

Midterm 1
Workshop in Essay Writing ENG1100

1. What is the article's primary claim (thesis) about the character of Elizabeth in Virginia Woolf's novel *Mrs. Dalloway*? What is the article's tone and intended audience? Explain why.

The article's primary claim about the character of Elizabeth in Virginia Woolf's novel '*Mrs. Dalloway*' is that Elizabeth is the post-war generation, meaning that rather than following the traditional footsteps of a woman in London, she places her own path and does what she wants. Whether or not she fits in. Throughout this article, Elizabeth is a perfect example of what individuals in the future generations would be like. In my opinion the article is written in a tone of righteousness. Righteousness can be defined as one's way of being right in their own morals and beliefs. The reason I think that the tone of righteousness describes this article impeccably is because it shows the different point of views of different characters throughout the novel, and this point of view allows the characters to live their morals and beliefs despite other people's opinions. "*Clarissa's marriage to Richard, and her acceptance of her role as the lady of the house, prefigures her embrace of "traditional" English, gender-based values. Yet her daughter remains reluctant to accept them*", this quote can support people believing in different morals and despite believing in different morals still getting along. In my opinion the intended audience is for the older individuals, I believe that it is intended for them because it begins to demonstrate that overtime not everyone of younger generations will be participating and doing things older generations have done. I think this is really aimed towards older generations because it shows that by us younger generations not following traditions it does not mean we think they are 'dumb' or 'unnesscaisry' it is simply us living life and using our freedom to our advantage.

2. What are the essential sub-claims of the argument and what are the reasons and evidence used to support them? How do these in turn support the primary claim (thesis)?

One of the first sub-claims of the argument is Woolf creating a novelistic structure of London and showing different character perspectives, as a way to allow us readers to understand how they live their lives. Woolf uses this as one of her subclaims because it represents how the older generations in London live, and how different their morals and beliefs may be as opposed to the younger generations. A second sub-claim that is used is the sound of Big Ben, the clocktower, and how the bells affect an individual. She uses the clock tower as an argument because it really highlights the difference in Elizabeth and the older generations. The chimes of Big Ben for the older generation mean, *“Big Ben’s ring is a reassuring reminder that all is well with England an empire”* meanwhile for Elizabeth the chimes have no effect on her and it is as if they are not even ringing for her. For the older generations the bells remind them of World War I and the aftermath, meanwhile for Elizabeth it is just a chime. Throughout this sub-claim, it spoke about how Elizabeths’ mother grew up and how Elizabeth is growing up. Elizabeth does not follow the same footsteps as her mother did, her mother was happy to be lady of the house and provide for her family, meanwhile Elizabeth feels no need to accept having to take on the role of the lady of the house. This can all relate back to the chimes of the bell because it shows how Elizabeth does not follow those passed through generation traditions. The final sub-claim throughout this article is rather than Elizabeth only associating with those of London tradition, she actually becomes quite close to an ‘outsider’, Miss. Kilman. In Elizabeth’s life, Miss.Kilman is an influence on Elizabeth to not follow the classic traditions and that everyone is equal and she should be able to do what she wants. All 3 of these sub-claims support the primary claim because they all define a difference between Elizabeth and the older generations. When Woolf started off by showing the lives of the older generation it allowed us to understand how they lived and what they believed in compared to Elizabeth, someone of the younger generation. Then referring to the clocktower, this supported the primary claim again because it showed the different meaning of the chimes of the clocktower for different generations. Finally when the author spoke about Elizabeth talking to an ‘outsider’ it also represented how Elizabeth was different from the older generation, who would only associate with people like them.

3. What rhetorical strategies does the article utilize and what are their effects? What specific appeals to authority (ethos) does it make? Please note that you are looking for instances employed by the authors, not those they identify as occurring in the novel (so if the article authors use a metaphor or employ a definition, it would count, but it would not count if they identified a simile or personification used by Woolf in the novel).

