TIME AND CONSCIOUSNESS REPRESENTATION IN VIRGINIA WOOLF'S *TO THE LIGHTHOUSE*

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ABSTRACT: *To the Lighthouse*, Virginia Woolf's fifth novel, is often regarded as one of her more complex and ambitious narratives. Erich Auerbach (2005) made one of the first attempts to shed some light on the narrative techniques employed in the novel in his essay "The Brown Stocking", the last chapter of his seminal work *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. However, some recent criticism on this essay, notably from Michael Levenson (2015), has emphasized the limited scope of Auerbach's terms of approach regarding the narrative of *To the Lighthouse*. Therefore, this article aims to update Auerbach's ideas with the terminology provided by structuralist narratology, especially the categories regarding time and consciousness representation, according to the theoretical propositions of Bart Vervaeck and Luc Herman (2005). In this respect, Woolf's use of multipersonal consciousness representation, differently from her contemporaries James Joyce and Marcel Proust, for instance, enables her to portray time in very peculiar ways in each of the sections of the novel. Consequently, by rendering the perception of the events not only from a single perspective, but from as many as possible, Virginia Woolf creates a mosaic of points of view that aims at a synthesis of reality.

KEYWORDS: *To the Lighthouse*. Virginia Woolf. Narratology. Time. Consciousness Representation.

RESUMO: *Ao Farol*, o quinto romance de Virginia Woolf, é geralmente tido como um de seus textos mais complexos e ambiciosos. Erich Auerbach (2005) fez uma das primeiras tentativas de evidenciar as técnicas narrativas empregadas no romance em seu ensaio "A Meia Marrom", o último capítulo de sua obra seminal *Mimesis*. No entanto, a crítica recente a esse ensaio, notavelmente por parte de Michael Levenson (2015), tem enfatizado o escopo limitado dos termos utilizados por Auerbach para abordar a narrativa de *Ao Farol*. Assim, este artigo tem por objetivo renovar as ideas de Auerbach a partir da terminologia fornecida pela narratologia estruturalista, com ênfase nas categorias referentes ao tempo e à representação da consciência, de acordo com as proposições teóricas de Bart Vervaeck e Luc Herman (2005). Nesse sentido, o emprego que Virginia Woolf faz da representação pluripessoal da consciência, diferentemente de seus contemporâneos James Joyce e Marcel Proust, por exemplo, permite que ela retrate o tempo de modos muito peculiares em cada uma das seções do romance. Consequentemente, ao apresentar a percepção dos eventos narrados não apenas por meio de uma única perspectiva, mas de tantas quanto possível, Virginia Woolf cria um mosaico de pontos de vista que visa a uma síntese da realidade.

PALAVRAS CHAVE: *Ao Farol*. Virginia Woolf. Narratologia. Tempo. Representação da Consciência.

THE COMPLEX NARRATIVE OF *TO THE LIGHTHOUSE*

Studies on the narrative techniques of Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927) are neither recent nor rare. Erich Auerbach's "The Brown Stocking", the last chapter of his seminal work *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (1946), is one of the first and most famous attempts to shed some light on the way Woolf deals with realism and subjectivity in the novel. More recently, Michael Levenson (2015) stated that any new study on the narrative of *To the Lighthouse* must take into consideration Auerbach's previous discussion on Woolf's novel, thus cementing his work as a starting point for anyone interested in deepening his reflections on the narrative perspective Woolf employs in her work. However, Levenson also acknowledges that Auerbach's terms of approach to the novel are contrasting, and in part limited, due to the difficulty of the text, thus making room to more things that remain to be said about *To the Lighthouse*. In this respect, what we intend to do here is to complement Auerbach's ideas on Woolf's work, especially the ones regarding the portrayal of time and consciousness representation, with the terminology provided by structuralist narratology. This field of studies, which has been constantly developing since the late 1960s, renders a variety of concepts that can highlight the resources and techniques employed in a narrative text and further contribute to a better understanding of how it is organized.

"Two blocks joined by a corridor": this is how Virginia Woolf first envisioned *To the Lighthouse*, according to a note from 1925 found in one of her notebooks. Such initial idea remained, since the two blocks aforementioned actually correspond to the first and last sections of the novel, "The Window" and "The Lighthouse", respectively. The corridor, i. e., the link between those two blocks, refers to "Time Passes", the shortest section of the book. Each one of these sections, however, also divides into many subsections, or chapters, with varying lengths. For example, there are subsections made out of a single paragraph, while others are longer than an entire section, as is the case of the seventeenth subsection of "The Window",

which is longer than all of "Time Passes". This fragmentary structure of the novel, as Jane Goldman (2015) points out, recalls the idea of mosaicking, a concept developed theoretically by Roger Fry, who, along with Virginia Woolf, was also a member of the Bloomsbury Group. According to Goldman, "*To the Lighthouse* may be a printed, verbal 'mosaic of vision', a field of patches that cannot be confined by the conventional bounds or units of signification, and constantly therefore reframes itself" (GOLDMAN, 2015, p. 36). In this respect, for us to have a better understanding of how this fragmented structure of the novel works in the whole, each section of *To the Lighthouse* will be approached individually in order to provide a clearer comprehension of how this idea of mosaicking is narratively constructed.

