

琉球大学学術リポジトリ

Mrs. Dallowayにおける意識と現実的空間

メタデータ	言語: 出版者: 琉球大学教育学部 公開日: 2007-07-18 キーワード (Ja): キーワード (En): 作成者: Taira, Katsuaki, 平良, 勝明 メールアドレス: 所属:
URL	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12000/1034

The Mind and the Physical World in Mrs. Dalloway

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It goes without saying that Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* is not exactly a conventional book. The plot of the novel, as most readers expect it, does not develop linearly and does not present a structure that helps provide obvious clues as to how the characters are situated to each other or, for that matter, against the background that rarely congeals sufficiently to the degree that readers feel comfortably involved in physical reality on a descriptive level.¹ The picture I have just drawn makes one almost wonder if the novel is indeed comprehensible and meaningful in that it gives readers the sense of tangibility and organicity that is almost guaranteed in conventional novels. Granted that *Mrs. Dalloway* is not a work that is to be read along the conventional expectations and criteria. But it is not entirely a material that rebuffs readers' attempt to make contact with the inner scapes that evolve through the printed text (which needless to say implicitly contains all the emotions and character layerings that reside in conventional works of art as well in the sphere circumscribed by the medium of the target object) as it palpably works on the reader's imagination and sufficiently energizes the space that comes into being through the interactions between the two. However, there is in fact something quite unique about the work. I may be repeating myself in such a short span of time but what it is that makes *Mrs. Dalloway* different, at least in a way that distinguishes it from other works that preceded it, is the way it treats the mind as it incessantly works in response to the slightest stimuli that smite each characters as they engage in just about most mundane daily activities in a duration of time that can also be characterized as made up of bathetically uneventful aggregates of all the life's infinitely more or less exciting or unexciting moments. In other words, the segment of a collection of people portrayed in the work is there by no

¹ The tangible plot pattern and linearity of the descriptive development that are the lynchpin of the Victorian novels are indeed craftily flaunted in Woolf's works. According to Eric Warner, "progressively we find her throwing off the prosaic discursiveness, the homage to agreed values and external descriptions which had supported much of Victorian fiction, in a concerted effort to bring the novel closer to the quick of the mind." Shift in focus must necessarily have led Woolf to come up with an array of techniques and themes that could shed a light on the side of reality which, Woolf considered, had not been covered by the Victorian writers. The above passage is quoted from *Woolf: The Waves*, published by Cambridge University Press, p. 9.

means by any necessity but through sheer contingency and whim that happens to arise through fortuitous interplay of various factors, the least of which would be to let out all the psychosomatic detritus the author has accumulated due to her own life's difficulties experienced preceding to and contemporaneous with the production of work that later comes to be known as *Mrs. Dalloway*. That is rather mundanely put, I admit. However, what constitutes the uniqueness of the work is exactly that. The pure mundanity of the occasion and the uneventfulness of the plot and non-teleological nature of the structure that spawn all sorts of conscious effluvia that may or may not relate to the physical reality that ostensibly functions as the backdrops to the inner worlds that in essence inundate the virtual world represented by the title our author gave to the current book we will be dealing with. To completely differentiate Mrs. Dalloway from other works of the twentieth century may be a bit disingenuous, for there are many that are equally or more mind-centered (as opposed to tangible reality centered) and less teleological and discontinuous than Virginia Woolf's but in that it is one of the first and thus retains the vestiges of the conventional novel plot and structure and all those elements that are essential to what we term conventional novels, it may be more readily used to elucidate the departing points at which the gap and differences between the two kinds of novels, that is Woolf's and more Classic type of works, can be brought to the fore with more clarity. The mundanity and the nontraditional approach within the overall framework of conventionalism, paradoxically (or perhaps all the more because of those reasons), further pronounces the uniqueness of the authorial approach Woolf takes in the novel and the conscious, which is quirky and discontinuous to say the least, world she develops in the novel. I intend to delve into the intangible zone that becomes so palpable in the work and analyze it in detail as it impinges on the real world, or vice versa, that as a whole gives rise to a unique fictional space. You may never know if layers of as yet unsurfaced portions of consciousness/ story can still be salvaged.

What is striking about Woolf's style is that the story starts with a subjective confession that is almost completely unconcerned about narrative conveniences. A reader, who has been uninitiated into the ways of the deep inner workings of the mind, would have a difficult time following the cues that are scarce, or to be more exact, different than the ones he might feel familiar with.² With the expectations derived from traditionalists' view point such introduction, "Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy

² Admittedly, the story per se is rather simple but the way it is conveyed is certainly not. No wonder a number of critics seize on the complicated structurality of *Mrs. Dalloway*, including Susan Rubinow Gorsky. See her *Virginia Woolf* for more developed argument on the issue.

the flowers herself," would certainly sound a bit obtuse and not a little abrupt. Who is Mrs. Dalloway? And what does buying the flowers herself, rather than letting someone else do it, have to do with the story? And what prerogative does a writer dare assume she has as she drops such seemingly audacious line right at the inception of a story before any other circumstantial, as well as background, preparation has been made? Or is the ploy used here merely a challenge to upset the conventional expectations a reader is presumed to bring in when he faces a work of fiction, which Mrs. Dalloway is supposed to be or was to be received as, at least, by the readers of the early twentieth century England? None of the questions can be easily answered and overridden when one considers what constitutes fictional space and once answers it (to save precious time, among other possible reasons) that the authentic sphere that makes up such a space is that which is centered around a meeting place between the readerly consumption of imaginative energy and writerly expenditure of creative structuation (albeit structuation can easily take the form of destructuation, its antithesis). Whether Woolf set about her rather innovative work in challenge or merely for its own sake, the nonchalant manner in which the conscious voice drives a wedge between the world of *Mrs. Dalloway* and outside it is so striking and its self-absorption (I would not say the air of almost autistic self-absorption but the tone that resonates from the first sentence rings so lopsidedly introverted that one would not be blamed for calling it annihilative of reality as it is conventionally understood) is so peculiarly tenacious that it easily grips the reader's mind for the duration of the episode that culminates (which sounds almost oxymoronic, I admit) with the final party towards which everyone after all seems to be oriented one way or another. I do not intend to dwell on the first sentence unnecessarily but what sets it apart is not merely its anti-narrative amorphous tendency. On a second look and on a closer inspection what strikes the reader is the sheer triteness of the topic discussed in it. Who would want to risk her writerly reputation on something so insignificant as the decision to buy flowers and without apparent shared information as to what purpose and for what occasion? Couched in such flimsy, seemingly that is, structure as to remind one that the question, rhetorical or not, dropped here is possibly a idiosyncratic irrelevance to all except for the person issuing the voice from there does not seem any deep-rooted cause for concern for the readers beyond that needed to skim over and discard it from his memory the sooner his eyes rushed past the target line. But the truth is, as I already mentioned, it sticks and lingers in the synergistic space that takes shape (which is surprising in itself!) between the text and the reader. The fact that it does becomes even stranger when one thinks and tries to put the first line of the work in some sort of structural perspective. After

all the statement is purely subjective and seems to concern only the person within whom the entire thought process is taking place. Other than that, or to be more precise, external to that conscious circuitry, the content exhibited does not and should not occupy any significant place except a transitory one that evaporates as the reader moves on to interact with other phases of thought processes that are seamlessly concatenated in the work.

The curious conscious interplays continue between the fictive character and the reader despite the off-putting inception of the story, which by the way, as I already suggested, does not sink in on the latter until careful analysis of the function and fluid structure of the first line is undertaken (which does not necessarily mean the reader is completely oblivious of the effect the first line leaves in his deep psyche, or inner mind and besides the reader's mind is meant to be carried along in synch with the thought processes of the characters as well as narrative consciousnesses). As odd as the first sentence is, the following one is even more so as a name, which the reader as far as he can remember has not yet been acquainted with, is abruptly incorporated and followed with the information that apparently pertains to the person of that name. The juxtaposition of the two sentences, which in fact is mere structuation of a continuous thought process, not only does not occur by inevitable logic but also is not the kind that prepares the reader for the details that are to be gratuitously provided by the writer or the center of consciousness that happens to be the dominant voice at the moment. The knee-jerk reaction of the reader when he encounters the rather free-flowing and quite possibly discontinuous narrative details provided here is to discard the obviously irrelevant information that is purportedly attributed to the person introduced as Lucy. But the fact that the very mechanism through which such information is incorporated (which is subtle and almost unnoticeable as a device to pass on a significant morsel of knowledge concerning the woman) after all seamlessly works by leaving an indelible, albeit very curious, mark on the reader's memory indicates that the interactive space I mentioned above is in fact in the process of forming and whatever deliberate narrative and structural ploy Woolf uses to create a sense of authenticity seems to be working.

