

POST-WAR EVERYDAY LIFE AND TRAUMATIC CONSCIOUSNESS IN “MRS DALLOWAY”: A LINGUO-PRAGMATIC AND COGNITIVE ANALYSIS

Sherkulov Sardor Komilovich,

Associate professor at the University of
Economics and Pedagogy

Abstract. This article investigates the representation of post-war everyday life and traumatic consciousness in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* through an interdisciplinary framework combining trauma narratology, cognitive poetics, and linguo-pragmatic analysis. The study examines how the novel reflects the psychological aftermath of World War I through fragmented narration, temporal dislocation, symbolic discourse, and internal monologue. Drawing upon the theoretical perspectives of Mikhail Bakhtin, Roman Jakobson, and John Searle, the research analyses the dialogic structure of consciousness, the poetic function of traumatic discourse, and the pragmatic implications of silence and speech acts. The study employs linguistic, semantic, and pragmatic methodologies to explore trauma representation in both individual and collective dimensions. Special attention is paid to ethnonymic and socio-cultural markers functioning as identity constructs within post-war British discourse. The findings reveal that Woolf constructs traumatic consciousness through syntactic fragmentation, metaphorical encoding, disrupted temporality, and polyphonic narration.

Keywords: trauma narratology, cognitive poetics, post-war consciousness, Virginia Woolf, dialogism, speech act theory, ethnonym, modernism, collective memory, pragmatics.

Annotatsiya. Mazkur maqolada Virginia Woolfning *Mrs Dalloway* romanida urushdan keyingi kundalik hayot va travmatik ongning ifodalanishi travma narratologiyasi, kognitiv poetika hamda lingvopragmatik tahlil asosida o'rganiladi. Tadqiqot Birinchi jahon urushidan keyingi psixologik inqirozning fragmentar narratsiya, vaqt deformatsiyasi, ramziy diskurs va ichki monolog orqali ifodalanishini tahlil qiladi. Tadqiqotda M. Baxtin, R. Jakobson va J. Searle nazariyalariga tayangan holda travmatik diskursning dialogik, poetik va pragmatik xususiyatlari yoritiladi. Natijalarga ko'ra, Woolf travmatik ongni sintaktik fragmentatsiya, metaforik kodlash, polifonik narratsiya va temporal uzilishlar orqali yaratadi. Roman kundalik hayotni psixologik tiklanish emas, balki yashirin travma maskasi sifatida tasvirlaydi.

Kalit so'zlar: travma narratologiyasi, kognitiv poetika, urushdan keyingi ong, Virginia Woolf, dialogizm, nutq aktlari, etnonim, modernizm, kollektiv xotira, pragmatika.

Аннотация. В данной статье исследуется репрезентация послевоенной повседневности и травматического сознания в романе Virginia Woolf *Mrs Dalloway* на основе травматической нарратологии, когнитивной поэтики и лингвопрагматического анализа. Исследование анализирует отражение психологических последствий Первой мировой войны через фрагментарное повествование, временную деформацию, символический дискурс и внутренний монолог. Теоретической основой исследования выступают концепции М. Бахтина, Р. Якобсона и Дж. Серля. Результаты показывают, что Woolf конструирует травматическое сознание посредством синтаксической фрагментации, метафорического кодирования, полифонического повествования и нарушения временной последовательности. Повседневная жизнь в романе интерпретируется не как восстановление, а как форма скрытой травмы.

Ключевые слова: травматическая нарратология, когнитивная поэтика, послевоенное сознание, Virginia Woolf, диалогизм, теория речевых актов, этноним, модернизм, коллективная память, прагматика.

Introduction. Modernist literature emerged as a direct response to the social, political, and psychological catastrophes of the twentieth century. Among the most influential literary responses to World War I is Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, a novel

that explores post-war British society through fragmented consciousness, disrupted temporality, and existential anxiety. The novel represents not merely a depiction of daily life in London but also a profound exploration of traumatic consciousness embedded within ordinary social reality.

The concept of trauma became central to literary and psychological studies after the twentieth century, particularly in relation to war, displacement, and identity crisis. Trauma narratology investigates how traumatic experiences resist direct representation and emerge through fragmentation, silence, repetition, and symbolic displacement. According to Cathy Caruth (1996), trauma is characterized by delayed cognition and repetitive return. Consequently, traumatic memory cannot be narrated linearly but manifests itself through discontinuous narrative structures.

An important dimension of traumatic discourse concerns ethnonymic and socio-cultural identity markers. Ethnonyms, understood as linguistic units designating ethnic or national groups, function not only as nominative structures but also as carriers of historical and cultural memory. In post-war literature, ethnonyms often symbolize ideological conflict, imperial identity, and collective trauma. In Mrs Dalloway, references to "Englishness," imperial Britain, colonial subjects, and social classes construct a broader framework of collective memory and national consciousness.