FIRST BLOCK: "THE WINDOW"

In "The Window", the reader finds the Ramsay family spending the afternoon at their summerhouse in the Hebrides in the company of some friends. Its first scene triggers the action of the section, with Mrs. Ramsay telling her youngest son James that they will visit the Lighthouse across the bay if the weather is fine the next day. However, a conflict establishes when Mr. Ramsay replies his wife, assuring her and James that the weather will not be fine:

> 'Yes, of course, if it's fine tomorrow,' said Mrs Ramsay. 'But you'll have to be up with the lark', she added.
>
> To her son these words conveyed an extraordinary joy, as if it were settled the expedition were bound to take place, and the wonder to which he had looked forward, for years and years it seemed, was, after a night's darkness and a day's sail, within touch. Since he belonged, even at the age of six, to that great clan which cannot keep this feeling separate from that, but must let future prospects, with their joys and sorrows, cloud what is actually at hand, since to such people even in earliest childhood any turn in the wheel of sensation has the power to crystallize and transfix the moment upon which its gloom or radiance rests, James Ramsay, sitting on the floor cutting out pictures from the illustrated catalogue of the Army and Navy Stores, endowed the picture of a refrigerator as his mother spoke with heavenly bliss. It was fringed with joy. The wheelbarrow, the lawn-mower, the sound of poplar trees, leaves whitening before rain, rooks cawing, brooms knocking, dresses rustling – all these were so coloured and distinguished in his mind that he had already his private code, his secret language, though he appeared the image of stark and uncompromising severity, with his high forehead and his fierce blue eyes, impeccably candid and pure, frowning slightly at the sight of human frailty, so that his mother, watching him guide his scissors neatly round the refrigerator, imagined him all red and ermine in the Bench or directing a stern and momentous enterprise in some crisis of public affairs.

> 'But,' said his father, stopping in front of the drawing-room window, 'it won't be fine.' (WOOLF, 2006, p. 1138-50)

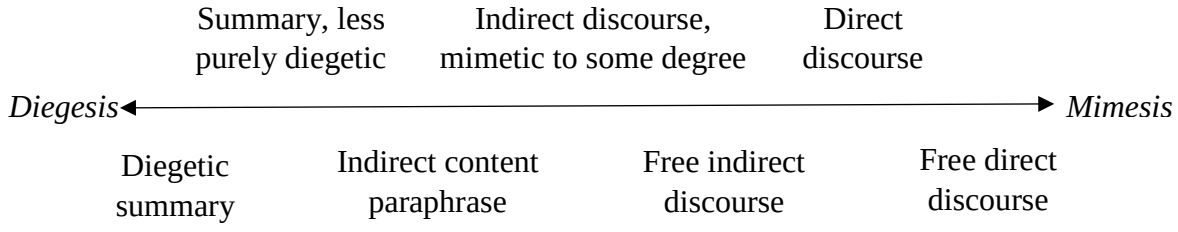
The excerpt above is very representative of Woolf's narrative style. Between Mrs. Ramsay's speech and Mr. Ramsay's reply, a long paragraph carefully describes James's inner thoughts and feelings as he realizes his long awaited trip to the lighthouse is finally within reach. The first passage of the novel highlights that there are two processes occurring simultaneously in the scene: one external, related to the dialogue between Mrs. and Mr. Ramsay, and the other internal, concerning what goes on in James's mind. This movement between an external event and an internal one initiated by the former permeate all of the first section of the novel.

What might first call the reader's attention is the fact that it takes more time to read James's thoughts than they might actually have taken in the scene, while his parents' dialogue, on the other hand, probably lasted for the same amount of time necessary to read it. In other words, Woolf's text implies, already in its beginning, that there is a strict relation between time and the way inner thoughts are described, i.e., the representation of events might be either more direct or indirect, and that depends a lot on what is in fact being represented. In their *Handbook of Narrative Analysis* (2005), Herman & Vervaeck divide the structuralist approach to narrative into three levels: story, narrative and narration. Since narrative and narration are the levels that deal with the representation of thoughts and time, our focus will rely on them regarding our approach to *To the Lighthouse*.

According to the authors, the narration level "implies two central areas of investigation: first, narrating (including the narrating agents) and second, the way in which these agents present a character's consciousness" (HERMAN & VERVAECK, 2005, p. 80). In the narrating area, there are two instances: the active subject, or the narrator, and a passive object, which is what he narrates. Regarding his level on a text, the narrator can be either extradiegetic or intradiegetic. The former does not belong to the events he narrates; he is just describing them,

while the latter is part of the narrated world. To some extent, the narrating level marks the detachment of the narrator in relation to what he narrates. The narrator of *To the Lighthouse* is an extradiegetic one, since he or she never introduces himself/herself as a character that belongs to the narrated world. The involvement of this narrator is heterodiegetic, since he has not experienced what he narrates. Instead, he mediates the perspective of the events through his account of the characters' feelings and thoughts, which makes room for a discussion on consciousness representation.

Defined as "the way in which the narrator renders the consciousness of the characters" (HERMAN & VERVAECK, 2005, 91), consciousness representation works on a scale made out of two poles: mimetic and diegetic. The closer the representation gets to a direct rendering of consciousness, the more mimetic it is. The more indirect and summarized it gets, on the other hand, the closer to the diegetic pole the representation of consciousness is. Usually, this scale of consciousness representation consists of three kinds: indirect speech, direct speech and free indirect speech. However, this triad is excessively simple when compared to the way thoughts can be rendered in a narrative text because there are intermediary forms between indirect speech and free indirect speech, for instance, or between free indirect speech and direct speech. In this respect, Herman & Vervaeck introduce the scale developed by Brian McHale, in which he differentiates among seven kinds of consciousness representation:



