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Mrs. Dalloway における voice と consciousness

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Mrs. Dalloway: A Refractive Window on Consciousness

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Virginia Woolf's famous work *Mrs. Dalloway* is known for its jagged shift in time and perspective and everything that is essential to establish a traditional story to let the totality, or for that matter as many fragmentary constitutive elements as possible, of the narrative signification cross over to the readerly consciousness. Because of the abruptness and frequent rupture in signification continuity that occurs throughout the story, the reader is seized with a sensation that the story is, as it were, leaving the objective realm involving him and others who try to share the fictional sphere they expect the author is obliged to provide across the heterogeneous hermeneutic layers, which ultimately make up the total author-reader environment. The off-putting sensation, however, does not sink in very deeply when the readerly consciousness, or reactive and constitutive mind, realizes the fictive attempts that are being made right in front of his eyes in the form of the textual imprint traditionally made on the paper medium (and recently more and more often in the digital electronic realm). The fictive attempts that evolve by dint of the transmogrifying mind of our heroine, Mrs. Dalloway, and by extension through her catalytic vicarious subjects and objects-cum-seemingly autonomous characters who obtrude into the conscious horizon of the heroine, tantalizingly reflect and suggest to the hermeneutic consciousness located on the other end of the multipolar scheme an ever changing aspect of a consciousness at work that in its turn can be grasped in so many different ways simultaneously while preserving a façade that is merely and nakedly doffed of the superficial covering, which in ordinary circumstances could become a camouflage beguiling and misleading the interpretive mind every which way as to the true state and condition of the entity and significance that is being presented.¹ The naked reality

¹ Is it because of the momentary pleasure that the heroine is always after that the mind that perceives and judges the situations that unfold before her eyes becomes so fluid and every concrete object and entity becomes somewhat blurred and all the more ephemeral as soon as the perceptive consciousness decides to delve deeper into them and simultaneously, and automatically, allows the readerly consciousness to experience them from so many different, and differing, angles? The momentary insight that ever flees from the grasping mind and the almost schizophrenic changeability of narrative may as well be the inevitable fate of Mrs. Dalloway. See Phyllis Rose in her *Woman of Letters: A Life of Virginia Woolf* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), pp.

refracted by the fictive window may be in fact fleeting and indeterminate as to its true state unless the readerly consciousness is willing to accompany the fidgety consciousness being foregrounded at any given moment and determinedly pursue the other until some form of logical explication emerges which possibly underpins and pulls together all the waverings that all too frequently happen in this extremely disjunctive story. Or perhaps, that the combinative principle that can explain the disjunctions and significational hiatuses that typically obtrude may be illusory, or even contrary to what the totality of the story means or gives rise to in the mind of the hermeneutic subject. Perhaps, the story is to be processed as a continuation of myriads of not necessarily interlinked bits of information and no more or less than that and the readerly consciousness is to absorb or accompany them just to experience the aleatory significational shapes that accrue from the process, regardless whether fictive emphases and crescendos materialize or not. Slippery slopes of the intricate workings of a private mind are the landscape awaiting the brave hermeneutic mind of the reader. Whether the project will be forced to undergo a drastic rethinking or sail along a smooth predictable path depends on the refractability, or the degree thereof, of the window through which the other can be gazed and gauged. Either way, we must go along with the mind of the abrupt and implicit "I" and reflect upon whatsoever accounts gush out of the infinite and ineradicable center that continually dominates the fictive space, and try to make sense of the seemingly desultory effluvia of textual outpouring in order to attain the significational stability that, traditionally speaking, is presumed to exist in the entente between the readerly consciousness and fictive characters, and which perhaps may be identified with the reality allowed through the magical window posited between the two.

The story plunges into the conscious process in progress, as it were, which forces the readerly mind to grapple, even for a second, with the reality, or inner reality, that is merely being exfoliated before his inner eyes. The choice he has at this juncture is either to recoil and withdraw into his own comfortable ratiocinative mechanism ingrained through his long experience with traditionally conventional fiction, which more or less demands an expected line of mental processes sanctioned by the time-honored protocols implicitly have been established throughout western literary history, or seize the momentum initiated by the rather offputting statement manifested at the inception of the story and allow his mind to flow with the conscious stream he might or might not recognize vaguely coursing underneath the visible textual sign.²

125-145.

² In fact the conscious stream here indicated may be another way of representing the

What is surprising is that the reaction most readers would manifest upon their encounter with the first line of the story is not only that it is the kind characterized by its indefinable uncertainty but also, and rather contrarily, its expectedness from the perspective of the mind that oversees what takes place between the authorial intent, or in this untraditional work it may be more appropriately described as autonomous conscious manifestations that pop up throughout the story, and the hermeneutic constitutive consciousness intervening in whatever is happening in the fictive world and grappling with the former. That is, if such an overarching larger meta-consciousness can be posited between and above all the actors (or, actants, if I may use the old and almost archaic term made fashionable during the heyday of literary structuralism) and that which perceives and decodes them. Or, perhaps, the conscious process manifested *medias re* is at all unsettling to the uninitiated readers in that the process is presumed to be in a continuum and there is no disrupting it without destroying the semblance of reality such presumed approach hopefully entails. But, as I already mentioned, it is surprising only to the extent that the line focused on elicits the kind of reaction from the reader because it has the semblance of reality and in fact, on perhaps retroactive and reactive reflection, the reality that is cleverly compacted into a scheme that is both iconoclastically novel and at the same time within the limit of expectations, that is to the degree that most readers put the line in proper perspective albeit with delay, so that the overall effect, which is to say the signification that is embedded within the ambient lines that immediately ensue, gives rise to an understandable situation that easily becomes combined with the other bits of conscious images, which overall contribute to the landscape the central consciousness both inhabits and subtly inflects. Once the initial surprise wears off, modulated by all the concomitant nuances the line itself and the surrounding images evoke, the readerly consciousness is busy making any logical

conscious narrative psyche, which ramifies and transmogrifies into so many variegated characters in the narrative space, which seemingly, and outwardly, project as each and single individuals but in fact are mere manifestations and phases of that original creative consciousness, from which the narrative always emanates and has begun to flow in the first place. See a relevant argument pertaining to the various manifestations of a narrative consciousness coursing through fictive personae, which nevertheless preserves single origin and identity in spite of its many phases of manifestations, in a collection of essays edited by Ralph Freeman, entitled *Virginia Woolf: Revaluation and Continuity, a Collection of Essays* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 7-8.

sense of the statement, which is traditionally characterized as obtuse, to say the least. The assertive voice, which tends to color the self-centered nature of the monologue our protagonist indulges in at the moment, is inseparable from the self-absorbent tendency of the conscious stream that is continued on to the next line. Without heeding any convenience for the accompanying reader, although to be fair with the protagonist she is completely oblivious to the external hermeneutic existence that gives life to the continuance of her existence even for a moment, the voice concentrates on the private affairs that may or may not have any relevance to the other in the hermeneutic scheme, without even indicating any interest in bringing the other to come to grips with the situation that is unfolding in the inner psyche of the protagonist.³

The puzzlement the readerly conscious feels for the moment barely dissipates before, or rather regardless of which, the voice-cum protagonist splurges on the well-defined schedule she has set for herself for the day. In a way, there is a dissonance of a kind between the two consciousnesses, the one completely on a personally inclined trajectory to satisfy her mind's need to sort things out in order to deal with the "momentous" event that is unfolding in her life for the day, and the other completely lost, even for a fraction of a second, and compelled to find a handle to make any sense of the unceasing details that indifferently come out of the spontaneous mind of the protagonist. But, strangely enough, the latter has somehow synchronized with the direction of the signification current of the desultory outpouring of the voice and finds himself at least not as muddled as before, which is also mere milliseconds preceding the current hermeneutic phase, and even though he might not actually comprehend the situational signification that is implicit in the mid of the central consciousness but feels attuned to the condition under which such promised meaning might arise in the fictive space he has set his mind in. One of the first attempts, albeit perhaps an attempt made retroactively with a few milliseconds time lag at least, would be relational to arrive at the proper distance between the voice, the I, and the person unhesitatingly named. The distance can be measured, or characterized, by the assignment tasked for the person

³ The signification dithering this process gives rise to may correspond to what Andrew McNeillie describes as a phenomenon in which what the author tells may not mean what she putatively claims it to signify but merely is a performative, declarative gesture, which fluctuates depending on to whom the voice addresses her message. Thus, the signification expressed by one remark incessantly transmogrifies itself into something else depending on all the factors that constitute the narrative, or rather narratological, environment. The association made here is an extrapolation from McNeillie's "Bloomsbury," one of the essays published by Sue Roe and Susan Sellers in *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), and the pertinent part occurs on pp. 5-14.