One of the types of rhetorical strategies that were used throughout this article are similes. The reason that similes were used was because it made a comparison to the beliefs of those in London especially when it came to the clocktower more understandable for us readers. This similes let us readers have a better understanding of the morals and values of the people in London apart from the older generation and let us make a better comparison to how those individuals lived compared to the younger generations. The use of similes throughout this article appeal to the authority in a way that it allows us readers to (1) be understanding of the morals and values coming from different things, and (2) it easily can make the reader have a feeling of comfort and knowledge while reading certain things. I for one when reading this article and reading similes, I felt as if I knew what they were referring to and what that feeling actually felt like for me. A second example of rhetorical strategy that was used in this article is symbolism. Symbolism was used because the effects of it allow the readers to have a better understanding of what things like the clocktower meant for those in London and that the meaning of it meant much more than just a bell chime. Relating back to the appeal of authority, using symbolism made us readers feel understanding to a certain extent and then happy to another. Being able to actually understand what these things meant to people in London allowed us readers to be able to feel how those individuals do because we are finally able to understand the true meaning of these things.

"A Different Path: Elizabeth and Big Ben in *Mrs. Dalloway*" by Roslyn Buff and Robert C. Hauhart

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Falchetta, in her perceptive analysis of the geometries of space and time in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, quotes Roger Fry's comments on cubism's inherent tendency to "introduc[e] at some point a complete break of connection between ordinary vision and the constructed pictorial vision" (111). Woolf's novel, as both Fry and Falchetta recognize, mimics cubism's painterly mode as it jumps quickly between different characters, fracturing the narrative along multiple planes.

To capture, but then manage, the flux of everyday life that she depicts, Woolf creates a novelistic structure built upon shop fronts, parks, and spires. In doing so, she renders a seemingly realistic image of London, circa 1923, juxtaposed against her characters' perception of the London they experience in a single day in June. Woolf used the same approach in her earlier sketch, "Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street," where Clarissa's walk through the Admiralty Arch, up the street toward Buckingham Palace, tethers the story—which largely consists of Clarissa's thoughts and brief conversations—to a recognizable, if necessarily broken, view of central London (Woolf "Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street" 21).

The second principal technique Woolf uses to unify the experiences and numerous private thoughts of her characters is to address temporality through the presence, and resounding call, of clocks, notably Big Ben. In this manner, Woolf combines temporality with physical location to doubly connect many otherwise unrelated characters (Falchetta 128-9). Indeed, although the clock motif is omnipresent in the novel, it was originally intended to be even more prominent. As A.J. Lewis notes, "Until August 1924 the title of the novel was to be 'The Hours'. This title is recorded in attempts, two in the manuscript, to begin the book with lyrical descriptions of clocks striking" (16). In both stories, Big Ben joins the characters' separate lives through a common experience. Clarissa and Richard, Septimus and Rezia, Dr. and Lady Bradshaw, and Peter Walsh, characters from the generation before the war, all note Big Ben's tolling. Yet, Big Ben's ringing isn't limited to the

function of imposing cohesiveness; rather, it also distinguishes the pre-war and post-war generations. Big Ben's peals don't reach everyone. Most notably, Elizabeth does not pay attention to the pealing of clocks during her journey on the omnibus. Indeed, Elizabeth is compelled to step off the bus when she senses she has been gone too long, and asks, "But what was the time?—where was a clock?" (Woolf 137). Her disregard distinctly separates her from those characters from prior generations. Arguably, her disconnection from Big Ben, a national symbol of England's stability and continuity, suggests for Elizabeth, and the younger generation she epitomizes, the possibility of a future unburdened by traditional English institutions and the attitudes of the pre-war era. To our knowledge, this reading of Elizabeth's role within the novel has not been raised heretofore.