In consonance with McHale's scale, the description of James's thoughts is classified as indirect content paraphrase, "which represents the thoughts or utterances faithfully as far as

content is concerned but not in terms of style" (HERMAN & VERVAECK, 2005, p. 92). Consequently, the reader knows that James felt an "extraordinary joy" for the upcoming trip to the lighthouse, but such happiness is not described by his own words, as the narrator constantly stresses which character feels or thinks what is being narrated, usually referring to James by the use of personal pronouns. The narrator's intervention, especially through the use of the third person, is what distinguishes the indirect speech from what people often call stream of consciousness or interior monologue, a technique that attempts to describe as faithfully as possible the words on the mind of the character. In McHale's scale, stream of consciousness would fall either on the direct or free direct discourse, with the example of Molly Bloom's famous interior monologue in the last chapter of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Regarding the beginning of *To the Lighthouse*, Mrs.' and Mr. Ramsay' speeches would fall within the direct discourse category, considering that the narrator provides a faithful representation of their words.

In line with *To the Lighthouse*'s use of indirect content paraphrase, David Bradshaw argues that

> Woolf depicts (rather than enacts) subjective consciousness, how the human mind meanders through experience, with a magisterial control of her materials. […]
>
> Foreshadowed in shorter works, such as 'The Mark on the Wall' and developed through *Jacob's Room* and *Mrs Dalloway*, Woolf summed up her technique in *To the Lighthouse* as 'oratio oblique [indirect speech]'. The point of view is ultimately always that of the omniscient narrator, but lexis and tone are continuously shifting depending on the character in focus creating the effect of an ever changing narrative standpoint. (BRADSHAW, 2006, p. 699)

At the end of this excerpt, Bradshaw states that, despite the omnipresence of the narrator in consciousness representation, his words are constantly changing depending on the character in focus. Such shift of words would make the indirect content paraphrase slide to indirect discourse, mimetic to some degree in McHale's scale. The fragment previously provided is not very representative of this kind of consciousness representation; however, Mrs. Ramsay's reply to her husband's speech that the weather will not be fine makes this distinction a bit clearer:

> ‘But it may be fine – I expect it will be fine’, said Mrs Ramsay, making some little twist of the reddish-brown stocking she was knitting, impatiently. If she finished it tonight, if they did go to the Lighthouse after all, it was to be given to the Lighthouse keeper for his little boy, who was threatened with a tuberculous hip; together with a pile of old magazines, and some tobacco, indeed whatever she could find lying about, not really wanted, to give those poor fellows who must be bored to death sitting all day with nothing to do but polish the lamp and trim the wick and rake about on their scrap of garden, something to amuse them. (WOOLF, 2006, p. 1150-62)

In this passage, the narrator takes us into Mrs. Ramsay’s mind as she knits a stocking. The character of Mrs. Ramsay is emphasized by the use of personal pronouns referring to her, implying the presence of an active agent that mediates her consciousness representation, thus defining it as indirect content paraphrase. Nonetheless, as we reach the end of the description, the use of personal pronouns referring to Mrs. Ramsay ceases, and the word choice representing her thoughts portrays a more subjective attitude towards the people from the lighthouse, who are described as “poor fellows”, “bored to death” and surrounded by a “scrap of garden”. Here, it is hard to tell if these are Mrs. Ramsay’s words or still the narrator’s because of the word choice; in this respect, the passage leads the reader to believe that the more the narrator plunges into a character’s mind, the more the character’s words come to the surface. The discourse here, therefore, can be defined as indirect, mimetic to some degree, since the narrator is concerned not only with the content of Mrs. Ramsay’s mind, but also with her style, implied by the word choice used in the passage, stressing how subtle the differences among the kinds of consciousness representation are in McHale’s scale.

At this point, one might wonder where the relationship between consciousness representation and the portrayal of time lies. There is more than one answer to this. The first of them is the already mentioned idea that the time one takes to read an internal event, i. e., the representation of a character’s consciousness, is longer than the time the character’s mental process probably took. This will lead us to the narrative level of structuralist narratology, which deals with “the concrete way in which events are presented to the reader” (HERMAN & VERVAECK, 2005, p. 59).

The idea of time in structuralist narratology takes into consideration both the narrative and the story levels. The latter corresponds to an abstract level organized by the reader, since it deals with "the chronological sequence of events that are often no longer shown chronologically in the narrative" (HERMAN & VERVAECK, 2005, p. 46). In *To the Lighthouse*, the external events are already presented chronologically, so that we will not spend much time on the abstract level of the story. On the other hand, the internal events, the ones dealing with the characters' minds, as we will later discuss, travel through time. That being said, our focus now will fall within two criteria regarding the narrative analysis of time: duration and order.

Duration, as previously pointed, is "measured by comparing the time necessary to read the account of an event to the time an event takes on the level of the story" (HERMAN & VERVAECK, 2005, p. 60). In the first scene of "The Window", if we consider only the dialogue between Mrs. and Mr. Ramsay regarding the weather conditions for the trip to the lighthouse, the duration of time can be classified as scene representation, since the time of narration, or the time one spends to read it, is almost equivalent to the time that event lasted on the level of the story. However, the dialogue is interrupted by the paragraph describing James's thoughts. In this case, the duration of time corresponds to deceleration, which "occurs when the time necessary to read the description of an event turns out to be longer than the event itself" (HERMAN & VERVAECK, 2005, p. 62). Such idea of deceleration has already been appointed by Auerbach when he analyzes the fifth chapter of "The Window", in which Mrs. Ramsay's act of measuring the brown stocking she is knitting for the keeper's boy is constantly interrupted by the description of her thoughts.

