

DEFINING THE LYRICAL NOVEL: VIRGINIA WOOLF AND GRAHAM SWIFT

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*Abstract: The paper sets out to compare Swift's novels to those of Woolf and determine whether the former were influenced by the latter. Once we have explored how Woolf's literary movement has influenced Swift's and determined that Swift, like Woolf, wrote lyrical novels. The paper examines the lyrical novel with the use of narratological theories in order to broaden the reader's understanding. The definition offered by Woolf in her diary of the new novel she wished to create and which suggested mixture of genres (narrative, lyrical, dramatic) is confirmed by the statements Terry Eagleton makes in *What is a Novel?**

Keywords: genres, intertextuality, foregrounding, tragedy, monologues

What does a theory of the lyrical novel look like? First we need to examine a definition of the novel. We notice how large and permissive such a definition is. The second edition of the Oxford English Dictionary defines the novel as:

A fictitious prose narrative or tale of considerable length (now usually one long enough to fill one or more volumes), in which characters and actions representative of the real life of past or present times are portrayed in a plot of more or less complexity.

The definition offered by Woolf in her diary of the new novel she wished to create and which suggested mixture of genres (narrative, lyrical, dramatic) is confirmed by the statements Terry Eagleton makes in *What is a Novel?*:

The point about the novel [...] is not just that it eludes definitions, but that it actively undermines them. It is less a genre than an anti-genre. It cannibalizes other literary modes and mixes the bits and pieces promiscuously together. You can find poetry and dramatic dialogue in the novel, along with epic, pastoral, satire, history, elegy, tragedy and any number of other literary modes. Virginia Woolf described it as 'this most pliable of all forms'. The novel quotes, parodies and transforms other genres [...]

The novel is a mighty melting pot, a mongrel among literary thoroughbreds. There seems to be nothing it cannot do. It can investigate a single human consciousness for eight hundred pages. Or it can recount the adventures of an onion, chart the history of a family over six generations, or recreate the Napoleonic wars.

[...] The novel is an anarchic genre, since its rule is not to have rules.

[...] The novel presents us with a changing, concrete, open-ended history rather than a closed symbolic universe. Time and narrative are of its essence. (Eagleton 2005)

Here Eagleton notices that the novel as a genre includes anything. Any mixture of literary modes can be found in a novel. Even the example of focalization through a character's consciousness is given. The novel is constructed according to fluid rules. Eagleton also believes that the aspects of time and narrative are the most important elements in a novel. Uses of time, place and narrative constructed mainly through lyrical monologues are common in Woolf and Swift. To these the role of intertextuality in the reader's experience may be added. The foregrounding theory explains why the lyrical mode is perceived by the reader in a way not merely tied to the use of language. Gestalt psychology (Evans and Green 2006: 65) speaks about figure-ground organization and the way humans have a cognitive ability to "segregate any given scene into figure-ground organization". In this case, a certain aspect becomes prominent in a scene or in a text. In the lyrical novel, this mixture of genres becomes more visible than in other novels. The lyrical mode is dominant, while dramatic and narrative modes work to intensify it. Language is not the only means of expression and of creation in the lyrical novel. The use of other traditions is brought forward for the same purpose. Readers process and bring along their understanding of those traditions, and especially of lyrical or dramatic aspects, which help to foreground those modes in the lyrical novel. Readers may be regarded as having scripts which they apply when intertextual references are relevant to their present reading. These scripts correspond to their expectations based on previous experience which are either contradicted or confirmed. As proof, critics focus on either the innovative or the traditional aspects in Woolf's novels. They see her as closer to either the Victorians or the Modernists. The readers' attention is caught by either the traditional story, or the plot, or by the lyrical aspects. One of these main aspects becomes the prominent function of the readers' expectations. One of these aspects proves to be more powerful.

