The Hero's Isolation in Virginia Woolf's and Graham Swift's Lyrical Novels

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Isolation is a commonly found trope in Romantic lyric poetry, with the poet or more generally, the artist, feeling lonely in society. That is what prompts him to confess in the lyrical mode, in a similar way to the characters in the lyrical novel.

Isolation is a theme that is dominant in much of Modernist literature: Woolf in particular chooses to focus on the isolation of the individual brought about by modern society. Magda Long, in *The bitter glass: demonic imagery in the novels of Virginia Woolf* (1975) notices this theme in *The Years*, but it applies to all of her novels.

Woolf's novels include, in their story's presentation, both dialogue and lyrical monologue. However, lyrical monologues are more significant in that they occupy more space in the story's presentation; they are also significant in that they express the difficulty of communication that is so prevalent in Modernist novels. What is more, in the lyrical monologues, the story's presentation includes all sorts of memories, with dialogues from the past or which are afterwards commented upon by characters and viewed through their perception. Lack of proper communication, or lack of sympathy and understanding from other characters is a theme that runs throughout Woolf's novels. Also, characters in Woolf seem to be more introverted; this is reflected in the novel's presentation. Characters may not feel at ease with being open to one another about their feelings; for example, Clarissa and Rachel are unable to convey their feelings concerning love. Clarissa refuses to marry Peter, the man she loves, because she does not like the extent of her feelings for him. She chooses to marry Richard Dalloway with whom she has no real communication. Loneliness and difficulty of communication results in less dialogue among characters, which leads, in turn, to the highly developed lyrical monologues that compose the story. In the lyrical monologues of these characters we notice a similarity with confessional lyric poetry. According to Paul Heterington (2013)[1], this kind of poem belongs to the 20th or 21st century but also to the past, to the 19th century (Emily Dickinson) or to ancient Greece (Sappho). In lyric confessional poetry, there are "small poetic narratives" presented to the reader which claim to present the truth

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about the respective speaking person. In the introduction to *Lyrical forms in English*, Norman Hepple expressed his views on the modern lyric poetry:

> […] much of our poetry is suffused with the individuality of the writer. Directly or indirectly, he reveals his presence in a poem; his feelings vitalize it; his mood colours it; the ruggedness or delicacy of his character is betrayed in it; his own thoughts, ideals, and experiences constitute its matter; it becomes, in a way, a mirror of himself […]. Now poetry of this kind is essentially a modern growth, corresponding to the immense development of individuality in modern times (Hepple 1911: 8–9).

Judging from Hepple's views, we may say that in the characters' lyrical monologues their individuality is evident. Just as the narrators' mood influences a poem, so does the characters' influence Woolf's novels. Their difficulty with communication makes them retreat into themselves and, if the novel is composed of lyrical monologues, it reveals this idea through its very form. Lyrical monologues are heard only by the reader, not by the other characters. The impossibility of true human connection is visible in the following passage from *Mrs. Dalloway*: "For they might be parted for hundreds of years, she and Peter; she never wrote a letter and his were dry sticks". In Clarissa's case, we are dealing with silence, while in Peter's case we are dealing with words which are not suitable for true communication and human connection. The same is true for Richard Dalloway, who "struggles and subsequently fails to verbalise his romantic feelings for his wife" (Delgado Garcia 2010: 19). Another problem with Clarissa is her view on independence and her wish to be alone with her inner reflections:

> For in marriage a little licence, a little independence there must be between people living together day in day out in the same house; which Richard gave her, and she him. (Where was he this morning for instance? Some committee, she never asked what.) But with Peter everything had to be shared; everything gone into (Woolf 2014).