> This entirely insignificant occurrence is constantly interspersed with other elements which, although they do not interrupt its progress, take up far more time in the narration than the whole scene can possibly have lasted. Most of these elements are inner processes, that is, movements within the consciousness of individual personages […] (AUERBACH, 2003, p. 529)

Therefore, in *To the Lighthouse* it turns out that whenever we are given an account of a

character's mind, the description of this internal event corresponds to deceleration, since one's thoughts travel faster than the time necessary to describe them. However, measuring time's duration in the novel requires that the analysis delimit units of investigation. If we consider the whole passage describing the dialogue between the Ramsay's as a unit, it corresponds to deceleration because the dialogue is constantly broken by the character's consciousness representation; if we consider the whole first chapter of "The Window", which covers both the Ramsays's dialogue and Mrs. Ramsay and Charles Tansley's walk in town, it corresponds to acceleration, because the event, even though carefully described, is narratively summarized in comparison to the time it probably took on the story level.

With regard to order, it lies "between the linear chronology in the story and the order of events in the narrative" (HERMAN & VERVAECK, 2005, p. 63). We have said before that the external events are ordered chronologically both in the story and in the narrative level, as each section of the novel is ordered linearly in relation to the chronology of the events. Based on Gérard Genette's criteria concerning order, Herman & Vervaeck divide it in three categories: direction, distance, and reach. The first of these deals with the movements performed by the narrative. For instance, we know that the narrator's account of the events in the novel is retrospective, since he tells the events with the use of the past tense. Therefore, the direction is classified as analepsis. However, one must also pay attention to all of the internal events, since they deal with the characters' recollection of past events and may also be classified regarding their direction. As his mother tells him that the trip to the lighthouse may finally be in reach, James remembers how long it has been since he first wished to visit the lighthouse across the bay. That recollection is a case of analepsis, or flashback. Genette would even classify this analepsis as homodiegetic, because such a recollection is strictly related to the ongoing event on the primary narrative, which is James's mother telling him that the weather may be fine on the next day.

Nonetheless, Woolf's treatment of time is not so easy to classify because of the amount of characters' thoughts described, which may both travel back and forward in time, demanding careful attention to their categorization concerning the events in the primary narrative. For that matter, for instance, even though the examples provided above deal with analeptical order, "The Window" has, as appointed by Paul Sheehan (2015), a speculative focus, since it attempts to anticipate the next day's weather conditions. Therefore, as Sheehan puts it, "these passages possess an insistently future-pointing, proleptic quality, and this becomes the signature time schema for the entire section" (SHEEHAN, 2015, p.51). As we will further explore, based on Sheehan's discussion on the novel, the other two sections of *To the Lighthouse* work with different time schemas.

As for distance and reach, the former concerns "the temporal gap between primary narrative on the one hand and prolepsis or analepsis on the other", while the latter "refers to the stretch of time covered by the analepsis or prolepsis" (HERMAN & VERVAECK, 2005, p. 65). James's recollection of how long his wish to visit the lighthouse has lasted, whose temporal gap lies some years apart from the present day in "The Window", falls within the primary narrative, which corresponds to an analepsis of internal distance. The stretch of time of this wish, which has lasted "for years and years it seemed", as the narrator tells us, comprises an entire period, since his recollection attempts to cover the time from the wish until its imminent accomplishment. Therefore, the reach of this flashback is classified as durative or complete.

What requires emphasis, however, is that, concerning *To the Lighthouse*, categories such as distance and reach are more prolific to analyze when one considers the internal movements of the novel, i. e., the representation of the consciousness of the characters. This argument is justified by the fact that the action of the novel is provided very briefly by the narrator. The majority of the novel deals with the characters struggling with their own thoughts and impressions on one another, and their recollections may or may not fall within the primary

narrative. Auerbach argues that this little emphasis on action in favor of consciousness representation is characteristic of Woolf's style:

> Let us begin with a tendency which is particularly striking in our text from Virginia Woolf. She holds to minor, unimpressive, random events: measuring the stocking, a fragment of a conversation with the maid, a telephone call. Great changes, exterior turning points, let alone catastrophes, do not occur; and though elsewhere in *To the Lighthouse* such things are mentioned, it is hastily, without preparation or context, incidentally, and as it were only for the sake of information. (AUERBACH, 2003, p. 546)

Such an informational tone regarding great changes achieves its most sophisticated treatment in "Time Passes". Before we approach that section, however, we must emphasize the second common point of the relationship between time and consciousness representation, which Auerbach also considers very remarkable in Woolf's style. As the categories of distance and reach shed some light on the internal movements of the novel, it became more evident that every digression, every recollection of old memories has its own temporal properties, and it is through their temporal relationships with the primary narrative that these digressions are classified sometimes internal, sometimes external, or sometimes punctual, sometimes durative. Therefore, as emphasis is laid on characters' perception rather than the description of the events, it is important to take notice of what the characters are telling us; in other words, focalization is paramount to Virginia Woolf's narrative construction in *To the Lighthouse*.

Considered an important part on the narrative level of structuralist narratology, focalization "refers to the relation between that which is focalized – the characters, actions, and objects offered to the reader – and the focalizer, the agent who perceives and who therefore determines what is presented to the reader" (HERMAN & VERVAECK, 2005, p. 70). *To the Lighthouse* deals with focalization in a very peculiar way. First of all, little emphasis is laid on action, which is focalized by the extradiegetic narrator; secondly, whenever he penetrates a character's mind, however he provides the character's thoughts indirectly, as previously stated, the focalization of these thoughts shifts to an internal point of view, since he attempts to portray

the perception of what surrounds the character in focus, and not his own. The perception of the people from the lighthouse as “poor fellows who must be bored to death” is Mrs. Ramsay’s and not the narrator’s, even though he is the one narrating this passage. In this respect, the process of focalization mimics the narrative structure of the novel: on one side, the narrative is organized by the movements of the external and internal events, the ones dealing with action and the ones dealing with consciousness representation; on the other side, focalization constantly shifts between external and internal perceptions, that of the narrator and those of the characters, respectively.

