

Characterization in Jacob's Room and Mrs Dalloway by Virginia Woolf

A comparative analysis of Jacob Flanders in Jacob's Room and Clarissa Dalloway in Mrs Dalloway.

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Abstract

This thesis takes a look at how Virginia Woolf uses her writing-style to build up characters in two different books. Woolf is famous for her use of the Stream of Consciousness-technique in several of her works, and the works chosen for this analysis is *Jacob's Room* from 1922 and *Mrs Dalloway* from 1925, two consecutively published works in her bibliography. That specific pairing for analysis works well for several reasons. Many people have analyzed Virginia Woolf, but few people have compared these two novels. Since they are published consecutively, it gives us a chance to see Woolf's development from the first to the second book. The most important reason is the great contrasts between how the main character is presented in both works, with one being shaped mostly by external forces and one being shaped by mostly internal forces.

By comparing both works, one could tell that even though they are presented differently, they needed some of the same elements to function. Both Jacob Flanders in *Jacob's Room* and Clarissa Dalloway in *Mrs Dalloway* are built up by the use of stream of consciousness, mostly from external forces, but more internally in *Mrs Dalloway*. Memory plays also an important role in the last novel.

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1 Introduction

Character in literature is defined by Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan as a construct within the story, with a network of different traits. These traits may or may not appear in the text, meaning that the narrator may mention some of them, and the rest is up to the reader to interpret and discover. In other words, if the text itself does not say something about the traits of a character, it is up to the reader to decide if these large portions of text reveal how the characters act, how they are, and what kind of personalities they have (Rimmon-Kenan 59).

While “the self” in Virginia Woolf’s work has been a topic of vigorous analysis by many scholars and critics, the topic of character and characterization has not primarily been the main focus of analysis. Much of the analysis has discussed the minds of the characters in her work, and psychoanalytic interpretations of her characters alongside observation of Woolf’s interest in human subjectivity, imply interest in character. The topic of characterization and how Woolf’s writing style is present in the construction of these characters on the other hand, remains areas which has not been much explored (Sandberg 6-7). Much of the work done on character has also centered on the characters already being established, and how they function in their world, in relation to the time period, and the environment surrounding them. Indeed, focus on the inner psychological ecosystem has been of discussion, and a character such as Clarissa Dalloway has certainly been highly relevant to the discussion of the psychoanalytic self in her work. The questions asked, are such as how Woolf has balanced the relationship between public and private space in Clarissa’s life, and how we see the character through both her thoughts and the public actions surrounding her. Edmonson (2012) says that this relationship between the public and the private spaces causes Woolf to have to account for other characters than Clarissa, like Septimus Warren Smith, through both the public space and through the private space, through the eyes of Clarissa Dalloway and other characters (19). In other words, scholars have researched how the characters of Virginia Woolf have challenged their society and the current role in their world. The focus has been on the significance of these characters in their time, but less on the construction of them. Jacob Flanders challenges the world around him by existing solely through the public and private space around him, and not through his own private world.

Rachel Bowlby noted that Virginia Woolf constructed a world where the readers see interaction between the most significant characters and some characters who are not at all of

importance. They are characters that exist in the world of the well-established characters, and may be a part of their life, but are not a part of the narration we see. Bowlby claims this adds to the point of realism, that Woolf has constructed a world where any person you know may enter your life on that present day, but they may not play a big role in the events of your life on that very day. Bowlby says Woolf has included a huge number of characters in her world, where some of them are intentionally meant to be forgotten, but to have their little moment. The elderly grey nurse sitting next to Peter Walsh in the park when he starts dreaming, is of no significance to the story. Nevertheless, she has her little moment whereas she is knitting next to Peter before and after he has his dream, “being one of those spectral presences which rise in twilight in woods made of sky and branches” (*Mrs Dalloway* 48, from now on abbreviated as *MD*). She is an observer entering Peter’s life briefly on that day, adding a presence to the story, but not a significance. The girl that Peter followed prior to this segment is indeed of no significance to the greater scheme of *Mrs Dalloway* but works as a conduit to introduce us to Walsh’ memory of Regent’s Park (*MD* 46-48). Furthermore, this notion of having in-depth characters which we learn much about, and outer sphere characters who we merely forget, is claimed to represent reality. We can only think about a handful of people at once, and some people we may know, might be forgotten on that very day (Bowlby 2011). The handsome girl and the grey nurse entered Peter Walsh’ life on that very day and changed the story, but we forget them as a part of the story shortly after.

1.1 Jacob’s Room

Jacob’s Room was written in 1922 and is Virginia Woolf’s third novel. We follow the main character Jacob Flanders through his childhood, life as a young adult, and ultimately follow him to his death. Throughout his life we meet several of Jacob’s acquaintances, both friends, family and love interests. The structure of the novel is reminiscent of the one of a *bildungsroman*, since we follow him from early life until death. The big difference is that the book is structured into scenes, where Jacob almost always is present. The focus, however, is often not necessarily on him, but on the people he surrounds himself with. Thus, *Jacob’s Room* ultimately shows us the entire life of Jacob Flanders in different scenes, and often they do not have any sort of connection to one another. In her letters, she wrote that the short stories “An Unwritten Novel”, “The Mark on the Wall” from her collection, “Monday or Tuesday”, were the discovery of her creative path, which led to writing *Jacob’s Room* and *Mrs Dalloway*. These short stories marked a change in her writing style, saying that she could

now “embody her deposit of experience in a shape that fitted it,” meaning that she now could see how she could enhance character with experiences of her own. She was more able to include herself in the “self” of the characters. These stories focused much on surrounding character, the self, and the awareness of their representation. The image of “the self” embedded in *Jacob’s Room* is vastly different, as it is the self of characters surrounding Jacob Flanders that characterizes him. If Woolf has embodied her deposit of experience in the characters she creates, it means that Jacob is built up by Woolf’s experiences embedded other characters than Jacob. These are the very elements that several critics have chosen to focus on; how these characters interact with each other, their relationship, and their perception of each other and the society and the world surrounding them. Sandberg’s example of “*The Mark on the Wall*” displays this very bit of information. The short story connects the image of oneself and that of other people, the very expertise Woolf displayed in *Mrs Dalloway* (Sandberg 45/ Letters vol. 4, 231). Mrs Norman who tells Jacob that he should not smoke in the non-smoking carriage, describes Jacob as the nice, handsome, distinguished boy who she sees as indifferent. This displays the image of experience, embedding Woolf’s experience in an elderly lady, characterizing Jacob as he is seen through the eyes of his surroundings (*Jacob’s Room* 21-22, from now on abbreviated as *JR*).

Virginia wrote in her diary in August 1922 that Leonard Woolf had read through *Jacob’s Room* and called it her best work yet. He praised her writing, but said she had no philosophy in life, and that the people, her characters, were ghosts. Virginia on the other hand, said the following: “There’s no doubt in my mind that I have found out how to begin (at 40) to say something in my own voice; & that interests me so that I feel I can go ahead without praise” (Diary vol. 2, 186). This may explain the different approach later taken to *Mrs Dalloway* where most of the central characters were introduced in thorough detail. Given that Woolf presented them with great inner-depth stream of consciousness, presenting us characters built up from within, they may be considered anything but ghosts. Leonard may have called out the greatest difference between *Jacob’s Room* and *Mrs Dalloway*. Furthermore, many critics note that despite these comments made by Woolf, her early work should be seen as novels where she attempted to work out her fictional voice (Raitt 2010). The reason for this claim, is that she wrote in her diary ten years later, after the release of *The Waves*, that “*The Waves* marks a new beginning, that this was the truly first work in her own style” (Diary vol. 3, 53). Nevertheless, *Jacob’s Room* and the short stories that led to the

inspiration of the novel, are seen as the turning point in Woolf's career, where her style was more character-oriented. The great contrast between the two novels also display this interest, that Woolf was willing to experiment with characterization in such different ways, with two contrasting approaches. The brilliance pointed out by Leonard, the ghosts she created, may have been an unintentional effort by Woolf, as she was at the time considering her voice finally as her own, but in retrospect she did not develop into her own style for another ten years. The willingness to experiment and explore however, aided in creating these ghosts, the character which we could not get close to.

Although critics and Woolf herself have different views regarding the development of her voice in 1922, Raitt (2010) notes that those who observe in *Jacob's Room* struggle to develop a mature, coherent identity. A struggle in which critics claim is a parallel to Woolf's struggle to attempt to develop her own voice. The struggle of the observes, can be a result of the number of observes who present in the novel. Since Leonard considered the characters in *Jacob's Room* to be ghosts, it may also display that the novel was considered to neglect development of character, even though Virginia believed at the time that she had finally found her voice to give life to the characters. The fact that *Jacob's Room* ended up being a novel with a protagonist missing mature, coherent identity, is something that several other critics have observed as well. Jacob Flanders, the protagonist in *Jacob's Room*, has been called unknowable and absent as a character. He is also described as incomplete and his thoughts and feelings are inaccessible. Promila Oinam says the first reading of this novel "creates an atmosphere of being vague and inconclusive" (Oinam 33). There is no direct description of the protagonist in the novel, and there is only a handful of solid facts we learn about Jacob. Other characters in the novel have been described, but not Jacob. As mentioned in the beginning, the less traits the author gives the reader, the more of a task it is for the reader to interpret these characters. In this case, Woolf has mostly let the audience determine who Jacob Flanders really is. Oinam further on describes the observers in the novel as characters who does not carry us far enough to see what kind of person Jacob really is. Ultimately, Oinam says "Jacob's life evades us", concludes by saying that "knowing Jacob Flanders turns out to be a guess work" (Oinam 37-38). The claim here is that Jacob is intentionally displayed as a character whose life we are only getting glimpses of. His real life is something none of the observers brings us close to, and we are left with an incomplete character, in other words, we are presented with an absent character.

Linda Martin (2015) supports this claim by saying that Jacob is intentionally constructed as an unknowable, opaque character. With Woolf being happy about her work on the novel, Martin further on asks the question how did Woolf construct Jacob's absence in such a thorough and successful way? She argues by using the theory of mind, the cognitive skills human use to conceive that other people have minds, thoughts and belief systems, and use this information to predict and engage with others. This means that humans use the information they have about other humans to interact and build a rapport with them. According to Martin, this is crucial to *Jacob's Room* because the narrator implies early on that Jacob will die. Using the theory of mind, this means that the reader will develop less of a relationship with Jacob, than if we did not have this information. Since he dies, we can distance ourselves from him (Martin 177-178).