That which Ersevîm states about the lyrical novel, in *Virginia Woolf: Lyrical Novelist*, has been realized or put into practice by Woolf and Swift:

Since its inception, the novel has been closely associated with the art of story-telling, which necessarily includes in its narrative technique some of dramatic action, causation, time, setting, and identifiable characters. To the contrary, the lyrical poem has dealt primarily with the suggestion of feelings and themes in musical or pictorial patterns. Lyrical fiction, this new and hybridic genre, which submerges the narrative in imagery has revealed fresh possibilities for the novel. (Ersevîm 1966)

The features Ersevîm attributes to the traditional novel are present in the lyrical novel as well. They are just differently represented. The story is there, although it is differently constructed or left for the reader to construct by filling in the missing parts (especially causation). Dramatic action, time, setting and characters are elements which Ersevîm includes under the label of narrative technique. The dramatic mode has always been present in the novel, even in the traditional one. However, in the lyrical novel the dramatic mode is differently represented. Woolf thought of the dramatic mode as part of the new novel she wished to create. When she said that she wished to create a novel with dramatic prose, a novel that should be acted and not read, she meant that she wished for the reader to share the intensity of the emotional experience. Also, she referred to the apparent lack of intervention of the author, or of the omniscient narrator, as the perspective presented will be entirely the characters' and the story

would be made up of lyrical monologues and lyrical scenes. Afterwards, Ersevîm mentions that “the suggestion of feelings and themes in musical or pictorial patterns” are features of the lyrical poem. Woolf has mentioned these features in her theories and tried to apply them in her novels. The emotional experience is clearly represented in the lyrical novel, while other arts such as painting or music have been introduced in the novels’ content. Woolf wished to use music to influence the narrative structure; however, it was Swift who put this theory into practice. Ersevîm views lyrical fiction as a hybridic genre, as it includes narrative, dramatic and poetic modes or genres. Woolf and Swift also manage to represent differently the features which Ersevîm mentions as belonging to traditional novels, while they also use the features which Ersevîm identifies as being specific to lyrical poetry.

One characteristic which was not explored sufficiently for the lyrical novel is its features of tragedy. Aristotle, in *The Poetics*, defines tragedy as generating emotions such as fear and pity. Aristotle’s definition of tragedy is the following:

A tragedy is the imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself; in appropriate and pleasurable language;...in a dramatic rather than narrative form; with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish a catharsis of these emotions.

The reader should feel pity and a dram of sympathy for the tragic hero, and fear that the fate of this kind of hero might prove to be unfavourable. Plot and character are the most important elements of tragedy according to Aristotle. This means that unity of plot is necessary for a good tragedy. Characters need to be believable. Other less important elements for tragedy are thought, diction, melody and spectacle. To what extent is the lyrical novel tragic? The form of tragedy in the lyrical novel is not the traditional, Aristotelian one. Moreover, the extent to which plot or action exists in the lyrical novel is debatable. However, in Swift especially, we notice that traumatic events are given a significant place. Even though the degree of tragedy is not as high as in Aristotelian tragedy, we notice that there are embedded texts where tragic events are given center stage. For instance, in Woolf, we have the tragedy of Septimus and Lucrezia. In Swift, Bill Unwin in *Ever After* parallels the fate of Shakespeare’s tragic hero Hamlet.

For the lyrical novel, the structure has an influence on creating a lyrical effect. This is achieved by structuring the story’s presentation on lyrical monologues and also by the so-called “absence of a concrete plot” (Utkarsh 2011). However, with respect to plot, in the representation of moments of vision we notice the need for finding a pattern, for finding coherence in apparently disparate elements, or in an apparently fragmentary world.

De Paiva Correia reflects on the lyrical mode’s general association with lack of action or coherent plot:

When we consider Shakespeare’s lyric sequence, his *Sonnets*, we soon realize that the text expands into a strong strip of action, and frames several characters. Since there is no doubt we are in the presence of lyric poetry, we must come to the conclusion that the lyric mode, similarly to the narrative and dramatic ones, is a powerful transmitter of action, as far as a coherent plot is concerned.

Shakespeare’s *Sonnets*, the outstanding example I have conjured up, definitely throws light on the subject. We should, however, bear in mind that even a short, isolated lyric poem usually displays action, even if the action is minimal. (De Paiva Correia 2008: 89)

She thus offers evidence for a new way of looking at the lyrical mode. De Paiva Correia believes that there is always at least some minimal action even in a lyric poem. De Correia claims that “the lyrical mode, similarly to the narrative and dramatic ones, is a powerful transmitter of action”, as far as a coherent plot is concerned. The use of the lyrical mode transmits action, and it is here that the active role of the reader comes in. After all, we could compare the situation of the lyrical mode as transmitter of action with the fact that certain incidents or other details are omitted from any narrative if they are considered irrelevant or unimportant. What is important for the lyrical novel will thus be concentrated in the instances represented in the lyrical mode. From there, the reader will be able to draw connections and infer what has not been said.