Consciousness representation and internal focalization rendered by characters were a common struggle among modernist writers. Woolf herself was aware of the fictional works of James Joyce and Marcel Proust, as well as the writings of Sigmund Freud, whom she would eventually meet in 1939. James’s anger towards his father’s words telling him the trip to the lighthouse will not be able to take place the next day, for example, is a clear representation of the Oedipus complex, as developed by Freud. All of this interest in understanding and portraying consciousness, as Auerbach stresses, led Woolf to refine her style in *To the Lighthouse*, differing from her contemporaries by offering the reader not only one character’s point of view, but the perspectives of many of them:

> The essential characteristic of the technique represented by Virginia Woolf is that we are given not merely one person whose consciousness (that is, the impressions it receives) is rendered, but many persons, with frequent shifts from one to the other – in our text, Mrs. Ramsay, "people," Mr. Bankes, in brief interludes James, the Swiss maid in a flash-back, and the nameless ones who speculate over a tear. The multiplicity of persons suggests that we are here after all confronted with an endeavor to investigate an objective reality. […]The design of a close approach to objective reality by means of numerous subjective impressions received by various individuals (and at various times) is important in the modem technique which we are here examining. It basically differentiates it from the unipersonal subjectivism which allows only a single and generally a very unusual person to make himself heard and admits only that one person's way of looking at reality. (AUERBACH, 2003, p. 536)

In counterpoint to the writers from the 19th century, especially the ones of the so-called literary realism (Balzac and Zola, for example), whose aim was to portray things as objectively

and impartially as possible, Woolf attempts to approach objective reality relying not on a single and external focalizer, but mainly on many internal ones. This process suggests that one's perception of reality is both subjective and limited, so that different points of view may allow us the see reality in the big picture, much to complement Goldman's (2015) idea of mosaicking in the novel; a mosaic made out of the amount of points of view presented. No wonder Lily Briscoe, struggling to finish her painting of Mrs. Ramsay in the last section of the novel, believes that "fifty pairs of eyes were not enough to get round that one woman with" (WOOLF, 2006, p. 3751). Auerbach calls this process as *multipersonal method*, whose aim lies on synthesis, and contrasts it with Proust's *À la recherché du temps perdu*, whose method is described as *unipersonal subjective*. Michael Levenson reinforces Auerbach's ideas on *To the Lighthouse* stating that

> In this respect, vision and narrative intersect throughout the novel, each offering perspectives on the perspective of the other. Just as characters must continually adjust to the changing look of objects, distant or near, connected or severed, in sun or under cloud, so the narrative asserts the multiple dimensions of life in time. (LEVENSON, 2015, p. 20)

One more point to be considered about the "changing look of objects" is how Woolf manages to shift from one point of view to another. Just like a lighthouse whose beam of light hits whatever surrounds it, focalization shifts fast and sometimes abruptly. The novel's first scene demonstrates that clearly: James is sitting on the floor cutting pictures out of a catalogue, while his mother watches him; as Mrs. Ramsay tells him they might go the lighthouse, the internal process begins and the reader is taken by the narrator into the boy's mind. The long last sentence of this extensive paragraph starts by emphasizing the vividness of the catalogue's images in James's mind, and ends, without any interruption in the middle of it, with his mother imagining her son's future as part of the King's or Queer's Bench. In other words, in the same sentence, two perspectives are rendered. Such a technique creates an effect of simultaneity, so that we can see that James and Mrs. Ramsay are thinking of different things; however, they are

doing it at the same time. Woolf does not restrict this idea of simultaneity to consciousness representation only, but she manages to create that effect in relation to the external events of the novel. She achieves that by interposing these paragraphs of consciousness representation among the ones describing the action of the novel, as the dialogue between Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay in the beginning of "The Window" shows us. Each speech is interrupted by an extensive paragraph of character internal focalization, implying that the internal process is occurring at the same time as the external one.

THE "TIME PASSES" CORRIDOR

Now that we have covered a great deal of the narrative structure of "The Window", we can leave Woolf's first block and enter the dark "Time Passes" corridor. This section was initially conceived as a break of unity in the novel's design, whose main purpose was to portray the impersonal passing of time, as Woolf's diaries show. Such an enterprise, however, was not easy to achieve: "I cannot make it out – here is the most difficult abstract piece of writing – I have to give an empty house, no people's characters, the passage of time, all eyeless & featureless with nothing to cling to" (D3 76) (WOOLF, apud. FERNALD, 2015, p. 12)". In this respect, "Time Passes" turns out to be the most experimental part of the novel, focusing not on the members of the Ramsay family, but in their summer house for a ten-year span.