These reflections show that the form of the novel, with its perspective on reality, is suitable for dealing with the Modernist problem of isolation. Another issue besides silence, which makes it difficult for characters to relate to one another, is dishonesty or failed attempts at communication. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa finds that she cannot truly say that Peter actually communicates with her through his letters. He merely writes without forming a connection with her. In a similar way, in *The Voyage Out* silence is disguised by meaningless words. Characters sometimes talk without actually having something meaningful to say, without connecting to those they talk to. Rachel in *The Voyage Out* is described as a silent young woman. She realizes that communication is not honest: "It appeared that nobody ever said a thing they meant, or ever talked about a feeling they felt, but that was what music was for" (Woolf 2006). Rachel does not express her feelings for Terence to her aunt Helen. She just talks to herself; she is heard only by the reader. There are moments when Rachel feels alone in a crowd, in the sense that she does not feel understood:

> Rachel looked round. She felt herself surrounded, like a child at a party, by the faces of strangers all hostile to her, with hooked noses and sneering, indifferent eyes. She was by a window, she pushed it open with a jerk, and stepped out into the garden. Her eyes swam with tears of rage (Woolf 2006).

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The use of the third-person narrator for her lyrical monologues underlines her distance from the others. When she feels isolated, she will develop her thoughts just for herself. Rachel's isolation prompts her to experience moments of vision. She is isolated in her own reality and experiences incidents differently from the others. Like the poet, or the visionary from Romantic poetry, she experiences various states of intense emotions, and she even hallucinates in the end. Walker clarifies the issue of Rachel's isolation, by placing her in her own social and historical context. Her death is interpreted as a result of her inability to adapt to the new situations she has to face:

> Rachel as an out of time, out of place heroine does not fit into her surroundings emotionally, physically, or intellectually. She is not like the other characters, she feels apart from them and they sense this, she does not communicate well with them, and she has intense aversions to what her contemporaries consider the normal life for a young woman. She is not 'avant garde', but neither is she a character of a previous time. Her early development is suppressed […], her education is incomplete and based on irrelevancies, and she doesn't have a clear vision of a future that is meaningful. Woolf very systematically places Rachel opposite characters that are in time and in place, and in the end Woolf has no choice but to write Rachel's death because Rachel never finds the time or place where she fits in (Walker 1998: 1).

The tragic aspect is obvious here. It has been said that Woolf attempted to break away with the traditional plot resulting in marriage; the traditional plot critics have referred to was the one of Jane Austen's novels. Woolf turns the story's focus away from the narrative, towards a dark mood all throughout the novel which is composed of Rachel's moments of vision. These will end, like in a tragedy, with the heroine's death. Rachel's death is a result of her lack of fitting in, due to her inability to find anything meaningful in the world. Even though she experiences moments of vision, in an attempt to find coherence in a chaotic world, it is not enough. However, even her moments of vision have to do mostly with a dark view of the external world, since they anticipate death:

> Rachel's widening experience of life is portrayed through the capture of instants of reality – "moments of being", which are associated with and, at the same time, foreshadow the idea of death (Galbiati and Harris 2010: 70).

Rachel's isolation is always connected to a poetic and, at the same time, tragic view of life. For the Romantics, solitude was, however, coupled with the idea of sociability, in the sense that a balance was supposed to be achieved between public and private lives. Here Rachel, and not only her, fails. Thus, the tragic aspect.

> But because Romanticism also inherited the 18th-century idea of social sympathy, Romantic solitude existed in a dialectical relationship with sociability – if less for Rousseau and still less for Thoreau, the most famous solitary of all, then certainly for Wordsworth, Melville, Whitman, and many others. For Emerson, "the soul environs itself with friends, that it may enter into a grander self-acquaintance or solitude; and it goes alone, for a season, that it may exalt its conversation or society". The Romantic practice of solitude is neatly captured by Trilling's "sincerity": the belief that the self is validated by a congruity of public appearance and private essence, one that stabilizes its relationship with both itself and others (Deresiewicz 2009).

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Rachel's story goes according to the Modernist understanding of the idea of solitude:

> Modernism decoupled this dialectic. Its notion of solitude was harsher, more adversarial, more isolating. As a model of the self and its interactions, Hume's social sympathy gave way to Pater's thick wall of personality and Freud's narcissism – the sense that the soul, self-enclosed and inaccessible to others, can't choose but be alone (Deresiewicz 2009).

