

Twentieth-Century Fiction
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Lecture - 30
Mrs. Dalloway - Part 1

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MRS. DALLOWAY

Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself.
For Lucy had her work cut out for her. The doors would be taken off their hinges; Rumpelmayer's men were coming. And then, thought Clarissa Dalloway, what a morning — fresh as if issued to children on a beach.

What a lark! What a plunge! For so it had always seemed to her, when, with a little squeak of the hinges, which she could hear now, she had burst open the French windows and plunged at Bourton into the open air. How fresh, how calm, stiller than this of course, the air was in the early morning; like the flap of a wave; the kiss of a wave; chill and sharp and yet (for a girl of eighteen as she then was) solemn, feeling as she did, standing there at the open window, that something awful was about to happen; looking at the flowers, at the trees with the smoke winding off them and the rooks rising, falling; standing and looking until Peter Walsh said, "Musing among the vegetables?" — was that it? — "I prefer men to cauliflowers" — was that it? 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 came awfully dull; it was his nature; and somehow, his eyes, his mouth





So, hello and welcome to this NPTEL course entitled Twentieth Century Fiction. We will start with a new text today, in this particular lecture and that will be Virginia Woolf's novel, Mrs. Dalloway. We have already mentioned this novel very briefly you know in last lecture, we talked about the whole idea of epiphany in modernism. That lecture was obviously, spent looking at some of the text, which we have covered so far including the Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock, Elliot's early poetry such as Preludes and also the James Joyce short story Araby.

So, epiphany is a very big feature in modernism as you have seen especially because we see how the human self the human subject is situated or submerged rather in a sea of machines and how you know the ascension to reaction to that you know situation among machines is something which epiphany captures quite well. It is a neutral phenomenon, it is obviously cognitive, neural in quality, but is also equally existential in quality. It either elevates you essentially or it gives you an idea or knowledge of nothingness which is more commonly the case in modernism.

Now, Mrs. Dalloway is a short story is a novel about various things, but primarily is a novel about the lack of empathy in a post war, post first world war London. Then, the setting the historical setting is very important because this is a metropolis which is mourning in quality. So, there is full of mourners and survivors, it is full of people who either lost their beloved ones or have come back from the war injured.

So, it has many characters, I mean the obvious protagonist is Mrs. Dalloway, I mean the whole idea the whole story is she is setting up a party for people to come and discuss is a very genteel society of people upper middle-class Londoners. But while this party is going on the preparation for the party is going on, we have another sub story which actually becomes more important than this particular story.

And that sub story is one of Septimius Smith. He was essentially a war veteran, who has come back from the first world war and who suffers from trauma and anxiety and depression. So, he is what we will now call a PTSD victim, post-traumatic stress disorder victim. But obviously, at that time that this term was not in vogue, no one quite knew what the problem of the soldiers were and there were various terms which were used randomly to describe them to classify them, one of which was Shell shock.

Shell shock was a term you know it was rampantly used in the first world war after the first world war. We are talking about victims, who suffer from nervous trauma. But it was obviously a very insufficient term. It hardly captured anything in terms of the real problem because you know many occasions, we had soldiers who never really been exposed to shells physically; but then, they still suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder or trauma in that particular case.

Now, what Septimius' situation reveals is the obvious medical inability to engage with these victims, to engage with these you know suffering subjects; but also it gives you a sense of the lack of empathy and that is what I just mentioned the primary aim, the primary objective or the primary theme of this novel; the absence of empathy. Now, like most modernist works like most cult modernist works; so, high modernist works, this particular novel too is set in one day.

A one Joycean day as you know it become famous you know use of James Joyce you know even Ulysses is set in a very similar kind of setting it is just one calendar day, but the calendar day or the one day is the day today is hardly important over here. Because

what is more important, what is infinitely more important is the different existential passages of time inhabited by the characters and which brings us back to one of the old thesis on time that we have touched upon already, the Henri Bergsonian understanding of clock time and real time a clock time being obviously, a standard time, time shared by everyone, time as in a digit of time, time as in a date of time and real time or psychological time is obviously, duree by Bergson. It is the psychological situatedness of the subject apropos of time.

So, how are you located in a particular mental time frame, in a mental time map right. So, that is obviously, it can be as well as out of sync with clock time and that being in sync out of sync with clock time is something which we see quite often in Mrs. Dalloway. Now, this whole idea of being out of sync with time is not just a philosophical thing in Mrs. Dalloway. It becomes very real experiential thing, as we can see suffered by Septimus Smith. He comes back from the war he is obviously suffering from trauma and anxiety and depression, but more importantly he feels completely alienated from this metropolis.

He cannot connect to anything in the metropolis right and his inability to connect is important because it is obviously, a medical condition which is obviously, preventing him from connecting to people, but also it becomes a political condition becomes like you know very much part of the political cultural condition of the time, where the soldiers who came back from the war hardly received any welcoming treatment, hardly received any experience of integration or reintegration for the matter. So, Septimus remains a very very unaccommodated figure in Mrs. Dalloway.

