

Trauma and Literature
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Lecture – 10
Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway – Part 2

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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,

This is an NPTEL course entitled “Trauma and Literature” on Virginia Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway. I believe we have already had an introductory lecture for this text where we spoke at length about the historical background of the text. It is to discuss in what ways it is a trauma text and also a text about gender, text about masculinity, a text about the collusion between medicine and patriarchy.

All these very complex narratives get into the text which makes it such a complex text and such a relevant text for us today as well. So, among other things, the trauma in “Mrs. Dalloway” it operates at various levels. There is obviously as I mentioned in the previous lecture the PTSD is trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder, the trauma that happens to soldiers when they come back after a war when they fail to integrate in a civilian space.

It is a text about disintegration quite literally and quite experientially as spoken at length. But also it is kind of trauma which comes out of repression as well. It is about this very gendered quality of trauma. Mrs. Dalloway for example the principal character, the principal

protagonist in this novel we find that even she suffers from a lack of agency. Agency becomes a very important issue in “Mrs. Dalloway.”

Different kinds of characters were seemingly agentic or seemingly wealthy, seemingly privileged, but they all suffer from different degrees of agencylessness and that obviously make them numbed in some sense. Numbness is also very important factor in “Mrs. Dalloway” because it is quite literally a city novel. It is about one day in a city, one day in a very speedy city.

We have London, post war London which is trying very hard to look very normal, trying very hard to look in a celebratory. It is trying to celebrate victory, trying to celebrate triumph, trying to celebrate velocity but underneath all that we have a city which is also mourning. There is mournability about London as well it is a city where everyone is mourning the loss of a dear one.

At some point the novel the narrator will say everyone has someone who died in the war. The war is very much there and the spectral presence of the war what is some kind of a shadowy ghostly spectral presence or shall we say a hauntological presence, a haunted ontology is there as a thing as a as a presence but it is really haunted in some sense. No one talks about the war directly.

Everyone wants to move on from the war. It is very much there as almost like a shadowy character in the text. It is a bit like Hamlet's father in some sense. We did talk about that as well. We will dive into the text today and we will look at the first few pages the opening of the novel. The opening of any novel is always useful to read because it takes you into the main issues the novel deals with.

We will spend some time in the opening and we see how the characters introduce one by one and because Woolf is such a fine writer, she uses very oblique methods of introduction. The obliqueness of Woolf is very interesting and the subtlety of narration is very interesting. It is a very subtle oblique narrative method that has been used way up. It is not heavy-handed, it is not direct.

It is like a blink and miss kind of a method where the major characters are introduced seemingly in a very flippant way. They come and go and obviously they reappear and we are told more things about them, but at introduction we find that it has a quality of immediate race starting in the middle. It is like the middle of an action Clarissa Dalloway is throwing a party where some of the most privileged people in London are supposed to come.

It is about her going out to buy some flowers for the party. It seems to be a very banal domestic material every day kind of an opening, but of course the moment you read the first few lines there is a lot of things that Woolf is trying to pack into the seemingly ordinary opening of Mrs. Dalloway because what we have here is a very complex novel as I mentioned, it is a novel about social Darwinism in some sense.

It is also a post-colonial novel in some sense because we have someone coming back from the colonies trying to integrate back into London but failing to do so. So, India is also there as a very important presence and the Anglo-Indians are talked about in very derogatory ways so the racism, the medical politics, the post-traumatic stress disorder, the gendered qualities all these things become really important in "Mrs. Dalloway."

We have to pay attention in great details and we need to be careful about the very deceptive simplicity of the opening which is exactly what it is very deceptive, deceptively simple but it is actually a very complex opening. The immediate race quality is trying to take us plunge us into the action of "Mrs. Dalloway" the novel, we are not supposed to go back and know about the characters we are supposed to just go with the flow and move them across the metropolis.

It is a very mobile novel, its characters move very quickly, characters speed across the metropolis but again that is very deceptive because what we have actually is a novel about stagnation. It is a novel about the lack of movement and everyone is trying to move very hard, everyone trying very hard to appear mobile, to appear very speedy but actually they are all suffering from stagnation.

They cannot move on existentially, physically, emotionally. They all seem to be stuck at different points of limbo locations and this limbo location becomes important in “Mrs. Dalloway”. Here, in the novel. Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself. For Lucy had a 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.” We have this idea of a very fresh morning and again Mrs. Dalloway would go out and buy the flowers. The reason is still unknown. This starting in the middle becomes a very important Modernist technique.

There is spatial temporarily, we talked about this in our previous lecture. As spatial temporarily it is a very complex novel, but it is also very deceptive because it seems to be about one day in London. It seems to be about one day in one space but actually it is about many spaces about, many sports of time.

They are all coming together, converging together in very complex combinations and the complexity of combination is something which we need to pay very close attention to. We do not know who lives here, we do not know why Mrs. Dalloway needs to buy flowers in the first place. “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 the Bourton and 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 that 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.”

