

Clarissa and Septimus

The text is an extract from the first part of Virginia Woolf's "Mrs Dalloway", a novel published in 1925. The plot is reduced to the minimum: it tells about a day in the life of Clarissa Dalloway. One day she decides to buy some flowers for a party; at the shop a violent noise from a car shifts the reader attention on the street, where Septimus Warren Smith and his wife Lucrezia are walking.

The first paragraph tells about Mrs Dalloway's thoughts during her way to the shop about her daughter's teacher, Mrs Killman. Right from the beginning the reader might notice the importance of anaphoric structures in the narration, whose function is to create phonological effects and to give cohesion to the text. There is the use of free direct speech.

In the second paragraph the point of view shifts from Mrs Dalloway to the narrator, who describes the woman entering the shop and being received by Mrs Pym, the shop owner. Virginia Woolf uses the language of sense impression: the writer often appeals to sight, to touch, to smell and to hearing.

In the third paragraph the point of view shifts again from Clarissa to Mrs Pym, who describes Mrs Dalloway as a kind person, who looks a bit older than the previous years. The writer appeals to the senses of sight and smell, describing the colours of the different flowers and the freshness and coolness of their smell. Virginia Woolf uses anaphoric structures ("this beauty, this scent, this colour") and the technique of enumeration, making a list of all the flowers Mrs Dalloway sees and of all the colours that decorate the shop.

In the fourth paragraph the narrator focuses on Mrs Pym, who goes to the window to see what has just happened.

The following paragraph contains informations about the car that caused the noise and the streets of London where the "rumours" spread. The writer appeals to sight. Among all the passers-by's hypothesis, the writer reports the one of a man who doesn't speak English correctly ("The Prime Minister's kyar"), making the reader aware of the variety of people living in that part of London.

Septimus Warren Smith is introduced by an anaphora and he also heard the explosion. He is presented through the categories of age, physical appearance and through the description of his strange. Septimus' point of view is presented through a metaphor and a comparison. The language of sense impression is used to describe the different colours of the ladies' parasols.

The last paragraph is introduced by Septimus' wife words: she suggests to go on, while her husband treats her angrily. She is a young Italian girl called Lucrezia, who's very worried about Septimus' behaviour.. Then narration shifts in time and place, to a past autumn on the Embarkment.