

How is the modernist style expounded within Mrs Dalloway?

The modernist style is successfully expounded within this extract as the extract is written in a very different style to classical literature and by doing this enables the reader to link to with the characters and helps to show the actual nature of the human mind.

The plot of this extract expounds the modernist style as it is unconventionally non-linear which reflects the chaotic nature of life and the thoughts of the characters. By describing the world from one character's point of view and then again from a different character's, both of which could be happening at the same time, it immerses the reader in the world as they can imagine the world from different perspectives and so gain a fuller understanding of it. These two points of view are also effective as they show the reader that certain sentiments are not solely held by one character but by two which implies that this sentiment is either universal or at the least reasonably common. In this extract it helps to show the reader that a rather surprising mood of depressed cynicism is not as odd as it seems, considering as the characters are all preparing to go to a party, as it is a mood many unrelated characters have and so must have some cause. The plot is also rather important in its oddity as there is a long tangent from the main plot. This starts when Walsh is "standing by [a] pillar-box" and then ends again when he is "by the pillar-box". The repetition of this phrase makes it clear to the reader that nothing is happening physically and the plot is not being developed, however, this tangent is important as it enables Walsh to deliver a soliloquy which helps the reader to understand his thoughts and feelings. This rather odd way of showing thoughts is actually very effective as the sudden veering away from one idea, the physical action of the street, to another idea mimics the way in which people think.

This extract further develops the idea of the disjunctive nature of human minds by the way in which the extract is itself written. The syntax defies the norm and seems to have no consistency, much like the mind. There are some very long and complex sentences which seem to go on and on for ever, never ending just adding more sub-clauses, which shows how thoughts are not distinct things but flow on from one idea to the next seamlessly. This is shown in its most extreme form in the passage focused on Henderson. There is a sentence which starts: "It was the girls" and then does not end until: "her old black dress." This sentence is extremely long, containing twenty one different clauses and seems to the reader to go on and on forever and by the time the sentence finishes the topic has changed completely. Instead of being broken into many distinct, smaller sentences the sentence just mutates slowly from each idea to the next. In this way it represents the nature of thoughts and how they are nebulous things with no clear boundary between each idea. A different nature of thoughts is also expounded in this syntactic oddity, as these complex sentences contain so much trivial detail, which is just added to simple ideas. This extreme details, many of which seem to be utterly irrelevant, shows how the mind often fixates itself on a very small detail and then flits to another detail, often only connected by the most tenuous link. Also the massive amount of detail, much of it so specific it is not really needed, also makes it hard for the reader to form the bigger picture of what is actually going on. This effect is very successful as it mimics the way in which someone in a crowded place will notice one or two details about their surroundings but might miss some obvious larger more important details.

To further develop the reality of human despair and the complex confusing nature of life there are more than one character in the extract. This is very effective at showing the confusing nature of reality as it shows that two different people experiencing the same situations will experience them in different ways. This shows how bleak the world is as it is not just one character who is depressed and bitter showing that life must give the character some legitimate reason for feeling thus. The despairing nature of the human mind is shown very aptly by using a soliloquy to describe a