Alex Oxner adds to this point by saying "Jacob remains a spectral, unknown figure, despite his elevated status as the novel's protagonist". Woolf has removed Jacob's determination and motives from the novel, thus his interiority does not exist in the text. It is almost as if Jacob represents death; he lives for a certain period of time, but his life remains unknown. His character is distant, and he remains a living person in a lifeless form, almost like a living dead character (Oxner 212). Alongside Martin's point on theory of mind, we see that critics have deemed Jacob to be absent. He is represented almost as a living dead, he is present, but his persona is not. We as readers are aware of his death, and Woolf aids us in drawing a distance to Jacob. Although there has not been much writing done on construction of character in this novel, *Jacob's Room* has gathered an interest in how Woolf has managed to construct an absent character. She has successfully managed to create a protagonist who the novel is about, but at the same time, he is not present, and not someone the reader will learn much about.

Although critics claim that Jacob is indeed an absent character, there is also evidence that he is not a fully absent character. My analysis will show how Jacob is constructed to be viewed as an absent character, but by standards, is a present character. What Oinam refers to as "guess work", is a very relevant factor here, as there are several traits of Jacob that are left out, and the reader has no choice but to guess his intention and ambitions. Martin and Oxner's notes on his lacking interiority and representation of lifeless character, is something I will expand on, as much of the claimed absence of Jacob is because of the construction of him. What we find and who we find around him, are elements that are responsible for the

impression of his absence. The surrounding impressions he sees and the surrounding thoughts people have on him, are contributions to the construction of his character.

1.2 Mrs Dalloway

Mrs Dalloway was published in 1925 and was the novel Woolf wrote following *Jacob's Room*. It centers around Clarissa Dalloway, who we follow for one summer day in London, after the World War. We follow her from morning until evening, when she is hosting a party which she is preparing for during the day. We also follow characters such as Peter Walsh, Clarissa's former love interest, and Septimus Warren Smith, who is a war veteran. Even though the timeframe on the book technically is one day, from morning until late night, the different characters reveal their past throughout it. We get to know the different characters through their past, and by combining their past with their present, which we learn during this summer day, we get characterization from Woolf on a much richer level than with *Jacob's Room*. The result of this elaborate past mixed in with the present day we are reading the book from, is a story combined by what seems to be two different dimensions of time.

The novel came together from what was originally a short story, titled "*Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street*". Her intention was to present the world seen by the sane and the insane side-by-side. Woolf also wanted the novel to be "closer to the fact" than *Jacob's Room*, and wanted to shy away from the Edwardian way of characterization (Sandberg 69). She wanted the characterization to be displayed as more realistic.

Woolf made it so that memory would be key to reading *Mrs Dalloway*. She said that she "dug out beautiful caves behind her characters...and the caves shall connect, and each comes to daylight at the present moment" (*A Writer's Diary* 60). When Septimus is introduced through Clarissa's point of view early in the book (*MD* 18) and is reintroduced by the little girl in Regent's Park running into Rezia and Septimus while they are having a discussion, we see one example of caves connecting. We see a case where different characters in the same world meet, through their background, and are then reintroduced in the public space. Walsh' reminiscing about the past transitions into the girl running into them in real time (*MD* 55). When a character's past is presented, often through stream of consciousness, caves between the past and the present are connected. As Jacob Flanders goes from childhood to manhood, Clarissa Dalloway is a character unfolded from her present adulthood, with memories of the past. While several critics agree that memory links the past and the present, one claim is that her present is composed of her past, while another claim is that the present is

inseparable from the past. Nevertheless, these claims support that memory is an important part of characterization in *Mrs Dalloway*, and the past and the present function through each other, not only one way, even in literature (Sandberg 69-70).

Critics have also discussed Woolf's use of characterization when it comes to use of inner and public consciousness, and private and public "space". Examples of the inner consciousness are emotions and thoughts, generally expressed through stream of consciousness. Public space can be dialogues, interactions with other characters, speeches, everything that happens outside the inner self, the mind. *Mrs Dalloway* is a novel where characterization happens through both spheres of consciousness, and we get to know the characters through both evident interactions and through their minds. Annalee Edmondson (2012) has looked at how characterizations in *Mrs Dalloway* happens through not only how the characters are narrativized, but also how they represented through the different characters' consciousness. She does this by analyzing the narration of Mrs Dalloway and Peter Walsh, and how they encounter other minds. In other words, she looks at how the main characters narrate and characterize other characters (Edmondson 17-19). Furthermore, Edmondson finds out that indeed, minds account for other minds, they interpret each other's behaviors, thoughts, and beliefs. Woolf creates "tunnels" through her characters, and we cannot know each character individually by their own emotions and thoughts. We have to also know them through other characters. This means that, as Edmondson says, that Woolf disallows a complete inside view of Mrs. Dalloway, because "everyday minds" are accessible, but not transparent (Edmondson 21-22). We can therefore only know Clarissa through her actions, what she lets us know about her, and what other characters, such as Peter, know and think about her. It is not a transparent buildup of character, given Clarissa and Peter's previous affair. This also applies to Peter Walsh and Richard Dalloway as well; given Clarissa's relationship with both characters, we can never know them as transparent characters.

This tunneling process intertwines with what Sandberg referred to as memory. The reason these minds are able to account for other minds, are because of memories of them as characters. They allow us to access other characters from the past, meaning that we read characterization of the past, from the memories of their surrounding characters. Sandberg, similarly to Edmondson, refers to selective memory; a complete character in *Mrs Dalloway* is made up by a limited set of traits and features. What Sandberg refers to as selective

memory, is what Edmonson referred to as these tunnels, an incomplete inside view of the characters, making sure that we can never know the different characters fully (Sandberg 70).

Edmonson also refers to the same theory of mind in *Mrs Dalloway* as Martin did in *Jacob's Room*, explaining that when Peter Walsh thinks about Clarissa, he describes her based off on evident happenings, such as speech and interactions. Peter is characterizing Clarissa through his inner thoughts in *Clarissa*, based on solid facts he knows about her. This counts as practicing the theory of mind because Peter uses the information he has to think what he does about Clarissa, and he remembers this when interacting with her (Edmonson 18). This means that, in both novels, the characters are able to build up the characters around them by theorizing about them, making up their minds on them based on what they already know about them.

In similarity to *Jacob's Room*, I will expand on how the character of Clarissa is not only constructed by help of her own self, both during her past and present, but by the characters around her, and the environment around her. She visits several places which bring back detailed memory.

1.3 The Next Step

As we now know through the established scholarship, the key areas of interest in Virginia Woolf's world has been in how the characters function in the "network of characters", how individual people function in the greater scheme of characters and society. The focus has been on established characters and their interactions, and less on the construction of characters, and how this characterization has taken form. Regarding construction of characters, critics have discussed how Woolf has intentionally structured Jacob Flanders as an opaque, unknowable character. He has been claimed to "represent death", being a protagonist representing lifelessness, representing nothing, giving us nothing. Merely a vague and inconclusive protagonist, as Oinam says. His observers as well, are constructed to not carry us close enough to Jacob, making not only Jacob an opaque character, but such a character in an environment where his world denies us access to him.

Sandberg's work on characterization in both *Jacob's Room* and *Mrs Dalloway* is prominent and fresh. He is one of few people who has compared construction of character in both novels and has provided a framework for how this thesis will discuss characterization.

Critics have discussed absence of character, interaction, use of memory, public and private consciousness and theory of mind. Although construction of character is done very differently in *Jacob's Room* and *Mrs Dalloway*, what similarities are there, and how does Virginia Woolf use her writing style to create similarities in both novels? I intend to explore the common features of Woolf's characterization in these texts through a comparative analysis and uncover the similarities. The purpose of this thesis is to add to the discussion of characterization and doing so by demonstrating that Woolf has indeed used a combination of evident interactions and private thoughts to build up her characters in these two books. Both these private thoughts and public events affects the inner minds of the characters, ultimately making them use their thoughts and opinions to characterize the people around them. I will argue that Virginia Woolf uses stream of consciousness to build up character in *Jacob's Room* and *Mrs Dalloway* and has done this by using her characters' minds to construct the other characters around them, in addition to constructing themselves through a combination of other's thoughts and their own memory. Stream of consciousness is used in relation to both real world interactions and inner emotions. This is because the people characterize others based off on what they already know about them in the public world, and off on their inner thoughts on the people, which could be through memory or earlier interaction. In other words, Woolf has intricately built characters whose traits are presented through actual real-world elements, and through what characters experience when they think about them. On top of this, the characters have their own memories about themselves, which again brings forth knowledge about them, from their own point of view.

1.4 Methodology

The way I will provide this knowledge is by analyzing construction of character through the use of stream of consciousness in both books. My argument is that stream of consciousness is the key factor in characterization, in regard to the characters' own inner self and memories, the public interactions that we can register, and their thoughts on other characters in the novel. Because ultimately, it is a combination of these three elements that creates a character in Woolf's world. I will analyze characterization in each book individually, and then compare them to display my findings. I will look at how stream of consciousness builds up Jacob Flanders through his surrounding narrators, because it is through what they observe, and what they think about him, which ultimately makes up Jacob as a character. The factor of self

however, is omitted from *Jacob's Room*, since we never experience Jacob's thoughts from his point of view. I will also look at how stream of consciousness builds up Clarissa Dalloway. In *Mrs Dalloway*, a character such as Clarissa is a blend of her memory, her relational characters, and her actual experiences. Still, it is the use of inner stream of consciousness which blends this all together.

I will explain my analysis through relevant terminology regarding characters and characterization. I will also explain literary terms such as stream of consciousness and characterization. The terminology will be explained through the scholarship I have found, which is important because other scholars might use the same terminology differently. I will refer to Shlomith Rimmon-Keenan's concept of characterization and discourse. The thesis will be divided into chapters of each book, containing analysis of firstly *Jacob's Room* and then *Mrs Dalloway*. I will conclude with a comparative analysis of my findings regarding construction of character in both novels.

1.5 Choice of Works

The pairing of *Jacob's Room* and *Mrs Dalloway* works well for a couple of reasons. There is a three-year gap between the release of the novels, and they represent two consecutive releases in Virginia Woolf's bibliography. This presents the opportunity of witnessing the progression of Virginia Woolf's writing proficiency, both regarding characterization and depth. It also allows us to see how Virginia Woolf changed as a writer on a personal level during those years, and how she is able to incorporate that into the novels. Another reason for the pairing is the fact that the style is so contrasting, but at the same time carry subtle similarities. Characterization works very differently, in the sense that Jacob Flanders is shaped by external forces, and Clarissa Dalloway is shaped by both internal and external, but mostly internal forces. Nevertheless, the challenge is to find a middle road which identifies both works, a pattern or niche used to display each contrasting force.

