegated	Peter		Not/Sally
207	61	delegated	Sally	What Sally felt was simply this	What/sacks
208	40	delegated	Peter		And/become
210	86	delegated	Sally	„Peter would think her sentimental“	How/father
212	5	non-delegated	x	Seemingly perspectives of Richard, Ellie, and Elizabeth, but all not very clear. Could be delegated focalization	For/moment
213	5	delegated	Peter		What/was

*To the Lighthouse – Mrs Ramsay’s Epiphany*

Epiphany: 85 – 89

Relevant use of Multiperspectivity: 85 – 89

Page	Lines	Focalization	Focalizer	Justification/Additional Information	First/Last Words
11					
85	14	delegated	Mrs Ramsay	„No, she thought“	No/others
85	1	non-delegated	x	„Although she continued to knit, and sat upright, [it was thus that she felt herself]“ There is the visible focalized of Mrs Ramsay sitting and knitting which clashes with the invisible focalized of her thoughts.	Although/herself

85	17	delegated	Mrs Ramsay	„she supposed“	and/experience
86	1	non-delegated	x	„(she accomplished here something dexterous with her needles)“ similar to the non-delegated instance above	She/needles
86	48	delegated	Mrs Ramsay		but/that
87	4	non-delegated	x	„without being aware of it“ If Mrs Ramsay is not aware of it, i.e., the focalized	she/passed
88	12	delegated	Mr Ramsay	„he was chuckling at the thought that“	though/darkness
88	25	delegated	Mrs Ramsay	„Always, Mrs Ramsay felt“ Here is the epiphany: „It is enough!“	Always/enough
89	11	delegated	Mr Ramsay	„he thought“	He/word
89	4	delegated	Mrs Ramsay	„she knew“	had/her

*To the Lighthouse* – Lily Briscoe’s Epiphany

Epiphany: 281

Relevant uses of MP: 212 – 281

Page	Lines	Focalization	Focalizer	Justification/Additional Information	First/Last Words
<b>3</b>					
212	17	delegated	Lily	„So they’re gone, she thought“	So/garden
212	2	non-delegated	x	„Little Chinese eyes“/“puckered face“ does not seem like Lily’s voice	she/face
121	201	delegated	Lily	„something she remembered“	something/sea
<b>4</b>					
219	96	delegated	Cam and James	„Their father, they knew“ „So James could tell, so Cam could tell“ They both	The/thought

				describe their pact to resist tyranny, which is later confirmed to be mutual through their respective perspectives.	
223	24	delegated	Cam	„Cam thought“	and/grimly
223	3	delegated	James	„But he began to think“	But/then
224	11	delegated	Cam and James	„Both of them (...) had a sense“	Both/looked
224	10	delegated	Cam	„She could no longer make out (...) which was their house“	But/murmured
224	21	delegated	Mr Ramsay	„he had seen himself there“	He/he
225	23	delegated	Cam	„it outraged her“	so/her
226	26	delegated	Mr Ramsay	„for he could not understand“	for/asked
227	12	delegated	James	„Yes, thought James pitilessly“	Yes/dismay
227	21	delegated	Cam	„so Cam now felt herself overcast“	so/Frisk
228	19	delegated	James	„James thought“	She'll/thought
228	3	delegated	Mr Ramsay	„Mr Ramsay decided“	Well/book
228	36	delegated	Cam	„she wished passionately“	But/thought
<b>5</b>					
230	388	delegated	Lily	„Lily Briscoe decided“	Yes/face
<b>6</b>					
243	3	non-delegated	x	Brackets, no hints on character perspective.	Macalister/sea
<b>7</b>					
244	78	delegated	Lily	„That anguish could reduce one to such a pitch of imbecility, she thought!“	Mrs Ramsay/bay
<b>8</b>					
246	31	delegated	Cam	„Cam thought“	They/page
247	167	delegated	James	„James felt“	And/symphony
<b>9</b>					
253	9	delegated	Lily	„thought Lily Briscoe“	The/valediction
<b>10</b>					
254	107	delegated	Cam	„thought Cam“ „But look, she said, looking at him“	It/alone

<b>11</b>					
258	408	delegated	Lily	“So much depends then, thought Lily Briscoe“	So/him
<b>12</b>					
273	37	delegated	James	„James thought“	Mr Ramsay/age
274	38	delegated	Cam	„Cam was tired of looking at the sea“ „She thought“ But also: „they vowed“ It is unclear if James is delegated focalizer here for a line or two or if Cam is merely imagining James‘ thoughts.	Cam/steady
275	29	delegated	James	„James thought grimly“	But/tooth
276	19	delegated	Cam	„Cam was sure that her father was thinking that“	And/himself
277	15	delegated	Cam and James	„James and Cam were afraid“ „they could not endure another explosion“	And/sailor
278	2	non-delegated	x	„James had steered them like a born sailor“ This is unlikely to be James‘ internal, invisible focalization. Cam being focalizer in the previous and the following part might also hint at her being the delegated focalizer here.	They/clearly
278	12	delegated	Cam	„Cam thought“	There/thought
278	22	non-delegated	x	„They had tacked“ But it is unclear who „they“ are exactly in this instance. All focalized instances are visible. „One could hear the slap of the water“	They/clearly
279	8	delegated	Cam	„Cam wondered“	What/away
279	11	delegated	Cam and James	„they both wanted to ask, they both wanted to say, Ask us	What/said