The section starts at the night of the same day of "The Window", right after Mrs. Ramsay's great dinner party. Andrew and Prue Ramsay, along with Lily Briscoe and Mr. Bankes, are coming back home from a short walk at the beach. As they enter the house and turn the lights off, everything is covered in darkness:

> So with the lamps all put out, the moon sunk, and a thin rain drumming on the roof, a downpouring of immense darkness began. Nothing, it seemed, could survive the flood, the profusion of darkness which, creeping in at keyholes and crevices, stole round window blinds, came into bedrooms, swallowed up here a jug basin, there a bowl of red and yellow dahlias, there the sharp edges and firm bulk of chest of drawers. Not only was furniture confounded; there was scarcely anything left of body

> or mind by which one could say ‘This is he’ or ‘This is she’. Sometimes a hand was raised as if to clutch something or ward off something, or somebody laughed aloud as if sharing a joke with nothingness. (WOOLF, 2006, p. 2804-16)

Woolf’s break of unity in “Time Passes” becomes evident in the excerpt above, which corresponds to the first paragraph of the section’s second chapter. No character is in focus here neither the focalization is rendered internally, as it was predominant in “The Window”; instead, the narrator, who remains extradiegetic, carefully describes not one’s thoughts or feelings, but the action of the house and its guests being drowned in blackness. If the external events were only a mechanism through which internal processes initiated in the previous section, here they come forward and become dominant. No character is distinguishable in the eyes of the narrator because darkness is all over, making human presence drastically absent from the section.

Acceleration takes over “Time Passes”. As the night approaches the house, time starts to travel fast, and its rendering is given by natural events rather than dates. As the narrator tells us, “night, however, succeeds to night”, and the winter “holds a pack of them” (WOOLF, 2006, p. 2827). The autumn trees are said to “gleam in the yellow moonlight” (WOOLF, 2006, p. 2827), and as the nights succeed each other, they become “full of wind and destruction” (WOOLF, 2006, p. 2839). This idea of succession creates a cyclical effect in the narrative, one that points to repetition, since night is not said to be succeeded by day, as expected, but by night again. Therefore, all of the concern in “The Window”, whose proleptic quality kept pointing to the weather conditions of the next day, is not solved in this middle section. Consequently, although ten years separate “The Window” from “The Lighthouse”, the narration of “Time Passes” seems to hold us in a long, never-ending night. In this respect, Paul Sheehan (2015) argues that the time schema of this middle section is the present; however, he also emphasizes that we cannot apprehend it because “the present is that which constantly escapes our grasp, with each now instantly becoming a then” (SHEEHAN, 2015, p. 53). Woolf tries to solve this problem by removing human presence from the section; however, as Sheehan reminds us,

without humans there can be no present:

> How does time pass without the hauntings of memory and the agitations of desire? What shape does the present tense take in the absence of the human compulsion to apprehend it? As Woolf demonstrates, the present itself vanishes. There is no "now" in "Time Passes", because other time scales have taken over. (SHEEHAN, 2015, p. 53)

Time, therefore, is measured by nature and its cyclical events. Also, by removing human presence from the section, the effects of time can only be perceived on the objects that remain. This is why the main event of "Time Passes" is the decay and abandonment of the Ramsay's summer house:

> So with the house empty and the doors locked and the mattresses rolled round, those stray airs, advance guards of great armies, blustered in, brushed bare boards, nibbled and fanned, met nothing in bedroom or drawing-room that wholly resisted them but only hangings that flapped, wood that creaked, the bare legs of tables, saucepans and china already furred, tarnished, cracked. What people had shed and left – a pair of shoes, a shooting cap, some faded skirts and coats in wardrobes – those alone kept the human shape and in the emptiness indicated how once hands were busy with hooks and buttons; how once the looking-glass had held a face; had held a world hollowed out in which a figure turned, a hand flashed, the door opened, in came children rushing and tumbling; and went out again. (WOOLF, 2006, p. 2850)

There is no action in this passage, only the description of the house's disrepair. The narrator, who never leaves the house environment, even with its emptiness, keeps with his heterodiegetic level of involvement regarding his narration, never interfering in the process occasioned by the passage of time. The only character who intervenes is Mrs. McNab, the old maid responsible for taking care of the house during this ten-year period; however, her old age and weakness prevent her from accomplishing the task.

In many ways, "Time Passes" is exactly the opposite of the novel's other two sections. It focuses on objects rather than people, on the house's description rather than the characters' consciousness; it renders time through acceleration rather than deceleration as well as spans the longest period of time even though it is the shortest section. There is one point, however, which is reminiscent of "The Window" and that becomes more sophisticated in this section: the idea of referring to external events in an informational tone. As Auerbach points out, in the first

section these events are random, for instance the measuring of Mrs. Ramsay's stock. They are introduced just as a means for the narrator to penetrate a character's mind. In "Time Passes", however, there are great changes going on out of the Hebrides, such as the outbreak of World War I; but, as Auerbach reminds us, although these events are mentioned, their description "is hastily, without preparation or context, incidentally, and as it were only for the sake of information" (AUERBACH, 2003, p. 546). During the ten years covered by the section, some of the members of the Ramsay family die, but since the narrator does not focus on whatever happens out of their summer house, these events are informed along with the section's chapters in bracketed sentences, just as if they were detached from the main text:

> [Mr Ramsay stumbling along a passage stretched his arms out one dark morning, but Mrs Ramsay having died rather suddenly the night before he stretched his arms out. They remained empty.] (WOOLF, 2006, p. 2850)
>
> [Prue Ramsay died that summer in some illness connected with childbirth, which was indeed a tragedy, people said. They said nobody deserved happiness more.] (WOOLF, 2006, p. 2895)
>
> [A shell exploded. Twenty or thirty young men were blown up in France, among them Andrew Ramsay, whose death, mercifully, was instantaneous.] (WOOLF, 2006, p. 2906)