So, in other words this novel is all about unaccommodation, this novel is all about also about the whole process of being out of sync with the system or being incompatible with the system, temporarily incompatible, spatially incompatible, culturally incompatible and of course, existentially incompatible. And this existential incompatibility is something which you see coming over and over again in many modernist works.

We saw for instance the Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock, where the whole politics of procrastination was based on this incompatibility, it grew out of this sense of incompatibility; where, Prufrock could not go where the women come and go, talking of Michelangelo, because he cannot fit in; he cannot be seems of compatible to that kind of

a cultural imaginary the cultural space. Now, similarly Septimus too he has a degree of masculinity crisis, he travels, he shifts from being a war hero from being someone has been to the war suffered the war, fought the war to a situation; where he is so nervous, he is so shivering all the time.

He is so hysterical all the time and he is got hysteria quite carefully, that he is almost shamed by the doctors who treat him and the whole notion of hysteria is important and this is where the two characters really come into close proximity Mrs. Dalloway and Septimus and the only degree of empathy that is established in the novel is between these two characters, who ironically never really meet except in only in the ending scene, where the final scene, where Septimus' dead body is taken away in an ambulance and Mrs. Dalloway listens to the siren of the ambulance and feels a degree of pity for the person inside it right. So, you know that is the only example of empathy in this particular novel.

But interestingly, what brings Septimus existentially close to someone like Mrs. Dalloway is the whole idea of hysteria because if you remember I am sure most of you are aware of this, the whole medical association of hysteria, the whole medical classification of hysteria was very heavily gendered in quality. So, hysteria was seen to be a disease of the womb, something which can only affect women because they happen to have a womb. So, men would never be hysterics in other words. Hysteria was essentially a female malady and those of you who have read Elaine Showalter's book would know what that was all about, the entire politics of classifying, medically classifying a certain disease and gendering it accordingly.

Now, when the first world war happened and this is I am just giving it as a context the medical political context out of this you know out of which this situation grew, which might help us in terms of situating the characters. When the first world war happened, you know all the soldiers who came back from the war who were essentially you know shivering on trauma, who were essentially completely nervous breakdown. They were obviously being hysteric, but because the term hysteria had already been appropriated in a very gendered kind of way, that term could not possibly be applied for the soldiers. So, they were given different names; they were given different classifications, Shell shock being one of them which I mentioned already.

Now, what that did essentially was that it completely exposed the inadequacy of British medical politics in terms of treating trauma, in terms of treating abuse, in terms of treating anxiety coming out of violence. Now, this was also the time interestingly, where Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalysis became more and more important in the in this particular situation because Freud for all his worth, he was someone for the first time, he was someone who tried to so make a systematic study of dreams, a systematic study of the subconscious and who is someone he is someone who wanted to convey and capture the whole experience of trauma into language.

The language of metaphors, the language of the figurative language through which trauma could be conveyed and captured. So, this is the whole idea, the whole Freudian psychoanalysis thing which converted, which made an attempt to talk about trauma in a narrative and that was important in this particular time and Freud was getting more and more traction in British psychiatry in a post stress world war. He was in London after the war. Now, with this setting in mind, this medical political setting in mind, lets sort of see what this novel is trying to do. I mean it is a very complex novel. It is one of the modern classics in world literature, it is definitely one of the finest novels written in post first world war fiction.

It is about the war, but like Elliot's *The Waste Land*, the war hardly gets mentioned in very heavy way except when Septimius has these traumatic visions of the war. He thinks about his friend Smith, Evans people who died in the war and there is always this degree of survivor's guilt that he suffers as a you know as a person, who has suffered the war and survived it. So, those episodes give very vivid and graphic details of the war, but those are very sporadic details, but the wasteland novel is about the seeming gentility the seemingly functional city in which this very genteel upper middle-class Londoners think of throwing a party together with a party which you know would never happens.

Really it sort of hardly takes off by the time novel ends. So, it is about the preparation for the party and we also see the hypocrisy of the people the hypocrisy of the upper middle-class people over here and class obviously is a very big concern. We saw how even in the wasteland the class is a very big thing I mean that episode of the game of chess for instance, where you know there is a working-class conversation about sex in a post war situation and there is genteel condition of loveless marriage, where you know a similar kind of setting is described using a very different vocabulary ok.

Now, with that preamble out of the way let us look at Mrs. Dalloway and let's dive into the text as it were and this should be on your screen; the text should be on your screen at the moment. So, Mrs. Dalloway by Virginia Woolf. Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself. For Lucy had her work cut out for her. The doors would be taken off the hinges; Rumpelmayer's men were coming. And then, thought Clarissa Dalloway, what a morning - fresh as if issued to children on a beach. Right. So, Clarissa Dalloway is the eponymous character the protagonist in this novel and she is the one who is we are told over here that she decides and she has said that she would go out and get flowers herself, not least because the morning seems to be quite charming in quality.