				anything and we will give it to you“ Both also make estimates on their father’s thoughts: „he might be thinking“	
279	2	delegated	James	„James thought“	He/God
279	4	delegated	Cam	„and Cam thought“ There is a sudden switch of the focalizer in mid-sentence. It then continues with „and they both rose“, but since the focalized is visible, there is no way to discern whether the focalizer switches here again, to James, both of them, or becomes non-delegated.	and/rock
280	41	delegated	Lily	„feeling suddenly“	He/vision

*The Waves* - The dinner with Percival

Epiphany: 75-81

Relevant uses of MP: 62-81

Page	Lines	Focalization	Focalizer	Justification/Addition al Information	First/Last Word
62	170	delegated	Bernard	The focalization during this passage is rather overtly indicated by „(character) said“	How/myself
66	30	delegated	Neville		It/is
66	23	delegated	Louis		There/dreams
67	2	delegated	Neville		The/come
67	16	delegated	Susan		There/tablecloth
67	16	delegated	Neville		He/background
68	13	delegated	Rhoda		The/is
68	3	delegated	Neville		Now/again
68	1	delegated	Jinny		Here/dressed
68	22	delegated	Bernard		Here/endurance
69	1	delegated	Louis		Now/Louis



69	4	delegated	Neville		Now/ecstasy
69	3	delegated	Bernard		Old/flesh
69	2	delegated	Susan		The/washing
69	1	delegated	Rhoda		The/Rhoda
69	3	delegated	Neville		The/stiff
69	2	delegated	Jinny		The/Jinny
69	2	delegated	Louis		In/green
69	2	delegated	Bernard		At/Bernard
69	2	delegated	Louis		From/meet
69	8	delegated	Bernard		And/mother
69	5	delegated	Jinny		And/Shelf
69	5	delegated	Susan		Bells/existence
70	2	delegated	Rhoda		Down/garlands
70	5	delegated	Louis		We/too
70	6	delegated	Neville		Then/me
70	4	delegated	Louis		I/London
70	3	delegated	Jinny		Then/smile
70	2	delegated	Rhoda		The/Rhoda
70	14	delegated	Bernard		But/contribution
70	3	delegated	Neville		After/talk
71	26	delegated	Louis		We/fare
71	12	delegated	Jinny		But/all
71	23	delegated	Neville		But/old
72	28	delegated	Rhoda		If/caring
73	32	delegated	Susan		When/phrases
73	50	delegated	Bernard		Had/phrases
75	6	delegated	Rhoda		Look/another
75	4	delegated	Jinny		Yes/before
75	6	delegated	Louis		The/sea
75	4	delegated	Neville		Percival/outside
75	17	delegated	Bernard		I/god
75	17	delegated	Rhoda		Unknown/ mountains
76	9	delegated	Louis		It/beneath
76	3	delegated	Susan		It/giddy
76	4	delegated	Jinny		It/love
76	22	delegated	Neville		Yet/India
77	18	delegated	Rhoda		Yes/street
77	6	delegated	Neville		But/here
77	5	delegated	Jinny		Rippling/clear
77	3	delegated	Louis		Look/all
78	3	delegated	Rhoda		Horns/assegais
78	4	delegated	Louis		Like/body
78	9	delegated	Rhoda		The/downwards
78	2	delegated	Louis		Death/death
78	13	delegated	Jinny		How/come
78	2	delegated	Louis		He/bar
78	9	delegated	Neville		With/come
79	2	delegated	Bernard		For/engaged

79	6	delegated	Susan		How/again
79	15	delegated	Louis		For/fire
79	7	delegated	Rhoda		They/asunder
79	34	delegated	Bernard		But/conjecture
80	8	delegated	Louis		Now/ever
80	4	delegated	Jinny		Let/again
80	3	delegated	Rhoda		Forests/soars
80	4	delegated	Neville		Happiness/speak
80	4	delegated	Susan		Weekdays/ November
81	17	delegated	Bernard		What/light
81	2	delegated	Rhoda		Peaked/ whalebone
81	6	delegated	Neville		Now/gone