These events, especially Mrs. Ramsay's death, will have great impact upon the lives of the characters in the last section of the novel. For now, however, no emphasis is laid on them. Woolf's use of brackets to report these horrible incidents may open up different readings regarding their function in the text. First of all, they may indicate how limited the narrator's point of view is, reaching nowhere beyond the Ramsay's house. The fact that he is not able to tell for sure the illness that killed Prue or the number of men who died from the explosion of the shell reinforces this idea. Secondly, as Woolf inserts these bracketed sentences among the paragraphs that describe the changing of seasons and the decay of the house, they imply the idea of the simultaneity of these events; in this sense, even though presented as if they were detached from the main text, all these deaths, nonetheless, allude to the idea that the result of

these dark times which the characters have gone through is reflected in the house conditions instead, which receives the main focus in the section. By the end of “Time Passes”, as Lily Briscoe and Mr. Carmichael have finally come back to the summer house in a September night (the same month in which the action of “The Window” took place), “then indeed peace had come” (WOOLF, 2006, p. 3020).

SECOND BLOCK: “THE LIGHTHOUSE”

“The Lighthouse”, the novel’s final section, takes place in the morning after Lily and Mr. Charmichael’s arrival. Woolf’s sketch for her last block puts into perspective two main ideas: “I have also made up a passage for The Lighthouse: on people going away & the effect on one’s feeling for them” (D3 119) (WOOLF, apud. FERNALD, 2015, p. 14). The action of people going away refers not only to the Ramsay members who died during the previous section, but also concerns James’s trip to the lighthouse, which, after ten years, is finally happening. In this respect, despite all of the tragedies reported in “Time Passes”, it is like “The Lighthouse” resumes the day after the one in “The Window”. The second idea corresponds to Lily and the effect Mrs. Ramsay’s absence has on her. In a way, *To the Lighthouse*’s last section seems to deal with two alternate temporalities: one that corresponds to the day following “The Window”, with the trip to the lighthouse taking place, and the other concerned with the characters’ state of mind after a ten-year period of losses and how it affects their own actions and perception of things. Therefore, the narrative is once again organized by internal and external processes.

Memory plays the major role in the section. Firstly conceived as a kind of elegy, “The Lighthouse” is a constant attempt to reunite again what has been lost – time, joy, Mrs. Ramsay, the trip to the lighthouse. If, on one side, “The Window” looked to the future and “Time Passes” to the present, the novel’s final section is embedded in the past, in the effort to recover it and

recreate it as it could have been. In its first chapter, we find Lily wondering what is the use of coming back to the house after Mrs. Ramsay's death, or even going to the lighthouse. She feels the urge to put these things together, give them any sense, "write them out in some sentence, then she would have got at the truth of things" (WOOLF, 2006, p. 3066). Unable to find a solution to her concerns, Lily suddenly remembers how, ten years ago, she was struggling to finish a painting of Mrs. Ramsay and decides to finally complete it:

> She sat her clean canvas firmly upon the easel, as a barrier, but she hoped sufficiently substantial to ward off Mr Ramsay and his exactingness. She did her best to look, when his back was turned, at her picture; that line there, that mass there. But it was out of the question. Let him be fifty feet away, let him not even speak to you, let him not even see you, he permeated, he prevailed, he imposed himself. He changed everything. She could not see the colour; she could not see the lines; even with his back turned to her, she could only think, But he'll be down on me in a moment, demanding – something she felt she could not give him. She rejected one brush; she chose another. When would those children come? When would they all be off? she fidgeted. That man, she thought, her anger rising in her, never gave; that man took. She, on the other hand, would be forced to give. Mrs Ramsay had given. Giving, giving, giving, she had died – and had left all this. Really, she was angry with Mrs Ramsay. With the brush slightly trembling in her fingers she looked at the hedge, the step, the wall. It was all Mrs Ramsay's doing. She was dead. Here was Lily, at fourty-four, wasting her time, unable to do a thing, standing there, playing at painting, playing at the one thing one did not play at, and it was all Mrs Ramsay's fault. She was dead. The step where she used to sit was empty. She was dead. (WOOLF, 2006, p. 3088-100)

Unlike "Time Passes", focalization is rendered by the characters in "The Lighthouse". As the action of placing the canvas upon the easel is described, the narrator dives into Lily's mind and portrays her consciousness indirectly, a technique highlighted by the amount of personal pronouns referring to her. There are some sentences, however, that approach Lily's thoughts more directly, creating the feeling that there is no narrator, no active agent mediating the representation of consciousness. "Let him be fifty feet away, let him not even speak to you, let him not even see you" is one of these examples. We cannot tell whether this is a faithful representation of Lily's thoughts or a kind of advice the narrator gives her about Mr. Ramsay's presence. The narrator's and Lily's voice merge into one, so that they become indistinguishable. Also, although the internal focalizer of the excerpt is Lily, we actually get to see a glimpse of

Mr. Ramsay's character through her eyes, whom she sees as a demanding man, in opposition to Mrs. Ramsay, regarded as someone that would constantly give herself to other peoples' requests. In a way, Lily tries to align herself with Mrs. Ramsay, in the sense that she sees her own painting as something she must be able to complete, a request that needs to be answered. Such a demand, however, will take the whole final section to be fulfilled.