specifically named. At this stage, the “work” and the putative person assigning it to the woman so named are not at all clear, but the fact that the task so defined is indubitable in the mind of the protagonist somehow colors the relational nuances that exist between the two. And that she merely states the “fact” and hurries on to the next detail that is possibly linked to the previous one involving the task assigned to Lucy, making them a series of tasks preoccupying the protagonist’s mind, possibly delineates a position our protagonist occupies in the relational scheme between the woman named and herself, be it social or occupational or everything that sets one apart from the other. At this stage, the readerly consciousness may be encouraged to put the proceeding line in the same category as the second line, for the simple reason that the detail that unfolds is the one that surely requires an amount of exertion, a kind that can be categorized as work, which immediately harkens back to the task assigned to Lucy. Although the imagery provided is rather obtuse and slightly odd for its overtly mundane evocation, the rather authoritative tone (that is also harkened back to the authoritative assertion made concerning the task assigned to the woman named) gives support to the possible signficatory exfoliation that finally sheds light on the mysteries the unceasing voice has tantalizingly been generating since the inception of the story. But the long-awaited-for exfoliation is dashed with an unexpected cacophony that is both mystifying and disruptively, and yet perhaps carnivalesquely, humorous. Somehow the image of the doors taken off their “hinges” juxtaposed with Rumpelmayer, be it the sound or the evocation it makes (regardless of what the person really is, for the introduction is too abrupt for the reader to ascertain whether the associations he unconditionally makes are objectively warranted or not) only amplify the bathetic potential to such a degree that the authority which supposedly has suffused the relational distance between the voice and the person named in the previous line becomes threatened.

The threat does not materialize, however, as the self-absorbent voice merely plunges into a further self-absorptive mode, in which a sentient entity within the protagonist instinctively and spontaneously reacts to the air and smell and everything that particular morning offers to her entire being. It turns out that the self being exposed inadvertently, and in spite of herself, does not know the bounds that are usually demarcated by time and space. The being that responds to the fresh morning stretches over years since that momentous day she evocatively recalls as one of the climactic moments in her life, which nevertheless impacts her up to the present, ultimately keeping the memories of the past alive in the present. It is one of those moments in which she relives and recreates the reverberations of the traumatic past compounded

with some of the pleasurable episodic bits of memories that intersperse them. The point of intersection and inception is the fresh morning, “as if issued to children on a beach.” Although the spontaneity that plunges our protagonist in the current mood seems to carry her all the way to the terminus of the present line, the moment when she begins to compare, albeit textually implicitly perhaps, the freshness at the moment with the tactily pleasurable sensation she putatively experienced then in the past is already merged with the intentionality that both initiates the latter half of the line and lets her weave the artifice of nostalgic pathos in the form of what might have been suggested by the childhood memory that resonates, conveniently enough, with the freshness of the present.⁴ At this point, therefore, the ensuing demonstration of the emotional exuberance is already prepared and presaged, which may or may not detract the impact of the plunge that might or might not be complete otherwise. The plunge happens to be both a jumping off point to the moment that is situated on the verge of taking off the hinges and through the transcendent window into and through the passage of time, which ultimately lands her in the self-same mood as the one she is exactly going through now. But with a difference that the then simultaneously recalled by the evocative power of memory is physically, or rather almost tactily, demarcated by a concrete window identified as the “French windows,” which conveniently enough allow an onslaught of bundled emotionally packed visual images gushing through the protagonist’s psyche. While the then so recalled is constantly related to the present, in which the voice finds itself being expressed through the consciousness of the one uttering it, the distant time frame given rise to at the moment obtains its own autonomous existence and the comparison between the two time frames gradually shifts to the prioritative nature of the then, which can be foregrounded through its tendency to be standardized against which, for instance, the present can be measured. The memories preserved through the long history of the protagonist are, therefore, all the more precious, which simultaneously gives piquancy to the details being indulged in as the voice enumerates the particular incidents and the circumstances in which they occurred. While the voice seems to maintain its “calm” and objective recollective tone, each detail it gives rise to redounds to the personal emotional timbre each one is woven

⁴ The interrelationship between memory and timeframes of past and present gives rise to an interesting set of possibilities of histories, which in fact are innumerably woven out of the threesome that is time and again catalytically impacted upon each other and dissolved in the mind of the central consciousness. There is no surprise that the crucial moments at the adolescent setup of Bourton are persistently revisited throughout the story. See an argument on how the “tunneling effect” is achieved behind each character’s chronological trajectories in Elizabeth Abel’s *Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 1-32.

with. Note, for instance, that the simple enumeration, such as “the air was in the early morning; like the flap of a wave, the kiss of a wave; chill and yet (for a girl of eighteen as she then was) solemn,” progressively mirrors the introspective emotionality each simile is invested with, culminating in this passage with the identification of the biographical stage she was at, eighteen, when the comparison inevitably, as it were, plunges into the momentous scenes developed then and there and for which all the fresh plunge, starting with the inceptive fresh air of the morning, has been preparing her and the readerly mind, as it turns out.

The piquancy and the vividness the momentous scene is invested with no wonder gradually lose their sharpness as the voice indulges in personal nuances, which are inflected by what might have happened there and then. As the readerly mind processes the implicit enormity of what is compacted in the expressions the subject gives rise to, the tone she assumes threatens to take the willing accomplice-cum-hermeneutic interpreter in a direction he never imagined it would take, at least initially when the spontaneity of the voice merely surprised and almost overwhelmed with its disjunctive and yet invigorating staccato inner codes, which nevertheless evoked something hopeful and promising that is tantamount to the freshness and spontaneity of the voice. What, then, does the string of words, now coalesced as an overshadowed ominous initiation into the private wounds, which the subject would not likely divulge unless the monologue assumingly takes place in a nonchalant soliloquy, the kind that obtains its realization for its implicit promise of evanescent memorability, really signify, or what impact does it exercise on the mind that has been hard put to cope with the outpouring of semes from the mind of the central subject in order to make them arrange and rearrange in any meaningful order in his seemingly helplessly frantic hermeneutic attempt? Most likely, the interpretative mind is similarly in the dark (perhaps reflecting the apparently directionless meandering of the subject in question) even after a moment’s reflection and reordering of the gestalt elements the voice putatively and incessantly provides. Perhaps, the best, and a most passive way, to cope with the emerging textual phase is to let the mind of the interpretative being enter that of the protagonist, as she allows her mind to wander and identify with the prevailing consciousness of the then and there at Bourton, and passively let the hermeneutic self reflectively color the bits of expressive ebullience as the mind of the subject would have it. In other words, a difficult and perhaps the self-same process to flow with the spontaneous voice as the latter meanders through a spectrum of emotional conditions over and through a span of time that nevertheless is identified with one point in her personal history. Or, perhaps, the protagonist herself

does not know how to gauge the exact sentiment the putatively momentous series of events in reference to the then evokes in her. That may perhaps be the reason why she resorts to the similes and metaphors to describe the inchoate emotionality, which at best is suspenseful, hopelessly and exquisitely so for the very self that is indulging in recollection, and at the same time somatically involving and immediate. In retrospection, the metaphoric and imagistic sentience being foregrounded becomes a harbinger for the intentionally obtuse (or perhaps trite) and mystifying images that end with “the smoke winding off them [the trees] and the rooks rising, falling” because the emotionality being evoked through the string of images manifested preceding the part just quoted almost touch and tickle the most sensitive part of the subject’s being so much so that the orgasmic (and overindulgent, even in a supposed setup of private and solipsistic monologue) frisson the recollection causes almost threatens to become cloying, or even worse too private.

The potential *huis clos*, however, is resolved by diverting the sensuous metaphor into something light-hearted and unexpectedly humorous, perhaps almost funny. The break in tone between the accumulated images of the “ominous” and the bathetic and anticlimactic remarks made to recollect through the central consciousness is so exasperatingly sudden and vast that the readerly consciousness momentarily has a difficult time comprehending what the heterogeneous concatenation of the images truly signify. Could the seemingly unsettling remarks, “Musing among the vegetables?” and, possibly more enigmatic and yet benign “I prefer men to cauliflowers,” are they to be taken in line with the preceding more dramatic recollective images, or contrary to and in spite of them, as completely carnivalesque off-putting humor that is intended to throw the readerly consciousness off its more inured high-brow (or more recommended) approach? A kind that is likely to shatter the full-blown expectations that have been accumulated since the inception of the private monologue, which seemingly has promised the readerly mind nothing but the undisguised and candid emotional response to the inner urgings of the central consciousness? Or, on the contrary, is it more apt if we introduced the meta-narrative voice that deftly and intentionally shapes the flow of the narrative consciousness in whatever way it pleases, or is intended to be taken by the other, the hermeneutic putatively smugly objective and over-serious entity on the other side of the bi- and multi-polar readerly scheme? If, then such an entity, the meta-narrator on the original end of the hermeneutic scheme, is premised, the spatiotemporal distance it automatically inserts between the two cannot help but turn the remarks hilariously comedic, so much so, perhaps, that the over-specific vegetative images almost threaten to upset the somber and nostalgic timbre the preceding

recollective images cumulatively and steadily have established. Because of the potential break between the two, the spatiotemporal hiatus almost sears the particularities of the present vegetative remarks into the readerly consciousness, as the differences they evoke become amplified and the heterogeneity gushes out and rushes to the consciousness that has, as it were, freshly awakened, and thus is ready to accept the remarks on a completely different ground than the one that seems to have lain underneath the preceding fictive landscape. Albeit the whole process might take merely a fraction of a second, with the realization of the intervening processes the interpretive consciousness reacts violently to the absurdity of the images made to coalesce before his eyes. If the subject who is made to recollect the momentous scene, in which the vegetative metaphor is indulged in, is really unaware of the magnitude of the humor she is implicated in, then, the discrepancy between the consciousness of the readerly mind (here, perhaps that of the meta-narrator may be identified with it) and that of the protagonist is all the wider, making the absurdity all the more facetious.