Communication problems are noticed by characters themselves. Both Terence and Rachel realize that there is no honest communication. Such problems may come from the insufficiency of language to express and understand reality. Terence discusses with Hirst: "what's the use of attempting to write when the world's peopled by such damned fools? Seriously Hewet, I advise you to give up literature. What's the good of it? There's your audience". St John Hirst himself feels isolated at a point where he is wondering about what other characters are thinking. He feels excluded. This feeling prompts him to wonder about issues such as his isolation, as compared to the happiness of others:

> But St. John thought that they were saying things which they did not want him to hear, and was led to think of his own isolation. These people were happy, and in some ways he despised them for being made happy so simply, and in other ways he envied them. He was much more remarkable than they were, but he was not happy (Woolf 2006).

The same problem of feeling excluded is found with Lucrezia, from *Mrs Dalloway*, an immigrant to England. Lucrezia's and Septimus' evolution parallels Rachel's tragic story. Their evolution is built on the same pattern of the failure of the Romantic wish for reconciliation of public and private lives. Just like Rachel, they also live in a nonsensical, chaotic world. They do have moments of vision, yet they are not enough to succeed in their attempt to find coherence between their private and public lives. Their public lives are always created by somebody else, by society, with its norms, to which they cannot adapt. Lucrezia comes from Italy, following her husband Septimus to London. She feels alone in the present; she is in a strange city and communication with Septimus is no longer possible, as he is no longer himself:

> To love makes one solitary, she thought. She could tell nobody, not even Septimus now, and looking back, she saw him sitting in his shabby overcoat alone, on the seat, hunched up, staring. And it was cowardly for a man to say he would kill himself, but Septimus had fought; he was brave; he was not Septimus now (Woolf 2014).

Lucrezia cannot connect to anyone, not even to Septimus any longer. Septimus does communicate his inner reflections, yet only the reader hears him. He cannot externalize his reflections, and the way he behaves or what he says is not taken into account by the others, as, to them, he makes little sense. It is impossible to represent externally, as in traditional novels, the psychological drama Septimus goes through. Delgado Garcia claims that "The most acute lack of connection with other selves is found in Septimus" (2010: 19). Indeed, he confesses only to himself or to his friend Evans, with whom once again communication is practically impossible

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since his friend is dead. His wife interrupts him and tries to make him aware of another kind of reality; this further highlights how their perspectives are different, and each of them is isolated in their own perspective.

Septimus has suffered a trauma. He lost his friend Evans in the war and now he is suffering from shell-shock, a mental condition not completely understood at the time by psychiatrists, and which is now called post-traumatic stress disorder. His condition leads him to remain isolated in a world of his own, not understood by the others and not able to communicate with them. Lucrezia finds herself alone and is confused about what is going on with her husband. Acting on the advice of the doctor, she tries to interest Septimus in things outside himself, but he continues to live in a different reality. "Lucrezia's isolation in dealing with her husband's post-traumatic stress disorder is repeatedly expressed, for instance: 'I am alone; I am alone! she cried' (2000: 20), and: 'she was very lonely, she was very unhappy!' (2000: 76)" (Delgado Garcia 2010: 19). Furthermore, the reader learns that Septimus had married a girl he did not love. He had become engaged to her when he was in a panic that he could no longer feel, following his friend Evan's death in the war. The two of them are thus separated, disconnected at both an emotional and intellectual level. Septimus' suicide may be regarded as a sign of total disconnection from the others around him. It is the same tragedy Rachel goes through. Even so, he does express a deep connection with the memory of his friend Evans and even with Clarissa. Clarissa and Septimus are connected at an emotional level, at the level of their reflections, and this is done not because they know each other or are even close to each other in a physical space. Delgado Garcia states the following: "Nevertheless, the text creates the illusion that an underlying link exists between these alienated selves that coexist on this day". Delgado Garcia goes to claim that:

> Gillian Beer has suggested that the readers, like Clarissa, make these connections "partly through our assumed familiarity with these same places and history, partly through the lateral entwining of the narrative and its easy recourse to the personal pasts of memory, the communal past of an imagined prehistory" (1996: 53). Certainly, the collective memory of the First World War, being in London on a summer day in 1923 or witnessing the royal car constitute experiences that the characters share, and the news of Septimus's death at Clarissa's party indeed brings their existences closer together despite their being strangers. However, Beer's account fails to consider the use of intertextual red herrings as the most important device to create links at the level of the *narration*, while individuals remain unconnected at the level of the *story* (Delgado Garcia 2010: 19).