2 Chapter Two: Jacob's Room

With several critics referring to Jacob Flanders as an absent character, what does this absence mean, and are they all talking about the same kind of absence? Eric Sandberg, Promila Oinam, Alex Oxner and Linda Martin are all critics who have claimed that Jacob is constructed as an absent character, even though the novel is about him. Martin notes that “Jacob is unknowable and opaque” and refers to Alex Zwerdling for what can be a reason for this. Zwerdling mentions that the narrator largely focuses on exterior factors surrounding Jacob, the characters around him and how they interfere with each other (Martin 177-178, Zwerdling 70). Sandberg also refers to Edward Bishop, who says that Woolf is not representing character with Jacob, she is representing subject (Bishop 147-148). This aligns perfectly with Sandberg is saying while referring to West and Majumdar, that the novel offers the type that Jacob Flanders was. Their claim is that he is not supposed to represent character, but a type of individual, a typical young man from Scarborough (Sandberg 53). This can explain the negligence of character, as we are then maybe not supposed to get to know Jacob Flanders as a character, but as an everyday young Englishman in the early late 19th and early 20th century.

2.1 Definition of character

As much as we would like to not call Jacob a typical character, does he actually differ from the definition of a character? Looking back at Rimmon-Kenan's definition, a character is one construct within the story made up by a network of traits. However, these traits may or may not appear in the text, and we assemble different traits throughout the story to define the character (59). So far, we cannot conclude that Jacob is an absent character, because we are in fact given different traits about him, and as they may or may not appear in the text, it is simply up to us as the readers to decide how these different hints and remarks define him as a character.

2.2 Presenting Jacob directly and indirectly

There are two different kind of ways to define characterization, the direct definition and indirect presentation. Direct definition refers to characterizing someone by describing them directly with help of a trait, often presented by an adjective, noun, or other part of speech. “He was selfish” is one such way to directly characterize someone, because we have a character, “he”, who we know is kind because the adjective “selfish” tells us so, quite literally. Indirect presentation refers to characterizing someone, but without using direct traits to do so. This means that the traits of the character are presented through its actions and choices in the story. It is then up to the reader to decide if these actions or part of speech are indications of character, or just a one-time utterance. Actions and part of speech are parts of act of commission, the fact that the character does something which depicts indirect presentation. Other factors of indirect presentation of character, include act of omission and contemplated act. Act of omission means that a character does not do something it should be doing or does not do something we expect it to do. A contemplated act refers to an unrealized plan or intention of the character (Rimmon-Kenan 59-62).

Looking more closely at Rimmon-Keenan’s direct and indirect definition of character, what qualifications do Jacob meet as far as being such a construct within the story? There are in fact several direct definitions of traits in the novel, and several of the *different* characters in the story name similar traits in Jacob Flanders. First and foremost, most of the individuals Jacob meet refer to him as an awkward individual. Mrs. Durrant, Clara’s mother, refers to him as “extraordinarily awkward” (*JR* 47). She mentions the same thing shortly later, that he was “extremely awkward” (*JR* 54). Fanny Elmer, another woman Jacob meets in the novel, who develops takes an interest in him, also refers to him as awkward, “very awkward he was” (*JR* 93) and this happens again towards the end of the novel, “that young man, Jacob Flanders, they would say, so distinguished looking – and yet so awkward” (124). Both Fanny Elmer and Mrs. Durrant refers to him as “distinguished looking” in the exact same passages (*JR* 47, 54-55, 124). Hence, we see Jacob described by another character-trait, on several occasions. Him being a silent individual is also something we see occurring several times. He gets referred to as the silent young man by Miss Eliot (45) and later again by Julia Eliot, who also notes that “if he is going to get on in the world, he will have to find his tongue”, meaning that she finds him too silent, perhaps too silent to hold his own ground (55).

The indirect presentation, that a trait is mentioned, shown or exemplified but not as directly as “Jacob was x”, is also something we find in the novel. This however, as the definition intends, is more ambiguous to determine as it is up to our subjective judgement to decide whether this in fact can qualify as an indication of character. In other words, the reader determines the trait, not the text, although the text can imply it (Rimmon-Keenan 61-63). Looking at the scene in the train when Jacob is heading to Cambridge, we get to see Mrs. Norman’s impression of Jacob, with little verbal interaction going on between them. As in matter of fact, this scene contains both direct and indirect presentation of character: Mrs. Norman notices his loose socks and shabby tie, and not seemingly realizing her presence. To the reader, it may look like Jacob is a quirky, perhaps absentminded or disorganized fellow. He may be lost in his thoughts or daydreaming. This is what we can perceive, according to what we have gathered from Mrs. Norman. However, she also describes him as grave, unconscious and “seeming so out of place”, which is direct description of character, giving that we have textual proof of her giving him traits. So far, we have what appears to be an intended description of Jacob, and an *actual* description of Jacob. Towards the end of the passage, Mrs. Norman notes that Jacob burst open the door, put her dressing-case out for her in a shy, clumsy manner and says, “let me”. As much as this is a direct description of Jacob being shy and clumsy, it also adds to the overall impression of Jacob being an awkward and quirky individual, in an indirect way. He does not interact with her for the duration of the passage, only reading is paper and being quiet. When the train stops in Cambridge, he suddenly remembers to be polite to her, almost in a rushed manner, as if his mind did not come back to reality before that very moment. Mrs. Norman too notices, as several other characters in the novel, that he was in some way nice, handsome and distinguished. Maybe the fact that he put out her dressing-case for her, added to that impression (*JR* 21-22).

Other indirect indications we find of Jacob being clumsy, unconscious and absentminded, we can find shortly after the previous passage analyzed in the book. When he is supposed to have Sunday-lunch with three other undergraduates and Professor Plumer, he is late and has mistaken the time. This is however, a brief indirect presentation (25). Shortly later, when Jacob lays back, on level with the meadow, he appears to be absentminded or unconscious of his surroundings. He observes legs of children and cows and hears munching sounds. Timothy Durrant then notes that “Jacob’s off”. This attention paid to surrounding details, may indicate that Jacob’s mind is wandering, and that it does so easily. He pays

attention to distant sound and scenery but is unaware of goes on close to him, in that very moment (27). The two examples mentioned above are indirect presentations of trait, because they imply that Jacob is clumsy and unwary without directly telling us in those words.

We can also gather from indirect presentation that he is a quiet, but polite individual. Woolf points out this several times in the novel, and it may be the quietness and politeness that adds to the surrounding people's impression that he is awkward and distinguished. In chapter 4 when Mrs. Durrant asks Jacob about his and Timothy Durrant's voyage, he only answers yes two times before Mrs. Durrant is thinking that he is an awkward person. Following this, Jacob asks if he should hold her wool, completely ignoring her request on the story and changing the subject. We saw the same element in the aforementioned scene with Mrs. Norman, where Jacob did not chat with her, but at the very last moment takes out her case for her. It is an identical example, quiet but polite, causing other characters to find him awkward but distinguished (22).

As for some of the examples shown, Woolf typically provides us with direct and indirect presentation of traits at a close proximity. This means that the text partially gives the reader some hints to interpret regarding character-traits, and then actually confirming or perhaps even disprove what we may have interpreted. The result is a fine balance between Woolf's characterization and the reader's characterization, or opinions. It is as if we intentionally are not supposed to know everything that happens, and it may be this very element that gives us this impression that there are absent characteristics when it comes to Jacob. Because we do get to know a little bit about him, but we have to use our imagination to understand, or to try to understand, the rest. In giving us these direct definitions and indirect presentations, it also keeps us constantly second guessing what we know about Jacob. Not only does Woolf encourage us to gather these hints about Jacob on our own and assess it, but also make us doubt what we think is true or what we think we know about him. Because if we use the indirect traits to construct what we think is the most logical and accurate description of Jacob given the actual direct definitions, we also have to keep in mind that it is only the direct definitions of character that are the tangible indicators of who Jacob is.

2.3 The Absence of Jacob

Following the fact that we indeed find character traits in a variety of ways in *Jacob's Room*, how can we then still question his absence? We see that Jacob is an existing character, by gathering direct definitions of traits, and traits presented indirectly, and we even see patterns to his characteristics. He is a well-built, young, distinguished, quiet and awkward individual from Scarborough, England. We know all these things about him, yet we feel that we do not know enough, and that we still do not know him particularly well. We know him and follow him from childhood until death, through several love interests and several occasions of long-distance travel, yet we still question his presence, hence the question of absence.

2.4 The Idea of the Subject

Looking back at what Edward Bishop said about type, we saw that perhaps the purpose of Jacob is not to represent a specific character, but to represent the type of person that he is, which he refers to as the subject. The fact that we are supposedly only exposed to the type of person that Jacob represents, makes it hard to determine his actual motivation (Bishop 149). Although we know that he is appreciated, by Timothy and several women, it is hard to determine what his intention out through life is. Once again, the scene on the train with Mrs. Norman is perfect to describe this, because it is really the pinnacle of what *Jacob's Room* represents. It is a quintessential Jacob Flanders scene. When Mrs. Norman observes that Jacob is reading and is considering offering her paper, she asks herself "But do young men read the *Morning Post*?". This is analysis of an individual as a part of a group, a young man among other men. It does not represent how to distinguish a person individually, but rather describes him as a part of the "group" or "category" he falls into, young men. This description does not add to individuality and does not distinguish Jacob well. In addition to this, towards the end of the scene, Jacob has suddenly fled the train and Mrs. Norman never sees her again. Now he is just another drop in the sea of young men at Cambridge, and this all she saw there when staying at the week-end. Thus, Jacob, aged 19, was just another young man at Cambridge, presented as the typical young student, not as an individual man. He did not represent Jacob Flanders in this scene, he represented a young man at Cambridge, a young, quiet and clumsy man, but yet distinguished and handsome. In this brief scene, he is merely just meant to represent a man who the elderly lady suddenly run into for a short moment.

We can also apply this to the ending of the novel, in which Jacob draws upon the catastrophic event of the World War. In the very last chapter of the book, Jacob has suddenly disappeared, as he has abandoned his home, leaving all the things there as they are. The general consensus is that Jacob has been killed in the war, although the book does not actually confirm this, only that he is missing. Bonamy however, notes that “What did he expect? Did he think that he would come back?”, implying that Bonamy expects Jacob to not have survived, unfortunately (*JR* 143). In the scene on the train with Mrs. Norman, the text explicitly tells us that Jacob is just another part of the subject implied, being young men, likely students, at Cambridge. In contrast to the scene on the train with Mrs. Norman, this chapter does not explicitly tell us in words that Jacob is a part of the subject, as much as implying it indirectly. It is well known that many young men from Great Britain died in the World War, and now Jacob is also one of them (Zwerdling 72-73). In other words, when Jacob becomes a casualty of the War, he represents the type of individual that he is, once again. He represents the young men who died on the battlefield, and one of the many young British men who never returned home. It represents Jacob as a part of the subject in the same way as the scene with Mrs. Norman, only just not in literal words. Still, it represents the same kind of absence, a person who used to, or is supposed to be there, but becomes a part of the crowd of his peers. In both examples, Jacob becomes a part of group, where he is the one person we know from that entire group. First, he is a part of the young male students at Cambridge, and secondly, a part of the young men who died in the War. It is this group he represents, which is the subject. Jacob represents that specific type, he is the one person we know from that entire group of people. As we get to know throughout the novel what kind of person Jacob is, we can see that he does not as much represent an individual character, but the subject, the type of person who does what several other young men in Britain does, including growing up in Scarborough, going to school in Cambridge, working in London, traveling Europe and dying in the World War. This is one of the reasons he seems absent as a character, he does what other characters of his age and time could do, and we get to know less things about the individual Jacob Flanders.