The scientific problem addressed in this article concerns the insufficient integration of trauma narratology, cognitive poetics, and linguistic pragmatics in the analysis of Woolf's novel. Although previous studies have examined stream of consciousness, modernist temporality, and psychological fragmentation, fewer investigations have focused on how traumatic consciousness operates through dialogic discourse, pragmatic silence, and linguistic fragmentation simultaneously.

The theoretical framework of this study is grounded in the works of Mikhail Bakhtin, Roman Jakobson, and John Searle. Bakhtin's theory of dialogism emphasizes the polyphonic interaction of voices within narrative discourse (Bakhtin, 1981). In Woolf's novel, consciousness itself becomes dialogic, fragmented between memory, perception, and social expectation. Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Warren Smith embody competing ideological and psychological voices that reveal post-war existential instability.

Roman Jakobson's communicative model provides another important analytical dimension. Jakobson (1960) distinguishes between referential, emotive, and poetic functions of language. In traumatic discourse, the poetic and emotive functions dominate because language ceases to function as transparent communication and instead becomes symbolic, fragmented, and emotionally charged.

John Searle's speech act theory is equally significant for analysing traumatic consciousness. According to Searle (1969), language operates through locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. Trauma often manifests itself not through explicit statements but through silence, interruption, hesitation, and implicit communicative

structures. Septimus's inability to communicate his psychological suffering demonstrates the collapse of conventional speech acts under traumatic pressure.

This study therefore aims to investigate how post-war everyday life and traumatic consciousness are linguistically and cognitively constructed in Mrs Dalloway through narrative fragmentation, dialogism, pragmatic silence, and symbolic discourse.

Methods. This study employs an interdisciplinary qualitative methodology integrating trauma narratology, cognitive poetics, discourse analysis, and linguistic pragmatics.

Linguistic Analysis

The linguistic analysis focuses on syntactic fragmentation, stream-of-consciousness narration, repetition, ellipsis, and temporal shifts within the novel. Woolf's stylistic innovations are examined as linguistic manifestations of traumatic cognition. Fragmented syntax and interrupted discourse patterns are analysed to reveal the instability of post-war consciousness.

For example, Septimus's internal monologues frequently contain syntactic disintegration:

“Men must not cut down trees. There is a God.”

Such constructions reflect psychological fragmentation rather than logical narration.

Semantic Approach

The semantic analysis investigates metaphorical structures and symbolic representations associated with trauma. Following Lakoff and Johnson's cognitive metaphor theory (1980), trauma is interpreted through conceptual metaphors such as:

Memory is a wound

Time is fragmented

Silence is isolation

War is a shadow

These metaphors function cognitively and emotionally within the narrative structure.

Pragmatic Approach

The pragmatic analysis is based on Searle's speech act theory and examines silence, hesitation, indirect speech, and communicative failure. Septimus's dialogues with doctors and society reveal pragmatic disconnection between individual suffering and institutional discourse.

For instance, medical discourse in the novel suppresses subjective trauma through authoritative rationality. The inability of social institutions to interpret traumatic speech creates communicative alienation.

Material and Examples

The primary material consists of selected passages from Mrs Dalloway focusing on: Clarissa Dalloway's social interactions;

Septimus Warren Smith's traumatic memories;
post-war urban imagery;
symbolic references to British identity and imperial consciousness.

Secondary materials include theoretical works on trauma studies, cognitive poetics, narratology, and modernist linguistics.

Results. The analysis reveals that traumatic consciousness in Mrs Dalloway operates through nine principal linguistic and cognitive dimensions.

Dimension	Linguistic Manifestation	Cognitive Function
Temporal fragmentation	Nonlinear narration	Disrupted memory
Stream of consciousness	Interior monologue	Subjective cognition
Silence	Ellipsis and interruption	Repressed trauma
Symbolic imagery	Metaphorical encoding	Emotional displacement
Dialogism	Polyphonic narration	Ideological conflict
Ethnonymic markers	National identity discourse	Collective memory
Repetition	Lexical recurrence	Obsessive recall
Urban symbolism	London imagery	Social alienation
Pragmatic failure	Communicative breakdown	Psychological isolation

The study identifies two dominant trauma models in the novel:

1. Individual Trauma Model

Septimus Warren Smith embodies psychological trauma resulting from war experience. His fragmented consciousness, hallucinations, and communicative disintegration represent post-traumatic stress disorder before its formal psychological classification.