Here Garcia suggests a narratological interpretation: the level of the story presents disconnected, isolated characters, while the level of narration shows that common memories about the war connect them. There are also the same places where characters walk about, the same car, the same plane which they watch and which makes them reflect on similar issues. These connections, at the level of narration, work together with focalization to keep a sense of coherence and cohesion among the various lyrical monologues. Also, this connection through reflections on universal issues such as death shows us that Woolf leans towards the universality of human experience, an aspect usually present in lyric poetry.

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Septimus himself had gone through an experience of displacement, by moving to the city from the country. He came to London "because he could see no future for a poet in Stroud" (Woolf 1981: 51). Stroud is situated in the countryside, so Septimus was there literally very close to nature, where there were likely tighter bonds among people. He feels lost in London, where there are plenty of other men named Smith: "London has swallowed up many millions of young men called Smith; thought nothing of fantastic Christian names like Septimus with which their parents have thought to distinguish them". A struggling writer of lower class status, he has to work as a clerk. Septimus' efforts to re-build an identity have failed. The war broke out and changed the course of the development of his identity. In an attempt to build another identity, he marries Lucrezia, hoping he might feel something again.

The same narratological approach suggested earlier by Garcia, with the characters being shown as isolated at the level of the story, is at work in *The Years*. In *The Years*, one example of difficult communication is illustrated by young Rose who cannot openly discuss what scared her when meeting a man while she went to Lamley's. Instead, she has bad dreams. At the same time, this concern with feeling isolated is common for Woolf's characters. This concern unites the characters at the level of narration. There are, however, moments when some characters experience a connection with the other characters. The Romantic ideal of unifying private and public lives is, at least briefly, achieved sometimes. Pasold (Pasold 1990 : 104) states that "love may bridge the natural gap between human beings, as Eleanor says: 'Anyhow, she thought, they are aware of each other, they live in each other; what else is love, she asked, listening to their laughter' (Woolf 1979: 282)". The preoccupation with the issue of isolation unites Flush and Elizabeth Barrett. In *Flush*, the title character, a cocker spaniel, expresses his feelings of loneliness due to his lack of proper communication with his mistress, Elizabeth Barrett: "What was horrible to Flush, as they talked, was his loneliness. Once he had felt that he and Miss Barrett were together, in a firelit cave. Now the cave was no longer firelit; it was dark and damp; Miss Barrett was outside". He feels he is no longer so close to her due to the appearance of Mr. Browning. However, his mistress also experiences isolation as her father keeps her a prisoner, isolated in his house in an attempt to control her. For Orlando, solitude is part of who he/she is. Here solitude does no longer work to unite Orlando with other characters at the level of narration. One significant aspect of Orlando's personality is his preference for solitude, which casts him in the role of a Romantic poet:

> He was careful to avoid meeting anyone. There was Stubbs, the gardener, coming along the path. He hid behind a tree till he had passed. […] There is perhaps a kinship among qualities; one draws another along with it; and the biographer should here call attention to the fact that this clumsiness is often mated with a love of solitude. Having stumbled over a chest, Orlando naturally loved solitary places, vast views, and to feel himself for ever and ever and ever alone (Woolf 1998: 8).

Another character who remains solitary at all times is Jacob. Moreover, solitude remains in *Jacob's Room* something impossible to overcome. The tragedy of not achieving the Romantic ideal of unifying private and public lives is present in this novel, like in *The Voyage Out* and *Mrs. Dalloway*. Jacob can be regarded as a

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tragic character, whose death is the result of this tragedy of not being able to achieve the Romantic ideal. Long discusses how in *Jacob's Room*, the problem of the lack of true communication persists, arguing that "the individual is never able to form a lasting relationship and remains isolated in a world where it is impossible to ever really know another" (Long 1975). Pasold also points out the "impossibility of knowing each other" which "leads inevitably to solitude, as it is put in *Jacob's Room:* "it was not that he himself happened to be lonely, but that all people are" (Pasold 1990: 104).