Hühn also claims that there is always a story, even in lyric poetry. There are always incidents, even in a poem. These features will make poetry suitable for a narratological analysis. We could also say that the lyrical mode in Woolf includes a story and incidents. According to Hühn,

[...] first, poetry can profitably be analysed on the basis of narratological categories and thus be compared with prose narratives proper (by poetry, I mean the lyric in the narrow sense, not merely narrative poems such as ballads or verse narratives); and second, events are a prerequisite of narrativity in fictional literature as well as in the lived world. (Hühn 2005-2007)

Narrating is used universally to structure experience, to make sense of the world and to present these ordered structures:

The first premise, the transgeneric applicability of narratology to lyric poetry, maintains that narrating is an anthropologically universal device for structuring experience and making sense of the world as well as communicating such ordered structures to others (or to oneself). (Hühn 2005-2007)

This statement references the moments of vision or analysis of the past in Woolf’s and Swift’s novels. Characters in Woolf and Swift, by their moments of vision, try to find a pattern. Characters in Swift and in Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* try to establish a coherence between their present situation and past experiences. They do this by remembering the past, and by telling their stories.

Hühn goes on to mention that

This ordering function of narrative essentially rests on the combination of two operations - the temporal concatenation of individual elements (existents and incidents) into some kind of coherent sequence and the mediation of this sequence from a particular perspective. (Hühn 2005-2007)

This statement underlines the role of the representation of time in the lyrical novel. The sequences may be regarded as the equivalent term for lyrical scenes. Temporal unity is in fact what holds a lyrical scene together. Hühn mentions the presentation of the sequence (or lyrical scene) from a certain perspective which makes narrative coherent. This reminds us that the perceiving character ensures the unity of the plot. What Hühn claims about lyrical poems holds true for the lyrical mode in Woolf and Swift. Everything Hühn states references earlier claims about the lyrical mode in Woolf and Swift. The following statement is no exception:

[...] lyric poems can be described as modelling temporal sequences of incidents, typically of mental processes comprising reflections, memories, emotions, imaginations, desires or anxieties, but also involving sense perceptions or physical developments (such as walking or dying). They mediate these sequences from a specific, usually personalised subjective perspective, through an act of articulation. (Hühn 2005-2007)

The lyrical mode in Woolf and Swift contains the features presented in the quotation above. What Hühn claims above has been mentioned in regards to the way the stream-of-consciousness technique tries to represent the workings of memory, or in the way a character's subjective perception shapes the story for the readers. Moreover, it is the act of perception which unifies the plot. Modernists try to bring unity and coherence through their novels, a unity which is not there in real life and which is only possible by means of art:

As far as the subject is concerned, modernist fiction's subject is tragic or comic tragic in essence and tends to present a fragmented view of human subjectivity and history (think of *Wasteland*, for instance, or Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*), and presents that fragmentation as something tragic, something to be lamented and mourned as a loss. Many modernist works try to uphold the idea that novels can provide the unity, coherence, and meaning which has been lost in most of modern life [...] art will do what other institutions fail to do. (Jin 2011: 114-118)

De Paiva Correia and Hühn question the statements that in lyric poetry, or in the lyrical mode, there are no incidents and no story. Jin supports the idea that there is a different presentation of the story in Modernist fiction:

A "striking feature of modern fiction is their giving precedence to the depiction of the characters' mental and emotional reactions to external events, rather than the events themselves. In doing so, the novelists abandoned the conventional usages of realistic plot structure, characterization and description, and their works became successions of "fleeting images of the external world with thoughts and half-thoughts and shadows of thought attached to the immediate present or moving back and forth in memory"(Chen, 1999)." (Jin 2011: 114-118)

Another aspect in which the Modernist novel differs from the traditional novel is the use of time:

[...] modern fiction does not start with the introduction of the time of a story and records the life experience of characters but usually reveals the characters' thoughts in less than an hour or just two or three days. (Jin 2011: 114-118)

A very important aspect is stressed in this quotation, namely the way a story is represented in Modernist fiction. In contrast with traditional novels, in Modernist fiction a story is not presented right from the beginning. The same aspect is also present in Postmodernist fiction. However, in some of Swift's novels, the time of the story often takes place outside the fabula.

