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English 188T: Digital Woolf

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Weather's Foreshadowing

Virginia Woolf's *The Years* follows a family chronologically through time starting with their youth in the year 1880 and ending with the present time somewhere between the years 1928 and 1935. Each chapter of the novel serves as a year in the lives of the Partiger family and other characters. At the beginning of each chapter Woolf sets the scene with a description of the weather at the time. The vivid imagery she uses when creating her settings allows the reader to have a clear understanding of the novel's scenes. Woolf starts each chapter with vivid imagery of weather to establish a strong setting that foreshadows the relevant events occurring throughout the different years documented in the novel.

Woolf uses the imagery of weather to foreshadow events that occur throughout the novel. The use of this literary device sets the tone and mood of each year at the beginning of each chapter. Pam Morris discusses the novel's narrative viewpoint and the role weather plays in writing, "These four worlds – human and physical, countryside and city – are held, within the narrative perspective, in a relationship wrought by their interdependence upon weather" (Morris 171). Here Morris is addressing the strong role that weather plays in Woolf's novel. Each year is started with the weather to set the mood for the events that follow. The narrative is set with the weather as it changes throughout the chapters. An example of this can be seen at the start of 1910 where Woolf writes, "It was neither hot nor cold, an English spring day, bright enough, but a purple cloud behind the hill might mean rain" (Woolf 152). Woolf uses a single purple cloud and

the threat of rain as imagery to create foreshadowing. Purple is often associated with royalty and clouds and rain are often symbols of sadness. This specific word choice foreshadows the death of King Edward VII at the end of the chapter. Other instances of weather foreshadowing future events can be found in the novel's text. Woolf's foreshadowing allows the reader to feel the nature of events that follow.

Woolf's imagery of weather found at the beginning of each chapter in her novel serves a specific purpose. The word choice she uses when setting the scene and the weather within it foreshadows the events that follow the start of each year. Weather is used to foreshadow death, capture time, and accentuate happier moments within Woolf's novel. This allows her to set a deeper mood with the use of her vivid weather imagery.