What a lark! What a plunge! For so it had always seemed to her, when, with little squeak of the hinges, which she could hear now, she had burst open the French windows and plunged at Bourton into the open air. How fresh, how calm, stiller than this of course, the air was in a early morning; like a flap of a wave; the kiss of a wave; chill and sharp and yet for a girl of eighteen as she then was solemn, feeling as she did, standing there at the open window, that something awful was about to happen; looking at the flowers, at the trees with the smoke winding off them and the rooks rising, falling; standing and looking until Peter Walsh said, "Musing among the vegetables?" - was that it? - "I prefer men to cauliflowers" - was that it?

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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, when millions of things had utterly vanished - how strange it was! - a few sayings like this about cabbages.

She stiffened a little on the kerb, waiting for Durtall's van to pass. A charming woman, Scrope Purvis thought her (knowing her as one does know people who live next door to one in Westminster); a touch of the bird about her, of the jay, blue-green, light, vivacious, though she was over fifty, and grown very white since her illness. There she perched, never seeing him, waiting to cross, very upright.

For having lived in Westminster - how many years now? over twenty - one feels even in the midst of the traffic, or waking at night, Clarissa was positive, a particular hush, or solemnity, an indescribable pause; a suspense (but that might be her heart, affected, they said, by influenza) before Big Ben strikes. There! Out it boomed. First a warning, musical; then the hour, irrevocable. The leaden circles dissolved in the air. Such fools we are, she thought, crossing Victoria Street. For Heaven only knows why one loves it so, how one sees it so, making it up, building it round one, tumbling it, creating it every moment afresh; but the veriest frumps, the most dejected of miseries sitting on doorsteps (drink their downfall) do the same; can't be dealt with, she felt positive, by Acts of Parliament for that very reason: they love life. In people's eyes, in the swing, tramp, and trudge; in the bellow and the uproar; the carriages, motor cars, omnibuses,



He must have said it at the breakfast one morning when she had gone 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; it was his sayings one remembered; his eyes, his pocket knife, his smile, his grumpiness and, when millions of things had utterly vanished - how strange it was! - a few sayings like this about cabbages.

Now, we are already introduced to two characters over here; three actually Lucy who is presumably the errant girl for Mrs. Dalloway. Of course, we are introduced to Clarissa Dalloway, who is this genteel upper-class woman; upper middle class woman trying to throw a party here and hence the necessity for flowers and more importantly, we have Peter Walsh, who again, he is this almost spectral presence in this novel. He is there as well is not there.

He is present physically and biologically, but he never really intervenes or never really comes you know invades the novel space. But he is very much a symbolic spectral presence because he is someone who has been, presumably he had been in some capacity in India and this is obviously, imperial India and he has come back from India and we are told later he met an Anglo-Indian woman and Clarissa Dalloway doesn't quite approve of it which obviously, makes it more complicated.

But here, we see in this particular episode is this morning it opens up in two different time frames; one is obviously, the present time frame, where Mrs. Dalloway is set and the other is the time frame when she was 18 years old and you know some of the snippets of conversations that she seems to remember you know some conversation she had with Peter Walsh about vegetables, looking at flowers and comparing flowers to vegetables. So, those snippets of conversation come back to her at this point of time.

So, immediately we have a series of themes at play. We have memory at play. We have mourning at play. We have the city at play and of course, we have the whole idea of existential feeling at play right. So, all these things are played out in a very very politically volatile and sensitive condition. The first world war, the post first world war London which is not quite spelt out the political sensitivity is not quite spelt out, but nevertheless is very much there throughout the novel ok.

And then, we talk about we described the traffic and we are given this very urban description of London and we are told that She stiffened a little on the curb, waiting for

Dartnall's van to pass. A charming woman, Scrope Purvis brought her thought her knowing her as one does know people who live next door to one in Westminster; a touch of the bird about her, of the jay, blue-green, light, vivacious, as though she was over fifty, and grown very white since her illness. There she perched, never seeing him, waiting to cross, very upright.

For having lived in Westminster - for how many years now? over twenty years - one feels even the midst of the traffic, or walking at night, Clarissa was positive, a particular hush, or solemnity; of an indiscernible pause; a suspense, but that might be her heart, affected, they said by influenza, before the Big Ben strikes. There! Out it boomed. First a warning, musical; then the hour, irrevocable.

The leaden circles dissolved in the air. Such fools we are, she thought, crossing Victoria street. For heaven only knows why one loves it so, how one sees it so, making it up, building it round one, tumbling it, creating it every moment afresh; but the veriest frumps, the most dejected of miseries sitting on doorsteps and drinking their and drink their downfall to do the same; they can't be dealt with, she felt positive, by Acts of Parliament for that very reason: they love life.