Consciousness may be dynamic, not static. Referring to postmodernism, Lodge (2002: 91) states that "the individual self is not a fixed and stable entity, but is constantly being created and modified in consciousness through interaction with others and the world." This

view is similar to Woolf's. In *A Writer's Diary*, she wonders whether life is "solid" or "shifting", connecting this aspect with identity and change:

Now is life very solid or very shifting?... This has gone on for ever; will last for ever; goes down to the bottom of the world - this moment I stand on. Also it is transitory, flying, diaphanous... Perhaps it may be that though we change, one flying after another, so quick, so quick, yet we are somehow successive and continuous we human beings, and show the light through. But what is the light?

Here we feel some dynamism, some change of state, even if we deal with an inner reality rather than with external dramatic and dynamic incidents. What gives the impression that the story is static in Woolf's novels? The subject does not move in space in the main fabula, while he presents the story from memory. In Woolf, the following aspects are pointed out: as Pasold claims (105), "the subject can remain fixed in space and its consciousness can move in time (time-montage)"; "time remains fixed, and it is the spatial element that changes (space-montage)". Thus, the subject may not move in the main fabula, or otherwise there may be no movement at the level of time while the spatial element changes. The time referred to here is the time of the main fabula, which, just like the subject, remains fixed. The action in a traditional sense takes place in the presentation of characters' memories of the past. One may also find a correspondent of this distinction at the level of the memories, meaning that the subject and time can be shown as fixed even in memories, as the subject may not remember something dramatic and dynamic, while some thoughts keep the external aspect static.

If we take this aspect into account, Swift's novels may be regarded as being more dynamic in the lyrical scenes where memories are shown. For instance, in *Waterland*, Crick's story, as recomposed from his memories, is quite dynamic. There are lots of external action and external incidents. The same may be said about the story in *Out of This World*, *Last Orders*, *Tomorrow*, *Wish You Were Here*, *The Light of Day*, *Ever After*, *Shuttlecock*, and *The Sweetshop Owner*. When characters look back on the past, the story is presented to the reader. Lots of incidents are revealed through memories. It is up to the reader to make the connections between the incidents. The incidents are many and the plot is complex. It is true that the action in the main fabula may be quite simple in some cases. In *The Sweetshop Owner* or in *Waterland*, the action in the main fabula is simple. Characters just look back into the past, while in the present of the main fabula nothing much happens. The same may be said about *The Light of Day* or about *Tomorrow*. The main fabula presents a static situation, from which characters go back in time or reflect on the present and on the past.

The situation in the main fabula may involve little action and a limited setting. For instance, in *Tomorrow*, the setting is the interior, and Paula's reflections occur at nighttime, possibly as she lies in her bed while her family is asleep. If the readers think of action in traditional terms, there is none in the main fabula. However, as the story is told through reflections and memories, incidents do occur. In *The Sweetshop Owner*, during the span of one day William remembers what has happened in the past, what has led to his current solitude. He is in conflict with his daughter Dorry. He expects her and wishes to see her but she does not come and he dies alone. Once again, not much happens in the main fabula and once again the setting seems restricted to the interior. However, the story is reconstructed by both William (and also by the lyrical monologues of the other characters, for whom there is no precise setting in the present of the main fabula) and the readers. In *Waterland*, the main fabula presents Crick in front of his students. The present situation prompts him to explain to them the importance of history, both public and private. Once again, the main fabula includes