The apparent discontinuity the first two lines seem to foreground, however, does not mean the concatenation of the two is indeed devoid of any logical linkage or it is completely gratuitous, although my statement above is certainly susceptible to misprision if read carelessly. On the contrary, Woolf does not forget to leave a logical copula that unobtrusively and yet unmistakably emphasizes the continuous thought process that is somehow linear in logic and definitely moored to a certain rationale, thus

preventing it from going completely berserk and directionless.³ It may not be a good idea to further expound on the way the two lines work, seeing that the logic inherent in the continuation of the two sentences is rather obvious if the reader followed the argument I made above, but just to make my point even clearer let me hazard to explain the inner workings of the subtle narrative devices that are embedded throughout *Mrs. Dalloway*. Now the word “for” obviously indicates a causative reason for the errand Mrs. Dalloway is running as the story starts. (Some might, with justification, object that the narrative is so continuous and fluid to such a degree that segmentation of any sort, including the attempt to divide the story according to semi-traditional developmental patterns, is not only impossible but also misplaced.) The word, with which the second line gets under way, somehow salvages the sentiment that is contained in the very sentence and lets it reflect on the relations (which is established through the concatenation of the two lines) between Mrs. Dalloway herself and Lucy, with the former somehow appearing understanding and generous, although these qualities do not necessarily concretize in definable emotions at this stage. The causative link indicated in the second line turns the reader’s attention back to the first one (in a somewhat reflexive manner that is necessarily subtle and unconscious but nevertheless there on a certain readerly imaginative level) and let him seize on the trivial and yet now turning out to be somewhat topically significant nature of the errand: buying the flowers herself. If Lucy is the one who needs to be doing the chores, at least part of them, does going out to buy flowers sufficiently compensate for the duty assigned to Lucy? Or does Mrs. Dalloway’s errand more than offset the “work cut out for” Lucy? What are indeed the relations between the two women? Why is going out to buy flowers such a seemingly momentous decision, a decision that merits to be foregrounded right at the beginning of the story?

All these answers and questions crop up successively as the reader’s mind is incessant jolted in synch with the little mystery that bubbles up from the depth of the character’s psyche via the narrative. Just when these bits of dialogical interfacing has reached a saturation point the next line supplies even more curious information. What does “doors to be taken off their hinges” mean? What does it have anything to do with Mrs. Dalloway’s going out for shopping and Lucy’s being meted out her portion of

³ An argument, made by such critics as Rachel Bowlby and others, that feminine temporarily, which is circular, and masculine temporality, which is arbitrary and dictatorial and represented by the booming sound of Big Ben, seems a bit too extreme. It may have to be revamped from a more diachronically expansive narratological perspective. On Bowlby’s argument see *Virginia Woolf: Feminist Destinations*, pp. 71-98.

domestic duty? And then the puzzle is made even more complicated as more characters threaten to plunge into the reader's imaginative sphere, which fortunately at the moment, or perhaps unfortunately, does not materialize. But the same trend that is continuing from the inception of the story surfaces again. A name, without explanation or any preambles is abruptly introduced and left to the reader to figure out whatever he can make of it. Does "Rumpelmayer" signify enough to warrant interruption of thought process on the reader's part (although since readerly imagination and writerly creative developing—including characters delineated through it—are going in synch at the moment, the thought process described here could easily apply to both) and let it work on his imagination more than the apparently cursory nature of the name seems to encourage, which the potentially humorous provenance of the name somewhat threatens to thwart? And when the precarious understanding of the reader appears to congeal with uncertain conviction, a new possibility dawns on the conscious horizon that could at least partially explain the very cause of the preceding concatenation/convergence of errand, work and seeming gratuitous/momentous introduction of a name.⁴ It is, rather anticlimactic though it may be, a gathering of a sort that is pulling every detail that has been provided so far—or at least such possibility suddenly emerges as the reader encounters or rather comes across a piece of information that suggests an impending visit of men related to Rumpelmayer or whoever he is, although the significance of the personage seems to lie not necessarily in his ontological value but in the connotative totality in its association with whatever it is made out to be in the reader's mind, not the least of which may as well be the name's humorous phonetic overtone. Here I must go back a little and supplement my explanation on the mechanism involved in arriving at the gathering of a sort, toward which conscious processes of the characters and narrator are putatively tilted, by incorporating the seemingly incidental as well as rather odd reference to taking the doors off the hinges. What does it simply mean? Well, initially, that is when the reader's mind is moving linearly along the temporal axis of the readerly activity towards the end of the psychical and textual oeuvre, the reference to taking the doors off the hinges indeed seemed insignificant and at the same time slightly out of the ordinary, particularly at a stage when no deliberate circumstantial evidence seems to aid the reader in deciphering the narrative development. But as the expected arrival of men is

⁴ The fluidity of the significance of incidents and characters that reside in the narrative space indeed seems to be the reason why Lucio P. Ruotolo makes the following comment:

Throughout Woolf's fictional world, language as well as personality resists the reifying intentions of a society bent on possession.

See *The Interrupted Moment: A View of Virginia Woolf's Novels*, p.101.

recalled and together with that conscious reversion to the previous fact, which actually takes place on the reader's part though it might as well involve authorial structural ploy, some tenuous logical linkage is made and the most conventional conclusion, albeit temporal which nevertheless proves to be the case, is reached in the readerly mind upon which to base his further imaginative activity. But when he is ready to engage with the conscious flight of the character/narrator on a more concretized level along the same topical line, the narrative mind takes a sudden abrupt turn in a completely unexpected direction. It is something sensory and ineluctable as the character almost instinctually responds to the milieu with everything it connotes and takes a flight of imagination that in its turn, or I should say, simultaneously sets the mind of the character on a transposed and different plane.

Needless to say, what connects the immediate response of the character to the rhapsodic and yet nevertheless necessarily concatenated series of events that ensues is not random but initiated through a tropological device that is seemingly nonchalantly inserted but nevertheless assertive in that it holds the two phases of mind's flight through a homogenous similitude. I know that sounds a bit too abstract. What takes place at this juncture in the mind of the character is a kind of transposition from one topological/tropological positionality to another that are located on different planes but definitely connected in sensory perception, at least as far as the narrative mind's is concerned. The jumping off point on this occasion is the feel and all the pregnant connotations the particular morning holds for the character. What the current physical condition plunges our protagonist into is the nameable, although somehow vague to the extent that the whole gamut of ambience the target venue that is to be referred to implies to Clarissa, and particular segment of her memories that pertain to a moment in her childhood at a definite locale identified as Bourton. Once again the transition achieved here is gradual, meaning the two phases of the mind are by no means identified, albeit similar, and whatever ensues in the descriptive outlay of the narrator's psyche is clearly demarcated as incidents that occurred in childhood, those "issued to children on a beach." This state of half here and half there, in terms of time and place, continues as the character's mind is excited and ineluctably drawn to the moments in her younger days, which are nevertheless still shared by the central consciousness as true and coexistent at the present moment when those temporarily distant days are actually recalled. That is part of the reason why the reader momentarily loses the bearings, as it were, when she encounters the exclamatory phrase, "What a lark!" Does it refer to the scene that took place decades ago when the protagonist was in her late teens? Or does it indicate the moment when the mind of

the character is spontaneously taken back in time to those distant days? Or does the phrase occupy a position that is neither there nor here, or more probably both here and there—a middle ground where both temporarities are shared and not shared at the same time? Or could it even be made to function as a kind of objective correlative, an objective reference point that can evoke multi-nuanced sentiments, which may be too abstract and complicated to be conveyed otherwise, while at the same time retaining the qualities of the physical objects that gave rise to those sentiments in the first place? It is hard to tell, especially when the reader's mind races along the temporal axis, registering the ever incremental lines that incessantly leave the preceding ones behind. But if the reflexive consciousness is ever put in use, which actually seems inevitable in order to comprehend the narrative in any meaningful manner, the holistic signification, which comprehends all the potential meanings indicated above and which comes bearing down upon the readerly mind transmorphosed as the exhilaration experienced on Clarissa's visit to Bourton, seems to be condensed at this phase of the narrative to the sentiment expressed through the pseudo-cryptic exclamations, "What a lark! What a plunge!" What is interesting is that the metaphorical similitude is almost always dovetailed with the literal identification of the conditions that bring about such linkage. What plunges Clarissa's mind into the state that is optimal for recalling the Bourton scene is, among other things, the actual squeak she hears at the moment and the one she unconsciously retained in her memory when she opened the French windows to go outside at Bourton. The resultant almost Wordsworthian joy when she steps outside, in the old days, and when she breathes in fresh morning air, which happens right at the moment in the narrative present, is each a mere incidental sensation but what brings back the distant and seemingly insignificant happenings, and memories thereof, are exactly those supposedly tenuous sensations that occur at any place and time regardless of any physical surroundings, although the causative elements that induce variegated sensations and the actual sensations characters experience are layered together and almost always accompany each other in *Mrs. Dalloway*. In a way the mind, a reservoir of memories, transcends time and takes precedence over physical reality but at the same time it is always moored to the incidents that gave rise to those memories in the first place.