Although Big Ben's steadfast chiming is thus representative of time's eternal march forward and life's transitory nature, it stands for much more. As Paul Tolliver Brown notes, "Located at the north end of Westminster Palace, Big Ben—the bell and the clock tower that houses it—serves as the official timepiece of London. It carries the 'lead' weight of authority as it announces the beginning of the day that will span the entire length of the novel it will frequently punctuate" (Brown 23). This authority relates not only to the time, but to the traditions of London, the seat of government, as a symbolic representative for England and empire. As Woolf made clear with respect to the novel's plan, she wished to "criticise the social system and show it at its most intense" (Zwerdling 69). Woolf's objective is important because of the novel's commingling of remembrance, present consciousness, and anticipated future. As Deiman observes, she "impregnates the present moment [...] with a sense of the historical past which, in turn, projects itself forward into the future" (52). Richard Dalloway, meant to embody the views of the prior generation, reflects as he passes Buckingham Palace, "he liked being ruled by the descendant of Horsa; he liked continuity and the sense of handing on the traditions of the past" (117). As he wends his way home through Dean's Yard to tell Clarissa he loves her, Richard hears Big Ben "beginning to strike, first the warning, musical; then the hour, irrevocable" (117). Clarissa, too, hears the ringing

as Richard approaches, "The sound of Big Ben flooded Clarissa's drawing-room" (117). For this generation, Big Ben's ring is a reassuring reminder that all is well with England and empire (even though, by 1923, it isn't). As Zwerdling notes, in pithily apropos phrasing, "the class under examination in the novel is living on borrowed time" (70).

By way of contrast, Elizabeth Dalloway does not pay attention to the passing of time or the pealing of clocks. Elizabeth does not hear Big Ben ring even though her bus route to the Strand remains well within Westminster, home to the clock tower. Although Big Ben is perhaps the most recognizable architectural symbol of London, as it has been there since 1859, Elizabeth is oblivious to its call. Brown observes, "As Woolf's characters roam the streets of London thinking about their lives before the war, Big Ben recalls them to the present" (22). However Elizabeth, who would only have been eight years old at the time WWI started, doesn't have a pre-war consciousness like the other characters; thus, she lives in the present and need not be called forth from the past. The fact that Elizabeth does not hear nor pay attention to Big Ben separates her from the traditions that World War 1, and its aftermath, have shaken—but not destroyed—for Woolf's older characters. As Peter Walsh reflects, in passing, "Those five years, from 1918 to 1923, had been, he suspected, somehow very important" (71). Woolf's focus on this particular moment in history is critical because, as Zwerdling observes, it is the precise time when the class that Richard, Clarissa, Hugh Whitbread, and their generation belong to was "decadent not crescent" (71). Woolf's treatment of Big Ben in her preliminary sketch of Clarissa Dalloway in *The Dial* lends support for interpreting its tolling as a Death Knell (Sakamoto 76). There, Woolf wrote, "Big Ben was striking as she stepped out into the street. It was eleven o'clock and the unused hour was fresh as if issued to children on a beach. But there was something solemn in the deliberate swing of the repeated strokes: something stirring in the murmur of wheels and the shuffle of footsteps" ("Mrs. Dalloway on Bond Street" 20). Arguably, Clarissa hears the striking as solemn, for it foreshadows the death of empire. Elizabeth, freed from loyalty to declining traditions of an England forever changed by the

war, moves freely through Westminster, and through time, like children on a beach, while anticipating her future.