Other than being described as a part of a group, another claim for Jacob being an absent character is the fact that although he is most often present, Woolf gives more attention to the other characters around Jacob rather than focusing on him as a protagonist. For instance, Bishop points out that to begin with, a myriad of characters are mentioned before

Jacob is introduced (Bishop 150). If not for the title of the novel, it would be hard to determine from the first impression, that Jacob is the main character of the book. In addition to that, several characters are introduced for a short number of scenes, sometimes even one, coexisting with Jacob in that moment, and then we never hear about them again, Mrs. Norman being one of them. The genius of this however, is that Woolf portrays it in such a way that it seems like we learn something about the people who just passes by Jacob, and from their point of view, Jacob just seems to be another person they encounter for a short moment, before their life moves on. This is how we get to know Jacob, through somebody's current life, which is most often the viewpoint that we read from, and then they meet or observe Jacob. And Jacob is rarely the main point of attention in these scenes, but the others involved.

2.5 The Women in Jacob's life

Many of the characters observing and surrounding him, are women, and many of them have at one point been his flirtation or love interest. He meets several women through his life who are at one point attracted to him, which we learn about most often from their viewpoint. These characters include Florinda, Clara Durrant, Fanny Elmer and Sara Wentworth Williams (*JR* 133). For instance, in chapter 6 when Florinda and him are at the restaurant in Soho, Florinda clearly shows interest in Jacob. She is complementing him, saying dreamily that he is like one of those statues, and there are indeed lovely things in the British Museum. After that she says she is happy she knows him and that he is a good man. These indicators show that Florinda is interested in him, however while this is happening, we only observe what she thinks and says, up until the point where they are interrupted by the noise and chatter around them in the restaurant. The passage there ends with Jacob observing her, that there “was something horribly brainless about her face”. This contrasts with Florinda's stream of consciousness seen prior to this, in that we experience her affection for Jacob, while he sees nothing of the similar sort in her. With Florinda being dreamily and Jacob observing “brainlessness”, what they both see is far from mutual, and as far as characterization goes, we learn more about Florinda here than we do about Jacob (*JR* 62-63). This is an example of characters surrounding Jacob with more focus on narration perceiving Jacob rather than giving attention to Jacob's actions itself. The fact that there are several women in the story who at one point are interested in Jacob is a prime example of the myriad of characters around Jacob, making

us not give as much thought to Jacob as to the characters around him, just as Bishop points out. They all have more interior life than Jacob, resulting in deeper character, even though they are less relevant in different parts of the story (Bishop 150).

2.6 The details in describing nature

Other than the amount of characters who observe Jacob and being apart the group of young British men that he is, Woolf has devoted long passages in this book to describing nature and the environment that Jacob encounters. Wherever Jacob goes, the scene is always set in his whereabouts, which is an important and enlightening feature because Jacob visits a lot of different places. Going from Scarborough to Cambridge, then London and onto Italy and Greece, we are always made sure about where his next scene takes place, relying on great amount of details in describing the environment which makes it easier for us to imagine Jacob's current situation and the room or setting he is interacting with. When Sandberg refers to "The Mark on the Wall" he says that character is uncertain, and that a powerful imaginative identification with something other than oneself allows the possibility for true knowledge (Sandberg 45). Here that powerful identification is made with not a person, but a tree, a tree given characteristics and qualities. Woolf describes the loneliness and bareness of the tree, "standing in the empty field with all the leaves close-furled, nothing tender exposed to the iron bullets of the moon, a naked mast upon an earth that goes tumbling, tumbling all night long" (*JR* 187). Here we see Woolf giving characteristics and a good amount of textual space to an object which is not by traditional means a character, actually a character at all. The tree however, takes certain characteristics and traits of a typical character, and a good amount of text is devoted to the tree. Although many of the scenes in *Jacob's Room* involve thorough descriptions of nature and environment, some of the passages contain this very same phenomenon, characteristics given to inanimate objects, and often in more textual space than Jacob himself.

Chapter 12 opens with Jacob entering northern Italy by train, looking out at the villas, the "hillside ruled with olive trees", the peaks and the local people. He describes Italy as fierce, bare and exposed. Before the narrator notes that traveling alone on one hundred pounds is a fine affair, we have already been introduced to the Italian landscape and the people that he observes, and what Jacob finds different from what he is used to, being dry and grassless

terrain, footpaths and always having villas in sight. Before we already know what Jacob is doing, saying or feeling, we get a long passage of him just observing, just exploring and seeing new landscape, new people and new habits. Thus, this passage has much more text devoted to portraying what he sees, rather than saying something about Jacob, making us in fact learn more about what is around him, than about himself (*JR* 107-108).

We can also find in Chapter 8 a passage about London and its life. The passengers in the coaches are described as leafless branches. Voices present, people on the pavement, people crying, girls and boys present, there is a lot of noise and people in the scene. This is another example of a stage set with scenery, people and noise, which takes up more place than Jacob. Immediately we can image this market in Soho and all the noise, chatter, and light. This might be the purpose here, to direct the reader's attention towards the surrounding, and not towards Jacob initially. Later in the passage, Jacob is introduced. Following the same pattern as the previous example, the scene is set first, then we follow Jacob. First he observes, then he interacts. Hence, we follow the location of Jacob and what he sees, but not necessarily how he feels and what he is thinking. Reminiscing to the previous scene several ways, we think about what is in his presence, rather than thinking directly about Jacob. No wonder we start to think that he seems absent even though he is still very much a relevant character in the book, he as an existing character is almost like a guest in these two scenes, rather than being the center of attention (*JR* 76-77).

Later in Chapter 12, Jacob arrives in Athens, a city which he seems fascinated by. The first thing Jacob sees in this city that he finds strange, is the local people and how they dress. Observing then the Acropolis and the Parthenon, he then notes more people and more sound (*JR* 118-119). Another example of a scene where Jacob is just present in a local amongst many people, and he just becomes another person present in the scene, as the main attention is not aimed towards him. What all three examples have in common, is that Jacob is present in an area where he observes a lot of noise and a lot of people. There is always chatter and crowds present, and the attention is often towards other individuals, either how they dress or how they interact. It is simply a description of what Jacob sees when he is arriving at the new place, and how he his presence "drowns" in this scene amongst what is around him. This means, that our main character, which we normally would expect the main focus being aimed towards, is just another piece of the scenery, whereas the scenery is where the focus is at. The character is present in these passages, but the consciousness and feelings of the character is

absent. We can also relate to Bishop's theory of the subject, that Jacob in these scenes takes on a role as a bystander, or an observer, just being used to introduce us to these new areas through his eyes. He becomes a part of the crowd but is the one individual used to describe the location. As disappointing and occasionally frustrating it is to always experience not "having access to Jacob", it also has a certain advantage, especially in these passages mentioned (Zwerdling 70). It gives more room to focus on surrounding details, building up the environment, scenery, and making the location of the action more realistic and interesting. Without all the constant focus on character and getting to know them, their feelings and their intentions, we get more time to get to know the life of the different locations of the book, since there are many of them.

2.7 Significance of the title

The fact that there is often more attention focused towards the scene and not the character of Jacob himself, may indicate the significance of the title of the novel. While other characters in his world are often described in great detail, even depicting their feelings, motifs and intentions, Jacob is often more just described in terms of his actions or interactions in that setting. This means that we often just spectate Jacob as another person in that room, and we spectate his physical actions, while not so much his inner mind, opinions and intentions. Given that Jacob's room also changes throughout the novel, like his room in Cambridge, London and the room in the very last chapter, may be another reason for this. Jacob's room may indicate the spectator role the reader takes, when learning about him, as we learn about him from being next to him and not from being Jacob himself, and learning little about his interior. Thus, his absence may be intended from the very onset of the book, the title. This can be interpreted as in he is present in the lives of the character, but his personality and feelings are absent. We do not spectate the moving interior elements, only what Jacob does, as an observer being in that very room.

2.8 Omissions and contemplations

As we realize that Jacob is in fact a character we witness throughout the novel, from childhood until death, we realize that something is still missing. As we realize that we have

seen Jacob all along the novel, we still feel like we cannot remember many details about his characteristics. Edward Bishop as stated that when we get to know this feeling of absence happens because we get limited access to Jacob's consciousness (165-166). This means, all the details we know about Jacob from observing him from the outside, only gives us information of the type of person that he is. We only get to know what earlier was referred to as the subject, or the type. We get to know mostly his physical actions, and are somewhat denied his consciousness, meaning it is hard for us to understand why the character makes the decisions that it does, and hard for us to understand motives. What Bishop is saying is that Jacob's inner consciousness is absent from the narrative, and the reader ultimately knows Jacob as a bystander, someone who has observed him his entire life, but has not yet experienced being Jacob. Without accessing his consciousness, it is indeed difficult to predict what Jacob will do next, and how he will respond to interactions he faces, like for instance the women he meets.

Expanding on Rimmon-Keenan's definition of the indirect presentation of traits, we saw that we did find these elements in the characterization of Jacob. However, when it comes to acts of omission, this is something that is hard to determine in *Jacob's Room*. Contemplated acts are far easier to define, as it is hard to interpret Jacob's intentions and motives, thus being unable to trace a larger plan in the greater scheme of events in the novel. It is hard to predict further down the line chronologically what Jacob will do, or what has happened to him. This means that the novel contains many contemplated acts, as we cannot fully trace the plan or intention of Jacob, meaning that one passage will not necessarily make sense with the next one. For instance, the last chapter in the book, was there ever any indication that Jacob would be a victim of the World War before that chapter? (Rimmon-Keenan 61-62). We know that Jacob Flanders' life is largely inspired by Woolf's brother, Thoby Stephen (Curtis 129). He dies of disease at the age of 26 after returning from Greece, and as Oxner points out, we could predict from early on that Flanders would also die at a young age (Oxner 211). The only way to predict that Jacob would die in the World War, is to combine the fact that Jacob's surname reflects the Battle of Flanders, where many young men died (Oxner 211), and the fact that Virginia Woolf's brother died at a similar age after returning from Greece. If interpretation outside the novel alone is concerned, we can predict from putting hints together that there was a chance Jacob would die at a young age in the World War. But in the context of the story itself, there is no chain of events that lead to us

predicting that he would die in the World War, in Scarborough. The only way we can trace character long term in the novel, is to look at where Woolf has drawn inspiration from, such as Thoby Stephen. The character of Jacob himself however, has behavior, which is impossible to trace long term, and therefore we see several contemplated acts throughout the novel, and the act of having him already being dead in the World War in the last chapter, is an example of a contemplated act.