This ambivalence is evident in the current section when Clarissa indulges in the traumatic episode involving Peter Walsh at Bourton. But before plunging into the direct encounter with Peter Walsh it may be more instructive to trace the process through which Clarissa's memory takes her in and out of the present and the past that are, as I mentioned, intricately interwoven with the circumstantial physical reality that

surrounded those moments and that contributed to the heightened sensibilities which make even the familiar somewhat defamiliarized. As the referential terms that directly turn the reader's attention to a certain temporal positionality clearly indicate, such as "this" in "stillier than this," our heroine's mind is located at a midway point between here and there as it explores the memorialized past in its association with the present. In other words, at this point the mind of the character has not completely left the actually occurring present in favor of the mellowed and yet somewhat significatorily more pregnant "then" when one of the climaxes of her life has putatively taken place. This seemingly insignificant fact nevertheless moors the readerly mind securely to the two temporalities and allows development of an imaginative space that comprehends two dimensions, which are not simply the mere sum of the two but are synergistically greater. The mind of our protagonist, however, is at the same time ever tilted toward the salvageable past where coruscating jewels of memories are waiting to be retrieved. As the mind oscillates between the past and the present the exhilarating sensations of the early morning comes back and becomes intensified as it is relived and amplified in the present as the mind busily engages in the nameable and yet somehow eluding core of experience. The best recourse at this point to grasping the fleeing joy is to resort to a metaphor, the kind that is comprehensive enough to let Clarissa float through a sea of abstracted sensations until she is comfortable enough to delineate the feel and shape of the experience she thinks she recognizes as the sensation that actually connects the present frame of mind to that of the past. But on this occasion what sways her mind is the unnamability and inscrutability of the emotions that sensation evokes in her mind in association with the physical reality she thinks she lived in at a certain point in the past. Notice that the moment this unnameable emotion congeals is the moment when her mind focuses on particular physical objects, which, if I once again reiterate my observation I expressed above, are seemingly incidental and yet inalienably connected with the entire episode that is destined to resurge in her mind time and again, albeit in a variety of renditions. (This may be by the by but the concatenation of symbolically charged imageries, such as "looking at the flowers, at the trees with the smoke winding off them and the rooks rising, falling," seems to gradually lose its effectiveness as it strikes the reader more and more artificial as overelaboration of the metaphors becomes ever strained.)

What tends to become effeminately melodramatic in *Mrs. Dalloway* is here saved by an unexpected bathos as the nostalgic and ever-engrossing yearning for the irretrievable past is countered by a particularized association in connection with an individual her life has been inextricably tied to ever since the moment that incident

took place in Bourton. As the symbolic adumbration of the unpinpointable and yet profound sensation was to be concluded and finalized, a person who has left an indelible mark in her life intrudes into her memory and in conjunction with the image of that person, or rather in place of that figure, a line uttered by Peter Walsh concretizes in Clarissa's mind as, paradoxically enough, more profound than anything else that has inundated her memory up to this point in its association with the present moment. This anticlimax completely sets the tone for the rest of the reverie, at least for the moment. Some might object that such seemingly innocuous lines as "Musing among the vegetables" and "I prefer men to cauliflowers" are legitimately there for their own sake, that is, for the tone and meaning and ambiance they evoke in the character's as well as reader's minds. But once again, as they appear at this particular juncture when Clarissa's is more than ordinarily immersed in the reveries of the past and the all the innocent memories associated with it, the timing of the lines does suggest some bathetic implications referred to above. The serious overtones the readerly mind has been absorbing up to the moment is suddenly jerked into a different tropological realm while the reader, as it were, is forced to bring in a set of expectations that are adequate for the possible jocular tone with which our author endues the two lines in question. It is not at all strange because such presumably romantic scene with full of nostalgic yearnings for the long-lost and yet ever present (to the mind's eye) childhood moments is abruptly plunged into an earthy reality that is so much tinged with the co-present with its ever-sharper blood and sweat human edges and yet which is actually coexistent with the very memories the protagonist fondly remembers and harkens back to with the slightest sensory urgings she gets throughout the story. Laced with the temporal ambivalence somewhat akin to the double-edged concretization of emotional nuances I touched upon above, the self-abnegating humor Clarissa manifests here is all the more emphatic and is, I am sure, the kind the author intended to linger and stick out in the readerly mind for the rest of the episodic epiphany, which oftentimes seems to constitute Woolf's present work. But such humorous digression aside the bathos and the implied potential humor the said lines present is not totally gratuitous, in a sense that they give rise to further elaboration on the very person the lines are specifically associated with in the protagonist's mind. Notice how pettishly the author/protagonist develops the tone that is originally derived from Clarissa's memory of the man who crossed the great oceans on his way to India. She does not necessarily pine for the man who so strongly left a burning image of himself or obstinately cling to all the impressions associated with the focal point both characters share at Bourton as her presumed nonchalance, which comes to the fore with the passing remark such as "one of

these days, June or July, she forgot which," obviously indicates. Or is it, as is more than amply hinted above, a mere affectation on the part of Clarissa, as she is desperate to rein in the gnawing emotions that arise from her involvement with Peter? How is one supposed to constitute the real gist of such remark as "for his letters were awfully dull," if not in the spirit of the double entendre, or more simply put, ambivalent dithering, in which Clarissa tends to frame her emotional riposte towards Peter? Well, I did not exactly expound on the bathetic overtones the episode is imbued with, as I seemed to have promised the reader. More directly along this line, then, the increasingly pettifying (well, actually it would easily be termed particularizing instead from another perspective) maneuver Clarissa can be interpreted as taking is prolonged as her mind magnifies the incidents and memories that contrast well with the previously hinted romantic possibilities, which could be, not incidentally, evocative of life's many shaded critical moments. The associations enumerated here,⁵ once again thrown in as if they were mere afterthoughts, which they were in a sense, are not only light and pettyish and bathetic, which as well reflects Clarissa's coyness even in her early fifties (a reflection of her mind's evolutionary cessation at the moment when the critical romantic encounter climaxed at Bourton), but also adumbrates one of the knotty thematic strands that run through the whole story.

As has been indicated already, what defines the mind at its most active is the others that surround it in their midst. Granted that I introduced the word "others" rather nonchalantly but they could best be described as residing beside and among the central consciousness and at the same time acting upon it in variegated ways to such an extent that one is often taken by surprise by their interactions and their resultant redefinitions of each.⁶ The seeming sudden shift in scene with the appearance of a nondescript Scrope Purvis (is it a coincidence that the name itself sounds oddly insignificant as well as comic, perhaps encouraging a perspective that is both baffled

⁵ This note should have been incorporated in the main essay but for the sake of clarity I decided to append it and leave to the reader's discretion. The passage I refer to, as some might have rightly presumed, is as follows.

...it was his sayings one remembered; his eyes, his pocket-knife, his smile, his grumpiness and, when millions of things had utterly vanished—how strange it was!—a few sayings like this about cabbages.