But the off-putting metaphor, or it might as well be literal from the perspective of the deadpan-faced protagonist (or it might be all the more entertaining to assume that she is as such at the moment), cannot go any more absurd, or for that matter has reached its absurd acme, forcing the voice to enumerate the detailed explanatory bits involving the images she has obtusely invoked. She even inserts a remark that puts a distance between the self completely embroiled in the comedic act of recollection and the more objective comprehending self, who, as it were, has manipulative sangfroid to perspectivize the entire recollective narrative structuration with a semi-cacophonous-cum-spontaneous interposition, "was that it." It turns out that the slightly jarring insertion set immediately after the odd and bathetic remark, "I prefer men to cauliflowers," is merely a cue to introduce further details about the momentous scene that had putatively taken place years before. In other words, it is a device to let the readerly consciousness to peek into the world that is private and yet which is somehow implicitly trustworthily presented to the reader consciousness, who in his turn is seemingly less required to exert his analytical mind to come up with the objective circumstances that might or might not be filtered through the consciousness in the process of textualization. The candidness the sudden narrative transparency seems to promise both stabilizes the narrative setup the readerly consciousness has so far precariously constructed, with its implicit guarantee of objective truth from which to derive a more reliable landscape, either conscious or material, and at the same time jeopardizes the immediacy the fictive sphere somehow intuitively imparted to the hermeneutic subject on the confronting end of the hermeneutic scheme. The promise of

transparency, furthermore, either because it arrives so suddenly and unexpectedly or for whatever ineluctable reason, threatens to degenerate into a conventionality that is almost too stereotypical of the prevailing traditional narrative that the voice quickly loses its *vivre* and begins to become almost stale. It becomes sunk in the quagmire of explanatory objectivity, which militates against the oddity and freshness of the voice that has predominated up until this segment of the story. Note the flatness of the tone that does not convey any excitement or interest to the readerly consciousness, “He must have said it at breakfast one morning when she had gone out on to the terrace—Peter Walsh. He would be back from India one of these days, June or July, she forgot which, for his letters were awfully dull....” Although economy of the storytelling may be fulfilled by just stringing together the circumstantial details concerning the protagonist and the person with whom the said climactic incident evolved, the force and the pulsating energy that have been keeping the narrative and conscious flow propelling forward are in danger of getting bogged down. But, perhaps, the initial freshness the readerly mind has experienced may still remain intact, or so the authorial mind calculates, as she keeps the narrative structuration bared through the enumeration of mundane details that cloyingly contribute to the flesh and blood of the actor and the actress, who in their turn gave rise to the sharp edges that privately delineate the then when the vivid memories that are relived perpetually in our protagonist’s mind were engendered.⁵ Whether or not the details, or the means by which they are delivered to the readerly consciousness, are anticlimactic or not, that is what our protagonist’s mind engages with at the moment. Perhaps, the mundanity that most strikes the readerly consciousness is the meta-theme everyone concerned (except the current consciousness of the protagonist, perhaps?) is likely to be focused on, as the bits of information become ever more incidental—or inevitable to the protagonist, at least?—and heterogeneous in pace and tone from those prevalent in the preceding part of the narrative. The moment the mind engages in the inner workings of memory coincides with the inception of the phase that, ironically, is both blatantly structural and thematic (or, even

⁵ Whether or not the mundanities that constantly inhabit the fictive space of *Mrs. Dalloway* merely strike the readerly mind as such and vanish the moment that were registered by the latter, or they in fact constitute something even deeper and quite insightful into the nature of such abstract concepts as life and existence, for instance, may be moot. But there are enough critics who support the latter view, particularly when the narrative is, often surreptitiously, aided by the insistent rhythm that lets the readerly mind focus on the facticity of the narrative strategy *per se*. See an argument on the overall fusion of the narrative structuration and the thematic concern that arises from the perpetual rhythmic pulsation in Stella McNichol’s *Virginia Woolf and the Poetry of Fiction* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1990), pp. 62-63.

utilitarian in that the string of information more and more strikes the readerly mind as opportunistic) and formulaically monologistic. There seems to be a lacuna of inevitability that should carry the readerly mind forcefully with the narrative flow simply because it is so natural and spontaneously surprising. Perhaps, it is the explanatory nature of the inner monologue that surfeits the readerly appetite as he copes with the mere information that ceaselessly, and gratuitously, overflows from the fecund mind of the sentimentally gripped central consciousness. In the end, as the details accumulate, they threaten to inundate the permissible hermeneutic capacity (or, perhaps, tolerance) of the readerly consciousness: "He would be back from India one of these days, June or July, she forgot which, for his letters were awfully dull; it was his sayings one remembered; his eyes, his pocket-knife, his smile, his grumpiness and...." No wonder memory, or a structural principle, should be selective, "when millions of things had utterly vanished," or the whole process of recollection, through which private landscapes are revisited time and again, is rife with quirky and unexpected surprises, "how strange it was!" All of this echoes the hermeneutic mind and the meta-authorial presence looking on the mind mired in private recollection, which may or may not be relevant to the fictive structuration, but one thing that is definitely relevant is that the minds observing the private recollective memory in action are overburdened with satiety by now and the sentiment (anti)climactically coincides with the bathos textualized at the end of the current reverie on Peter, albeit, to be fair with the dreaming mind of our protagonist, she is completely oblivious to the unintended effect the present recollection has on the mind of the reader, "a few sayings like this about cabbages."

The objective observation, a bit too much descriptive perhaps, obtrudes at the end of the prosaic explanatory segment, just in time when the readerly consciousness has started to react languidly to the setup that has begun to feel too methodically structural. Even a traditional physical indicator, which the present sudden intrusion certainly is, has an air of freshness after the cumulative private revelatory passage that has gone on overly and elaborately stretched out. Now the readerly consciousness has a clear marker by which to place his bearings in the fictive landscape that has started out as a continuum of bits of conscious images strung together. Our protagonist is (rather overly prosaically) surely located on the "kerb, waiting for Durtnall's van to pass." So, the hermeneutic mind retroactively reconstitutes what has been taking place in the narrative, everything that has cropped up in bits of seemingly disjointed information from the rather obtusely begun conscious stream—has been merely a reflection constantly taking place via the mind of the protagonist while she is constantly

perambulating through the town, in which the kerb she happens to be standing on at the moment and everything she has been observing and made to reflect upon in the present are putatively located. With the concrete confirmation, which is artificially presented and yet presented in such a way that the reader has no choice but to make a foundation stone of the fictive edifice he has committed to construct in implicit cooperation with the protagonist and other characters that emerge from the narrative—the readerly consciousness has a momentary sense of relief, as if he had been buoyed up above the surface of the water to breathe in a lungful of fresh air, which is sure to aid him as he reengages in restructuring or surveying the narrative horizon anew from what he would like to be reassured of a fortified vantage point. But, the busy constantly moving perspective, which the voice of the protagonist supplies, does not allow the readerly mind to rest on one stable perspectival ground for long. Without any excuse at all, the voice shifts and inhabits the mind of another person, who is most likely merely passing through the scene without any guarantee of further contact with the central consciousness that is within his view by sheer chance. What is surprising and once again invigorating for the hermeneutic mind in quest of the certainty of gestalt signification is that the two people who have supposedly come in contact, either spiritually or physically, are brought on to the current “climactic encounter” for no reason at all or with any promise of meaningful sequiturs; rather, they are there for the sake of a mere overlapping presence any reality-impacted situation might give rise to in daily encounters of complete strangers, which they are not in that both of them, perhaps unilaterally, share a certain portion of the spiritual sphere underpinned by the fact that they frequent or reside in the area they are passing through, a privileged and definitely upper-class area of London only a handful of denizens have the right to be associated with. They do not accrue anything significant, or so the readerly consciousness has been resigned to the inevitable consequences of distant convergence of non-tangible energies, as it were, except that Scrope Purvis’s thought process, which is also too neutrally descriptive to be doubted of its reliability, is perfectly, almost too pat perhaps, echoed by our protagonist, as she simply continues the preceding, and formulaically his, thought process, as if it also rightfully belonged to her. The seamless cogitation and conscious stream is a *déjà vu* of the conscious manifestation that occurred a few lines previously, as the protagonist took her cue from the fresh morning air and immediately and spontaneously recollected what had transpired years before at Bourton.⁶