This makes the opposite of this, act of omissions, difficult to recognize. This functions as a direct contrast to contemplated act, and especially in the case of Jacob Flanders. Since it is difficult to determine Jacob's intentions because we are denied access of his feelings, we see constant simultaneous difficulties of tracing what he should do, and several examples of unrealized intentions. In other words, the fact that his character is hard to predict, makes it easy for us to find unresolved plans, contemplated acts, and hard to find out what he should do, acts of omission. Hence the word omission, we expected something, but that action was omitted. Only in this case, we can never really expect what Jacob will or should do. At the same time as we can deem the fact that he dies during the events of the War a contemplated act, it is impossible to deem it an act of omission, because nothing before this chapter tells us that Jacob should in fact be a part of the war and die on the field (Rimmon-Keenan 62).

Although he is considered a friend and a good person by his peers, the fact that he is considered awkward adds to the argument of him being involved in several contemplated acts. When he is considered awkward and an unusual guy, it is not only hard for the readers, but also his companions to predict what he would want to do next. However, after Jacob returns to London from Greece, Bonamy discovers something in Jacob that is unusual for his character. For all the women Jacob has met who are fond of him, he never feels the same way, and as such has not shown interest in return. Since this has happened several times in the novel, we can consider it a pattern. The fact that he shows disinterest in these women, does make it look like an act of commission, and we would expect him to just not be interested in the next woman he meets. But in chapter 13 when Jacob returns from Greece, Bonamy exclaims "You are in love!", followed by Jacob blushing. The end of that passage reads the women Jacob has met throughout the book, Florinda, Fanny and Clara Durrant, who have been shown disinterest by Jacob. He has recently met Sandra Wentworth Williams in Greece, who is married, whom Jacob seems to have fallen in love with. This breaks with the pattern we have seen so far, and the sentence "The sharpest of knives never cut so deep" sums this up

perfectly. This means that for once, the narrative cuts through Jacob's absence and lack of emotional existence. For once, he seems like an everyday young boy who falls in love (*JR* 132). This notion of him being not only physically but emotionally present, falling in love, as a contrast to what we have seen previously, is therefore an act of omission. He breaks with what we expect, even though it is difficult to expect certain reactions from such a character. Difficult or not, this is something that breaks with the pattern of his love life, or lack thereof, and ultimately, depicts Jacob as not an absent character, for a short moment.

2.9 Absence of character – absence of dialogue?

Finally, there is one last point that applies to all the previous ones, and that sums them up. Alex Zwerdling argues that Woolf used a technique in the novel which enhanced the element of Jacob as an absent character, called narrative economy, or descriptive economy. We know a great deal about Jacob, even though we feel that we do not know enough. And while we as readers have the task of interpreting a great deal of the text, Zwerdling claims that Woolf tells us a lot without using that many words, hence descriptive economy. Much information about him is presented through minimal amounts of text (Sandberg 61). Other characters or Jacob's actions may reveal some of his character, but when it comes to dialogue, the amounts we see from Jacob are small (Zwerdling 19-21). When he is in a conversation with someone, he is a man of few words. Often, he just answers or asks questions with just a couple of words. As seen in both the scene on the train and the scene with the Durrants, he is both quiet and awkward, and much of the both scenes are about Jacob, but he only talks in short responses, just giving confirmation or asking a short question. Looking once again at the scene on the train, the only thing Jacob says, is "let me" towards the end. Followed by Mrs. Norman's short "who...", along with the opener "This is not a smoking-carriage", we have the entire dialogue for the scene. However, with Jacob only saying two words in the entire scene, we can still gather that Mrs. Norman shares a carriage with a young man going to Cambridge, clumsily, awkward, reading the Daily Telegraph, and seeming as he does not even notice her presence. He seems unconscious about his surroundings, strange, and Norman finds him handsome, before he disappears out in the sea of young students at Cambridge. In other words, we learn a lot about Jacob! But at the same time as we learn about him, we get the impression that we do not get to know him, because of the lack of dialogue. This is where Woolf's narrative economy comes into play, much as been said about Jacob, but they are

most often thoughts and opinions of his surrounding social sphere, it almost never comes from Jacob himself (*JR* 21-22,47-48).

Zwerdling's argument of Woolf's narrative or descriptive economy, sums up all the previous arguments of absence because it functions as an underlying point in all of the aforementioned notations. As in reference to Bishop's point on the argument of the subject, his key element we see is that we see Jacob as a part of a larger group of men, not as a single individual. Woolf does not give enough space in the novel to let Jacob grow to a character with great individual depth, because that space is given to the other characters, their lives, and their thoughts on Jacob. Because this individual depth is missing, the result we get is a character whose background we can recognize in other characters who grew up in Scarborough, went to school at Cambridge, worked in London or died young in the World War. There is not enough individuality in his character to make him a unique, memorable and present character, and the lack of dialogue certainly aids in making him such an absent character.

All the women who Jacob meets during his life, is a prime example of this narrative economy coming into play. As we saw in the scene where Jacob and Florinda are at the restaurant, the dialogue between the two of them is one-sided, with Florinda taking the lead. Other than those two, we hear nearby conversations in the restaurant, coming from the table next to them. What we can gather from Jacob in this scene, are his few thoughts on Florinda, which is not even speech, just looking at her and finding her somewhat brainless, mere disinterest. This is once again a scene where the character who is supposed to be a main character, is just reduced to a residual presence, hidden behind Florinda's thoughts and speech (*JR* 62-63). We see here just as we saw in the previous point, that there is not enough individuality in Jacob's character, and there is not nearly enough space given in the text to build his individuality as a main character. Both the scene with Jacob entering Italy by train and when he returns to London from Greece show examples of Woolf's narrative economy. The fact that she has devoted such amounts of space to the descriptions of the environment Jacob sees and neglect any dialogue Jacob might have, shows this. The difference here, is that all the environmental descriptions are Jacob's observations and thoughts, and not that of any surrounding characters. Still, the scene on the train devotes more space to describing something around him, and not something about him. Concerning narrative economy, there is no dialogue here, but we do learn a lot about what Jacob is used to home in England and what

is new to him (*JR* 107-109, 76-77). We do learn something about him, even though we might not feel that we are closer to “getting to know him”. He expresses thoughts on what he sees, but not about himself.

2.10 Summing up – what does absence mean and how is Jacob constructed as a character?

As we have seen, Jacob Flanders is very much a present character, as far as the requirements for being a character goes. He has several character traits, as described by various people he meets throughout his life. What is missing and what is considered absent, is a deep individuality we usually find in typical main characters. His character is structured in such a way that even though he can be seen in most of the scenes in the book, even though we know almost his entire life story, he is constantly absent. Woolf has given more textual space to describing his surroundings and the places he visits, getting to know the people he is involved with, and all the physical actions he commits. We mostly never get to know how he feels, we sparsely get to know how he thinks, and we never fully enter his mind. We enter the minds of the people who interact with him. Therefore, Jacob is a character constructed as a character whose presence is lingering physically in each scene, but the individual mind and soul of Jacob is absent from the view of the reader.

3 Chapter Three: Mrs Dalloway

3.1 Components needed to construct Clarissa Dalloway

While the character of Jacob Flanders is mostly a result of the narration of his surrounding characters, what Sandberg refers to as external forces, Clarissa Dalloway is a character constructed with help of several different elements (Sandberg 69). Even if construction of character in *Jacob's Room* seems to be difficult to interpret, it is difficult in a different way in *Mrs Dalloway*. Jacob Flanders is a character who we get to know almost exclusively through the people who surround him, and he is structured in such a way that he is dependent on other characters to function in *Jacob's Room*. The reason is that without other people's thoughts and opinions about him, there is virtually no Jacob Flanders. The character of Clarissa Dalloway is different because it is not as dependent on other surrounding characters, but it is still a part of the character. I argue that the character of Clarissa Dalloway is constructed by help of the three following components: the past, the present and by help of other characters. The past and the present is linked by memory, a key component to the construction of character in *Mrs Dalloway*, and a key component to reading the novel as well. Memory functions in the surrounding characters construction of Clarissa as well, as their private memories develop her character in combination with her own private memories. The present combines the past, and the present is what Clarissa uses to bring us to the past, and her own self in the present is what takes her character further beyond just memories (Sandberg 69-70, 72).

3.2 How we recognize Clarissa Dalloway in the present

Clarissa is introduced in the novel as a fifty-one-year-old woman living in London (*MD* 31). She lives in Westminster with Richard Dalloway, whom she is married to, a wealthy man working at the House of Commons (*MD* 3, 98). Her neighbor sees her as a charming and vivacious woman, and Clarissa sees herself as someone that dress well, with nice hands and feet. Nevertheless, she sees this as something covering her "pea-stick figure and ridiculous face beaked like a bird's". In other words, appearance is important for Clarissa, appearance and reflection. She views her present self as Mrs Dalloway, and not as Clarissa, citing that she feels invisible, and her body seeming like "nothing at all" (*MD* 3, 9). Woolf refers to Clarissa's face later when she looks in the mirror, and purses her lips to give her face point, to

give it a dart-like definite (MD 31-32). Her manners and appearance covering her self-proclaimed thin figure reflects her personality as well; seeming as charming as she is, still Clarissa appears to be a concerned woman, as she questions her marriage to Richard and her former relationships with Peter Walsh and Sally Seton.

Peter Walsh recognizes her aging when they first meet in the present, at around eleven o'clock. He also recognizes her care for appearance, and his view of what marriage has done to her. Here Woolf has linked the past together with a scene in the present. Peter is thinking, "here she's been sitting all the time I've been in India; mending her dress; playing about; going to parties; running to the House and ball and all that" (MD 35). This connects his knowledge of Clarissa's character from the past to the present. It does so because what Peter is thinking, requires knowledge that goes back to a time before this scene takes place. Later when Woolf narrates from Peter's point of view, he thinks that Clarissa has grown hard, and that there had always been something cold in her. Timid and conventional, she had always seemed a little bit careful, according to him (MD 41-42). In similarity to the previous scene, Peter recognizes a trait in Clarissa which is in the present, but also backs it up with information from the past. In both scenes, we learn about her current appearance and current traits, but we also learn how Clarissa has changed over time and what similarities there are between her past and her present.