⁶ The interrelatedness that is the hallmark of the space being developed here is time and again seized as the key to characterizing the influences and nuances that arise from the nexuses and signficatory interstices of *Mrs. Dalloway*. Susan Merrill Squier, for one, notes that "Woolf uses street scenes to juxtapose Septimus Smith, Peter Walsh, and Clarissa Dalloway in such a way that the reader must consider their interrelatedness, must connect (if only momentarily) what would otherwise remain disconnected...." See *Virginia Woolf and London: The Sexual Politics of the City*, p. 120.

and somnolent on the part of the reader?) can be seen in this light. The abruptness of transition from one consciousness to another is another hallmark of this story, which I already referred to above. Without any excuse a descriptive passage is taken over by an almost voyeuristic soliloquy that issues from the transient patchwork character named Purvis. What is the actual remark that can be heard only by the mind's ears? It is as simple as, "A charming woman" (p. 6). However, in its surface triviality is hidden something that reflects the essence of what constitutes Mrs. Dalloway and her ilk who reside in the area here indicated by a shorthand, Westminster. The train of associations I have been making is by no means arbitrary as the said Purvis in fact is made to reveal, although in a manner that is one degree removed. If that sounds a bit mystifying, then, the actual quote might satisfy the reader's craving for the relevant information, "knowing her as one does know people who live next door to one on Westminster." (The indirect sharing of the voyeuristic information here, by the way, is visually accompanied by parentheses, which effectively divide the conscious distance between the reader and the target mind currently at the center of the narrative.) If I seize on the issue of this diverging distance, then, the next bits of staccato information succeeding the parenthetical remark further differentiate and amorphizes the distance/perspectival relationship between the reader and the characters involved. Such observations as "a touch of the bird about her, of the jay, blue-green, light, vivacious" are obviously located some distance between the said positionalities, albeit it is logically understood that the assertive mind must necessarily reside in the clownishly named personage as well. This shifting purview not only gives a sense of a camera in action as it pans or zooms in and out on the object in question but also effectively expresses the fluid conscious distance that establishes between various players that are both directly and indirectly, or rather visibly and invisibly engaged in the narrative canvas as it fluctuates before the readerly consciousness. Nevertheless, narratological tidbits of information are skillfully inserted among the seemingly spontaneous outflow of impressions, which on closer inspection divulges the ever-present calculating hand of the author behind the presumed autonomous characters that fill the fictional space. That is not to say that the narratologically modulated string of information is exclusive of other organic possibilities as the conscious distance is skillfully entwined with the information necessary to smoothly advance the storyline, as the conventions require. That may sound a bit too abstract. Let me quote the lines that correspond to the argument I am developing for some time now.

She stiffened a little on the kerb, waiting for Durtnall's van to pass. A charming woman, Scrope Purvis thought her (knowing her as one does know people who live

next door to one in Westminster); a touch of the bird about her, of the jay, blue-green, light, vivacious, though she was over fifty, and grown very white since her illness. There she perched, never seeing him, waiting to cross, very upright. (*Mrs. Dalloway*, p. 6)

As I pointed out above, some of the information would be rather gratuitous and even a bit too artificial if it issued exclusively from the mind of Purvis except in a setup where the pathological history and other information float to his conscious horizon in a moment of truly voyeuristic and truly personalized moments. If such exception was granted then the line immediately preceding the apparent authorial, third person comment would come alive as an authentic overflow of private thoughts. But framed in such a manner that the perspective distance is constantly modulated by the various presences, both current and potential, it may be fair to say that even the thought processes within the fictional space of *Mrs. Dalloway* is influenced by the fluidity that has characterized the mind function in the initial part of the story.

In fact the same fluid motion is in full force here as the direct conscious commentary is followed by the seemingly receding perspectival focus and then by the voice which could as well belong to all the characters involved, albeit some by tenuous threads, as well as to none other than the very narrative controller that engulfs and directs the story from the beginning to the end under cover of the floating consciousnesses that fill the narrative space. This fluidity, or what seems like an amorphous narrative focus, is indeed what is being manifested in the line that starts with "For having lived in Westminster." The source of conscious ratiocination is indeed hard to be exactly located until the absolute author (which may sound a little facetious in an oscillating and relativistic perspectival environ) specifies the person that voiceless voice is supposed to be issuing from. But still then the opacity of the source is made much of to prevent the reader from directly attributing the voice to Clarissa by inserting a third person pronoun. How is one supposed to react when he encounters "one," especially as his mind is hurrying on from the comment by a gratuitous presence, who does not necessarily warrant to be there at the given moment? Is it absurd to expect the readerly mind to comprehend the ensuing sentence in the same vein, as something continuous in thought process from the previous haphazard remark by Purvis? If the impression the name is likely to leave on the reader is calculated to linger sufficiently long enough for any bathetically comedic name is entitled to, then the disorientation the lack of clear perspectival delineation induces in the reader is clearly intentional on the part of the creator of the story. But the more interesting question would be why such over-elaboration to decenter the conscious world and to keep the

readerly mind, as it were, at bay and at a loss at the same time? To answer that question would be to follow the train of thought that is tacked onto the conscious focus that is seemingly associated with our protagonist. That being said, however, what causes the dissipation of conscious focus and our engagement with the various ramifications of it on the part of the reader, is indeed tantamount to a quest to resolve the pseudo mystery I posited immediately above. Without much delay and dithering we should pursue the conscious train that derives from, although not necessarily ineluctably seeing that the dissipation or cecentering of focus is taking place here so fluidly, the very random appearance and appraisal of one Purvis. As I mentioned, the one, the generalizing and fuzzying of the conscious center at this juncture, or the use of such neutral term temporarily misdirects the way the reader seizes the signficatory intent that is particular to any individualized conscious center.⁷ But that is, to be exact, checked in medias res as the author identifies the source of the thought by appending a specific person as the one from whom such thought process if emanating. But another interesting issue is that does the initial staccato revelation about Clarissa in fact exclusively arise from the named person only, or could it be something that is legitimately and justifiably shared by others in the fictional space where boundaries between individuated consciousnesses, if I dare use such phrase, are tenuous, to say the least, and quite fluctuating, at least. Such interpretational possibility is indeed not at all a stretch as the fragmented display of reality, or relational divulgation between the inner self of the person being centered at the moment and the reality that putatively surrounds her, tries to go beyond the bounds of the conscious control of the person to whom it is directly linked. But is the seemingly descriptive passage indeed constantly moored to Clarissa and exclusively to her, as the passage of time and the ever-changing physical circumstances thrust themselves into the foreground and the central consciousness, from which the former are supposed to be derived and projected, is ever pushed back to the contingent role, only to be reminded of by the trite narratological devices such as “Clarissa was positive,” and “she thought.” Is it not perhaps more accurate to say, at least from an empirical standpoint, that the thought process that is developed here at and after the introduction of Scrope Purvis is diluted in a manner that all the specific traces of the perspectival foci are intentionally blurred and words, which have become almost autonomous, come to the foreground as if they were the only

⁷ Not surprisingly, Makiko Minow-Pinkney notes in her *Virginia Woolf & the Problem of the Subject* that “the systematic use of ‘represented speech’ (free indirect speech)” in *Mrs. Dalloway* “generates an effect of subjective haziness...across the whole text...which produces a continuous indeterminacy” (pp. 54-55).

reliable source of relativized information as to which portion of them belong to which character and what physical objects are interpreted through whom. The way the collage-like bits of information are put together seems to encourage this interpretation. For instance, the initial pseudo-soliloquized revelatory phrase, "For having lived in Westminster," which in itself gives an impression of suspended indirectionality in terms of the progression of the story, is almost immediately pulled back to a individual perspectival focus, although to whose is not yet certain at this point. The readerly mind is simply relieved to find a viewpoint to which it is enabled to fall back on. However, this possible certainty is once again shattered as quickly as the perspectival certainly has set in in the wake of the generalized subject. This decentering is short-lasting in its turn. As I have already argued the deictic identification of the name, to whom the thought process purportedly belongs, must necessarily pulls the centrifugal conscious movements back to the center and endows the formerly seemed textual jumble with a certain amount of fixity that translates to perspectival certainty on the part of the reader. But once again, the previous and the momentarily suspended cycle starts with the resumption of the staccato revelation of the relational nuances that establish between the physical objects around the conscious center and whoever is mediated to reach them, who, as it happens, is Clarissa, among a number of possible candidates. I say among others because by now, although just a few phrases away from the definite identification of the source of the thought process, the perspectival fragmentation is so pervasive that the reader is hopelessly inured to the conscious fluidity until she feels that the fictional space is just filled with words without almost any intentionality behind them. It is, if I borrow the term that was much favored in the olden days, logorrhea at its best, or worst, depending on how you assess the fluid coagulation (I know it sounds paradoxical) of textual collage.