⁶ The continuous streaming of consciousness, which is translated by and into language, or words, may be impacted, with great possible hermeneutic rewards, on the idea that

In a way, the transition, or the traces of it, is visible when the over-scrupulous presentation of the outer person of our protagonist is consciously (most likely) disregarded and the protagonist delves deeper into the self, which is (as she sees it) and can be only identified and externally manifested through a momentary suspense, or a metaphor, the convergence of the time and her emotional upheaval that culminates in the present give rise to. On reflection, the identification gratuitously presented in the Scrope Purvis's thought process, that is if formulaically it is divided from our protagonist's, tends to flatten out the depth she has been accumulating over the previous disjunctively presented segment and the need to disrupt the tendency might as well have been keenly felt at this juncture. Although the seeming continuum of the putatively heterogeneous consciousnesses from one to the other may act as a mechanical ploy to deliberately engulf the many within a meta-mind of the authorial or dominant voice that prevails at any given moment, the two-dimensionality, as it were, that entails, regardless of the dictate of the ur-narrator, is an undesirable consequence that needs to be voided, even as an extemporaneous measure. In that sense, the abrupt introduction of the periodic non-conclusive accumulation of bits of images and lines on the heels of the more than predictable unidirectional sentences regularly strung together seems quite effective because, as the readerly mind begins to be attuned to the almost bathetic continuation of the expectant distribution of fictive information, the ennui, tinged with the stultifying sense of doldrums invading the hermeneutic mind of the reader, is forced to bear upon the jagged as well as slippery hermeneutic resistance the seemingly multidimensional lines generate. The sense of mystery that grapples the inquiring, or the ready-to-be sedated, mind of the reader happens so ineluctably that the latter may not know what is actually taking place before he realizes that the particular "hush" may promise nucleus of the private thoughts, which the readerly mind had been tempted to construe as being constituted by the mundane knowables and external descriptors, such as the age and sprightly figure (or so perceived by Scrope Purvis) that have the tendency of becoming too pat for the hermeneutic inquiry of the

words may be useful to mirror the truth that lies deep down in the heart and mind of conscious characters but they do not necessarily function in any utilitarian manner. Thus, whenever they mirror and reflect the deeper workings of the nucleus of consciousness they may not necessarily contribute to the definite significations that may or may not be used to attempt to confirm the valuation of each statement *dramatis personae* make. While each situationality that is transmitted and mirrored by words coalesces in the fictive space, it may as well change its phases depending on the way it is conceived and perceived by each and every participant in the narrative. See Virginia Woolf's view on "words" explored by Maria DiBattista in her "Virginia Woolf and the Language of Authorship," collected in *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, pp. 127-129.

readerly mind. But when the mystery has finally engulfed him and as it develops into so many shaped possibilities of comprehending the subject of the protagonist, or what have cumulatively constituted her in the present, he intuitively reacts in a way that the path to grasping the real subject lies not in the externalities presented in the most uncomplicated manner possible, which surely gives the readerly consciousness a sense of jejune infantilely passive ease and thus it could be said that it is a kind that circumvents reality-impacted complications and depth, but in an environment where open-ended signification possibilities challenge the hermeneutic subject as to the true essence of the mind and the consciousness dealing with the multifaceted interactions that manifest regardless of whatever verbal definition the target subject grants to the momentary phases of the inchoate emotionality, with which she after all struggles mostly as she tries to delve into the mystery, or the unnameable through this segment of the narrative. The unnamable, and yet which is the target of the subject's infinite curiosity and attention, is enough to bring the somnolent mind of the readerly consciousness back into the world that is permeated with the conscious energies of the characters that inhabit the fictive space. At this stage, therefore, the traditional tendency of narrative structuration is once again checked by the jagged disjunctive power of the polymorphous indeterminacy which the abstract metaphorization prominently both represents and manifests as. It may be apt to follow the dithering way the mind of the protagonist travels at this juncture in response to the inner and outer conditions that ineluctably present themselves to the narrative subject.

Once one pays closer attention to the minutiae of the constitutive elements of the target segment, one quickly notices the de-structural tendency the voice presents to the readerly consciousness throughout. In fact, the voice is intentionally desultory in that the unidirectional force, which has been the predominant feature in the external descriptive segment previous to the present one, is deliberately challenged and instead divergent elements are strategically inserted whenever occasions present themselves, or even when there seems to be no such appropriate jumping off points where the voice can rightfully indulge in open-ended destructive (destructural) ditherings seemingly unrelated to the topics that have already been introduced. At the inception of the current segment, our protagonist continues the theme that has been proposed, as it were, by the detached subject from herself, and without any legitimation the topic is further expounded upon until a divergent force intrudes, which can only be simulated by a metaphor or a subjective intuitive imagery. But before the image is completely delineated, an intrusive comedization threatens to sidetrack the divergent narrative line, which is already diverted from the expected traditional linear line, and unsettle

the hermeneutic stance, rendering the readerly consciousness further amenable to polymorphous signification on the narrative, which is seemingly hopelessly evolving as an ever widening fictive circle. Somewhere in the stream of evocative conscious desultation, however, the direction the voice of the narrative subject takes decidedly swerves toward coalescence of the inchoate thought process she is engaged in. Since each bit of that imagery can only be rendered through approximation, be it a thing she can touch or hear or merely can invoke on the spur of the moment, the tone of the textual space being developed becomes all the more private and intuitive, so much so that the accompanying readerly psyche tends to be struck by its cryptic obtuseness that verges on wayward idiosyncrasy. At the same time, however, the immediacy the shorthand transmission of private codes, as it were, grants to the readerly psyche manages to engender a sense of transparency through which one feels as if he were entitled to the insight into generation of each and minute thought processes as they barely begin in the deepest core of the subject's being. Once that understanding is settled in the mind of the accompanying subject, then, the half-hearted attempts at verbalization of the present, or rather what the interaction between the self and the environment that surrounds her, becomes suddenly graspable to the other, who is supposed to be defined as someone essentially detached from the subject being developed in the fictive space with an autonomous subjectivity and the seemingly wayward thought patterns that are inherently governed by the (unpredictable) law of its own, or perhaps the law granted and shaped by the ur-voice that also unpredictably resides in the space confronting the readerly consciousness. The potential identification of the minds that emerges at this juncture may be the reason that the narrative voice encourages the inner workings that are taking place putatively within the protagonist to be taken as also the process, identical or at least similar in nature, that is occurring in the accompanying hermeneutic mind, "Such fools we are, she thought, crossing Victoria Street." Although the method employed here is definitely revelatory of the "hidden" hand of the meta-narrator, who is making sure that the hermeneutic mind is synchronized with the mind of the narrator, the deep and long dive undertaken in the proceeding portion of the target segment perhaps warrants such a momentary relief for the amicable companion who dares to fathom the deepest recesses of the intricately nuanced mind of the subject being explored.

Indeed, only an implicit faith in the leading voice can take a readerly mind down a path of such uncertainty, as the latter fearfully struggles with the half sentences and incomplete phrases without any sense at all of where the whole thing is taking him to. Tantalizingly enough, each component in the target portion merely coalesces in the

mind of the narrative subject, which may or may not make any ineluctable sense to herself, and making the matter worse, or more interestingly perhaps, the accompanying hermeneutic mind is dragged along, hopefully willingly by now, without getting any definite inkling of what each bit of verbal concretization significationally entails. In fact, the long journey that begins with “For Heaven only knows why one loves it so” is so precariously defined in terms of its directionality that without the implicit faith the readerly mind puts in the inchoate thought processes of the narrative voice the journey itself might disintegrate, forcing a kind of significationally explosion that in the end will come to a bathetic cliché, at most, or even worse a nothingness that does not even reward the mere “physical” labor of deciphering the jumble of phraseological mishmash. But, let us follow the incidence of each and constitutive half-phrases that seemingly occur without any premeditation, which is to say utterly spontaneously, and try if any deeper meaning arises from the analytical insight into the momentary coalescence of minimalistic multivalence, which the verbal manifestation in the present prominently strikes the readerly consciousness as while he desperately and at the same time merely goes along with the flow of the conscious ramifications derived from the mind of the central narrative being. Note that the main referent, or what the character has in mind and what she tries to reference, is seemingly deliberately taken over by a significationally substitute “it,” rather than actually named and defined and presented in the beginning of the present peroration. What does the *it* in “why one loves it so” signify, then, becomes a nagging question that remains throughout the long thought process until, possibly, the very end of the current segment where the peroration putatively is concluded. Why does it need to be disguised and hidden from the cursory understanding of the readerly mind for the time being? Does it play, that is the act of keeping the *it* from the comprehending mind of the reader, any fictive role in the overall scheme of the narrative? Or, is the matter-of-fact manner in which the narrative mind works, without taking its time to explain or prepare the still-lukewarmly initiated mind of the reader for the arcanelly idiosyncratic thought processes of the narrative consciousness, a way of violently introducing, and thus plunging the mind of the reader without mediation, as it were, into an ever-evolving fictive world that is constantly breaking away from the comprehending significationally perimeters conventionally attuned hermeneutic attempts tend to rely on? One element that keeps the dismayed readerly mind from completely falling behind, however, is the pace at which the seemingly disjunctive and random occurrence of the phrases pursue each other. Although each one may not make much sense on its own, the concatenation of them following one on the heels of another tends to shape a significationally trajectory, which is not necessarily quite definable but