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the same; can't be dealt with, she felt positive, by Acts of Parliament for that very reason: they love life. In people's eyes, in the swing, tramp, and trudge; in the bellow and the uproar; the carriages, motor cars, omnibuses, vans, sandwich men shuffling and swinging; brass bands; barrel organs; in the triumph and the jingle and the strange high singing of some aeroplane overhead was what she loved; life; London; this moment of June.

For it was the middle of June. The War was over, except for some one like Mrs. Foxcroft at the Embassy last night eating her heart out because that nice boy was killed and now the old Manor House must go to a cousin; or Lady Bexborough who opened a bazaar, they said, with the telegram in her hand, John, her favourite, killed; but it was over; thank Heaven — over. It was June. The King and Queen were at the Palace. And everywhere, though it was still so early, there was a beating, a stirring of galloping ponies, tapping of cricket bats; Lords, Ascot, Ranelagh and all the rest of it; wrapped in the soft mesh of the grey-blue morning air, which, as the day wore on, would unwind them, and set down on their lawns and pitches the bouncing ponies, whose forefeet just struck the ground and up they sprung, the whirling young men, and laughing girls in their transparent muslins who, even now, after dancing all night, were taking their absurd woolly dogs for a run; and even now, at this hour, discreet old dowagers were shooting out in their motor cars on errands of mystery; and the shopkeepers were fidgeting in their windows with their paste and diamonds, their lovely old sea-green brooches in eighteenth-



In people's eyes, in the swing, tramp, and trudge; in the bellow and the uproar, the carriages, motorcars, omnibuses, vans, sandwich men shuffling and swinging; brass

bands; barrel organs; in the triumph and the jingle and the strange high singing of some aeroplane overhead was what she loved; life; London; this moment of June.

Now, this is obviously, very very deceptive because we are we will see quite clearly how London is hardly the life-giving London over here. London, we very quickly get to see London as a mourning metropolis, but on the surface superficially it lays, it seems to be a city of velocity and positivity and movement and full of life. Now, the big ben is a very symbolic presence in this particular paragraph and it will become more and more symbolically present in the course of the novel the big ben as most of you would know is a big wall clock in in London and it sort of bangs every time the hour goes say up. So, you know it becomes a spectacular and iconic reminder of clock time.

So, the big ben striking is obviously, a reminder of the voice of clock time playing out and again it's a metanarrative of clock time. We have the whole idea of little psychological time as people crisscrossing each other, peoples and the voices crisscrossing each other in different storytelling situated selves. So, people are telling each other stories, people are living stories of each other, people have this sort of memories in which they can escape from the tyranny of time and all that is played out against this big backdrop of clock time; the big ben banging away in very very spectacular fashion ok.

But the impression over here the setting over here is seemingly one of velocity, is seemingly one of positivity is seemingly one of peace and prosperity and in this obviously, very very deceptive in quality. But Mrs. Dalloway seems to sort of see everything as good about London, the parliament is good. The motorcars, the omnibuses, the aeroplanes are good. The brass bands are good. She loves this life in London; this moment of June everything is like set spectacularly.

For it was middle of June. The war was over, except for someone like Mrs. Foxcroft of the Embassy last night eating her heart out because the nice boy was killed and the old Manor House must go to a cousin; or Lady Bexborough he opened a bazaar, and they said, with a telegram in her hand, John, her favourite, killed; but it was over; thank Heaven over. So, again look at the way in which it is mentioned almost sarcastically the war is over. Finally, some people have got killed; some people have lost their loved ones,

but that is fine it is over, but also look at the way in which the loss of the war is described to us.

So, you know we have this example of Mrs. Foxcroft, who is obviously very sad because her nice boy is killed and now, the old Manor House must go to a cousin and this is very very important because the whole priority, the whole focus over here is about the property. Who is going to get the property now that the son instead right? So, this obviously, shows the hollowness and hypocrisy of the British upper middle-class society at this time. But then, the war is very much there as a spectral presence and it is there everywhere in London, it is like a very foggy presence which never quite goes away, but then the whole point of the war is negotiated with a very oblique and complex fashion.

It was June. The King and the Queen were at the Palace. And everywhere, though it is still so early, there was a beating, a stirring of galloping ponies, tapping of cricket bats; Lords, Ascot, Ranelagh and all the rest of it;. So, again all these very very masculinist metaphors are important. There is a stirring of galloping ponies which obviously suggests velocity and movement and the tapping of cricket bats. So, again cricket bats are examples of metaphors of masculinist sports and Lords, Ascot; Lords, obviously could be cricket venue.

Lords, Ascot, Ranelagh and all the rest of it; wrapped in the soft mesh of the grey-blue morning air, which, as the day wore on, would unwind them, and set down on the lawns and pitches the bouncing ponies, whose forefeet just struck the ground and up they sprung, the whirling young men, and the laughing girls in their transparent muslins who, even now, after dancing all night, were talking they absurdly were taking their absurdly wooly dogs for a run;

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the triumph and the jingle and the strange high singing of some aeroplane overhead was what she loved; life; London; this moment of June.