What we can gather from Clarissa herself and her surrounding characters regarding her appearance, is that as professional and enchanting as Clarissa seems, marriage and age has taken its toll on her. She is still very much obsessed with the way she dresses, and views this as something covering her true self, her true feelings about her present life. All the scenes used above describes the external appearance of Clarissa's character through the components of the past, the present and by help of other characters. Woolf includes the past here in the presentation of the current Clarissa, as in Peter describing what differences he sees in Clarissa from previous years compared to the present. In his mind he also remembers the similarities. Woolf also includes the present as in this being Clarissa's present appearance. The descriptions in both Clarissa's and Peter's thoughts are both the past and the present, but their confrontation, their meeting, is in the present. How both Clarissa and Peter have changed, is something we learn from the present, since their change is something they can only see in the present and compare with the past. At the same time as this is happening, Peter aids in building the external appearance of Clarissa's character along with Clarissa's own thoughts.

As the point of view switches back and forth between the two characters, the reader follows both minds and follow both descriptions of Clarissa's external appearance. In other words, all three components can be used to construct the external appearance of Clarissa's character, and tell us how the appearance differs from a different point in the character's life. We know that Jacob in *Jacob's Room* is inspired by Virginia Woolf's brother, Thoby. Just like Jacob, he studied in Cambridge, lived in London, went to Greece, and died at a young age (Curtis 129). In similarity to this, Woolf has drawn inspiration from her mother, Julia Stephen, to create Clarissa. Just like Clarissa, Julia was a devoted wife, and seemed emotionally distant, according to Woolf. Her mother's exhaustion at running a large family was something she noticed, but she was still keeping up the appearance as someone enjoying life, displaying magnetism and vitality (Dowling 74-75). There are several parallels that we can draw to Clarissa. The hardship she is feeling at her age, how life and marriage has been hard on her, is a strong parallel to Julia's exhaustion, as well as they both display vitality, especially Clarissa through her dresses and parties. Marriage can also be considered to be a hardship for Julia, as well as Clarissa, since Julia was a devoted wife. Peter Walsh described Clarissa as someone who's grown hard, although she seemed always to have something cold in her, according to him. This is also similar to Julia being described as emotionally distant, even though she seemed central to everything. There are several other claims of who the inspiration for Clarissa came from, one of them being Kitty Maxse, a friend of the Stephen family. Clarissa was a familiar name to Woolf, as her aunt Caroline Stephen used it in her work to describe the Clarissans, as well as she was familiar with Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* (Dowling 76).

3.3 Using memory in *Mrs Dalloway*

With the aforementioned points referring to how we know Clarissa Dalloway as the character she is when the novel starts, we need to look at the Clarissa Dalloway before the novel takes place as well, a character than will return several times during the novel. As this transition from before the novel to the present in the novel happens several times, the link that binds this is memory. Woolf relies on using memory as a tool of creating character in *Mrs Dalloway*, as the novel is written in layers, consisting of the present, the past and the minds of the individuals surrounding Clarissa. Her character takes shape by help of these three ingredients: the past, the present and by other characters. We saw Clarissa being introduced as a fifty-one-year-old woman living in London at the time the novel takes place, but what we learn from

her past and from characters such as Peter Walsh, is what helps the reader getting to know her as a character (*MD* 31). The role other people's minds play in the creation of character is relevant here, just as in *Jacob's Room*, but the fact that her past is so important, is a great contrast. While *Jacob's Room* is constructed almost as a *bildungsroman*, *Mrs Dalloway* takes place in only one day, in real time. We follow Jacob from his childhood until his sudden death, while we follow Clarissa through one day at a middle-point in her life. The novel then, while slowly advancing forward in time, takes us back several years through memory. In both novels, the characters of Clarissa and Jacob unfold continuously as the story does, and we get to know the characters better and better throughout the novels. However, chronologically they are different, as *Jacob's Room* is continuous chronologically, while *Mrs Dalloway* jumps back and forth in time.

The events Clarissa is narrating, have already happened at an earlier point in her life, meaning that the novel takes place after these events have happened. When Clarissa is referring to these events, she goes back in time, she is speaking of the past. According to Rimmon-Keenan, this is called an analepsis. A narration of a story-event at a point in the text after later events have been told. In other words, Clarissa's character unfolds through a series of analepsis. These analepses are what Woolf referred to as her caves that she would like to dig out behind her characters, and then later connect them. This is what otherwise traditionally is known as "flashbacks" or "retrospection" (Rimmon-Keenan 46).

We can find an example of Woolf's use of analepsis to construct character early on in *Mrs Dalloway*, where Woolf introduces Peter Walsh and Clarissa's past relationship, and that Richard Dalloway never could forgive Clarissa for liking Peter. Then Woolf takes us back in time through one of Clarissa's memories at Bourton, where Walsh was described as mad and Hugh Whitbread was not, but Walsh was still loyal and had proper manners, as described by Clarissa. In the long run, Clarissa could not stand Peter, as they argued a lot, could not see eye to eye and Walsh wanted everything to be shared. Clarissa had to break it with him, or they both would have been destroyed and ruined (*MD* 6-7). This scene tells us several things: This is an analepsis, because it has happened in Clarissa and Peter's past, before this ongoing day in the novel. Through this analepsis we learn about how their past has affected their relationship in the present. This memory is used to create a narrative for the present, by providing characterization from the past, we see here one of Woolf's caves connecting. Indeed, we also see here that the characterization in *Mrs Dalloway* would not function in the

same way without the use of memory, because of the time-span of the novel. Since the duration of public time in the novel is just one day, any memory with a time-span greater than one day will allow for more characterization than what we can get from reading one day from Clarissa and Peter Walsh's lives. Memory allows for an unlimited duration of flashback, as far back as the characters can remember, or as far back as they are intended to remember. As long as Woolf returns to Clarissa's present and public space of time, the novel upholds these two dimensions, one of private time through memory, analepses and stream of consciousness, and one of public time through narrating the present. As long as Clarissa and the other characters jump between these two elements, the narration in the past remains an analepsis and not the sole narratological method used in the novel.

Paul Ricoeur has addressed that the narrator has granted the reader access to the thoughts of all the characters in the novel, as well as the different spaces of time. We know all of Clarissa's thoughts on Peter, as well as Peter's thoughts on Clarissa. This access makes the link between past and present more digestible as a reader, meaning that we the memory that Woolf employs, is easier for us to understand and comprehend. When we read from the point of view of Clarissa, how she assesses Peter as a person, we already know that we can access the same thoughts while reading from Peter's point of view. We know that Clarissa's inner mind is not the only opinions or views we are accessing (Ricoeur 104).

The scene at Bourton that we looked at, was a past memory of the Clarissa in the present. This scene takes place entirely in the mind of only one character, Clarissa. However, later on after Peter and her have met during the day which the novel takes place in, Peter wanders alone and we are then presented a memory at Bourton from Peter's point of view. The memory starts when him saying "death of the soul" to himself, when he wakes up on that bench in the park. He then, through his memory, takes us back to a scene at Bourton from his point of view, in the 1890s. He was passionately in love with Clarissa, and he remembers her best friend, Sally Seton, who had a reputation of being daring in those days. Peter then describes how usually one of his and Clarissa's quarrels begun, as it was almost as if they communicated without talking. Peter would not say much, even though Clarissa said from her point of view in the previous scene that everything had to be shared between Peter and her (*MD* 50-51). This is one example of how Woolf has granted us access to several characters, other minds than just Clarissa's. Other than making the process of memory more orderly, it grants us characterization from several points of view, thus making character more accurate.

This is because the book contains large amounts of thoughts and speech from Clarissa's point of view, both in the past and the present in the novel. Through this, we get a divided opinion on her character, therefore making it more accurate. Combined with the ability to access the minds in the past as well, memory accessing Peter Walsh becomes highly important as well, to complement the past of Clarissa.

3.4 The present and the Big Ben

A reoccurring element in the novel is the function of the Big Ben. When Clarissa's mind enters the stream of consciousness, the inner thoughts of her character can be both in the present and in the past. The Big Ben functions as an instrument in the novel, reminding us when we are in fact in the present, and that memory is not a factor in that very moment. Since the novel takes place in one day, the Big Ben reminds us how far into that day we are, and how far into the novel we are as well. The Big Ben already appears in the very beginning of the novel, and it is clear from the start that Woolf wants the reader to pay attention to it. The abrupt "There! Out it boomed" instantly grabs our attention, following that Clarissa had just left her home to buy the flowers (*MD* 4). The Big Ben continues to grab our attention in similar fashion throughout the novel, and whether we have entered Clarissa's mind traveled back through memory or Clarissa walks through London in the present, the Big Ben grabs us back to the present, kindly reminding us where we are at in terms of the timeframe of that present day.

3.5 Utilizing Stream of Consciousness

The component used to introduce us to Clarissa's self, as well as the self of other characters, is the technique called the Stream of Consciousness. Often thought of as an inner monologue, stream of consciousness allows us to enter the minds of the characters we are following, and the narrator, through mind of the character, dictates the pace of time outside the consciousness. It is highly relevant to the novel, as it is linked to the use of memory and its link between the past and the present, since stream of consciousness is often what brings us from the present to the past, and vice versa. In regard to characterization, stream of consciousness is used by Clarissa herself to reveal traits, often in the past, and by Peter to

reveal the character of Clarissa. The scene at Bourton displaying an analepsis, at the fountain where Clarissa decides to break with him, is one example of this. The passage begins with a description of how June has changed the color of the trees and how the summer air is hot, followed by Clarissa reaching the Park gates, then she walks towards Bond Street. When we know where she is going, we are drawn back to the present, because she is walking there in that very moment. In-between these three elements signaling the present, Clarissa goes back in time describing the struggles of her relationship with Peter, including their break at the fountain. The actions signaling present time are significantly slowed down before she reaches Bond Street. Nevertheless, Clarissa expresses that even though she is married to Richard, she could never quite forget about Peter, and the moment she found out that he had married a woman he met on the boat to India, was horrifying for her. Even though it made her angry, as she finds Peter cold, heartless and prude, Clarissa calls the one gift she is blessed with is knowing people by instinct. She often finds herself wandering off in the moment, feeling alone and scared, and does not find herself particularly knowledgeable, but values her ability for caring for others, something she thinks Peter does not value, being one of the reasons they could not last together (MD 6-7).