The opposition between communication and lack thereof is noticed by Mills (33–34) in *Between the Acts*. The novel illustrates once again a dark atmosphere showing the same conflict between public and private lives. The characters appear to try to adapt to their historical time. They also try to communicate with the others. The difficulty of communication can be seen throughout the preparations for and during the pageant (there is a fragmentation due to natural phenomena, such as the wind, but also because the performers forget their lines). We notice

> the fragmented nature of much speech, both in the intervals and in the pageant itself. At the end of one interval, "the audience turned to one another and began to talk. Scraps and fragments reached Miss La Trobe" (Woolf 1978: 90). In the final scene of the pageant, all the participants appeared, with each declaiming some phrase or fragment from their parts (Woolf 1978: 134) (Mills 2008: 33–34).

Their vision of history is fragmented, chaotic, just like their vision of life. They try to find coherence for their view of the world through moments of vision and they also try to communicate with one another.

Like in *The Voyage Out*, the difficulties of honest communication are emphasized in *Night and Day*. For example, Katherine reflects one night in the garden, alone, about her relationship with William Rodney. She is about to marry him, but she is not happy about this prospect. Unlike Rachel, however, she does not die in the end. Her tragedy of not being able to reconcile public life with private life is temporary. She will marry someone else.

The Modern isolation, where everyone is alone, searching for one's identity, is illustrated in *The Waves*. According to Qiuxia Li, in *The Absent Presence: A Study of Percival in The Waves* (2011: 78), in *The Waves*,

> The monologues of the six characters reveal the modern man's search for the self. In the modern world, everyone feels alone. For example, Rhoda said, 'Alone, I often fall down into nothingness. I must push my foot stealthily lest I should fall off the edge of the world into nothingness' (Li 2000: 23).

In *To the Lighthouse*, the lighthouse is regarded as a symbol of loneliness by Simone Petry in *Motifs and Symbols in Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse* (Petry 2004: 5). Mrs. Ramsay does not fully communicate with her family, although she cares about them. Mr. Carmichael too is perceived as a lonely character.

De la Cuesta, in *Catharsis and Lamentation: Elegy in To the Lighthouse*, notices a sense of disconnection among the characters:

> In the long interior monologues of the characters, a sense of disconnection is born; Mr. Ramsay emerges as a philosopher alienated by his own thoughts, unable to

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> fulfill his responsibilities as a husband or a father; Lily finds herself isolated and frustrated by the restrictions and obligations society places on her, perceiving herself under constant attack by patriarchal men and the domestic woman, embodied in Mrs. Ramsay; James' Oedipal desire for attention leaves him feeling angered by his father and abandoned by his mother, a disposition that persists until the final pages of the narrative. (Miller-de la Cuesta 2010)

The sense of disconnection de la Cuesta speaks about refers to the difficulties of communication among characters. We could apply the same reading by Delgado Garcia, with disconnection at the level of the story and with a sense of connection at the level of narration. The lighthouse may also be regarded as an element of connection at the level of narration since the characters' reflections are often about it.

Swift's novels also focus on the issue of isolation. He takes Woolf's preoccupation with this issue further. The tragedy of not being able to reconcile the Romantic ideal of private and public lives is present in his novels as well. Sometimes, the tragedy is temporary, sometimes it is there until the end. Problems of communication among characters are also present with his characters. The frequent absence of addressees within the fabula is noticeable with Swift's narrators. Mostly, as Malcolm has noticed, the lyrical monologues are addressed to the reader.

Tom Crick in *Waterland* has an audience in the person of his pupils; however, they may not entirely understand him. In *Out of This World*, it is only Sophie who has an audience at times, namely her therapist. This absence of an audience comes from conflicting relationships between the characters. According to Winnberg, in Postmodernism,

> the narrator must continue to speak in order to literally survive; that is, the narrator only exists in terms of the fiction she is producing, and at the point the production of discourse ends, the narrator ends. Notable in this respect are, in McHale's view, texts by John Barth, Steve Katz, Maggie Gee, J.M.G. LeClézio and Raymond Federman, with Laurence Sterne as a forerunner (Winnberg 2003: 10).

Winnberg suggests that the isolation of the speaker goes hand in hand with issues of silence and subjectivity. Since the story is constructed from the subjective view of the lyrical monologue of a certain character, his story ceases the moment he ceases to show the reader his views on various incidents.