For it was the middle of June. The War was over, except for some one like Mrs. Foxcroft at the Embassy last night eating her heart out because that nice boy was killed and now the old Manor House must go to a cousin, or Lady Bexborough who opened a bazaar, they said, with the telegram in her hand, John, her favourite, killed; but it was over; thank Heaven — over. It was June. The King and Queen were at the Palace. And everywhere, though it was still so early, there was a beating, a stirring of galloping ponies, tapping of cricket bats; Lords, Ascot, Ranelagh and all the rest of it; wrapped in the soft mesh of the grey-blue morning air, which, as the day wore on, would unwind them, and set down on their lawns and pitches the bouncing ponies, whose forefeet just struck the ground and up they sprung, the whirling young men, and laughing girls in their transparent muslins who, even now, after dancing all night, were taking their absurd woolly dogs for a run; and even now, at this hour, discreet old dowagers were shooting out in their motor cars on errands of mystery; and the shopkeepers were fidgeting in their windows with their paste and diamonds, their lovely old sea-green brooches in eighteenth-century settings to tempt Americans (but one must economise, not buy things rashly for Elizabeth), and she, too, loving it as she did with an absurd and faithful passion, being part of it, since her people were courtiers once in the time of the Georges, she, too, was going that very



And even now, at this hour, discreet old dowagers were shouting out in their motorcars on errands of mystery; and the shopkeepers were fidgeting in the windows with their paste and diamonds, the lovely old sea green brooches in the eighteenth century settings to tempt Americans, but one must economize not buy things rashly for Elizabeth, and she, too loving it as she did with an absurd and faithful passion, being part of it, since her people were courtiers once in times of Georges, she, too, was going that very night to kindle and illuminate; to give her party.

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courtiers once in the time of the Georges, she, too, was going that very night to kindle and illuminate; to give her party. But how strange, on entering the Park, the silence; the mist; the hum; the slow-swimming happy ducks; the pouched birds waddling; and who should be coming along with his back against the Government buildings, most appropriately, carrying a despatch box stamped with the Royal Arms, who but Hugh Whitbread; her old friend Hugh — the admirable Hugh!

"Good-morning to you, Clarissa!" said Hugh, rather extravagantly, for they had known each other as children. "Where are you off to?"

"I love walking in London," said Mrs. Dalloway. "Really it's better than walking in the country."

They had just come up — unfortunately — to see doctors. Other people came to see pictures; go to the opera; take their daughters out; the Whitbreads came "to see doctors." Times without number Clarissa had visited Evelyn Whitbread in a nursing home. Was Evelyn ill again? Evelyn was a good deal out of sorts, said Hugh, intimating by a kind of pout or swell of his very well-covered, manly, extremely handsome, perfectly upholstered body (he was almost too well dressed always, but presumably had to be, with his little job at Court) that his wife had some internal ailment, nothing serious, which, as an old friend, Clarissa Dalloway would quite understand without requiring him to specify. Ah yes, she did of course; what a nuisance; and felt very sisterly and oddly conscious at the same time of her hat. Not the right hat for the early morning, was that it?



So, again this is a long sentence which tells you again how the movements are happening around her, how everyone seems to be very jolly and very kind in spirit and, we also get to told that you know we also get to know that she is also planning on giving a party. So, the war is over and there is celebration and jubilation everywhere. There is a residual spectral sense of loss which is mentioned every now and then, but the surface of city seems to be moved on and also quite jubilant in quality and that is an interesting combination.

But how strange, on entering the park, the silence; the mist; the hum; the slow-swimming happy ducks; the pouched birds waddling; and who should be coming along with his back against the Government buildings, most appropriately, carrying a despatch box stamped with the Royal Arms who, but Hugh Whitbread; her old friend Hugh - the admirable Hugh! So, Hugh Whitbread, again a pale fellow figure does not quite appear strongly in the novel, but then she he represents one of those genteel people who is coming from one of the government buildings.

“Good morning to you, Clarissa!” said Hugh, rather extravagantly, for they had known each other as children. “Where are you off to?” “I love walking in London,” said Mrs. Dalloway. “Really it’s better than walking in the country.” They had just come up - unfortunately - to see doctors. Other people came to see pictures; go to the opera; take their daughters out; the Whitbread’s came “to see doctors”. So, again the whole idea to come to see doctors becomes a very dark symbolic statement of the medical situation in a post war London. Everyone almost everyone has to go and see doctors on a regular basis. Either because someone has a physical injury or someone has a traumatic injury which he or she is going to recover from.