Characteristics include:

disrupted syntax;
obsessive memory recurrence;
symbolic hallucination;
emotional dissociation;
suicidal cognition.

2. Collective Trauma Model

Clarissa Dalloway represents collective post-war consciousness hidden beneath everyday routine and aristocratic social ritual. London society appears outwardly stable while internally fractured by war memory and existential anxiety.

The analysis demonstrates that ordinary urban life functions as a symbolic mask concealing unresolved trauma.

Structural Scheme of Trauma Representation

War Experience → Psychological Fragmentation → Narrative Discontinuity → Symbolic Language → Reader Reconstruction

The results also indicate that Woolf employs polyphonic narrative techniques consistent with Bakhtinian dialogism. Multiple consciousnesses intersect without hierarchical dominance, creating ideological instability and cognitive multiplicity.

Furthermore, ethnonymic and socio-cultural references contribute to collective identity formation. References to Britishness, empire, class hierarchy, and post-war nationalism function as symbolic markers of historical memory.

Discussion. The findings confirm that Woolf's novel represents trauma not simply as psychological damage but as a linguistic and cognitive disruption affecting narrative structure itself. Trauma transforms language into fragmented discourse where silence and metaphor become more expressive than direct narration.

Bakhtin's theory of dialogism proves especially relevant for interpreting Woolf's polyphonic narrative method. Consciousness in the novel exists as a dialogic interaction between social discourse and internal memory. Septimus's traumatic voice conflicts with institutional medical discourse, revealing ideological violence embedded within post-war society.

The results also correspond with Jakobson's theory of poetic language. In traumatic discourse, the poetic function dominates because language becomes self-referential and emotionally charged. Woolf's stylistic experimentation demonstrates how syntax itself can embody psychological fragmentation.

Compared with other trauma narratives such as Toni Morrison's *Beloved* or Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, Woolf's approach is distinguished by its interiorization of trauma. Rather than depicting external violence directly, she reconstructs trauma through consciousness and perception.

The pragmatic analysis demonstrates that traumatic communication frequently fails within institutional frameworks. Doctors in the novel interpret Septimus's suffering through clinical rationality, thereby silencing subjective experience. This reflects what trauma theorists identify as the social invisibility of psychological suffering.

From a linguo-cultural perspective, the novel reflects post-war British identity crisis. Ethnonymic and imperial references encode collective anxieties concerning national decline, social transformation, and existential uncertainty after World War I.

The study also contributes to cognitive poetics by demonstrating how readers actively reconstruct fragmented narratives. Woolf intentionally creates semantic gaps requiring interpretative participation. Consequently, trauma becomes not only a thematic element but also a cognitive reading experience.

Furthermore, the novel illustrates how everyday routine functions paradoxically after war. Social rituals, parties, and urban movement appear to restore normality, yet they simultaneously conceal deep existential fragmentation. Thus, post-war daily life becomes performative stability masking traumatic consciousness.

Conclusion. The present study leads to several important scientific conclusions:

Mrs Dalloway represents post-war traumatic consciousness through fragmented narration, symbolic language, and disrupted temporality.

Trauma in the novel functions simultaneously at individual and collective levels through psychological memory and social discourse.

Bakhtin's dialogism explains the polyphonic interaction of traumatic and institutional voices within the narrative.

Jakobson's communicative theory demonstrates the dominance of poetic and emotive language functions in traumatic discourse.

Searle's speech act theory reveals how silence, interruption, and communicative failure operate pragmatically in trauma representation.

Ethnonymic and socio-cultural markers contribute to the construction of collective memory and post-war national identity.

Woolf's modernist narrative technique transforms trauma into a cognitive and linguistic structure rather than merely a thematic subject.

The novel demonstrates that post-war everyday life conceals unresolved psychological fragmentation beneath social ritual and urban normality.

The interdisciplinary integration of trauma narratology, cognitive poetics, and linguistic pragmatics provides a productive methodological framework for analysing modernist fiction.

References.

1. Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The Dialogic Imagination*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
2. Bartlett, F. C. (1932). *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3. Caruth, C. (1996). *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
4. Freud, S. (1920). *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. London: Hogarth Press.
5. Halbwachs, M. (1992). *On Collective Memory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
6. Jakobson, R. (1960). Linguistics and Poetics. In T. Sebeok (Ed.), *Style in Language* (pp. 350–377). Cambridge: MIT Press.
7. LaCapra, D. (2001). *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
8. Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
9. Ricoeur, P. (2004). *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
10. Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
11. Stockwell, P. (2002). *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction*. London: Routledge.
12. Whitehead, A. (2004). *Trauma Fiction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
13. Woolf, V. (1925). *Mrs Dalloway*. London: Hogarth Press.