In *The Sweetshop Owner*, William Chapman has many difficulties in understanding and being understood by his daughter Sophie. As proof, he dies as he waits for his daughter to come. He addresses her many times in his lyrical monologues, yet she does not respond affectively to his stories or she is literally absent and her father only talks to himself. Between William and his wife Irene there has always been a communication problem and this has also been the case between Irene and her family. In such situations, where a communication barrier is found between characters, the lyrical monologues' purpose is to inform the reader and make him determined to make sense of the story. The reader infers the problems of communication between the characters and gets to see their perspective on the issues at the same time. For Swift's characters, conflictual relationships lead to the characters' isolation. The isolated characters talk to themselves or to the other characters, yet the others do not actually listen to them and do not connect with

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them. Once again the Romantic ideal of connecting private with public lives leads to a tragic result of being isolated from the others. This isolation is a pretext for the characters to present their lyrical monologues only to the reader and for Swift to write his novels structured in a way that shows clearly that there is no real dialogue among most of the characters. The conflict between parents and children is also visible in *Shuttlecock*, *Last Orders*, *Out of This World*, and *The Light of Day*. Otherwise, there is the conflict between generations in *Waterland*, as Tom Crick has a different view on history than his students. The conflict between husband and wife is found in *Wish You Were Here*, *The Sweetshop Owner*, *Last Orders*, *Shuttlecock*, and *Ever After*.

Novels with metafictional aspects, when the narrators are aware that they are writing their stories, also contribute to the aspect of isolation. They write, because they do not feel that they can communicate their emotions to other characters. In *Shuttlecock* and *Ever After* there are instances of stories within the story, as each novel contains the memoirs of relatives of the characters. In *Shuttlecock*, Prentis reads his father's memoir and comments and reflects on what he reads. In his turn, Prentis is aware that he is writing a story. The war memoirs of Prentis' father reflect a need to communicate his experience as a war hero. However, towards the end of the novel Prentis realizes that what his father has written is not the truth. Thus, his father remains isolated, but he is isolated in a different way than the characters whose lyrical monologues are presented to the reader. Prentis' father is in a home, unable to speak, so the impossibility of communication between father and son in this case is literal. In his turn, Prentis does not feel as if his family understands his search for truth regarding his father's past or even everyday aspects related to their life together. In *Ever After*, Bill Unwin goes through the memoirs of one of his Victorian ancestors. Matthew Pearce is estranged from his wife, Elizabeth. These stories within the story reflect, in a metafictional way, the experience of the estranged characters who write their reflections and are aware that they write in their turn. At the next level, the reader goes through the same experience of sympathizing with the characters at the present time of the main fabula.

Swift's characters live in a chaotic, fragmented world. The world becomes fragmented due to the characters' impressions of not feeling understood. They may feel imprisoned in their relationships, for instance. In Swift's novel *The Light of Day*, George Webb feels imprisoned with Sarah in a relationship of mutual dependency, each clinging to the other as an embodiment of desires for different lives. Kristina feels imprisoned in the Nashes' home on her arrival, or at least this is how Sarah perceives her. Characters feel insecure, as if they were living in a world without meaning because of the events in their lives. The war is the cause for Kristina's wanderings. War brings change. It transforms the world and characters' view of the world. Kristina finds herself in a different world, in a different country and then she goes back to an empty home (as her family was killed during the war in Croatia). The chaotic, fragmented world is reflected in the characters' experience of isolation, as they feel alone in their search for truth. Prentis in *Shuttlecock* tries to find out the truth about his father. The stream-of-consciousness reflects a fragmented view of the world. Thoughts are presented in the novels as they occur to

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the characters, and time is not chronological, as characters move with their thoughts and memories between past and present.