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Times without number Clarissa had visited Evelyn Whitbread in a nursing home. Was Evelyn ill again? Evelyn was in good deal out of sorts, said Hugh, intimating by a kind of a pout or swell by his very well covered, manly, extremely handsome, perfectly upholstered body he was almost too well dressed always, but presumably had to be, with his little job at the Court that his wife had some internal ailment, nothing serious, which, as an old friend, Clarissa Dalloway would quite understand without requiring him to specify.

Yes, she did of course; what a nuisance; and felt very sisterly and oddly conscious at the same time for her for her for her hat. You know, so the whole idea of this ailing woman becomes important, Hugh would bring his wife and he seems to have some internal problem which Clarissa Dalloway pretends to have or supposed to have known already without having to be spelt out ok.

For Hugh always made her feel, as he bustled on, raising his hat rather extravagantly and assuring her that she might be a girl of eighteen, and of course, he was coming to her party to-night, Evelyn absolutely insisted, only a little late he might be able to he might be out of the party at the Palace to which he had to take one of Jim's boys - she always felt a little skimpy beside Hugh; School girlish; but attached to him, partly from having known him always, but she did not think of him a good sort in his own way, though

Richard was nearly driven mad by him, and as per Peter Walsh, if he had never to this day forgiven her for liking him.

So, Hugh Whitbread here seems to be a very obnoxious white man, a bit of a know all and Peter Walsh is; obviously, coming back from the colonies. They seem to be hating each other, the very sight of it and Peter Walsh as we were told Peter Walsh had never forgiven Clarissa Dalloway for liking Hugh Whitbread. So, again we have an array of characters already given to us and that array is important for us to understand and unpack ok.

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She could remember scene after scene at Bourton – Peter furious; Hugh not, of course, his match in any way, but still not a positive imbecile as Peter made out; not a mere barber's block. When his old mother wanted him to give up shooting or to take her to Bath he did it, without a word; he was really unselfish, and as for saying, as Peter did, that he had no heart, no brain, nothing but the manners and breeding of an English gentleman, that was only her dear Peter at his worst; and he could be intolerable; he could be impossible; but adorable to walk with on a morning like this.

(June had drawn out every leaf on the trees. The mothers of Pimlico gave suck to their young. Messages were passing from the Fleet to the Admiralty. Arlington Street and Piccadilly seemed to chafe the very air in the Park and lift its leaves hotly, brilliantly, on waves of that divine vitality which Clarissa loved. To dance, to ride, she had adored all that.)

For they might be parted for hundreds of years, she and Peter; she never wrote a letter and his were dry sticks; but suddenly it would come over her, If he were with me now what would he say? – some days, some sighs bringing him back to her calmly, without the old bitterness; which perhaps was the reward of having cared for people; they came back in the middle of St. James's Park on a fine morning – indeed they did. But Peter – however beautiful the day might be, and the trees and the grass, and the little girl in pink – Peter never saw a thing of all that. He would put on his spectacles, if she told him to; he would look. It was the state of the world that interested him; Wagner, Pope's poetry, people's characters eternally,





And then, we are told about the relationship between her and Peter, it is a very complicated relationship. We get a sense that they may have been romantically involved at some point of time, but obviously with time in life, and second chances in life they moved away they part ways. Then, Peter is back from India and she has always been in London. So, coming back from India is obviously is a very symbolic kind of comeback and many British fiction and nonfiction, especially drama which has which have this image of the colonial figure coming back from India and then, finding it difficult to readjust in London or in England, any part of England.

So, one very famous play about this is John Osborne play, Look Back in Anger which has this figure of the Colonel coming off from India and now, he is unable to understand why he isn't taken seriously anymore. Because you know this is not India anymore; this

is the not the Raj anymore. The raj has come to an end; the empire has come to an end. So, he will not be taken seriously. So, Peter is a very complex figure like as I said he is a bit spectral in quality, there is almost like a ghostly quality about Peter, he comes in and goes whenever he wants to and he asks he is very close to Clarissa Dalloway we were told they never got married and you know they, the way we are told about the nature of the intimacy they shared, the friendship that they shared over the years or have shared over the years.

For they might be parted for hundreds of years, she and Peter; she never wrote a letter and his were dry sticks; but suddenly it would come over her, If he were with me now what would he say? - some days, some sights bringing him back to her calmly, without the old bitterness; which perhaps was the reward for having cared for people; they came back to her in the in the middle of St. James's Park in the morning - indeed they did. But Peter - however, beautiful a day it might be, and the trees and the grass, and the little girl in the pink - Peter never saw a thing of all that.

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spectacles, if she told him to; he would look. It was the state of the world that interested him; Wagner, Pope's poetry, people's characters eternally, and the defects of her own soul. How he scolded her! How they argued! She would marry a Prime Minister and stand at the top of a staircase; the perfect hostess he called her (she had cried over it in her bedroom), she had the makings of the perfect hostess, he said.