In the case of this novel, memory depends much on stream of consciousness to build character in the way that it does. As mentioned earlier, the advantage of using memory is that the timeframe of memory can be unlimited, as supposed to the timeframe of the present, which is already set to one day. Through the mind of Clarissa, time can be slowed down significantly, and this provides more room for details. In this passage, we saw Clarissa use memory to convey history and background of her character because of stream of consciousness. The inner monologue of her mind talks about her past, but also how it has affected her in the present. Her character in the present is much a result of what has happened in her past, and she reminisces this through her memory when entering stream of consciousness.

The passage where Peter shows up at Clarissa's door is another example of Woolf using stream of consciousness to enter the characters' minds, and by going back and forth in time, the characters reveal traits of both their past and their present through memory. Stream of consciousness lets us examine the traits from the perspective of the characters themselves. When she answers the door at eleven o'clock and it is Peter standing there, Clarissa seems astonished at first, but then recognizes him as exactly the same as before, the same queer

look, same check suit, a little out of the straight face, thinner, but awfully well looking. Even though this description happens in the present, it requires memory to recall how Peter has looked earlier, and Clarissa uses memory to compare what she is seeing now compared to what she remembers from the past. As enchanting as Clarissa found him, she now remembered why it was impossible to make up her mind whether to marry him or not, which makes sense considering that the last passage we witnessed Clarissa experiencing that she could never quite forget about Peter, even though she found their relationship troublesome (*MD* 34-35). Through her own self, Clarissa reveals more of her character. Uncertainty and mixed emotions concerning Peter and seeing him makes her recall earlier years when they were in love. Even though Clarissa recalls this relationship, she, just as before, recalls why a marriage between them would not have worked. Just as the first memory at Bourton, Clarissa recalls both her struggles and positive recollections of Peter, and in this scene she can compare his change from the past to the present.

What these two scenes tell us, is that the character of Clarissa represents a lot of uncertainty, but also someone who knows other people well, and is good at reading other people. The uncertainty is represented through the fact that Clarissa has a lot in life. She is wealthy and married to a man with a powerful position at government and is viewed by people in her circle as enchanting and joyful, hosting parties for her acquaintances. She seems joyful and enchanting on the outside, as she pays attention to how she dresses and material things like flowers and parties, but on the inside still questions her life, her marriage, and her being at fifty-one years old. One example of her knowing other people well, is the frequency of how she analyzes Peter through stream of consciousness when they interact or when she thinks about him. When Peter tells Clarissa that he is in love with a girl in India, she is thinking “in her heart she felt, all the same, he is in love. He has that, she felt; he is in love” (*MD* 38). She is using her intuition to judge Peter’s feelings. In the first scene we see Clarissa describing traits of Peter, saying he never cared for the little things and that he is only interested in the state of the world and the “defects of her own soul”, perhaps meaning that she was not complete enough for him. In addition to this, Clarissa said that the one gift she had in life, was knowing other people, almost by instinct (*MD* 5-7).

There are several ways to recognize when we are in Clarissa’s mind through stream of consciousness and what Woolf uses to drag us out of the mind and into the world again. Some of these triggers are related to memory, as memory is often a sign of when we have entered

the mind of the characters. Dowling describes this as Woolf “using signals for her psychological turns”, and that some of these include “Peter said” or “Sally thought” (Dowling 48). “Still, he was in love; he told friend, her dear Peter, he was in love” followed by “But what are you going to do?” is one example of this (*MD* 38-39). This is Clarissa’s reaction to Peter saying he is in love with a girl in India, but this reaction happens in Clarissa’s mind through stream of consciousness. She reacts to what Peter is saying, then we enter her mind. “But what are you going to do?” draws us back to the present and to public time, as this is actual speech and not just thoughts in her mind. We can find another example at Clarissa’s party, a scene towards the end of the novel. At one point during the party, Clarissa hears the Bradshaws talking about the death of Septimus Warren Smith, who had killed himself by throwing himself from a window. When she hears the Bradshaws talking about it, we are in the present and not in her mind. “What business had the Bradshaws to talk of death at her party? A young man had killed himself...” is in her own mind, and this inner monologue is stream of consciousness. Woolf has used this as a signal or trigger to change the psychological turn, using Clarissa to reflect on something that is said in the present. This also displays Clarissa’s uncertainty, as she feels that someone has brought something to the party that does not belong there. Nevertheless, she still feels somewhat content with this news at her party, happy that he died and that they went on living (*MD* 155-158). These are examples of some of the different type of entries Woolf employs to enter the mind of the characters. They are employed all the way through the novel from the beginning, and it is an easy way for Woolf to include history, background and opinions of the characters that exist outside the one-day-timeframe of the story. Even though memory relies heavily on stream of consciousness in this novel, this scene is an example of stream of consciousness being used without using memory at a deeper level. Woolf does not take us far back in time when the death of Septimus is revealed to Clarissa, since it happened the same day. Even by using stream of consciousness without adding much element of memory, allows for Woolf to include more detail in her characterization, as stream of consciousness can still slow down time significantly.

Since Woolf said after she wrote *Jacob’s Room* that she finally could say something in her own voice, and that she wanted *Mrs Dalloway* to be closer to the fact, and display characterization more realistic, it is easy to take this into consideration when looking at stream of consciousness in *Mrs Dalloway* (Diary vol. 2, 186, Sandberg 69). Clarissa

represents a lot of realism and everyday struggles, like questioning relationships, caring much for her appearance and being uncertain about her life. Naremore claims that Woolf did not want to make this too obvious and virtually representing herself as Clarissa. Woolf wanted to make it clear that Clarissa was a character, and that character was not Virginia Woolf. This is why, according to Naremore, Woolf has implemented description of scenery in the novel, building a world around Clarissa, and not just displaying the thoughts of Clarissa eternally, making it sound like Woolf speaking her mind. She does this to display not only the character of Clarissa, but also her life, and what her life contains. Switching between the past and the present, using these signals to enter and exit her mind, is one way to describe Clarissa's surroundings (Naremore 77-78). This is familiar ground for Woolf, as *Jacob's Room* is largely built on the surroundings of Jacob Flanders, and these surroundings complement his character considerably. These small "holes" in the stream, entering the real world again, saying where Clarissa is walking, breaks up the long streams of thought, showing us that Clarissa indeed is a character on her own and not just Woolf mind wandering, and it also shows us the world around Clarissa. Indeed, we also reach to the front of the cave again, that Woolf wants to build behind her characters, and consider for a moment the caves we see starting to form behind her characters. Edmonson supports this by saying that Woolf denies us full access to Clarissa, because "everyday minds are accessible, but not transparent", so we do not have a complete knowledge of Clarissa's interiority, even though we have access to her mind, emotions and her past (Edmonson 20-21). Therefore, in alignment with Naremore, a transparent view of Clarissa's mind does not exist, as Woolf draws us out of her mind and back to the public present just enough to show the world around Clarissa and not just the world of her mind.

3.6 The mind of Peter Walsh

One of the biggest similarities between Jacob Flanders and Clarissa Dalloway is how their characters are shaped by their surroundings, especially people who interact and who think about them. Even though the narrator has the ability to give the reader access to the different minds and different memories, often it is the characters themselves in *Mrs Dalloway* who reveal character traits. When Clarissa talks about herself and her past, it is from the view of her own mind that we learn who she is. Exactly the same happens with Peter, when he thinks about Clarissa, the traits of her that are revealed, are done so from the point of view of his

character. This means, even though the narrator has full control over both the minds of Clarissa and Peter, that their opinions on each other is subjective. Peter Walsh is by far the character in the novel who builds up the character of Clarissa the most, outside Clarissa herself. Peter characterizes her both in the present, though his memory, and through stream of consciousness. Also, interestingly, a big difference between *Jacob's Room* and *Mrs Dalloway* is the fact that most of the characters surrounding Jacob Flanders, are female perspectives. Given that Peter Walsh is by far the character outside Clarissa to build her character the most, much of her character is constructed by a surrounding male perspective.

We look at the scene where Peter shows up at Clarissa in the morning from her perspective, the following example is from Peter's perspective. When Clarissa opens the front door and finds Peter to be exactly the same as before, except perhaps "a little thinner", Peter finds Clarissa to look older than before. Just the same way as Clarissa, Peter uses memory to compare Clarissa to how she looked at an earlier point in her life, and he is much more critical of Clarissa's development than Clarissa is of Peter's. We see this through how Peter analyzes her character afterwards, while Clarissa finds Peter as charming and enchanting before, Peter thinks she just sits there mending her dress and going to parties as usual, in other words keeping up her outer and material appearance. It makes him grow agitated, seeing in his mind what marriage has done to her. Another annoyance for Peter is the fact that Clarissa brings up the past and bring back old memories. In other words, memory is a more tense field for Peter's character than Clarissa's, and maybe after all, Clarissa is more happy to see Peter again than vice versa (*MD* 34-36).

This scene, from Peter's point of view, confirms some of the traits that Clarissa's mind reveals. Marriage has been rough on Clarissa, and she tries to hide her inner uncertainty through her outer appearance. It also confirms that Peter cared about larger things in the world, not caring for Clarissa bringing back old memories. He also finds Clarissa to be cold, and therefore not willing to open himself up to her. Peter's character as well, through stream of consciousness and memory, slows down time significantly, and his inner mind convey details independent of time in the public space. He thinks "For why go back like this to the past? Why make him think of it again? Why make him suffer, when she had tortured him so infernally? Why?". Another reason for Peter loathing that Clarissa brings back these old memories, may be because of the fact that he is in love with another girl now, in addition to them being painful memories, given that they are not married now (*MD* 34-37).

The scene following their meeting, when Peter walks alone in the park and sleeping on the bench, shows much of Peter's opinions on Clarissa, thus providing considerably to Clarissa's character. As Edmonson puts in, "Peter provides a tunnel to Clarissa", meaning the caves that Clarissa attempt to dig out (22). Peter repeats what he thought in the last scene, that Clarissa has grown hard, and that there had always been something cold in here. He also finds Clarissa's voice reluctant to inflict its individuality. This means that in Peter's mind, he may detect her uncertainty, that maybe the parties and dresses is just an appearance, but that she is cold and hard on the inside, a result of marriage (*MD* 41-43). Even if it looks like Peter does not worry about Clarissa and only think about the big things in the world, Vereen Bell claims that he is still under her spell of cordiality, meaning that when it comes to her, he can never put her behind her. This may be another reason that he despises the fact that she brings up these old memories, that he is still in his way, in love with her (Bell 107).