Traumatic experiences lead to the characters' isolation. This is the case of Irene, who is raped by Hancock, yet her family does not believe her when she tells them about it. Irene is isolated in her own world because of this, and from here comes her future lack of connection with her husband. In *Waterland*, one character's traumatic experience affects another character: Mary steals a baby from the supermarket because she can no longer have children of her own. This affects her husband, the teacher, who tries to retrace the history of his life in order to see when and what went wrong. However, this concern is not shared by the others, as his students do not seem to agree with or to understand him. Isolation can come from the loss of a dear one: in *Ever After*, Bill Unwin is very much affected by the death of his wife Ruth. Change brings about a traumatic experience: George in *The Light of Day* sees his life change for the worse and his existence becomes chaotic. He loses his job, and then his wife leaves him. Characters make efforts to bring order and peace into their lives. Such an effort is self-analysis, which is used by the characters in their lyrical monologues. Their analysis of past incidents is such an attempt. They are alone in this attempt to understand what went wrong. Traumatic events cause misunderstanding and isolation among family members; such is the case in *Out of This World*, where Sophie decides in the end to forgive her father and reunite with him. Both Sophie and Harry are alone in their examination of the past. Traumatic experiences almost always lead to the character's permanent solitude. In the case of Sophie and her father, however, after the experience of solitude, the desire for reconciliation appears. The intense emotions caused by all the incidents examined are shared by the reader: the lyrical scenes created are very vivid and show great emotional intensity. For those lyrical scenes, narrative, reflective, and inner monologues (Malcolm 2003: 162) often overlap.

Since the focus in Swift's novel is not on action as represented in traditional novels, we can think of the reflective aspects in terms of slow-downs. However, the emotional experience is depicted as quite dynamic, since the emotional participation is intense on the part of characters as well as on the part of the readers. Lyrical monologues given by any isolated character are based on emotional aspects. Such characters express their emotional views on the story while they feel isolated from the other characters. This situation reminds us of isolation in Romantic lyric poetry. Wordsworth's poem which begins with "I wandered lonely as a cloud", according to Fiona Stafford, in *Reading Romantic Poetry*, introduces

> the popular idea of the solitary poet, at once wanderer and wonderer. *The Solitary Reaper* […] records the poet's response to a figure of complete self-sufficiency, whose striking isolation makes a similarly powerful impression on the reader's imagination […] (Stafford 2012: 36).

Isolation in Swift thus leads the reader to think of isolation as a trope in Romantic poetry and to associate the lyrical monologues in the novel with the speeches of Wordsworth's solitary poet. The lyrical monologues of isolated characters are not always slow or static, since plenty of incidents and emotional states are represented there. The traumatic aspects of various incidents and their

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reflections in the characters' lyrical monologues bring dramatism and dynamism to their stories. Various aspects of nostalgia for the past are represented in the lyrical mode. Isolation allows characters to present in detail and high intensity their emotional states related to various incidents and characters. Since there are very brief instances of pure narrative mode in Swift's novels, lyrical and dramatic mode are usually in the foreground. Otherwise, the reader can always put the story together and identify the relations between scenes, as the characters' lyrical monologues allow her to imagine the story.

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to analyse, comparatively, the theme of isolation in Woolf's and Swift's lyrical novels. The theme the two authors have in common is also part of Romanticism; it reminds of Romantic lyric poetry. The way in which isolation as a trope in Romantic lyric poetry works to create the lyrical aspect in Woolf's and Swift's novels is explored. The characters' difficulty with communication makes them retreat into themselves and, if the novel is composed of lyrical monologues, it reveals this idea through its very form. The characters' isolation is always connected to a poetic view of life. Sometimes, it is also connected, at the same time, with tragic view of life. For the Romantics, solitude was, however, coupled with the idea of sociability, in the sense that a balance was supposed to be achieved between public and private lives. Here characters such as Rachel, Septimus or Lucrezia in Woolf's novels, fail. Delgado Garcia suggests a narratological interpretation: the level of the story presents disconnected, isolated characters, while the level of narration shows that common memories about the war connect them. The characters' solitude is tied in with parts of their personalities. One significant aspect of Orlando's personality is his preference for solitude, which casts him in the role of a Romantic poet. Characters sometimes talk without actually having something meaningful to say, without connecting to those they talk to. For Swift's characters, conflictual relationships lead to the characters' isolation. The isolated characters talk, yet the others do not connect with them. The Romantic ideal of connecting private with public lives leads to a tragic result of being isolated from the others.

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