So she would still find herself arguing in St. James's Park, still making out that she had been right — and she had too — not to marry him. For in marriage a little licence, a little independence there must be between people living together day in day out in the same house; which Richard gave her, and she him. (Where was he this morning for instance? Some committee, she never asked what.) But with Peter everything had to be shared; everything gone into. And it was intolerable, and when it came to that scene in the little garden by the fountain, she had to break with him or they would have been destroyed, both of them ruined, she was convinced; though she had borne about with her for years like an arrow sticking in her heart the grief, the anguish; and then the horror of the moment when some one told her at a concert that he had married a woman met on the boat going to India! Never should she forget all that! Cold, heartless, a brute, he called her. Never could she understand how he cared. But those Indian women did presumably — silly, pretty, flimsy nincompoops. And she wasted her pity. For he was quite happy, he assured her — perfectly happy, though he had never done a thing that they talked of; his whole life





He would put on his spectacles, if she had told him to; he would look. So, again we have this empirical blunt non-nuanced example of Peter and a very hyper sensitive quality exhibited by Mrs. Dalloway and it is like a very incompatible match. But they were always together for a long time ok.

It was the state of the world that interest him; Wagner, Pope's poetry, people's characters eternally, and the defects of her own soul. How he scolded her! So, Peter seems to be this typical mansplainer; someone who can someone who claims to have superior intellectual endowment because he happens to be a man.

So, he thinks of big things, he likes big things; like Wagner's music, Pope's poetry and then he is also is a judge of people's characters externally and all these are put together to characterize Peter in a way, which makes them non-sentimental compared to Mrs. Dalloway or compared to Clarissa, because the whole idea of sentimentality is very conveniently mapped on to the female like hysteria, sentimentality can be conferred and conveyed to the female at work in most occasions, rather than giving a man that brand ok.

How they argued! She would marry a Prime Minister and stand at top of the of the staircase; the perfect hostess, he called her she had cried over in the bedroom, she had liked, she had the makings of the perfect hostess, he said. So, the word hostess is obviously sarcastically used. So, we are imagining we are suspecting this is the time when Peter and Clarissa had parted ways in the younger days and then, when Clarissa had to take a decision I am not going with him and then, this is Peter's response to it. It is a very savage response which sort of sarcastically it tells her that you would be one of these politician's wives, you will be standing on a staircase and then having a good life which is also to say you will be having a hollow and meaningless life in London ok.

So, she would still find herself arguing in St James's Park, still making out that she had been right - and she had too - not to marry him. So, the whole idea of again, it becomes a flashback back and across time and then, we are told that you know she thinks she is right for not having married Peter Walsh because you know some, a part of her wants to feel right about it, wants to feel good about turning down his proposal. For in marriage a little license, a little independence there must be between people living together day in and day out in the same house; which Richard gave her, and she him. Where was he this morning for instance? Some committee, she never asked what.

So, you know she seems to enjoy a lot of independence, but again there is an irony in this whether this independence is detachment, we do not quite know. Because as I mentioned already this is a novel about the lack of empathy, it is the alienation of the human

subject. So, the fact that she never gets asked by her husband where she is or she never really asks her husband where he is, that shows a degree of quote unquote “openness” flexibility, but also a sense of disconnect and alienation. So, it goes either way ok.

With Peter everything had to be shared; everything gone into. And it was intolerable, and when it came to the scene in the little garden by the fountain, she had to break to him break with him or they would have been destroyed, both of them ruined, she was convinced; although she had borne about with her for years like an arrow sticking in her heart the grief, the anguish; and then the horror of the moment when someone told her at a concert that he had married the woman met on the boat going to India!

Never she should forget all that! Cold, heartless, a prude, he called her. Never should could she understand how he cared. But those Indian women did presumably – silly, petty, flimsy nincompoops. And she wasted her pity. For he was quite happy, he assured her - perfectly happy, though he had never done a thing that they talked about; his whole life had been a failure it made her angry still.

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She would marry a Prime Minister and stand at the top of a staircase; the perfect hostess he called her (she had cried over it in her bedroom), she had the makings of the perfect hostess, he said.

So she would still find herself arguing in St. James's Park, still making out that she had been right – and she had too – not to marry him. For in marriage a little licence, a little independence there must be between people living together day in day out in the same house; which Richard gave her, and she him. (Where was he this morning for instance? Some committee, she never asked what.) But with Peter everything had to be shared; everything gone into. And it was intolerable, and when it came to that scene in the little garden by the fountain, she had to break with him or they would have been destroyed, both of them ruined, she was convinced; though she had borne about with her for years like an arrow sticking in her heart the grief, the anguish; and then the horror of the moment when some one told her at a concert that he had married a woman met on the boat going to India! Never should she forget all that! Cold, heartless, a prude, he called her. Never could she understand how he cared. But those Indian women did presumably – silly, pretty, flimsy nincompoops. And she wasted her pity. For he was quite happy, he assured her – perfectly happy, though he had never done a thing that they talked of; his whole life had been a failure. It made her angry still.