But it is the constant fluctuation between the untethered flow of words and reflexive perspectival adjustment that characterizes the style and sets the pace of the story as a whole. As I noted time and again, the textual outflow continues that is somehow tied to the external circumstances the subject happened to be placed in while the authorial intervention ineluctably regroupes the logorhetic words to the perspectival center. What is interesting is that as the conscious center is constantly dislocated it is inevitably brought to face the transmogrifying reality, that is also the trademark of the physical world as we know it. As the two move in parallel, the collage of descriptive and reactive passages increasingly become dispossessed of, or rather detached from, the conscious center and present themselves as independent descriptive bits that are under no control other than that of the author. In other words, the more seeming autonomy

the textual space abrogates to itself, the more authorial manipulative intent becomes etched into that space. Could it be that the surface freedom the words enjoy here merely a calculated gambit on the part of the author to introduce ever-changing circumstances that are opening out before the protagonist's mind? Just a fancy way of narrating what is taking place at a given locale at a given time? That would be a little disappointing. Perhaps there is something layered and complicated going on here? Something subtle, something correlatively⁸ more recondite? With that wishful possibility in mind let us analyze the passage I questioned one more time. The diluted perspectival focus represented by the first line, "For having lived in Westminster..." which wavers in its originating perspectival point between Clarissa and others, could as well give rise to a state and status that are irrevocably tied to the name and its derivative historical and social significance. The dilution, in a way, is a way to impregnate the scene and the moment in the fictional timeline with something more than a mere individual insight and responses could offer. It is a ploy to let all the readerly experience that is impinged upon the historically charged name and place come in to play on the apparent meaning that floats from the combination of the authorial plan and the character autonomy that has been established so far. I have often touched upon the relativized and relational view that arises from the fluid atmosphere, which the present fiction we are dealing with possesses. What it produces is an almost tangible sensation that is not quite independent of the words it is born of but still suggestive of nuances that are on a different plane, and thus possibly are apart from the original words, and yet determined and framed by all the elements, both acting and contingent circumstances, involved. Take a very impressionistic line, "The leaden circles dissolved in the air," for an example. The leaden circles are obviously a reflection of the character's state of mind. However, they also function as a general atmosphere in which the reverberation of the booming clock pervades the entire fictional sphere that is being developed. That is not the only exhaustive description of what is taking place there at that particular juncture. Spliced with variously nuanced senses is the physical timbre that is actually experienced to be permeating the current space which engulfs the literal and metaphoric existences that obtain their *raison d'être* there. The state of being that is almost completely detached from the artificial control and that gives a sensation that the readerly mind is merely afloat through the plethora

⁸ Perhaps it is rather incidental but the use of "correlative" here hearkens back to the concept which pseudo-scientific textual purists were fond of invoking in the old days. It is meant to signify relational imageries that correspond to each other but at the same time exist in heterogeneous domains. The kind of relations, both literal and metaphorical, that establishes between the two is also implied.

of words. Such delectable ambience, however, is immediately realigned with the introduction of the name or its equivalent, as the implicitly ever-present controlling hand is again made palpable when the conscious center is identified, "Such fools we are, she thought..." No sooner the authorial presence is felt than the dissipation of the conscious center is reinitiated and the seemingly autonomous logorrhea reasserts. Perhaps the real meaning, which can be defined, rather vaguely, a pinpointable unvarying significance that is absolute and solid and runs through the story as an unchanging thematic strand, exists where the ebb and flow of the conscious tide washes over the invisible hand that underpins the fluid structure, which only congeals momentarily at the most auspicious moment.

The same divagation, or the metaphorical wandering to link and transform the relationship between the environ and the state of consciousness the narrative focus is in at the moment, is extended and more accentuated as the descriptive passage continues. There is no surprise about the direction in which the narrative moves as the active mind of the central focus is ever bombarded with various stimuli, both internal and external. The point of departure for the current segment is seasonal. The initial clause establishes the milieu and the mood that underpins the whole atmosphere, "For it was the middle of June" (p. 6). There is nothing unusual about it except that the seasonal cue turns the hearts and minds of the general narrator and the characters involved to the brutal war that has just been concluded. Introduction of a war theme is a deft way to incorporate different socio-narratological interests to the story. Note the somehow abrupt and gratuitous manner in which the narrator lays out the historical fact compounded with some idiosyncratic personal details. As it turns out, providing concrete information is not necessarily the prime motive for developing this segment of the passage but rather a contingent act to entwine quirky, humorous angles with the narrative that is nevertheless deeply impacted by the cataclysmic historical occurrence. But it is best at the moment to follow the train of tangential details that may or may not be the product of the general narrator. What makes the passage potentially digressional and at the same time moored to the thematic strain of the entire episode is the playfulness with which the central consciousness reveals the quirky bits of information about anonymously typified personalities. Let me quote: "The War was over, except for some one like Mrs. Foxcroft at the Embassy last night eating her heart out because that nice boy was killed and now the old Manor House must go to a cousin" (pp. 6-7). The anticlimactic bit of truth at the end not only deflates the blown up expectations of the readers but also brings an easy, relaxed atmosphere to the whole episode. Could it be that the narrator cum author cannot bear continuously tense moments where every

unexpected and life-impacting incident is potentially lying in wait, forcing the characters inhabiting that suspenseful space constantly on the alert, at least mentally? Could it be that the laughter invoking passage a mere backlash to that? Could it be that the war merely a gambit to incorporate a new nuance to the story, which otherwise might bog down on its own heavy desultory weight? That utilitarian technical surmise falls through, at least for the moment, when a fragment of a pure and genuine sentiment reveals itself in its wake, expressing a rather blasé and yet sincere relief, “Lady Bexborough who opened a bazaar, they said, with the telegram in her hand, John, her favourite, killed; but it was over; thank Heaven—over” (p. 7).

Either way, the busy workings of the central consciousness are paralleled with the passage of time and spatio-environmental transformation it entails in the narrative landscape. The central consciousness is in transition, in short. Narratologically, the transition is cued by another reminder of the month of the year, “It was June.” This time it is a departure point for another metaphor that is related to the former, in that the general consciousness presides over in the same coextensive space and at the same time reaches for something else. The next line can be considered in the coextensive line, as the mind is brought to the idea of nation and patriotism, which in fact is repeated throughout the story, upon invocation of the “King and Queen.” But it could be nothing more than the locational reference, as indeed they are identified by their residence immediately after, “at the Palace.” This physical, locational identifier is turned to a general metaphor to engender an atmosphere that is in alignment with the seasonal reference that is repeated in this passage. Notice how extensive and extended this metaphor is as the narrative mind ponders and responds to the external stimuli. It is the kind that intersects both the figurative and literal realms and at the same time integrally helps to organize and advance the story line, as the words direct the reader’s attention to the actual environ that is being developed on the canvas as well as to the inner landscape that is being concatenated in parallel to the former. Let me quote.

And everywhere, though it was still so early, there was a beating, a stirring of galloping ponies, tapping of cricket bats; Lords, Ascot, Ranelagh and all the rest of it; wrapped in the soft mesh of the grey-blue morning air, which, as the day wore on, would unwind them, and set down on their lawns and pitches the bounding ponies, whose forefeet just struck the ground and up they sprung, the whirling young men, and laughing girls in their transparent muslins who, even now, after dancing all night, were taking their absurd woolly dogs for a run.... (p. 7)

The words that specifically link the metaphor to the ambience being felt in the air is the

kind that expresses the vitality and throbbing of the heart upon encounter with the joy, *joi de vivre*, that indescribable and yet electrifying thing one finds for no particular reason except that one merely lives. This sensation is tied to galloping ponies for the very same reason that they represent life and an unrestrained life force that is sufficient unto itself for being that per se. But the seemingly inorganic elements and matters are combined to the people who happen to play cricket, displaying the very joy and life force that permeate the air. Next stage is where the abstract merger of the force and joy of life is translated and congealed in particularized individuals. Initially the naming of these people, "Lord, Ascot, Ranelagh," is slightly offputting, making one wonder about their significance, ramifications, and relative positions vis-à-vis the general narrative consciousness, Clarissa and other characters who appear in the story. The little mystery, which in fact is not, as the reader eventually realizes that those named referents could as well function as the happenstance character Clarissa already encountered previously in the character of Purvis (the facetious name actually helps to retain him in the corner of the readerly mind), then dissipates in the ambient "grey-blue morning" that engulfs and redirects the reader to the larger metaphor that is being woven through the long-winded passage that continues like a throbbing vital energy permeating the fictional space. It turns out that the very energy that is metaphorized is now concretized in each and variegated manifestation of the jubilation and joy of living. What they are—"the bouncing ponies...whirling young men, and laughing girls in their transparent muslins"—is a myriad representations of what constitutes the core and fundamental energy that makes our lives worth living for and makes the daily and mundane scenes so marvelously fresh and charmingly mysterious. Is it a mere coincidence that the eye of the dominant consciousness recognizes something ineffably fascinating as "discreet old dowagers were shooting out in their motor cars" on an errand that is described as, indeed, mysterious? While to an obviously de-familiarized observer they might as well appear completely devoid of interest, except as an object of socio-gerontological study to determine the pattern of behavior among the elderly leisurely population, the particular phase being seen through and experienced by the general consciousness is in fact bubbling with the untapped and generalized vivacity that the whole scene becomes both a literal and figurative rendition and reaction of the mind as it views and at the same time reflects upon the reality that whirls around it until the narrative momentum redounds to the explicit "I," which is rather abruptly identified with our protagonist through a mundane and bathetic parenthesized comment by Clarissa, "but one must economise, not buy things rashly for Elizabeth." The explicit soliloquy marks a turnaround as the conscious focus is led on from one state

to another. This time it is to trace a bit of family history as the narrative center is shifted to the depth of Clarissa's memory where the unsalvaged episode of her ancestral glory is once again brought to the fore. Somehow maintaining a objectifying distance, the central consciousness abruptly, although it is not as abrupt as other introductions to new phases because of the insertion of parenthesized perspectival identification, reveals her link to the very ambience she happens to set herself in, "her people were courtiers once in the time of the Georges." The confession is not only a device to incorporate the court into her lineage, thus making it somehow necessitous to bring in Clarissa's ancestral revelation (which is rather circuitous, I must say), but also to lead to an eventuality that is purportedly waiting at the end of the hectic preparation, of which our protagonist's excursion is a part, in the form of kindling and illuminating (which is deemed an integral part of hosting a party).