The feeling of simultaneity is also present here. Lily's act of rejecting one of her brushes in favor of another is described in the middle of a paragraph portraying her thoughts. Simultaneity, however, is not restricted to the level of paragraphs. When we approach three or more chapters of "The Lighthouse", we notice that the events of the morning are taking place at the same time. On chapter IV, for instance, James, his sister Cam and Mr. Ramsay start their sailing to the lighthouse. The fifth chapter, on the other hand, is set back at the house, with Lily watching from the lawn as the boat sails before she focuses on her painting again. As she wonders on the future of her picture, the sixth chapter interrupts her reasoning to tell us that Macalister's boy, who is guiding the Ramsays to the lighthouse, has just taken a fish. Such information is given in only one short bracketed paragraph, which comprises the entire chapter; however, it reinforces the idea of simultaneity of the actions, since chapter VII resumes Lily's reasoning. Such interlacing game of events will continue until the end of the section, when James finally arrives at the lighthouse and Lily is able to finish her painting.

James's and Lily's accomplishments are only achieved by a matter of perspective, which take on the form of an internal realization. As he sails towards the lighthouse, James remembers how, ten years before, his father had told him that the trip would not happen. At that time, "the Lighthouse was then a silvery, misty-looking tower with a yellow eye that opened suddenly and softly in the evening" (WOOLF, 2006, p. 3592). Now, as he approaches it, he is able to see its "white-washed rocks; the tower, stark and straight". He notices how "it was barred with black and white", looks at its windows and the "washing spread on the rocks to dry" (ibid., p. 3592).

Seeing the lighthouse closely changed his previous idea of it, so that he wonders whether the lighthouse he saw as a boy was real. Soon, he realizes that "the other was also the Lighthouse. For nothing was simply one thing" (WOOLF, 2006, p. 3592). Somehow, James's realization resembles the multipersonal narrative technique Woolf employs in the novel, in the sense that more than one single perspective on the same thing is provided. James sees that his perspectives are not excluding; both are the lighthouse he has so long dreamed of.

Lily, unlike James, needs to see things from a distance to finally be able to finish her painting. As she stares at the sea from the lawn, imagining where the Ramsays' boat might be, she realizes how "distance had an extraordinary power" (WOOLF, 2006, p. 3620). Freed from Mr. Ramsay's demanding presence, Lily thinks that love, different from Mrs. Ramsay's act of giving herself to others, "had a thousand shapes", and that some lovers had the gift "to choose out the elements of things and place them together and so, giving them a wholeness not theirs in life" (ibid., p. 3672). This gift of creating a sense of wholeness reflects her difficulty with her painting, which consists not only in imagining Mrs. Ramsay sitting by the window in order to portray her, but in bringing her back to fulfill the picture, creating a bridge with the past that can at the same recover it and make it remain. However, as Lily realizes, one single perspective was "not enough to get round that one woman with", for "one wanted fifty pairs of eyes to see with" (ibid., p. 3751). In the end, Lily must let go of the past to finally complete her painting. Her final vision is the one that reminds her that the steps where Mrs. Ramsay used to sit are now empty, and the only way to at last finish the picture is through an act of creativity, which Lily achieves by drawing "a line there, in the centre" (ibid., p. 3897). Paul Sheehan, commenting on Lily's realization, argues that

> Between recollection and invention lies the creative agency of memory. Proust saw this as involuntary, but Woolf makes it the key to Lily's acts of remembrance. In communing with the dead, as she has been doing with Mrs. Ramsay, Lily struggles against the tyranny of the past; it is only when she discovers her own powers of creativity that she can be released from it. Lost time can be recovered, finally, through creative recollection, and this is akin to a kind of artistic vision. (SHEEHAN, 2015,

p. 57)

The key to cope with the past, therefore, lies not on memory alone, but in inventiveness as well, and that is achieved through art. In this sense, memory may bring the past back, while creativity may free us from it. However, *To the Lighthouse* also tells us that although art may be this safe spot of recollection and invention, its future is always uncertain. In every section of the novel we find characters wondering on or dealing with the future of their art and the response to it. Lily, for instance, at a certain point realizes that "nothing stays; all changes; but not words, not paint" (WOOLF, 2006, p. 3506). In a way, this is a hopeful realization, because despite our inability to apprehend time or even to remain in it, art is unchangeable, it is something that lasts. However, it might also last "hung in the attics" or "rolled up and flung under a sofa" (ibid., p. 3506), as she ponders. Luckily, Mr. Carmichael's volume of poetry does not end like that in "Time Passes", as it is met with an "unexpected success", since "the war, people said, had revived their interest in poetry" (ibid., p. 2927). Mr. Ramsay, on the other hand, reflecting on his own work as a professor and philosopher in "The Window", realizes that no matter how famous he may become, such fame will one day be outlasted by ordinary things, because even "the very stone one kicks with a boot will outlast Shakespeare" (WOOLF, 2006, p. 1578). In other words, although art can by its own means recover time, it will end up outlasted by it. As a result, one of the greatest lessons that *To the Lighthouse* teaches us is that art is not a kind of certainty in the world; it may outlast people, but cannot avoid fading away someday as well. However, we still cling to it as our last hope.

Therefore, in this work we intended to present how innovatively time and consciousness are interconnected and represented throughout *To the Lighthouse*. In light of Auerbach's ideas on modernist literature, many of the topics raised in his essay could be analyzed in Woolf's novel. The terminology provided by Herman & Vervaeck's *Handbook of Narrative Analysis* allowed us to update Auerbach's thoughts on the novel and helped us see the way Woolf

narratively builds her text and how the use of multipersonal subjectivism enables her to portray time in very particular ways. Yet, if, according to Mr. Ramsay, even a stone can outlast Shakespeare, the time to confirm such statement is yet to come, since Shakespeare's life and works are still influent and present nowadays; consequently, as this work attempted to prove, the same can be said about Virginia Woolf.

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