She had reached the Park gates. She stood for a moment, looking at the omnibuses in Piccadilly.

The NPTEL logo, which consists of a circular emblem with a stylized 'N' and 'P' inside, and the text 'NPTEL' below it.

A small inset image of a man with glasses, wearing a dark blue shirt, looking down. This is likely the speaker for the video lecture.

So, the whole idea Peter marrying an Indian woman is something which enrages her, had enraged and still enrages Clarissa Dalloway which is to show that maybe they had some kind of a romantic relationship at some point of time and Peter proposed and she turned it down. But then, she when she found out that he has married an Indian girl she got furious right. So, this whole idea of an Indian girl becomes important. Again, a very

peripheral almost spectral presence, but she the Indian woman, the Indian wife of Peter Walsh informed his character to a large extent ok. And of course, the white woman's take on the Indian woman is very very unflattering and is almost racist in quality she describes them as silly, petty, flimsy, nincompoops. So, that is the example of Indian women according to Clarissa Dalloway.

And then, she is also convinced that he wasted his whole life on the marriage; he wasted his whole life of his public persona, perfectly happy though she. He had never done a thing that they talked of. His whole life has been had been a failure, it made her angry still. So, they talked about when Clarissa and Peter were together, they talked about the aim to do many things; but they never really took off, never really happened, despite the many conversations they had ok.

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look, as Clarissa came in, just for a moment cordial; before they settled down for the usual interminable talk of women's ailments. How much she wanted it – that people should look pleased as she came in, Clarissa thought and turned and walked back towards Bond Street, annoyed, because it was silly to have other reasons for doing things. Much rather would she have been one of those people like Richard who did things for themselves, whereas, she thought, waiting to cross, half the time she did things not simply, not for themselves; but to make people think this or that; perfect idiocy she knew (and now the policeman held up his hand) for no one was ever for a second taken in. Oh if she could have had her life over again! she thought, stepping on to the pavement, could have looked even differently!

She would have been, in the first place, dark like Lady Bexborough, with a skin of crumpled leather and beautiful eyes. She would have been, like Lady Bexborough, slow and stately; rather large; interested in politics like a man; with a country house; very dignified, very sincere. Instead of which she had a narrow pea-stick figure; a ridiculous little face, beaked like a bird's. That she held herself well was true; and had nice hands and feet; and dressed well, considering that she spent little. But often now this body she wore (she stopped to look at a Dutch picture), this body, with all its capacities, seemed nothing – nothing at all. She had the oddest sense of being herself invisible; unseen; unknown; there being no more marrying, no more having of children now, but only this astonishing and



Now, the physical appearance of Clarissa Dalloway is mentioned and again we see the complexity and anxiety, you know inherent in that kind of a comparison. So, she would have been, in the first place, dark like Lady Boxborough, with the skin of crumpled leather and beautiful eyes. She would have been, like Lady Boxborough, slow and stately; rather large; interested in politics like a man; with a country house; that very dignified, very sincere. Instead of which she had a narrow pea-stick figure; a ridiculous little face, beaked like a bird's. Then, she held herself well was true; that she held herself

well was true and had nice hands and feet; and dressed well, considering that she spent little.

But how often? But often now this body she wore she stopped to take a look at the Dutch picture, this body, with all its capacities, seemed nothing - nothing at all right. So, she is having a self-reflection on her own in terms of her appearance, but what is important to see the live quality of these descriptions. So, once you know we see the workings in a brain, we see the thought processes, the stream of consciousness that she is experiencing and along with that suddenly, the reader the narrator, omniscient narrator, stops the narrative suddenly and tells us she stopped to look at the Dutch picture.

So, again the time of narration and time of action seem to quite timeless with each other. they seem to be blending with each other very very interestingly.

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would she have been one of those people like Richard who did things for themselves, whereas, she thought, waiting to cross, half the time she did things not simply, not for themselves; but to make people think this or that; perfect idiocy she knew (and now the policeman held up his hand) for no one was ever for a second taken in. Oh if she could have had her life over again! she thought, stepping on to the pavement, could have looked even differently!

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Bond Street fascinated her; Bond Street early in the morning in the season; its flags flying; its shops; no splash; no glitter; one roll of tweed in





She had oddest sense of being herself invisible; unseen; unknown; there being no more marrying, no more having children now, but only this astonishing and rather solemn progress with the rest of them, up Bond Street, this being Mrs. Dalloway not even Clarissa anymore, this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway. So, again the whole idea the feminine identity is portrayed over here. There is no Clarissa Dalloway left, there is no Clarissa left. So, her entire identity has now been consumed by a husband's identity Mrs. Clarissa Dalloway right that becomes be all and end all of her life and is more into time.

So, I will stop at this point today and we will continue with this text in the next lectures to come.

Thank you for your attention.