nevertheless helps the readerly mind constitute bits of nuances that have a tendency to make the latter amenable to an optimistic state in which he is more willingly to trust the directionality that the verbal accumulation of the narrative mind seems to foretell, which in turn may be translated into an implicit guarantee that the hermeneutic mind will be reciprocated in the end, one way or other. Therefore, in light of the speed with which the mind of the constitutive and hermeneutic self tumbles along the fictive world limned out by the spontaneous liquid mind of the narrator, the seeming obstacles each bits of the conundrum supposedly present to the readerly mind merely becomes an incentive, as it were, for him to further move forward in step with the mind of the narrator to get even more tightly spliced with the latter as she further indulges in her spontaneous inchoate self and revels in the joy of merely being in the present. Perhaps, the signifiatory layer does not constitute as large a component of the narrative structuration as one might think at this point; rather it might be of functional importance to the extent that it gives rise to and aid the rhythmical and temporal elements that underlie the whole subliminal significations the readerly mind intuitively supplements to take in the gestalt meaning playing out in the mind of the narrator or the conscious world, which in its turn is a reflection and refraction of “reality” rendered through the putatively authorial mind of the ur-narrator.⁷

When the readerly consciousness, then, follows the trajectory set by the narrative mind in action he eventually arrives at a safe definable haven, which, not surprisingly, coalesces as a descriptive conceptuality indicated and represented by a string of words, “they love life.” At this point a certain and somewhat well-defined idea arises and overtakes the once (albeit merely a fraction of a second before) puzzled mind of the reader, allowing him to realize that all the truncated, hodgepodge of impressionistic expressive phrases, which however are most prominently underpinned by the bouncy jovial rhythmicality, were in fact propelled by the directionality that simultaneously prefigured the concomitant signification that would only be settled by

⁷ Each and variegated instances that come and go, as it were, in the consciousness of each dramatis personae do not necessarily mean that the author, or the ur-narrator, is trying to mirror the reality traditionally-minded authors incline, or used to incline contemporaneously with Virginia Woolf at the turn of the century, to attempt in order to reflect the widest array of “human comedy” or “idiosyncrasies of human character.” Rather, her kind is an approach that delves deeper into situationalites where certain universalized emotions and unconditional hermeneutic responses occur, the kind that leads to even abstracted and concentrated criss-crossings of circumstances in which readers and author-cum-dramatis personae can share empathic and universalized moments, in spite of themselves. See the relevant argument by Joan Bennett in *Virginia Woolf: Her Art as a Novelist* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 3-18.

the final well-defined sentiment just quoted. The implicit trust the readerly mind placed (or were forced to place, in a sense) in the spontaneous mind of the central consciousness is after all rewarded and now the hermeneutic consciousness retroactively deciphers and basks in the unfolding sentiments and nuances that gush out of the foregone bits of phrases and disjunctive sentences. As soon as the narrative landscape opens up with all the gestalt significations embedded in it, the rest seems to follow almost automatically, that is in true synchronicity of the minds of the narrator and the accompanying subject placed across the readerly text. No wonder that the expressions, those which rise out of the inchoate mind of the narrator, become foreshortened, as it were, and the pulsation that underlies and propels the surface texture meets a willing accomplice in the mind of the readerly hermeneutic consciousness. They, the two subjects interfaced by the readerly text, are in a transcended state in which tedious verbal explanation is redundant and the structuration that engulfs the narrative occurrence is reduced to a mere experience both go through. In the process, however, the emotional crescendo of the directive narrator tends to exceed the limit of objective translation of reality, which she putatively conveys through verbalization. Perhaps the pure musicality that is inherent in the pulsated phraseological bits cannot escape the intuitive resonance that arises from the unconditional reciprocative core of the narrative subject so that the only way to render the energy that flows out of it may be just to go along with the flow, which with its inertial force allows the narrative mind to reach its maximal exultation with the resulting anticlimactic observation, as the mind is overwhelmed, as it were, by the force that wells out of its core before the terminus of the current segment. When the subject eyes and recognizes the "it" in every minutest detail around her, the accumulation of the mundane (now that the mystery of the "conundrum" has been solved and simultaneously shared by the accompanying consciousness) may be bound for a bathetic conclusion, such as what she in fact reaches, "the strange high singing of some aeroplane overhead was what she loved; life; London; this moment of June." The specificity that protrudes from the conscious overflow becomes a sign of immediacy and at the same time that of textual vulnerability, as it provides an abundant opportunity for the readerly mind to interpret it in a way that resonates with his subjective core, as well. The supposed break in the boundary that seems to have separated the two subjects, which the current idiosyncratic approach of the ur-narrator provided, in a way backfires here as the private codes become decoded in accordance with the implicit agreement the two have reached by now. Unless the "strangeness" of the aeroplane is given due value that is appropriate to the historical backdrop of the narrative, the bathos that seems to

unravel from the immediate conscious unfolding of the narrative subject at this juncture seems to presage a development that is indeed less than climatic or spontaneous.

The too much coagulation of the mundane must necessarily lead to a resolution that both reflects the whole landscape, including the inner and outer ones evolving from and mirroring the inner core of the narrative subject, and gives rise to a historical safe valve, by dint of which the narrator can allow a breath of fresh air to settle over the fictive sphere and keep the participants in the unique fictive evolution from completely sedated, or for that matter repulsed by the too much of private idiosyncrasies that have been non-linearly presented without an explicit agreement between the two parties as to its directionality and the way the fictive significations entail from it. A tack the mind of the narrator resorts to is a piece of history that is putatively shared by all the participants in the narrative, including all those potentially cross paths with the central consciousness manifested through verbalization of the protagonist, and utilize it as an element to bear upon all the personages who at least have vested interest in the war mentioned in the story, including those who supposedly merely look on what transpires across the hermeneutic crevice that narrows and broadens according to the directionality of the narrative the central consciousness initiates. Before the historical interlude is introduced, however, the seasonal reminder is once again iterated for the reason that will only become evident in the evolving conscious narrative unwinding. For now, it may be best just to cling to the unpredictable narrative dictate and hope the retrospective interpretative method the readerly consciousness adopts will reward his understanding just it did time and again previously. When the readerly mind is becoming ready to brace for the surprising unknown to unfold from the unpredictable conscious horizon of the narrative sphere, the tone takes an unexpected turn for the facetious, as the specific "samples" the central narrative voice draws attention to turn out to be definitely not as dignified as the war (and a major one at that) seemingly preemptively evoked in the mind of the accompanying readerly consciousness putatively suggests. On the contrary, the circumstances woven out by the now loquacious mind of the narrator are disproportionately bathetic and anticlimactic, making the readerly mind retroactively conjecture that the elements that seemingly protruded from the spontaneous conscious journey were introduced merely to deemphasize their prominence and, rather paradoxically, foreground the facetious and idiosyncratic capricious humor that occasionally intruded into the main flow of the narrative work and which the hermeneutic mind misjudged were merely there to be dismissed, or to be used to enhance only the serious multivalent narrative strand. Whatever the case, the

current phase overturns the cumulative expectations the readerly mind has learned to place on the overall structurality of the narrative, except that the “disarray” may work for better entertainment of the reader, as the mean-spiritedness of a character like Mrs. Foxcroft is enough to bring hearty laughs to a mind constantly diverted and misdirected from the true course of the conscious narrative that is so often disjunctured and diverged when the readerly consciousness thinks he has finally caught up with the true directionality of the inner core of the narrative subject, from which after all the whole gestalt significations putatively emerge. But how hypobolically the foregrounded humor is embedded with the rest of the minutiae! It is as if the proceeding detail as well may be taken in the same breath as the episode concerning Mrs. Foxcroft. Perhaps it is, or it may be there in that conjunctive location because the surrounding narrative significations mutually either detract or augment their true meaning depending on the way the readerly consciousness faces the other subject across the hermeneutic line. At least in the present case the understated signification merely enhances the humor that would otherwise be merely passed over as something light-hearted and yet unworthy of undue attention on the part of the readerly consciousness. The vivid reminder of the tragic consequence of the war also contributes to the discrepancy between what is expected of the derivatives of the historical event and what is made to arise from it by the fertile and unpredictable imaginative mind of the narrator. The jealousy that is obviously a contributing factor to the emotion Mrs. Foxcroft comes to possess, or currently possesses, may or may not be due to the fact that the representation so arisen in the textual concretization is more than subtly inflected by the personal proclivity our protagonist happens to be born with, or willingly chose to cultivate in spite of, or because of her personal relationship with the lady in question.

