Re-thinking human life into poetry: Virginia Woolf's The Waves

Frigstad, Trine Beate

Master thesis

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Abstract
This thesis explores the experimental poetic discourse of The Waves by Virginia Woolf, including narrative and dramatic aspects. My discussion takes its cue from the Author's attempt to write to a rhythm and not to a plot. Rhythm, plot and story are central problems for the discussion, as well as the poetic style of the prose, narrative devices and use of figurative language regarding character building and symbolism in the novel. The difference between soliloquy and interior monologue is illustrated as a stream of consciousness technique. Images and symbols are related to the individual characters in the novel but they also disclose the threading of the characters' minds regarding their understanding of each other and life as a whole. 'Shared imagery' present a transformation of character as metaphor. I discuss how the poetic language of 'The Interludes' is represented through metaphor and metonymy. Furthermore I consider the mystical aspect of the novel in 'the silent world, which exists beyond human life, and consequently human speech.'

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Who wouldn't love to write like Virginia Woolf? (Well, some people, probably, but I'd wager not many of them are looking at this page.) That perhaps is [the writer’s] task—to find the relation between things that seem incompatible yet have a mysterious affinity, to absorb every experience that comes your way fearlessly and saturate it completely so that your poem is a whole, not a fragment; to re-think human life into poetry and so give us tragedy again and comedy by means of characters.