In this reading, Elizabeth's evocative scene on the omnibus demonstrates her resistance, and the resistance of her generation, to traditional pathways that her mother and the older generation have trod. Conventions that her mother is fond of, such as planning parties and the admiration of women's beauty, are of no interest to her. Woolf establishes this when Elizabeth muses, "And already [...] it was beginning [...] People were beginning to compare her to poplar trees [...] and garden lilies, and it made her life a burden to her, for she so much preferred being left alone to do what she liked [...] and she had to go to parties, and London was so dreary compared with being alone in the country with her father and dogs" (135). Elizabeth's coming of age at 17, expressed in her thoughts during her omnibus ride, contrasts vividly with Clarissa's own journey to maturity reflected in her remembrance of life at Bourton. Clarissa's marriage to Richard, and her acceptance of her role as the lady of the house, prefigures her embrace of "traditional" English, gender-based values. Yet her daughter remains reluctant to accept them. Elizabeth's comments express a desire for freedom when she refers to the bus as a pirate ship and declares, "She was delighted to be free" (135). Further, she mentions that, "she would like to have a profession" (136). This radical modern thinking continues to emphasize her separation from the traditional standards that her mother and the prior generation represent. Although Elizabeth contemplates some misgivings about her future, the scene ends with her boarding another omnibus "calmly and competently" to carry on her journey (137). In this moment, Elizabeth makes a conscious decision to continue on her path of perceived freedom. The entire scene, underpinned by Elizabeth's neglect of Big Ben as it tolls time, demarcates her experience from that of the other characters. This interpretation of the meaning of Elizabeth's disregard of Big Ben, and therefore the traditional values of her society, is further supported by the scenes revealing her friendship with Miss Kilman. Miss Kilman, the ultimate outsider, represents the evils of a rigid, exclusionary society, and the anger that arises when one does not belong to the fortunate "in" group. As Reginald Abbott observes:

Her disorientation and anomie in the commodity spectacle is not the result of an unfulfilled desire to participate in the spectacle, but is a byproduct of the spectacle itself as she becomes an innocent bystander knocked down by the parade that trumpets her 'outsiderness,' her inability to participate in or be a spectator of any of society's spectacles. (207)

As Abbott describes, Miss Kilman is a victim of the system, someone who, while technically a part of English society, had to do without because she could not fulfill the requisites of her assigned gender and class roles. Woolf writes of Miss Kilman, as she ponders over Clarissa, "There rose in [Miss Kilman] an overmastering desire to overcome [Clarissa]; to unmask her" (125). Likewise, Kristina Groover comments that, "Miss Kilman's resentment of Clarissa, her thwarted desire for Elizabeth's affection, and her anger at having been 'cheated' of happiness thus form the unspoken tenets of Miss Kilman's religion" (12). Having fallen under the spell of Miss Kilman's non-conventional influence, as her mother ruefully acknowledges, Elizabeth's thoughts about her future are driven, in part, by Miss Kilman's attitudes, "'And every profession is open to women of your generation' said Miss Kilman. She might be a doctor. She might be a farmer. Animals are often ill. She might own a thousand acres and have people under her. She would go and see them in their cottages" (Woolf 136).

Most telling, however, is the fact that—like Elizabeth—Miss Kilman shows no signs of registering Big Ben's ring, nor does she align her day with the announced hour as clocks mark time's passage. Miss Kilman, although ostensibly a member of an older generation based on age alone, is oblivious to the ringing of Big Ben's bells and unresponsive to the demands of polite, English upper-class society. In her most extended treatment, Miss Kilman and Elizabeth take their leave from the Dalloway's home and Clarissa. As soon as they leave, Clarissa becomes immersed in ruminations about Kilman, about love and religion, about Peter Walsh. Her reverie is interrupted as Big Ben strikes the half hour followed by "the other clock, the clock which struck two minutes after Big Ben" (127–128).

Yet, when the narrative turns to Miss Kilman's thoughts, standing in the street with Elizabeth outside, no acknowledgement of Big Ben's sounding is made. Indeed, even after Miss Kilman and Elizabeth separate, and Miss Kilman makes her way past Westminster Cathedral to "that other sanctuary, the Abbey" where she installs herself at the end of a row, no mention is made of Big Ben's resounding ring, even though the lesser bells chime every quarter hour (133). Elizabeth's alignment with Miss Kilman in this regard affirms the significance of the differing treatment Woolf accords to those characters whose lives are infused with the symbolic tolling of Big Ben and those whose lives no longer reflect its imprint.