The private emotions and all the circumstantial contingencies coagulate in the form of peroration about the joy and beauty of merely being surrounded by the mundane. Once the slanted potential implicative portion of the passage is quickly passed over, our protagonist recurs to the mood that has dominated the previous segment where the spontaneous overflow of the unnamable bits of memorable events from the past have been indulged in and disjunctive fragments of verbalized inchoate expressions were manifested in the fictive space, as if they had been given rise to for some inevitable urge from the inscrutable core of the protagonist. Now, the *vivre* represented by the panting of the heart and transmogrified into a strain that runs through the propulsive movement of the preceding passage comes to the fore once again and turned into an energy to compel the central consciousness to scan the circumstantial landscape merely to wallow in the resultant accumulation of imageries, which overall constitute the

current narrative sequence. Now the ineluctable “life” that has been stretched out and suspended over a space of disjunctive phraseological bits in the preceding segment is repeated and substituted, or augmented perhaps, by an analogous force which our protagonist finds in the June day she savors at the moment and in the fact that the “Kind and Queen were at the Palace.” The normalcy and the expected order that prevails in the moment becomes the mainstay and source of her sense of jubilation, and the possession and experience thereof inevitably contributes to the “beatings” she feels all around her. The intricate nuances the sense born of the experience of what the beating gives rise to in the central consciousness gradually develop into something that is too fine and precious to be expressed through other means than imagistic abstractions, disjunctive bits of phrases and imageries that may not necessarily conventionally syntaxed and joined together, but somehow seemingly extemporaneously thrown out from the depth of the jubilant exultant self the readerly subject is hard put to identify with now. The process that unravels at this stage is the same as that surfaced a minute ago when the conscious self became enraptured with the memories voluntarily (or, possibly, involuntarily) recalled from the distant past. The details verbalized through the aid of the narrative self inundates the orderly structural container and the resultant overflow brings about words and phrases that may not necessarily constitute a logical, well-structured set of conceptual bits, but the verbalization that materializes in the fictive space does not fail to convince the readerly consciousness of its candid jubilant force that propels the narrative voice through the whole gamut of both physical and spiritual breadth of the narrative space. The immediacy that arises from the bottom of the narrative consciousness once again becomes foregrounded and the disjunctive array of direct and immediate sentiments and sentiences coalesced through the aid of verbalization comes across as something the readerly consciousness can truly identify with and can be absorbed from the inchoate core of the narrative subject.

Abstractions, that is what really matters beyond and over the verbatim significations that play along on the surface of the text, may be the true concern of the readerly consciousness, as he continues to follow the trajectory of the mind that revels in the life and beatings the mundane and ordinary incidents evince. Superficially, the depictions that ensue after the typical ordinariness, or perhaps orderliness, represented by the palace and its expected royal occupants, are by themselves amenable to a picturesque rendition, which the readerly consciousness might as well dwell on to make maximum sense of. The “stirrings,” the movement, and uncontrollable life that erupts out of the ordinary objects can be expressed by, and as well as focused upon, the

fast-paced force that is synchronized with the imaginative rhythm accompanying that of the galloping ponies and “tapping of cricket bats.” Before the readerly consciousness, or the movement that is engendered along with the “imaginary” situationality generated at this point, can catch up with the propulsive force that shoots through the series of verbalized concatenation, the galloping objects or the unstoppable life has gone past it and hurrying on to a point that is completely indefinable, or ungraspable by the power of the hermeneutic consciousness. The latter is being left behind and never moves abreast of what is taking place both on the textual surface and what metaphysically transpires on the imaginative and conscious level. As soon as the galloping ponies are tamed, as it were, a new sequence of images emerges and shoots forward without any excuse whatsoever about what and where the string of details, “Lords, Ascot, Ranelagh and all the rest of it; wrapped in the soft mesh of the grey-blue morning air,” will lead the readerly consciousness to. But when the new bits of information coalesces as a seemingly manageable depictive narrative constituent, what most prominently emerges is the force, a perpetual mobile, that ceaselessly keeps the individual elements moving forward, regardless of their directionality and imaginative valence. Appropriately enough, what unfolds from the previous detail is an image of the said personages translating into so many characters, a set of whom “pitches the bouncing ponies, whose forefeet just struck the ground and up they sprung, the whirling young men.” Nothing stays still in this picture, and even the seemingly discrepant images are made to merge and constitute one set of objects, which in their turn, or rather simultaneously, are rendered to represent something rather abstract, such as the mere force that propels the whole thing that resides in the narrative space at the moment. Needless to say, the “whirling young men” expectedly transmogrifies into its opposite and made to continue the momentum that has been generated some time ago with the inception of, or rather discovery of, the fine June day, which in its turn is a continuation of the force (merely in a metaphorized form) that has been around as long as the conscious energy has been in existence since the beginning of the narrative where the readerly mind and the narrative voice met to be engaged in the primal work of reciprocating the very energy that paradoxically, and circularly, resulted from the (self-same) process.

As soon as the energy is spent, which initiated the transmogrification of the discrepant and discreet objects into each other and kept the narrative rhythm bouncing forward, another set, of course, of transmogrification is started, which is not at all highbrow but almost mundane in its ordinariness while seemingly maintaining the façade of a class that is apart from the rest of the populace, such as those who dare not aspire to commute to the area now being depicted. The bouncing and dashing “young

men,” who dexterously and sportily manipulate the ponies and the young women in “transparent muslins,” who, it turns out, merely walk their doted puppies around the exclusive area of London as they are wont to—they not so mysteriously are transformed into a rather energetic set of madams in the form of affluent “dowagers,” who go out to have a spin to test their nimble selves in the latest toys available, once again, only to the exclusive set. The energy that is ubiquitous in the scene, however, does not leave any single individual that is portrayed therein somehow comedically uninflected. What comes across the hermeneutic divide between the personae directly concerned in the narrative and those private consciousnesses trying to decipher the mysteries concomitant of the conscious narrative, is the serio-comic strain that colors the bouncy and lively manifestations preeminently foregrounded in the movement of the young men and the ponies, jubilant girls, who danced all night, and the overadventurous women, who perhaps ask for more than their share of fun the life in the June day could bring on—perhaps even in a retroactive manner so that all the pure joy expressed through the mentioned circumstantial imaginative episodes suddenly become tinged with an inflected nuance that forces the readerly consciousness to reflect back on the emotionality that has been, and was, evoked at the moment the passage was encountered a fraction of a second before. The possible absurdity, or strictly speaking, the joy of *vivre* overextended to the degree beyond reason and logic and even word, gains its force and plays out in the proceeding segment that harps on the theme of the self-same unconditional joy of merely existing in the present. The bifurcate thematic and conscious directionality redounds to the facetious nature of the nuances that becomes embedded in the target section. The shopkeeper tries to sell something that is not quite what the items’ appearance indicates, or rather the fake substance the said item is meant to represent does not foretell the whole story our protagonist envisages at the moment, as the quality of being genuine or the fact that the “sly” sales clerk attempts to pass it off as something genuine to an ingenuous customer, as the American is supposed to signify (not likely, a gullible innocent who inevitably falls for temptations), does not presage an outright criticism or praise from the conscious soul of our narrative subject. The view so expressed merely functions as a bridge to the need to remind the self so being evoked to fulfill her duty as a hostess to throw a successful party as her possible noble ancestors might have done so number of times before in the glorious history of England. In other words, the day-to-day mundanities that develop around the narrative being merely represent or lead to occasion an idea of what life implies to a soul who is elevated to be able to taste the mere joy of being alive and conscious of being part of what goes on in what is literally and metaphorically called

life.