3.7 Clarissa and the Definition of Character

Looking at Clarissa Dalloway as a construct within the story does not impose the same challenges as with Jacob Flanders. We see several of the same descriptions by both Clarissa and Peter, both in the past and the present, and through stream of consciousness and by events in public time, such as speech and dialogue. This means that there are a number of traits we can tie to Clarissa, which builds her up as a character. Confirmed several times by herself and Peter, she is good-mannered and well dressed, and has her magnificent way with words. Bell's claim of Clarissa's cordiality, which Peter keeps falling for, is one example of this. Since this is just a claim, and is not something Peter admits, this is an indirect presentation of a trait. It is exemplified and assumed, but is not mentioned. Another indirect presentation of a trait is Clarissa's insecurity. She questions herself why she never married Peter, but at the same time remembers why she did in fact not marry him, since they never would have worked, according to her. It is clear however, that she has mixed feelings about this, and mixed feelings about her current marriage to Richard. Nevertheless, neither Clarissa nor Peter presents this trait by an adjective, through either speech or thought. It is hinted however, as Peter thinks she always had a sort of timidity about her (42). Therefore, this is an indirect presentation of a trait (Rimmon-Keenan 59-64).

On the other hand, an example of a direct definition of a trait, is the fact that Clarissa seems cold and has grown hard. Through Peter's stream of consciousness, he describes with

this directly. “There was always something cold in Clarissa, he thought “(42), and earlier when they meet, he thinks “He would like to make a clean breast of it all. But she is too cold” (37). Peter complements this with the thought of her having grown hard (41).

We can even find a trait which is a blend of the two types of presentation. Clarissa herself analyzes people around her, including herself, to a great extent. In her mind she describes them a great deal, and when she meets Peter again, the first thing she does is analyzing his appearance and interaction. She recognizes the same look, the typical fiddling with his knife, which she found to be an “extraordinary habit” (*MD* 37). She also analyzes Kilman as well, in similar fashion. “...she was never in the room five minutes without making you feel her superiority, your inferiority; how poor she was; how rich you were;...” is one example of this, as well as how you did not hate her, but the idea of her (10). These scenes exemplify indirect presentation of a trait, that Clarissa know people well, and has an ability to analyze them in detail, both their personality and their appearance. However, Clarissa also claims herself that her one gift is knowing people by instinct, she “would see people lit up at once (7-8). This is a direct definition, judging that we can call the trait knowing people by instinct. The direct definition of the trait aligns with what we can find that exemplifies that trait, through indirect presentation.

3.8 Summing up – Memory, Stream of Consciousness and other minds

What several critics refer to as memory, and how it is used in the novel, is important to build character. The book consists of a great amount of analepses, describing events that has taken place before the story starts (Rimmon-Keenan 46). Woolf herself has said that her intention is to build caves behind her characters, and let them connect at the present, and these caves are memory and history of the characters, dating backwards from their present (*A Writer's Diary* 60). Memory appears all the time in *Mrs Dalloway*, and there are not many moments where we follow Clarissa or Peter, that we do not experience their memories. Memory works much in conjunction with stream of consciousness, called interior monologue by some. Memory is often presented in the novel through the mind of the characters, through interior monologue. It also has the ability to slow down time in the book, meaning that more detail can be slipped into the description, but is still ongoing in the mind. It does not happen through speech, public time, so more text presented through stream of consciousness often means that time is slowed

down. In similarity, memory can present more elapsed time, as it is not ongoing, but something that has already happened. The mind of the different characters is not significant only to reveal themselves, but to reveal other characters through themselves.

A large portion of what we know about Clarissa, we learn through the mind of Peter Walsh, who was once upon a time a love interest of Clarissa. We learn about Clarissa through both Peter's present and through his memory. His character, just like Clarissa, is designed by Woolf so that we learn a lot of the details through stream of consciousness, through Peter's mind. From these different elements; memory, stream of consciousness, the consideration of different characters' minds, all aid in constructing character, and they all depend on each other and work together. Woolf has constructed Clarissa Dalloway with help of these different elements and these elements have been demonstrated through the different examples in this chapter.

4 Conclusion

4.1 Comparing the world in *Jacob's Room* and *Mrs Dalloway*

One similarity that we can notice early on in both novels, is the amount of characters and names that we find. In the beginning of *Jacob's Room*, we can see that there are a number of characters that appear before Jacob Flanders, and they all appear by name. Woolf has done this purposefully, as we see that one of her main goals in *Jacob's Room* was to not give the reader too much insight into or sympathy for Jacob. He exists in an ecosystem of characters and is almost never the center of attention. In addition to this, these characters have a lot of interior life, often more than Jacob (Bishop 150). We see a similar phenomenon in *Mrs Dalloway*; several names and minor characters that surround Clarissa, appear in the novel. Especially in *Mrs Dalloway*, several place names appear in addition to names of characters. Already on the first page of the novel, the names that appear in addition to Clarissa, are Lucy, Rumpelmayer's, Bourton, Peter Walsh, Durtnall's and Scope Purvis (*MD* 3). Clarissa, Lucy, Peter Walsh and Scope Purvis are characters who exist in Clarissa's world, while the others are names of places or companies (*MD* 166). Woolf's intention never seems to be to make Clarissa absent like Jacob, but to not make her obvious or transparent character. Instead, a realistic display of character, and a character that was in one way similar to herself, but not would that would represent herself. *Mrs Dalloway* contains a lot of street names as well, and these are essential not only to show us a world surrounding Clarissa, but to also display the realism of the character. Clarissa had lived in Westminster over twenty years (*MD* 3), so it is realistic that Woolf characterizes a Londoner, and that she knows the city well.

Another function of all the names and places in both novels, is the purpose of building a world surrounding the characters. This has a large impact on *Jacob's Room* because it helps Jacob being less visible in the masses, thus he is more absent. Jacob is also a character that depends much on the characters around him to function the way he does, he is built up by others. It also helps the reader visualizing the surroundings of the character, which is important in both novels, as they both travel chronologically. We follow Jacob through young adulthood as he travels from Scarborough to places such as Cambridge, London, Italy and Greece, and at every location, we are introduced to the scenery and the people surrounding Jacob. In *Mrs Dalloway*, we also follow Clarissa through several locations in London, as well as Peter Walsh. We follow her through places such as Bond Street, Westminster, Victoria

Street and Piccadilly (*MD* 3-7). Many of the locations are also described, making the reader pay attention to what happens outside of Clarissa's mind. It also helps the reader visualizing London and be aware of what surrounds Clarissa in the given moment. The construction of the world takes away some of the attention from Clarissa and Jacob, making us pay more attention to what they see, and not just what they think or do.

The characters in the world that surrounds Clarissa and Jacob are significant in the sense that they largely help shape them. Jacob's character relies much on this, while Clarissa does too, but not to the same degree as Jacob. It is obvious that Jacob's character would not function without his surroundings, because then it would not only be an absent character, but also a non-existing character, as he can not stand on his own. Clarissa, however, can function by her inner self, but it would be a far different character. The elimination of Peter's mind would change how we look at Clarissa, because then we would only see her for her, subjective mind. Thus, even though character seems to be built very differently in *Jacob's Room* and *Mrs Dalloway*, they still need some of the similarities to function. Even though it seems like Jacob's character is viewed from the outside and in, and Clarissa's from the inside and out, Clarissa would be a different character without the perspective from the outside looking in, being for instance the mind of Peter Walsh. There is very little we can see on the inside of Jacob, so he is solely dependent on his surroundings and the world.

4.2 Comparing characterization in *Jacob's Room* and *Mrs Dalloway*

The definition of character was, as mentioned in the very first sentence, a construct consisting of a network of traits that may or may not appear as such in the text, according to Rimmon-Keenan (59). If the character is not fully transparent, and we can not know everything that is to be said about that character, the reader must interpret the rest. This is a very important factor for both Clarissa and Jacob and is one of the most important similarities between them. Woolf wrote both characters with the intention of not only displaying reality, but not being her transparent self in those characters. That means, that the reader has a responsibility for doing the rest, which is doing their part in interpreting the parts of the character that Woolf does not reveal. We can interpret Jacob just from the traits and comments we are presented with, but they are not necessarily enough to present to us an entire character. The reader has to make assumptions of what those traits represent as a whole, but the traits themselves in

Jacob's Room are not enough to present an entire character, because it never shows his emotions or thoughts, just what impressions people get of him. When it comes to Clarissa, there are fewer direct definitions of traits, so the reader has just as much of a job to interpret the character. Woolf's mind provides some of the framework for Clarissa's mind, and her knowledge of London provides a route in London, the rest is up to the reader to decide: What does this tell us about Clarissa Dalloway? What kind of character is she, if she does the way she does in the novel?

4.3 Comparing individuality in *Jacob's Room* and *Mrs Dalloway*

One of the most important comparisons of the novels, is the question of individuality. How much individuality does Clarissa and Jacob represent? As Woolf has not provided full transparency for both characters and that the reader has to interpret the rest, there is no clear vision of what neither character represent. Jacob Flanders lacks the depth of a personality, to be considered a fully present character. At the same time, the insecurity of Clarissa and her uncertain life choices does not make her a clear-cut present character either. Woolf's argument of wanting to represent realism may be a reason for this. Nevertheless, when we ask ourselves what Clarissa Dalloway represents, its hard to think of a tangible response. The character of Clarissa does not "conclude" in any way.

4.4 Conclusion

This thesis has looked at how Virginia Woolf uses stream of consciousness to build up characters in two novels through the mind of both the main characters, and the characters surrounding them. The reason for the specific pairing of *Jacob's Room* and *Mrs Dalloway* was twofold. The books have a very contrasting style of displaying character, as *Jacob's Room* almost solely focus on building character from external forces and *Mrs Dalloway* focus on using internal forces. The other reason was that although there has been done much research on Woolf, not much analysis and comparison have been done on these two novels

together. Despite the novels and the two main characters having contrasting styles, there were some similarities in both novels and examples of how Woolf has employed her style. Even though there is no existing stream of consciousness from Jacob Flanders' point of view, there is stream of consciousness around him, and these minds construct Jacob, he exists almost solely through the eyes of others. Clarissa is largely built on stream of consciousness and memory. Memory can be divided into the past and the present, and the stream of consciousness can be represented by herself, or by other characters, such as Peter Walsh. Both novels need characters around them to build them up. Woolf's main intention seems to have been to create two main characters that are not overtly representing anyone, but either representing a type of group, or a type of person that is not viewed as transparent. Both characters are a mix of Woolf's mind, the mind of others, and Clarissa a mind of herself.

My goal was to see if Woolf was using similar techniques in two completely different works, and the answer is yes. Woolf uses stream of consciousness to build up character in both *Jacob's Room* and *Mrs Dalloway*, and I have provided several examples of how she has done this and provided relevant theory. She does it by using stream of consciousness together with minds outside the main character, and occasionally through the self of the character. The world of Woolf is much open to interpretation, and there are several combinations that are possible for interesting comparative analysis.

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