mostly reflections. Crick's mind goes back to his memories while he talks in front of his students. In *The Light of Day* there is a bit more movement and there are even external settings. George walks through the city of London, he talks to Rita, but he also reflects a lot and the dynamic action takes part in the fragments of his memories which make up the plot in the novel. Once the story is reconstructed, the reader may realize that, despite the way it is told or presented, there are lots of incidents and the action can be dramatic and dynamic at times. In *Ever After*, Unwin reflects a lot and the action seems to take place in the past, not in the present. However, there is, unlike in the previous novels, a rather dynamic element in *Ever After*, namely Unwin's conflict with the Potters. Some scenes are present at the time of the main fabula, one of them being the scene where Unwin ironically parallels Katharine Potter's attempt with acting like a character in a Medieval romance. The ironic element brings dynamism to the scene, together with the visual aspects of the external action. In *Out of This World* once again dynamism of action lies mostly in the past. Sophie's lyrical monologue takes place in front of her therapist, in his office. Once again, this is a static, interior setting. However, there are certain external incidents which take place at the present of the main fabula, yet they are mostly implied and reconstructed. Sophie's decision to see her father places her in the plane towards the end of the novel. In *Last Orders* and *Wish You Were Here* travelling takes place at the time of the main fabula, so the setting is no longer only static and interior. External incidents and characters move and have dialogue at the time of the main fabula. However, the main dynamic incidents take place mainly in the past, just like in the previous novels, and once again the plot is reconstructed by both characters and readers.

In *The Voyage Out*, *Night and Day*, *Jacob's Room*, *To the Lighthouse*, *Flush*, *Orlando*, *The Waves*, *The Years*, and *Between the Acts*, there is no such distinction between the situation in the main fabula and the situation in the characters' memories. Perhaps it is because of this aspect that there is not at least the illusion of dynamism in the previous novels by Graham Swift. Since there is no return to the past, a past from where a dynamic action can be rebuilt, the readers are left with only a static situation at the time of the main fabula. It is only in *Mrs. Dalloway* that a similar situation to Swift's novels may be found. The settings in the main fabula vary from interior to exterior. There are even walks through the city of London, and characters move in space in the main fabula. There is also the party at Clarissa's place, where there is dialogue and movement. However, once again the real action seems to have taken place in the past and once again both characters and readers reconstruct it from the lyrical scenes.

Thompson (2012) sketches the following plot structure for *The Voyage Out*:

The Euphrosyne's voyage (Chapters 1-6).

- **Beyond roads, gods, and mankind (VO 14-15)**
- **Winter pilgrimage (VO 17)**
- **Shrinking worlds (VO 17-18, 31, 35)**
 - Ship as island, silence of the voyage (55)
- **What does anyone in England know about the ocean? Why does one marry? (VO 23, 31, 35)**

The New World: Santa Marina, Buenos Aires (Chapters 7-9)

- **Santa Marina and Helen's villa, the hotel (VO 56, 57)**
- **Rachel's "care": looking through windows (60-61, 63, 64)**
- **"bubbles" (69-70)**

Parties (Chapters 10-14)

- **Changing (79)**
- **The picnic into the mountains (80, 81)**
 - **Shrinking worlds and telescopic visions (83, 85)**
 - **Rachel looks (86-87)**
- **The Dance (chapters 12-14)**

Profound thoughts

- **...and sudden revelations (Chapters 15-19)**

A Final Voyage (Chapters 20-27)

- **The Jungle Expedition**
- **Why does one marry? (TVO 158)**
- **Two roads image (TVO 157)**

This illustrates the way this novel differs in terms of structure from a traditional novel. One may notice the importance of various reflections, which coexist with more traditional scenes. External action is there, yet time seems expanded on various reflections, in the sense that reflections occupy quite a large amount of textual space and of the reader's time. What is more, the conventions of the marriage plot, as critics have stated, are challenged. Rachel, the main character in the novel, does not marry; she dies. *Night and Day* has a structure which reminds the reader of a play or of a Jane Austen kind of plot. The focus is on the relationships of two couples. There is a dramatic feel to the novel, like in a play, at times. However, once again, non-narrative aspects do take over most of the textual space and reading time. *The Years* presents the history of a family over time. There are dramatic scenes with dialogue; some attention is given to external elements. However, once again, interior reality and non-narrative comments predominate. *Orlando* and *Flush* were called biographies, yet they are more like novels. They are not traditional biographies and, after all, not even realistic, since various fantastic elements take over at times, such as Orlando's immortality and the way *Flush*, a dog, can tell his story. There are various dramatic scenes where external elements are present. Judging from the way the story progresses, it has, at times, a rather dynamic feel. Lots of incidents take place. Sometimes, suspense is present, such as in the scenes where *Flush* is kidnapped or during Orlando's adventures. Once again, though, there are moments where non-narrative comments take over and occupy a large amount of the textual space. A dynamic element in *Between the Acts* is the preparation for the play. The play contains some ironic and quite dramatic scenes which bring the attention of the reader to the external aspect. However, the lyrical atmosphere is one of pessimism surrounding the feel of the upcoming war. This and other sombre reflections slow down the rhythm of the progression of the story.