The narrative voice, once linked to the protagonist, either floats alongside the protagonist's consciousness or identified with it for the moment as Clarissa obviously continues her itinerary into the park.⁹ But the reaction to the physical ambience of the park seemingly brings back the conscious focus to the individuated person who is indeed interacting with the environ. It may be because of the parenthetical focal marker that determines the narrative mooring point, but the revelatory remark, albeit terse and staccato as has been the case before, unflinchingly directs the readerly mind to the protagonist as the former registers the reflexive voice arising from the depth of her psyche as if it were an instinctive emotional reaction, which most likely is unable to belie her true sentiment at the moment. But as the conscious ripples caused by the initial reaction of our heroine widens and grows ever larger in number and amplitude the conscious focus becomes again blurred as the reader increasingly hears the generalized narrative echo in the abstracted and untethered words, "...how strange, on entering the Park, the silence; the mist; the hum; the slow-swimming happy ducks; the pouched birds waddling..." (p. 7). The riddle-like accumulation of dispersed words tries to form a mystery of a sort, leaving the reader baffled and simultaneously helplessly drawn into the tenuous landscape being painted before his eyes, when a comically mundane concretized shape of her old friend thrusts himself into our, as well as protagonist's, view.¹⁰ This is a layered approach to introduce a scene that is

⁹ John Bachelor in his *Virginia Woolf: The Major Novels* (pp. 76-77) also notes the existence of this wandering narrative voice. The "seamless web" of incidents in a single day is rendered meaningful as the undivided artificial chapters and other segmentary markers are completely eliminated and in their stead introduced the oscillating voice that moves from one consciousness to another.

¹⁰ The ripple-like effect that involves and interconnects each and every incident and

heterogeneous to the one being developed preceding it. The more different the two are in ambience and tone, the keener the sense of the new phase the reader is likely to have. The nonchalance and intentional deprecatory tone interwoven here to describe Hugh Whitbread treblely emphasize the obtusely comical nature of the physical interruption caused by the unexpected event. A rather bombastic and yet friendly greeting signals the surfacing of the conscious selves to the physical and common reality we recognize as constituting the living world, "Good-morning to you, Clarissa!" The conversation, nevertheless, remains within a definitely colloquial and expectedly intimate realm, for, as it turns out, they have known each other for years. But what does it signify? Among other things, all the attributes and qualities that are invoked in connection with Hugh are also applicable to our heroine as well. But before the self-recursive reflection starts, the narrative goes under once again to the conscious realm where bits of regurgitative information are made to flicker for the moment for their own sake, that is only in the sphere of the protagonist's mind, while at the same time allowed to reveal the relational nuances that exist between the two personages being described. As it turns out, the revelatory function assumes ascendancy momentarily as Clarissa's mind wanders about and recollects the spousal pathological episode that, she thinks, caused their visit to the doctor. For the readers, needless to say, the background information Clarissa provides becomes pieces of auxiliary interpretative blocks that go into establishing the relational significance the surface appearance alone cannot give. But the deeper insight into the relations existing between the two, and by way of it others involving those concatenated to Hugh and Clarissa, inevitably realigns the narrative focus to the person who is portrayed and evaluated through the consciousness of our heroine, "Evelyn was a good deal out of sorts, said Hugh, intimating by a kind of pout or swell of his very well-covered, manly, extremely handsome, perfectly upholstered body..." (p. 8). What it gives out is that Hugh, a snobbish and potentially bombastic sycophant, albeit with enough of an uxorious tendency, is not merely an exemplification of self-reflection as he emerges as a character along the narrative line but also a reflection of Clarissa's mind as it reflects and refracts all the impressions she purportedly receives in the given context. (It could as well mean self-reflection of Clarissa more than that of Hugh, as

character is indeed a feature that integrates the entire fictional space at a conscious level. Let me quote Michael Rosenthal:

Woolf creates a tightly unified texture in which almost every change of focus from one character to another occurs through what we might call specific spatial and psychological, or external and internal, hinges. Woolf moves us from consciousness to consciousness, that is, by creating particular moments of immediate physical contact between people on the streets of London, or by having characters intersect in the thinking of one another. (*Virginia Woolf*, p. 88)

indeed a parenthetical comment seems to invite the readers to assume.) As the narrative strands continue getting tangled up and being woven in a way the invisible Consciousness allows the characters to fulfill and eke out their roles, self-reflexive and –refractive elements generate a gamut of narrative possibilities, which the reader can disentangle and interpret the way that is heuristically most appropriate under the given context.

In the meantime narrative information increasingly fills out the space that is being developed before the reader's eyes. Clarissa conjectures and understands, which in fact comes to the same thing in this uniquely consciousness-dominant world, that Hugh's wife is indeed the cause of their visit to this particular part of London and the ailment of Hugh's wife has something to do with the internal organs. This revelatory soliloquy is not only enough to divulge the depth of their relationship but also the historical vicissitudes that preceded this brief encounter at a park on a summer's day, which somehow suggestively impinge upon the party that is to come later on the same day. That is not to say that the narrative setup that helps to link the contingency involving Hugh and the party via Clarissa is all that definite but the apparent evanescence of the meeting between the two not only helps sink in the minds of the readers the image of the encounter that is to be or not to be discarded shortly after, but also because of the very gratuity and possible redundancy the meeting implies in its triteness, the reader feels encouraged to retrieve the very image, which is not particularly memorable per se but all the more encodable because of its uncharacteristic blankness, at a strategic moment and scene that is susceptible to interpretative and heuristic associations. An interesting conscious move at this point is that instead of delving further into the historical dimension of their relationship Clarissa shifts her attention to the gaze she perceives Hugh to be casting upon her right there at the present moment, "Ah yes, she did of course; what a nuisance; and felt very sisterly and oddly conscious at the same time of her hat" (p.8). This not a surprising conscious move is after all a reminder that the episode to a great extent is buttressed by the ego that constitutes and permeates the fictional space eponymously named *Mrs. Dalloway*. Once in a while our protagonist has to assert her presence by referring back to her own thought process, which is no doubt a main ingredient of the story. But this inner monologue is not a completely undiluted self-reflexive monologue, as the reader is inevitably carried along with Clarissa's self-bloating ego—a phenomenon particularly pronounced when observed from a distanced third-person perspective—as it is brought to the fore in connection with no other than such petty object as her hat, "Not the right hat for the early morning, was that it?" The narrative distance and relationship

between the third-person objective existence and Clarissa and those between Clarissa and Hugh, who is under scrutiny while he places her under his scrutiny, are ironically, and to the chortling delight of the by-standing reader, neatly homologous. The plot structure that emerges from this brief encounter reawakens in the readerly consciousness the presence of the general and larger motivator that has been lying low and yet constantly directing the way seemingly organically enmeshed consciousnesses evolve on a deceptively blank and passive surface of a canvass. As if to assert and reconfirm the premised existence of a pervasive general manipulator, the narrative voice is distanced from the protagonist, enough to force the reader to tear herself from the lulled and pleasantly illusory position where the voice and protagonist's consciousness are identified. Notice the use of third person pronominals, as if to emphasize the descriptive stance of whoever that lies behind the scene yet ineluctably reveals herself at the least provocation, "For Hugh always made her feel, as he bustled on, raising his hat rather extravagantly and assuring her that she might be a girl of eighteen..." (p. 8). But as the general voice reasserts her presence the focal consciousness where the currently active voice resides oscillates again, releasing the readerly mind to attach to whoever seems in the narratological ascendancy at the moment. In fact, the narrative direction, in which the voice is directed and from which the voice issues (obviously seemingly, as always), shifts so frequently that the reader has an impression that the conversation is flickering before his eyes before it settles into the rightful and stable owner of the current narrative voice before it is reclaimed by none other than Clarissa, as she again bares her self-consciousness before the incessantly verbal and implied onslaught of Hugh's snobbishness and grandiosity. But this personal dilation involving Clarissa and Hugh does not stop at the former's idiosyncratic psychological revelation that is strictly connected to her relational inferiority complex, which is reflexively triggered whenever Hugh reminds of her pettiness and what she perceives as her inherent deficiencies. Hugh's presence is at the same time an invitation to a reverie on what has happened among her friends that also impinges upon Hugh himself. In other words, he is a trigger and a link to crucial temporal events that are constituted of all the key individuals who gave rise to them in the first place and all the emotions that are inextricably attached to them. What enables the seamless transition to the scene at Bourton is indeed the presence of Hugh at the present and what causes a complex of reflections and responses within Clarissa.

