Virginia Woolf: The Novels

ANALYSING TEXTS

General Editor: Nicholas Marsh

Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales *Gail Ashton*

Shakespeare: The Tragedies *Nicholas Marsh*

Virginia Woolf: The Novels *Nicholas Marsh*

Jane Austen: The Novels *Nicholas Marsh*

Thomas Hardy: The Novels *Norman Page*

Further titles are in preparation

Virginia Woolf: The Novels

NICHOLAS MARSH

Macmillan Education

VIRGINIA WOOLF

Copyright © 1998 by Nicholas Marsh

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 1998 978-0-333-73931-0

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles or reviews.
For information, address:

St. Martin's Press, Scholarly and Reference Division,
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010

First published in the United States of America in 1998

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources.

ISBN 978-0-333-68349-1 ISBN 978-1-349-26322-6 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-26322-6

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Marsh, Nicholas.

Virginia Woolf, the novels / Nicholas Marsh.

p. cm. — (Analysing texts)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-312-21374-9(cloth). — ISBN 978-0-312-21375-6(paper)

1. Woolf, Virginia, 1882–1941—Criticism and interpretation.

2. Women and literature—England—History—20th century. 3. Woolf, Virginia, 1882–1941—Outlines, syllabi, etc. I. Title.

II. Series.

PR6045.O72Z81525 1998

823'.912—dc21

97–50472
CIP

For Georgie

Contents

<i>General Editor's Preface</i>	<i>page</i> x
<i>A Note on Editions</i>	xi
Part 1: Analysing Virginia Woolf's Novels	1
1 Virginia Woolf's style	3
<i>Mrs Dalloway</i> , pp. 34–5	3
<i>To the Lighthouse</i> , pp. 106–7	8
<i>The Waves</i> , p. 15	12
Conclusions	15
Methods of Analysis	16
Suggested Work	17
2 Mental Processes in Virginia Woolf	19
<i>Mrs Dalloway</i> , pp. 43–5	20
<i>To the Lighthouse</i> , pp. 57–9	28
<i>The Waves</i> , pp. 179–81	36
Conclusions	43
Methods of Analysis	45
Suggested Work	47
3 Male and Female in Virginia Woolf	48
<i>Mrs Dalloway</i> , pp. 17–19	48
<i>To the Lighthouse</i> , pp. 114–15	53
<i>The Waves</i> , pp. 17–19	59
Conclusions	65
Methods of Analysis	67
Suggested Work	68
4 Social Commentary and Satire	69
<i>Mrs Dalloway</i> , pp. 13–14	70
<i>To the Lighthouse</i> , pp. 194–5	75
<i>The Waves</i> , pp. 169–71	79
Conclusions	86

Methods of Analysis	87
Suggested Work	88
5 Imagery and Symbol	89
Imagery: Similes and Metaphors	89
Imagery: Symbolism	90
Imagery in the Novels	91
<i>Mrs Dalloway</i> , p. 44; and Peter Walsh's Knife	92
<i>To the Lighthouse</i> , the Boar's Head, and the	
Lighthouse	95
<i>The Waves</i> , pp. 153–4	102
The Sea and Water in <i>To the Lighthouse</i> and	
<i>The Waves</i>	106
Conclusions	113
Methods of Analysis	114
Suggested Work	115
6 The Significance of Nature	117
<i>Mrs Dalloway</i> , pp. 164–5	119
<i>To the Lighthouse</i> , pp. 132–3	124
<i>The Waves</i> , pp. 157–8	130
Conclusions	136
Methods of Analysis	139
Suggested Work	140
7 Life and Art	142
Origins in Human Nature	143
Learning, Reason and Poetry	147
Art: Lily Briscoe's Painting	156
Art and the Structure of Virginia Woolf's Novels	167
Part 2: The Context and the Critics	171
8 Virginia Woolf's Life and Work	173
Virginia Woolf's Life	174
Virginia Woolf's Writings	178
The Development of Themes in Virginia Woolf's	
Work	182

9	Virginia Woolf's Contribution to the Development of the Novel	185
	Virginia Woolf's Approach to the Novel	186
	Virginia Woolf's Contribution to the Novel	191
	The 'New' Subject-matter: Psychology and Feminism	194
10	A Sample of Critical Views	196
	Erich Auerbach	196
	Elizabeth Abel	205
	Gillian Beer	213
	<i>Further Reading</i>	218
	<i>Index</i>	222

General Editor's Preface

This series is dedicated to one clear belief: that we can all enjoy, understand and analyse literature for ourselves, provided we know how to do it. How can we build on close understanding of a short passage, and develop our insight into the whole work? What features do we expect to find in a text? Why do we study style in so much detail? In demystifying the study of literature, these are only some of the questions the *Analysing Texts* series addresses and answers.

The books in this series will not do all the work for you, but will provide you with the tools, and show you how to use them. Here, you will find samples of close, detailed analysis, with an explanation of the analytical techniques utilised. At the end of each chapter there are useful suggestions for further work you can do to practise, develop and hone the skills demonstrated and build confidence in your own analytical ability.

An author's individuality shows in the way they write: every work they produce bears the hallmark of that writer's personal 'style'. In the main part of each book we concentrate therefore on analysing the particular flavour and concerns of one author's work, and explain the features of their writing in connection with major themes. In Part 2 there are chapters about the author's life and work, assessing their contribution to developments in literature; and a sample of critics' views are summarised and discussed in comparison with each other. Some suggestions for further reading provide a bridge towards further critical research.

Analysing Texts is designed to stimulate and encourage your critical and analytic faculty, to develop your personal insight into the author's work and individual style, and to provide you with the skills and techniques to enjoy at first hand the excitement of discovering the richness of the text.

NICHOLAS MARSH

A Note on Editions

References to the three novels studied in this book, *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*, are page references to the Vintage editions of 1992, published by Vintage Books (Random House), and based on the Hogarth Press editions of 1990.