Affective narratology brings narratology deeper into the interpretation of narratives. The focus on emotion and affective response is significant in the lyrical novel. Astrid Erill, in *Narratology and Cultural Memory Studies*, believes that narratology can offer insight into memory studies, since storytelling, like memory, connects time levels (past, present, future):

Storytelling is per definitionem an act of 'memory', in the broad sense proposed by Augustine, namely an act of connecting the temporal levels of past, present and future. Conversely, cognitive psychologists hold that acts of memory which belong to the episodic-autobiographical memory system (i. e. the memory of lived experience) can *only* be realized

by way of storytelling. At the heart of both autobiographic memory *and* narrative, then, lies a process which Paul Ricoeur describes as a ‘grasping together’ and ‘integrating’ “into one whole and complete story multiple and scattered events” (Ricoeur 1984: x). (Erill 2009: 213-214)

The use of non-linear chronology has an artistic effect. In Swift, narrators go back to the past in an attempt to establish the connections between the past and the present, as well as the causes for various incidents and the present situation. In doing this, the characters return to the trauma. They also analyse and attempt to put together apparently disconnected, fragmented incidents, which become cohesive as they bring memory back into the discussion.

Maya Rao (1997) details how the conception of cyclical time is illustrated in the story in the novel *Waterland*: As Crick tries to understand why his wife kidnaps a baby from a supermarket, he goes back to the past and remembers Mary’s abortion in their teenage years. He remembers the dead fetus which damaged Mary’s body and prevents her from having children at present. Rao concludes:

Showing how "the history of the past is built in, directly and effectively, really, in the present" (Alphen, 210) this active connection between the past and present constructs time cyclically. (Rao 1997)

This theory of cyclical time holds true, in fact, for all the narrators in Swift’s novels, who go back to examine the past in order to understand the present. Rao believes that:

In response to Victorian linear time, *Waterland* [...] interweave[s] the past and the present to create cyclical time. Contrasting the linear time which constructs the past as dead, cyclical time makes the past come to life as an active force in the present. Swift structures *Waterland* cyclically by placing the past and present parts of his narrative in non-chronological order [...] (Rao 1997)

Cyclical time is thus the result of the interweaving of past and present in the narrative. According to Rao, linear time “constructs the past as dead”, while cyclical time, represented by a non-linear narration, “makes the past come to life as an active force in the present”. Of course, this structure does not apply only to *Waterland*, but to all of Swift’s novels. The characters in all of Swift’s novels have the same view on time, and they tell the story by their lyrical monologues in a way which is based on the same principle as Crick’s. Woolf’s novel *Mrs. Dalloway* is built on the same principle, by using the same concept of cyclical time. Together with the characters, the reader will try to understand the important influence of the past on the present. The reader is drawn to participate emotionally in the understanding of the past. Due to sympathizing with the characters, the reader will be motivated to share in their intense emotional experiences as well as their active investigation into the role of the past. Just as the characters rebuild their past, the readers rebuild the plot into a coherent story. Ricoeur confirms the view that plot has a shaping function:

Ricoeur's emphasis on the constructive role of plot, its active, shaping function, offers a useful corrective to the structural narratologists' neglect of the dynamics of narrative and points us toward the reader's vital role in the understanding of plot. (Onega 1996: 255-256)

Ricoeur's theories show the need for affective narratology, which emphasizes the way the reader's emotional experience is shaped by the narrative structure and the way she participates emotionally in the story of the characters.

Culler supports this view of "replotting" narratives when he talks about narrative competence:

If narrative theory is an account of narrative competence, it must focus also on readers' ability to identify plots. Readers can tell that two works are versions of the same story; they can summarize plots and discuss the adequacy of a plot summary. It's not that they will always agree, but disagreements are likely to reveal considerable shared understanding. (Culler 1980)

The characters in the novels experience cyclical time. They also try to understand the present situation by going back to the past, and by attempting to find connections between memories. In this respect, characters and readers share the same task, which is of building (or rebuilding) a plot.