*The Waves* - Dinner without Percival

Relevant uses of MP: 119 – 133

Epiphany: 127-129

Page s	Line s	Focalization	Focalizer	Justification/Addition al Information	First/Last Word
119	33	delegated	Bernard		Hampton/down
119	78	delegated	Neville		Now/room
121	25	delegated	Susan		There/friends
122	6	delegated	Rhoda		The/lovers
122	58	delegated	Bernard		It/known
123	42	delegated	Louis		It/chapel
124	49	delegated	Jinny		I/afraid
126	45	delegated	Rhoda		There/now
127	19	delegated	Bernard		Drop/space
127	2	delegated	Susan		In/fly
127	2	delegated	Jinny		As/now
127	1	delegated	Rhoda		And/live
127	5	delegated	Louis		But/darkness
127	8	delegated	Bernard		Silence/ pugnaciously
128	5	delegated	Neville		Oppose/lust
128	10	delegated	Rhoda		Yet/different
128	5	delegated	Louis		They/behind
128	1	delegated	Rhoda		Like/Rhoda
128	17	delegated	Bernard		It/gone
128	10	delegated	Neville		Unreasonably/ George
129	6	delegated	Louis		While/

					harmonium
129	3	delegated	Jinny		The/ handkerchiefs
129	2	delegated	Susan		I/which
129	7	delegated	Rhoda		The/outside
129	3	delegated	Bernard		The/lives
129	2	delegated	Louis		A/trees
129	1	delegated	Jinny		Built/Jinny
129	5	delegated	Bernard		Marriage/out
129	9	delegated	Louis		Now/hear
130	10	delegated	Rhoda		They/us
130	6	delegated	Louis		A/another
130	8	delegated	Rhoda		A/open
130	7	delegated	Louis		All/feet
130	6	delegated	Rhoda		If/divided
130	10	delegated	Louis		For/immersed
131	15	delegated	Rhoda		Now/purpose
131	9	delegated	Louis		Something/ Jinny
131	2	delegated	Bernard		We/perhaps
131	10	delegated	Neville		Yet/out
131	1	delegated	Jinny		After/lockets
131	2	delegated	Susan		Still/me
131	48	delegated	Bernard		Let/sleeping

## A.2 Abstract

Multiperspectivity is a literary tool that is used by Virginia Woolf to convey and explore her fascination with visions and “Moments of Being” (Woolf 1927: 259).

The claim of this paper is that Virginia Woolf employs multiperspectivity to show how a shared perception of the world works as a unifying force that catalyses visions or epiphanies. These “Moments of Being” allow characters a brief look at the world as it is, at a universal truth that remains behind a reality of fractured experiences.

It will be examined how this idea is explored and evolved in four of Virginia Woolf’s novels, starting with *Jacob’s Room* and *Mrs. Dalloway* and then continuing with *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*.

To achieve this, the use of multiperspectivity in scenes related to epiphanies will be investigated in detail, concerning the number and duration of perspectives included and the presence or absence of mediating voices.

The main goal is to identify key elements of shared perspective in Virginia Woolf’s work and outline in how far these experiences are real or even relevant to the characters having them. Are Virginia Woolf’s philosophical visions aesthetical, spiritual, social or deceptive in nature?

Woolf, Virginia. *The Common Reader: Second Series* 1927. London: Hogarth Press

### A.3 Zusammenfassung

Multiperspektivität ist eine literarische Technik, die von Virginia Woolf in der Verarbeitung ihrer Faszination mit Visionen und „Augenblicken des Daseins“ eingesetzt wird.

Die dieser Arbeit zu Grunde liegende Annahme, ist dass Virginia Woolf mit Hilfe von Multiperspektivität zeigt, wie geteilte Wahrnehmung als verbindender Einfluss wirksam wird und somit Visionen oder Epiphanien hervorrufen kann. Diese „Augenblicke des Daseins“ bescheren den Charakteren einen kurzen Einblick in die Welt wie sie tatsächlich ist. Sie erhalten Anteil an einer universellen Wahrheit, die sich hinter einer aus Einzelerfahrungen bestehenden Realität verbirgt.

Die Ausprägung und Entwicklung dieses Konzeptes wird in dieser Arbeit anhand von vier Romanen Virginia Woolfs untersucht. Die dafür ausgewählten Werke sind *Jacobs Zimmer*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *Zum Leuchtturm* und *Die Wellen*.

Dazu wird die Perspektivenstruktur in ausgewählten Szenen, welche mit Epiphanien im Zusammenhang stehen, genau untersucht. Dauer und Anzahl der gegebenen Figurenperspektiven, sowie die Frequenz von deren Wechsel, sind ebenso relevant wie das Vorhandensein oder das Fehlen höher gestellter Erzählinstanzen.

Das Hauptziel dieser Arbeit ist die Identifikation gemeinsamer Elemente, welche die Darstellungen von geteilter Wahrnehmung und Epiphanien in Virginia Woolfs Texten aufweisen. Sind die Visionen der Charaktere ästhetische, spirituelle, soziale oder täuschende Erfahrungen?