All the to's and fro's of the psychological desultation abounds as our protagonist hurries on to the destination she had set for herself when, as if some degree of quiet is a necessity rather than an extraneous redundancy, cessation of the propulsive force brings on a quiet that is almost ineffable but on the textual surface is merely described as a resultant occurrence as she enters a park. A metaphoric imagery that translates the sense of quietude, which she thinks has mysteriously intruded upon her perambulatory thought process, is a pond populated with "slow-swimming happy ducks," who, as expectedly and rather picturesquely waddle in the watery haven. The seemingly abrupt cessation in the momentum incepted at the beginning of the current episode, or strictly speaking that which has been transmitted throughout the conscious narrative of the central subject that has been textualized, it turns out, merely prefigures the oncoming force with which the mundane narrative propulsion is further forwarded by the unexpected appearance of none other than a familiar—albeit a total incognito to the readerly subject—figure our protagonist introduces by the name of Hugh Whitbread. A rather prosaic name is echoed by the way the verbalization is structured in the narrative, as the conscious, inchoate realm is immediately taken over by a more logical, stylized formularity, a kind the readerly mind finds easy to follow because of its conventionalized transparency.⁸ Perhaps the mettle of the personage that is introduced is reciprocated by the overall structuration that is made to engulf the person rather unenthusiastically given rise to, or that the correlation between the structuration and the possible relation which exists between the two now coexistent in the narrative space may not necessarily reflect any signifiatory importance that is pertinent to the coalescence of the conscious horizon—however, the irrelevancy of one to the other or any element to another that might not seem directly related to it may redound to a nihilistic possibility of the conscious horizon to the detriment of the overall

⁸ It is tantalizingly apropos to speculate, as Michael Whitworth seems to indicate, that Hugh in his material and social personification stands for the kind of social hierarchy Clarissa's, as well as Virginia Woolf's, world was constituted of, a world shot with the ideology of class consciousness in which men with ambitions and yet without inherent social standing endeavored to climb to an ever higher and more privileged level. In the assigned role that develops from the narrative depiction Hugh, particularly in his implicit relationship with the central voice, gradually emerges as a figure who is intent on accomplishing such a feat of social climbing, one of the main concerns of the traditional novelists preceding and contemporaneous with Virginia Woolf, and yet who is simultaneously relegated, either consciously or unconsciously, to a neutralized position devoid of class implications. See an interesting observation relevant to the dualistic process in action in *Authors in Context: Virginia Woolf* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 51-54.

narrative signification (or possibly quite otherwise), which so far has been deemed to be resided by active characters putatively engendering multivalent layers of nuances, albeit shot with disjunctive significatory orientations. Regardless of the true picture of the present moment our narrative heroine experiences, the conversation that evolves and results from the anticlimactic encounter adds a modicum of interest for the readerly consciousness to pursue and ascertain how the direction of the conscious narrative takes shape. But first the actual dialogue in the most historically honored dialogic manner, at least on paper, intervenes. In reciprocation to the greeting by the central subject, at least on the conscious level, Hugh effusively announces, "Good-morning to you, Clarissa!" which is followed by "Where are you off to?" The overfamiliar response is excused by the narrator in command at the moment implicitly inflected by the recursive bit of biographical information that the two of them who happened to have met in the park have known each other for years. The rather bathetic introduction of the personage (or perhaps inclusive of both of them since each reflects on the other, both subtly and blatantly explicitly, for the very reason that they have seemingly thoroughly known each other since early childhood when the true self of each tends to be revealed undisguised, as the narrator reminds through the narrative strategy being deployed through the two so mutually introduced, as it were) indeed threatens to corrupt the forceful rhythmic tempo that has been predominant throughout the story as the mundane reciprocation becomes further iterated by a mere formularity, "I love walking in London," which contrasts with the wild disjunctive multi-directional force the narrative has been implicitly accumulating, a non-conventional unpredictable energy that is nevertheless fresh and disarming, perhaps, to a skeptical accompanying subject like the one who is confronting the fictive protagonist across the hermeneutic line separating the two. The admittedly inane remark does not advance anything, except for the over-reactive vain pride our heroine feels for being a sophisticated city dweller, who has tasted all the nice things both the court and the realm she has been familiar with for years could possibly offer and yet still cannot get enough of it.

The proceeding explanatory passage does not overly betray readerly expectations, as the content indeed multiplies in mundanities that have been threatening to overwhelm the disjunctive, waywardly energy, an element which the readerly consciousness understood to have been enlivening the fictive sphere with surprises and multivalent significatory strands that could not be easily defined but nonetheless provided constantly renovating forces contributive of what made the present narrative so alive and vivid. Instead of prolonging the latter strain of thought processes, the narrative definitely swerves to a path that is both prosaically low-toned

and somehow predictably formulaic, as already adumbrated by the encounter of the two personages who have known each other for years. The malaise of seeing the man who invariably reminds the protagonist of the familiar thought patterns and content becomes reiterated, as it were, as the central consciousness engages in a thought process that merely emphasizes the same unexcitement and indifference, which is epitomized by the automatic association Hugh initiates in the mind of our protagonist, “[t]hey had just come up—unfortunately—to see doctors.” If there is any change in the routine reciprocative mental process detectable in the spontaneous repartee, either psychological or emotional, which the central consciousness evinces at the moment, it is subtly inflected by the fact that her old friend, inauspiciously enough, arrived and crossed paths with her because and as a result of his specific mission to “see doctors,” which, she implicitly judges, is so prosaic that the central consciousness is forced to categorize it under the same rubric as she usually does with the person of Hugh and anything that relates to him, which, not surprisingly, induces the matter-of-factly uninvolved (and indifferent) tone that obtrudes from the textual surface for its very unremarkableness. Regardless whether the resultant textual coalescence differs from what she and the accompanying readerly consciousness had expected to evolve from the over-stuffy mind of Hugh Whitbread, the textual development remains uniform in that no one participating in the fictive universe takes undue notice of what arises from the present character confronting the hermeneutic mind and the central consciousness, with the understanding (which might as well be mutual) that some inhabitants of the narrative sphere invariably act as they are wont to and the fictive directionality and trajectory they describe are set even before the story has fully run its course, or so the central consciousness subtly imparts to the conniving readerly consciousness, who relies upon the former to navigate the unfamiliar territory he thinks he has been traversing. It is no surprise, then, that the central consciousness decides to elucidate the essence of Hugh by contrasting what is deemed typical of the populace and what is the bathetic norm of the old friend of the protagonist. In the course of which, the central consciousness almost predeterminedly comes to the conclusion, which is somehow faux-profound for being in fact formulaically superficial, that a significant piece of matrimonial detail pertaining to Hugh and his wife needs to be revealed and that Hugh is a dotingly caring husband who does not stint his efforts to assiduously care for his ailing wife.⁹ At this point, the mundane detail becomes mired in an indifferent

⁹ It may be apropos to introduce the relationship between Virginia Woolf herself and her stern and yet psychologically almost frangible father to amplify the dualistic, or even multivalent, aspects of Hugh Whitbread, as he is observed to implicitly unfold to the central consciousness in action. Leslie Stephen, albeit an irascible and keenly

retrospective and recollection on the circumstances in which the protagonist herself visited a nursing home where Evelyn, the wife, was looked after and resting for convalescence. The memory, however, does not accrue to a sentiment reminiscent of a compassionate pity for the ailing wife, but rather redounds to the person of the husband, who is dutiful, perhaps, and yet because of his perfect adaptation to the sphere in which he is supposedly in his true element nevertheless inconsistent with the spontaneous non-traditional force that is best characterized by its tendency to disjunctivity, the very essence of what runs throughout the sphere where both he and the central protagonist and consciousness reside. The stuffy predictability that coalesces in the mind and person of Hugh threatens to infect the free-dictating energy that is expected to flow out of the mind of the central consciousness and is mirrored by the course of thought process she adopts in the immediate response to the reminiscences Hugh and his wife evoke in her mind.

The cessation of the free-thinking energy ramifies into petty bits of personal reactions our protagonist strings together vis-à-vis Hugh and all the incidental associations that are pertinent to their shared early experiences. The trite reminiscences manifested in the verbal surfacing of Hugh and his wife and their visit to London gives rise to an extremely personal emotionality represented by, or rather metaphorized into, a pettish contrast she feels between herself in a hat and Hugh's mere presence in front of her. In spite of the fact that she feels so close to Hugh, a sentiment she cannot refrain from expressing as "sisterly," the central consciousness immediately derives a primordial rivalry, as it were, from that very closeness, which results in an embattled mentality in which she feels compelled to defend herself for being threatened by an enemy that tries to abrogate all her self-autonomy without any preconditioning. The very unconditional (or perhaps spliced into the sense of being conditioned through her long association with the adversary) reaction our protagonist exhibits at this moment translates into a petty self-pity that coalesces as an adolescent plea for empathy, "Not the right hat for the early morning, was that it?" The perspective she imposes on the accompanying subject takes it for granted that the two are in complete emotional synchrony and together they hopefully pose a (flimsy) defense against an overwhelming tyrant who threatens to crush them with his autocratic

attuned intellectual who poured out reams of insightful observations in his writings and daily remarks, needed soothing and maternalistic care, which Virginia Woolf and others provided, in order to remain a functioning intellectual being throughout his productive years. See the interesting balance on which an Edwardian intellectual teetered and, paradoxically enough, much relied in a study done by Roger Poole in his *The Unknown Virginia Woolf* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 8-35.