Interestingly enough, the reflexive conscious move back to the past events once again brings the relational subtleties that redounds to our protagonist and the person who for the last years has been on her mind continually. But the psychological

technique here employed enhances the emotional immediacy that must have obtained right there at Bourton when the climactic encounters took place years ago. The freshness and vividness that have been retained through those years flash back to the surface and, helped by the descriptive craftiness of the author, flare up at the merest whiff of the nuances that are evocative of those moments. At this particular juncture, however, the deictic indicator that refers to the state of Clarissa's mind is explicitly marked. But the abruptness of the temporal flashback is nonetheless there as the reader incessantly moves along the narrative line, "Peter furious; Hugh not, of course, his match in any way, but still not a positive imbecile as Peter made out; not a mere barber's block" (pp. 8-9). Note how the readerly mind is invoked in the relational complications that apparently resulted from the entanglement among the individuals mentioned. But, not strangely, the psychological clashes here mentioned are rooted in past history that is beyond true comprehension which can, however, hopefully be reconstituted through a cursory intimation allowed to the reader here. Through the double-edged sword, as it were, the author lets Hugh reflect on Peter and the latter on the other through the ingenious soliloquy that is, on the surface at least, not to be poached upon by others except for those have a privileged stance on the inner psyche of the protagonist. The outcome of the self-reflection is deeper insights into the yet-to-be-materialized Peter and her relationship to him and the aspects of Hugh, who just emerged from the corner of Clarissa's mind into reality that is as mundane as a park and snobbish as the English aristocracy our protagonist is surrounded with. The sentimental and tender side of Hugh that comes as a byproduct of flashback merely augments the psychological amplification the temporal and spatial equalization has already produced in the form of conscious immediacy in the segment where Clarissa salvages the past history involving herself and her friends. The sentimental defense of Hugh, however, inevitably raises the image of Peter, her dearest, to a level that simply overwhelms anything else, even an image of what she in a moment of passion calls "unselfish" and dedicated son. Once she abandons herself to the overwhelming passions of the moment the strongest emotions associated with Bourton rush back to her. The "fury" of Peter in the face of overvalued Hugh and all the complex of nuances tied to them become the elements that make up the ambience as Clarissa experiences the psychological transportation into the past. When her reaction to Peter's autocratic judgment is diluted in her fond memories of Hugh, then, the unforgivably willful Peter is momentarily transformed into her dear Peter, both ineluctably and inexplicably. In such sweet surrender to the past moment, Peter at his "worst" can be seamlessly reconciled with the Peter the adorable.

As Clarissa is irresistibly pulled to the past, the subtlest nuances that are associated with and evoked by her ties to Peter rechannel her conscious energy to the external ambience. Although rather modestly manifested, the seasonal indicators in the target segment also point to the very emotional concretization and all the associated conscious expansions that derive from her precious encounter with Peter. The budding leaves, young mothers suckling their babies and all the images that congregate within the parentheses express the very essence of youth and vivacity and spontaneous bursting energies Clarissa must have felt in her very modest and yet inherently violently passionate relations with Peter.¹¹ In a sense, their relations have not changed in the intervening years, despite the fact that so many untoward events and complications occurred in the meantime. The sentiment, which arose from a combination of a bit bemused and inexplicable ties between herself and Peter, also has history, as she in her recollection divulges in the proceeding passage. The separation, which has indeed lasted for years, is something that has indeed driven a wedge into her life but also at the same time and on another level surmountable and even negligible. According to her conscious voice, which could be moot, nevertheless, "For they might be parted for hundreds of years, she and Peter; she never wrote a letter and his were dry sticks; but suddenly it would come over her, if he were with me now what would he say?" Note the shifting physical and psychological distance that she feels exists between the two. They could as well be parted forever but in the end the deeper ties that bind them together simply will not let them drift apart. It is not the actual communication that keeps them bound and connected but something more subtle and yet far more enduring and potent. It is unconditional and goes beyond any logical boundaries that actually separate them. In the words of the voice that derives from the consciousness of our heroine, to be more exact that which is allowed to float from the substrata of our heroine's conscious self or made to look like arising from the conscious self, the actual communication, be it in the form of a letter and others, are nothing more than "dry

¹¹ Alternately, the parenthetical passage can be read as an independent expression of vital energy nature displays around Clarissa. While she is absorbed in her reverie of the past passionate moments, the organic and inorganic entities and their entirety merely exist, responding to the call of nature each on its own. But, in the end, this independent external entirety is subsumed under the uncontrollable exuberance Clarissa feels within herself, despite no effort on her own part. Although the tense in the last sentence in the parenthetical passage may be cogent evidence that the natural world and her psyche are in a subsumptive relationship here for the moment, it may as well be the case that Clarissa's psychological world maintains its existence in conjunction with the independent ambient world that surrounds her. Or, perhaps the two readings might come to the same thing in this tale where spatio-temporal elements are frequently conflated through the mind of the focal consciousness.

sticks," mere jumble of words which are not worth poring over except for the ultimate task of keeping the content of the communication in the corner of her mind, which in fact proves to be the case. What transcends all the perfunctory and material aspects of a relation that would ordinarily keep two people close together is the immediacy of the memory that is always at the ready to bring in the presence of Peter wherever Clarissa might be and whatever she might be engaged with.¹² Especially the memory associated with the strongest impressions occasioned by her encounter and conversations with Peter that are always somehow tied to the crucial moments and locale in her life in the past. It turns out, not surprisingly again, that she happens to be passing through the same park she and Peter spent together years ago. Curiously, and not unexpectedly, the emotions that seize her at the moment are the ones that are actually tied to the physical ambience and objects she recognized there but more directly derived from the surprise and freshness she felt when Peter showed no interest in the surroundings (even the pink dress a child wore nearby, which etched an indelible mark in her memory retrievable and reliveable at any moment in her later life) and continued on his self-centered talk on politics and faultfinding of others, including Clarissa's and his own. The immediacy of the sentiment she experiences at the moment is so vivid that she is drawn back into the depth of the past with its complex of emotional responses elicited from the core of her self. In other words, the vivid sensation of the proximity of Peter's presence increases the instinctive reactions she felt at the time and still does now. Notice how raw and decisive is the sentiment Clarissa expresses as she recalls the incident involving the very park she is going through now. The bitterness and at the same time irrevocable ties she feels toward Peter, all the more because of the unbridgeability of the distance that always wedges between them, helplessly drive her to a state of almost childish tantrums, "It was the state of the world that interested him" (p. 9). Not only that. To her mortification, what Peter harped on and what their physical proximity educed in their relation was his faultfinding of her character and their essential heterogeneity in family background and temperamental propensity. Naturally, belligerent invectives on the part of Peter triggered violent reaction and opposition from Clarissa. She justifies and consoles herself for wedding to Richard, rather than Peter, which indeed fulfills the latter's prediction made at the fateful locale

¹² The whole gamut of experiences and memories that intrude into the novelistic present without a moment's notice in this uniquely Woolfian world is extensively treated by J. Hillis Miller in his *Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels*. According to him, they transform themselves into the virtual present (p. 184) that supersedes the physical present, which obviously was the main concern of the Victorians and not necessarily of Woolf's.