Non-linear chronology shapes a tragic view of the world for the characters who try to find unity in a chaotic world. Its role is the following: to represent a fragmented reality, a fragmented experience of the characters, with fragmented memories, to represent traumatic experiences and intense emotional experiences, to represent the workings of memory, to represent affective memory, and to shape the experience of rhythm for the readers. Narrative rhythm in Postmodernism becomes "hasty and fragmented, frantic and verging on the incoherent. [...] it is by disrupting the correlation between fabula and story [...] that the novel achieves its postmodern feel" (Bal 1997: 110). Novels with non-linear chronology thus, by their structure, reflect a fragmented rhythm. This fragmented view of the world is also a common feature of Modernism and Postmodernism. Generally, while for Modernists such a fragmented view of life is regarded as tragic, it is an acceptable representation of reality for the postmodernists. In both Woolf and Swift the characters' efforts go towards finding unity in their experience, so we can say that in their novels fragmentation is tragic.

There are significant relations between Modernism and Postmodernism and the past. What is striking is that almost the same traditions are there in both Woolf and Swift (Victorianism, represented in the tragic mood, and Romanticism, present in the poetic mood and mixture of genres), and they work together in both to create the lyrical novel. Woolf and Swift are just two representatives of the influences of previous movements on their contemporary time. Perhaps the intertextuality might be regarded as having affective consequences on the readers. Past traditions are there as a background for understanding and expressing the characters' emotional states. Intertextuality is used for more than just making a statement in contemporary novels about past traditions. It uses these traditions to create an emotionally and poetically charged setting.

The analysis of the lyrical novel in Woolf and Swift brings to the attention of the reader the way these writers construct their novels. The elegiac, sometimes mournful or nostalgic, at other times nearly tragic aspect of their novels contributes, together with the Romantic tropes, to insight into a definition of the lyrical novel. Swift uses Woolf's techniques and he even takes them further. It is problematic to say what exactly constitutes a traditional plot and what exactly the readers understand by a traditional story. Woolf shocked her readers by her experimental technique. Yet why did this happen? Are her novels really that different from traditional ones? In fact, she did shape the readers' perceptions of what she called the traditional novel in her essays. She defined her new type of novel in opposition to the traditional novel. Thus, she created expectations about previous novels and then

challenged them. The same has happened with Swift. He tells us that he is concerned with stories in an old-fashioned sense. This means that our expectations are for the fiction of his time to be different. He will thus stand out with his style. Critics such as Malcolm underline his lyricism and present him in opposition to other writers who are his contemporaries. Lea (2005: 6) tells us that Swift's concern with ethics makes him an old-fashioned story-teller. Readers form expectations because of their conceptions of Modernism and Postmodernism.

The readers' expectations are challenged when a certain group of writers thwart their expectations associated with the respective movement or cultural context. However, even a lyrical poem contains a story and readers must contribute by the common process of understanding a story. The process of understanding rebuilds the story and its plot. Readers' perceptions can be tricked to the extent that they come to question the borders between lyrical and narrative modes and even between genres. Is it all an illusion? We can ask ourselves this question once we notice that the definition of the novel has always been one that includes anything. The writing of a novel is about the predomination of a certain mode. It is all a matter of degree. Yet the effect on the reader is, without a doubt, very powerful. The readers' interpretations and reactions go beyond the very form of the story, or of the novel. Their reactions and interpretations go even beyond what Stanley Fish called "interpretive communities". At times, for instance when they read the moments of vision in Woolf or Swift, the readers forget they are reading a novel. They feel as if they are reading poetry and their perception is taken over by this illusion. Identifying previous literature in Woolf and Swift – and indeed, they often use the same pieces, from writers of the Romantic era or from Shakespeare – helps explain the readers' reactions. It all started with Woolf's theory, and to this we add this theory of illusion, of emotional reactions of the readers. Among the first readers to express their perception of the lyrical novel was Lytton Strachey who wrote to Woolf that her novels looked very much like poetry. Woolf herself had thought of calling her new type of novel "elegy". This thesis shows that the lyrical mode predominates as it is constructed through the use of previous literature associated with lyric poetry.

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