tyrannical power. But the direct narrative strategy, which does away with the deictic markers, backfires as the readerly consciousness does not necessarily give in to the implicit mutual concord the narrator imposes and has been imposing on him, which perhaps penetrated the inner core of the hermeneutic self on occasions, but provides, on the contrary, an opportunity for the latter to reflect on the true picture that is emerging from the encounter between the two old friends met putatively purely by accident someplace in the center of London. The unidirectional judgment the central consciousness has been endeavoring to implant on the psyche of the readerly subject collapses on its own arbitrariness and allows the readerly mind to reconsider the gestalt situation that unfolds right before his eyes in the fictive space that has been permutating with the help of the central voice, to be fair. As the situation revolves, turning all the evaluative clues upside down, the readerly consciousness may be entitled to perceiving the remarks the central voice gives rise to not necessarily in the manner the latter obviously intends but in a way he himself considers most appropriate in a circumstance that develops in spite, or perhaps because of, the numerous complications that preceded the present juncture. Or, perhaps, the pettishness that is reflected in the comment our protagonist makes pertaining to Hugh and his wife's visit to London, and all those foregone details associated with the two in their convolution and involvement with the protagonist, may be treated as an ambiguous piece of evidence that both complicates and amplifies the undercurrent, in light of which the two parties in contrast need to be constantly reconsidered, or, after all, is the current manifestation of the protagonist's biased view to be gauged with the emphasis on the all too human side of our protagonist, which needs to be refracted and fathomed in all possible manners and yet to be after all reconnected to her peculiar personality, which is the core of Mrs. Dalloway after all? It is true, however, that the present manifestation of peculiarity, the oversensitivity and over-delicate reaction to others' implicit view, may be understood only in light of the old-school psychoanalytic insight into dark recesses of human heart, which no ordinary, or alternative, approach makes it possible for us to delve into. The pathological self-belittlement—after all it is only the subject's mind and heart that inclines to see herself in the manner depicted in the text and not necessarily because of the “overweening imposing” presence of Hugh that makes her, or rather reduces her into, a nonentity—tends to foreground itself for its persistent and nevertheless careless pervasion throughout the passage, even with an automatic interruption by the thought of the party she is hosting that evening. But even the scheduled party she reminds herself of is bound with the idea of Hugh the bully and authoritative figure, as it merely occurs for the reason that Hugh is possibly invited to

another one that is associated with none other than the Palace, for which our protagonist initially blamed Hugh for being snobbish and unpalatable. The conflicting sentiments become conflated with the dominant idea of imposition and authority, which in turn encourages its opposite to recur in the mind of the central subject, which then is abruptly overwhelmed by the timid self-reminder that the almost psychotic fear of the other is as real and vivid as the verbalization actually coalesces in the textual space. As soon as the conflicting emotions are finally, and uneasily, resolved, a new emotionality thrusts itself in the form of Richard, her husband, and Peter Walsh, both personages who played a role in the distant past in the locale, which later becomes a focus of recurrent revisitation in the consciousness of our protagonist.

The emotionality that develops in the ensuing segment of the narrative is the kind that involves a three way psychological battle (or perhaps even more appropriately, psychological disequilibrium) centered around the person who happened to have emerged out of nowhere in the middle of London and caused so much emotional oscillations in the mind of our central consciousness. Suddenly, and as well as inevitably, heterogeneously crisscrossed perspectives (via the ur-narrator) intrude to broaden the psychological landscape engulfing the memories that date back decades and the characters and personages who are inextricably bound with them. As if the wayward assessment the central consciousness presents pertaining to the person of Hugh and their relationship is not adequate for the readerly psyche to judge the objective background against which to view the current situationality constituting the present narrative circumstance, external evaluations thrust themselves into the scene that not so subtly inflect the way the characters in action are to be further complicated. The one that cannot escape the readerly attention in spite of its seemingly modest intervention is the view derived from the then promising cool-headed young man, who later turns out to be Mr. Dalloway the husband of our protagonist, who complements a rather subjective and unreliable interpretation that floats through the mind of the central consciousness with a comment that Hugh merely exasperated him for being such an impossibly incompetent imbecile, who, nevertheless, was able to follow through formalities rather well. The modest outburst, given rise to via the recollective mind of the central consciousness, militates against the innate calm nature he is putatively endowed with, which because of its potentially contradictory narrative nuances enforces the curious complexity that is made to accrue pertaining to the character, around whom all the memories are allowed to coalesce. The stance our protagonist assumes at this juncture, rather interestingly, is humorously non-committal, as she defers the definite judgment on Hugh by invoking the “objective” opinion on the person, around whom the

characters in the distant past at the momentarily recollected site of Bourton also circled around in their intensely emotionally involved state, as far as the completely subjective voice of the narrative mind is trustworthily relied upon. The deferment of judgment is further complicated, as well as prolonged, as she invokes still another person, with whom she turns out to have had a long-lasting emotional involvement stretching to the narrative present, and lets him hand down a damning characterization of Hugh, which, to make the protagonist's stance even more precarious, is spuriously, and rather expectedly, refracted through her very biased and unsettled views on the two men, one of whom, as it turns out, generated the most tension among all the parties concerned. As the foregone elements, which putatively ballast the memories that underlie the present experience the central consciousness undergoes, jostle with each other, she tends to be wedged into a psychological *huis clos* out of which she cannot extricate herself without jeopardizing the narrative construct, on which the memories and the very existence, or perhaps the autonomy, of the characters involved depend.

The narrative trajectory the story traces thereafter may perhaps be a natural consequence of the avoidance of such an impasse the narrator-cum-central consciousness faces at this juncture in the midst of the conscious stream, of which the story is constituted almost exclusively. Development of a direct spontaneous inner landscape where a minutest inchoate stimulus potentially has an expansive rippling effect ensues, which might or might not result in a psychological and mental effusion that is not so easily fathomable or, perhaps, unrelated to the initial stimulus. As the voice responds to the desire and inner urge and translates it to the textualization of inner space, the hermeneutic consciousness might as well be plunged into the world that evolves from such idiosyncratic wavering and psychological dithering, which the hypersensitized mind of the narrative subject lets loose over the fictive horizon. But the "objective" assessment of the situationality that arises from each moment's "ratiocination" (as far as the subject directly involved seems to deem herself to be engaged in) does not guarantee a definable signficatory essence, which the readerly consciousness can fully comprehend and absorb as his own and synchronous with the others' that exist, strictly speaking, within the space demarcated by the boundaries that divide between them and himself. Because the divide remains intact, albeit on occasions as murkily, or for that matter too transparently, as an effervescent epiphenomenon that might as well vanish into thin space, which may or may not engulf all parties concerned in the gestalt development of the conscious narrative coalescing between the two, the intentional cul-de-sac that pops up insistently between them along the chronological axis, along which the hermeneutic activity inevitably takes place, must needs to be

circumvented as much as possible, in order for the narrative horizon to continue to be organically vital and significatorily meaningful to all subjects participating in and contributing to the overall setup, in which the readerly activity ineluctably occurs. Or, perhaps, it may be just the whim of the central subject, who happens to elect to reminisce about the person about whom her heart and mind becomes so agitated after so many years of separation, that allows the voice to concentrate on the circumstances, in which all the parties actively engaged in the youthful drama when the climactic events came to pass at Bourton, the long forgotten and yet never delible part of her memory, to which, after all, the present person that appears in front of her as flesh and blood merely contributed an essential part of but by no means the entirety of the associative backdrop—such whim may be both a key to the escape from and a necessary ingredient to the *huis clos*, which together integrally makes the narrative experience so dynamically vital both to the readerly subject and the personages involved in the narrative act itself. In the jumble of process lies the nuclear phase of her experience that needs to be followed through in order to come up with the very essence of the existential subject being given rise to, which, nevertheless, is so universal that the readerly consciousness has to grasp at all cost to partake of it. Because of the potential paradox both in content and procedure, the narrative *huis clos*, at least on this occasion, leads to a superficial deictic interlude, which provides an enough opportunity for the readerly subject to breathe a sigh of relief, perhaps from a hermeneutic point of view, but which is so inauthentic to the extent that the voice that “tells” the story sounds heterogeneously aligned with the content and spontaneity that has putatively dominated the preceding scenes, which, however, were also interspersed with occasional bathetic narrative recollections.

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Mrs. Dalloway における voice と consciousness

Virginia Woolf の Mrs. Dalloway において時間や叙述的視点の概念は大幅に伝統的概念から逸脱するものであることは殆どの批評家が認めるところである。この論文では主に narrative における中心的な voice に焦点を置き、いかに物語を絶え間なく流れ貫く consciousness がその narrative space の領域で自由自在に、そしてあたかも独立した存在であるかのように、それぞれの individual existence を統合、ないしは様々な角度から投影するか、というその過程を考察する。