at Bourton. In her words, Richard is the one who gives her freedom to enjoy her independence, to let her be what she is. In a moment of slight hesitation, or rather a moment of proud self-assertion, she lets the reader share with their marital secret that their *laissez faire* marital agreement, be it implicit or not, is so complete that she does not know what he is occupied with or where he is at this very moment when she is recalling the memories of the past as she walks down St. James's Park. But strangely enough, the satisfaction she derives from the current marriage does not guarantee her perfect union with Richard, the kind of perfection that excludes any lingering attraction to the man whom she rightfully considers bigoted and constricting in many senses. On the contrary, as her fresh anger and indignation and frustration toward Peter demonstrate, she cannot sever the tenuous and yet inexplicably persistent connection to Peter. Clarissa reveals her psychological defeat, which is no other than her admission of her enslavement to Peter at the deepest instinctual—something Jung might have called archetypal—level, and at the same time foregrounds the tenacious ties (which may be a paradox because their physical ties seem so tenuous) she has been unable to cut in spite of herself when she lets out the hidden emotional reaction she experienced upon learning the union of Peter with an Indian-bound woman on the boat, “the horror of the moment when some one told her at a concert that he had married a woman met on the boat going to India!” The self-defense mechanism she employs thereupon is to vituperate the woman and the man, who deals with such a woman, by bringing in the logic of colonial inferiority and self ever determined by the master who rules over the unenlightened. She insists she simply does not care. The reason for that seemingly nonchalant dismissal of the other is simple. She still suffers from that psychological hangover, which in fact is more than that as it stings her heart and the rawness of the wound exists in the immediacy of the past that is coexistent with the present in her memory, and feels the need to reassert her superiority to anyone or anything that dares to supersede her in what she considers, implicitly and even unbeknownst to herself, the dearest place in Peter's heart.¹³ It does not take much imagination to hear the pettyish, child-like dudgeon as she gives vent to her frustration, “those Indian women did presumably [care]—silly, pretty, flimsy nincompoops” (p. 10). Her vulnerability in fact is exposed time and again as she tries to defend herself against the invisible assault of

¹³ The present that is coexistent with the past and that is somehow non-heterogeneous to the other is frequently pointed out by Woolf scholars. The following is from Shirley Panken's *Virginia Woolf and the "Lust of Creation"*: “The form of *Mrs. Dalloway* disdains temporal continuity but is guided rather by the characters' inner thoughts and feelings so that eruptions from the past are congruent with associations concerning the present” (p. 119).

Peter, which, as far as its effect on her is concerned, should have been mitigated, if not with the disappearance of her once beloved, but surely with his reported marriage to the execrable "Indian" woman. The fact is that Clarissa always feels she is like a pampered child who knows nothing about how to cope with a situation that requires detached judgment and more exposure to the real world with its concomitant struggle, the survival of which is contingent upon real savvy bred through years of defeat and agony. For that very reason her caviling about Peter's failure in life only redounds to his glory over life's struggle and inadequacy on her part as a society woman, who would feel at a loss were she kept out of her normal ken of activities. No wonder she feels defeated at the end of the current reverie, "It made her angry still [to recollect about her involvement with Peter]" (p. 10).

Transporting her mind back to the psychological immediate past does not result in any constructive state of mind except that Clarissa cannot resist the reinvigorated sense of rejuvenation as she reaches the gate of the Park and faces out the street in front of her. If the reader remembers, she has been feeling down with her recent bout with her illness as she had set out for the errand; the unnamable jubilation she experiences at this point is no other than the positive effect recollection of the past induces in Clarissa. It may be noted that the physical world that surrounds the characters and the conscious dimension they contribute in the story seem to exist side by side without much interaction except that the former induces a certain state of mind in the latter and a mind reconstructs the outside images in a way that contributes to the development of the conscious world that subtly, and occasionally actively, influences the narrative line. But this obvious outcome visually identifiable in Clarissa as she comes out of the park and her reverie also reveals a new level of interaction between the active ruminative mind and the past that is always at the ready to be beckoned to become coextensive with the present, as it brings about a change in the way she feels about herself. But life's complications are not so easy to get disentangled into purer strands of this and that, categorically determinable as young and old, for example, "She felt very young; at the same time unspeakably aged" (p. 10). In fact what defines her current rather solipsistic reverie is fluid ambivalence. She is at once inside and outside of people's minds, for instance, as she looks out at the external activities that develop before her. The unstable, and at the same time relativistic, perspective she employs as she delves deeper into her own memory and consciousness and reflects upon the transmogrifying images that flicker across her eyes could lead to uncertainties that can only be described as unsettling. In her words, or rather according to the inner voice that is let afloat from her psyche, "She had a perpetual sense, as she watched the

taxicabs, of being out, out, far out to sea and alone; she always had the feeling that it was very, very dangerous to live even one day" (pp. 10-11). This psychological disequilibrium is so unnerving that she admits to having a phobia of a sort that is not quite fixable and well-definable but something that oozes out of her very being as she must necessarily face the external, tangible particulars that lie around her. No wonder she reacts to them on the instinctual level; otherwise the solipsistic reverie would completely engulf her to the degree that she had no choice but to self-implode. The reference to Clarissa's instinct can be taken as no other than a revelation as well as admission of self-defense she is used to resorting to whenever existential certitude becomes shaken as a result of too much psycho-conscious reverie she exposes herself to in reaction to, as well as, which could be rather paradoxical, in spite of, the external stimuli that constantly bombard her as she walks toward her destination. Her ultimate reliance on her self and instinct, "If you put her in a room with some one, up went her back like a cat's; or she purred," is the very mechanism that preserves her mental equilibrium and aplomb, albeit temporarily, in a constant tug of conscious energy that oftener than not pulls her back and forth along the spatio-temporal axes as the narrative evolves inexorably. But in the flow of consciousness the defensive self-preservational instinct becomes merely a part of dilatational interactive processes between the mind that is causing the expanding universe both of Clarissa and others in the story and the actual world that surrounds them. As she moves across the park and into the street all the memorable events flood back to her but they are necessarily conditioned, either subtly or blatantly explicitly, by the scenes that develop before her, albeit they are necessarily modulated by the consciousness at work that is also reflective of the past being played out in the central character's mind. The tug of war between various interactive elements that are embedded in the processes manifests oscillating levels of ascendancy among the constituent elements involved in the whole fluctuating transmutational kaleidoscope that is the story of Mrs. Dalloway. On occasions the inexorable images of particularity and particulars, which the real world reflects around her, thrust themselves before Clarissa's eyes with their vivid concreteness, "what she loved was this, here, now, in front of her; the fat lady in the cab," but as soon as they take shape in the images of the outer world that exist as if independently of her, they are seemingly reduced to a jumping off point for further flight of ratiocination, "did it matter that she must inevitably cease completely?" Not surprisingly, this simple question itself becomes a platform on which to further connect the mind world and the world surrounding her. The outcome of which is dilution of, or more accurately permeation of, her being into the trees and others that cause the mind

world to thrive in her imagination so animatedly in the first place. The passage is worth quoting *in toto*, as it in a way reifies the climactic state of her mind at this juncture in the story.

...but that somehow in the streets of London, on the ebb and flow of things, here, there, she survived, Peter survived, lived in each other, she being part, she was positive, of the trees at home; of the house there, ugly, rambling all to bits and pieces as it was; part of people she had never met; being laid out like a mist between the people she knew best, who lifted her on their branches as she had seen the trees lift the mist, but it spread ever so far, her life, herself. (pp. 11-12)

But once again, just as her mind expands and stretches far beyond herself into and over the objects that are spatio-temporarily removed from her, the reality with its hard edges intrudes upon her. The real disenchantment Clarissa, as well as the reader, experiences is the realization that the euphoria and a sense of lulling, wave-like motion one has been feeling turns out to be a mere dream and chimera that have potentially nothing to do with the reality that happens to be represented by Henchards' shop window, a glassy wall beyond which the expansive mind may not enter and take possession of the objects inside nor occupy the space in which they reside and reduce them to become amenable to the very thing what consciousness represents, an esemplastic power (if I draw on Coleridge, which may itself disqualify me, as being somehow anachronistic, to remark on the mental process being discussed) that shapes them into the images transmogrified to suit the spatio-temporal contextuality. But there is no need to worry. The mind as is conveyed through the story is far more resilient and freer than anyone has ever dared to represent (except perhaps Joyce). As it is wont to respond to each and every stimulus that incessantly bombards it whatever spatio-temporal corner it happens to occupy, this time the mind latches on to the text that is broadcast through the books being displayed at the locale where our heroine is situated and takes its cue more readily than ever to journey on the wings of imagination into the realm where consciousness bends and twists and transmogrifies spatio-temporal individuations within, and without, the boundaries in the most fantastic manner possible as the mind interacts with the passing images as Clarissa walks by on one summer day in the year soon after World War I. No one has ever captured the evanescent, iridescent flow of subtle sentiments as they are born, experienced and modulated in response to the finely nuanced ambient world—the thing the mind feels incessantly knocking on its liminal and subliminal ken—as well as Virginia Woolf. Or am I just imagining?

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Mrs. Dalloway における意識と現実的空間

Virginia Woolf の芸術的試みの一つの特徴は意識の非直線的な流れの忠実な再現ということができると思うが、この論文では彼女の代表的作品である Mrs. Dalloway を例に意識が現実的、物理的空間においていかに manifest そして reify するのか直線的時間的流れとの対比において考察してみた。