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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 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.

"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 at a breakfast one morning when she had gone out onto the terrace –Peter Walsh. He would come 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 the millions of things had utterly vanished. How strange it was! – a few sayings like this about cabbages."

This is brilliant writing because again see what Woolf is giving us is seemingly ordinary things cabbages, flowers, pocket knives. The very metonymic quality material is something which we need to pay attention to. A man called Peter Walsh we do not quite know who he is fully at this point, but he is someone who is coming back from India.

Apparently, we do not know what he is doing in any of the first place or we can hazard a guess maybe he is a colonial officer who was coming back from India because this is written 1925 after the First World War. So, anyone coming back from India must be involved in some sense with imperialism with colonialism but we do not quite know exactly what.

But then Peter Walsh is being remembered by Mrs. Dalloway and we see the act of remembering obviously transports the character into different points of space and time. She is going back literally in different points of space and time remembering very organically but

also quite in a very fragmented manner, in a very metonymic manner, different things, different clippings, different materials, and different images.

The whole act of remembering becomes interesting because it is not really a full act, it is not really a total recall, and it is not really a complete remembrance of what happens. But there are certain things which are strangely remembered like something said about cabbages for example. There is no rationale behind remembering. There is no rationale behind the fact that some things get more remembered than other things.

Woolf uses a technique throughout the novel and that is the technique of the stream of consciousness where seemingly random things attached to each other in a free-flowing fluid kind of a thought movement. And there no rationale why object A sticks to object B, it is just the way the consciousness operates, it is just the way the mind operates.

The mind appears in “Mrs. Dalloway” is a very fluid phenomenon. The mind appears as an activity, a very fluid activity which is seemingly random in its rationale. There is no logical rationale behind it and it is exactly the capturing of consciousness which makes Woolf along with other people such as James Joyce and T. S. Eliot a very good example of high modernist writing because high modernist writing.

This is a literary category which was conveniently constructed for academy purposes. But high Modernist writing is exactly about the capturing of consciousness, is on its randomness and on its associated politics. The consciousness of a human mind is captured in language and we have different connections, different coordinates of consciousness which are revealed to us.

Mrs. Dalloway is trying to remember Peter Walsh. He was supposedly coming back from India and she does not quite know when. She does not know if it is June or July, but sometimes he is coming back from India and then she is remembering him remembering certain little sayings of his but then it is very random, very flippant, and very irrational in some sense.

He said something about cabbages for example, he said something about men and cabbages and vegetables. So those things get remembered rather than the more “important things.” The whole idea of the politics of importance, the politics of hierarchy in the mind, the politics of hierarchical meanings gets dissolved away in some sense.

It is exactly what the stream of consciousness does, it dissolves away the politics of privilege in the mind, the normative politics of privilege why we assign certain importance to certain things more than other things. But when the mind operates fully freely in a very fluid way then that politics of privilege disappears completely. So, the stream of consciousness in “Mrs. Dalloway” is a very random a fluid phenomenon.

The randomness and fluidity of the phenomenon becomes important and that is something which is very powerfully captured by Woolf in the very opening as we can see. I do not quite remember what he was like, his letters are very dull. The letters which are seemingly informative, seemingly detailed, seemingly dense were always very dull. I could not care less about his letters.

But then I do remember him from his sayings about cabbages, from his sayings about the vegetables, from his sayings about different little things and from his very metonymic embodiment like pocket knife. Now this pocket knife becomes important because that would keep recurring, it almost becomes the form of shall we say extended embodiment. The embodiment of Peter Walsh is extended with the pocket knife and it is obviously a very phallic object as well.

It is part of his masculinity, also part of his nervous masculinity. He is always flipping it off and on in his pocket as some kind of a very nervous male, very nervous phallic activity in some sense. So the pocket knife becomes important, his smile becomes important, his grumpiness becomes important. But when everything else vanishes how strange that all that remains in terms of the memory of Peter Walsh is a few sayings like this is about cabbages.

I think if you take a look at Woolf’s writerly practice over here she deliberately picks cabbages because cabbage is very dull vegetable, it is not an exotic vegetable, it is something

which you see everywhere, it is dull, it is boring, it is ordinary and it is exactly the point. The boringness, the boredom, the ordinariness of cabbage is exactly what has been used over here to create something extraordinary out of it.

We realize the only way memory operates is through very boring material things everyday phenomenon, but the way it operates, the way the combinations happen that becomes complex that is something which we do not quite know, we cannot put a finger on it in terms of the rationale okay. So, the opening becomes important in terms of how the consciousness is captured by Woolf okay.

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

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

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

We can see the human beings in “Mrs. Dalloway” they often describe using very objective details, you know using details of machines, about objects, about inorganic things. In other words, the organic world and the inorganic world they begin to blend in ways in “Mrs. Dalloway” which becomes almost indistinguishable. We cannot distinguish between the organic and inorganic world anymore and that is part of the traumatic landscape.

We will find later when the traumatic person, the person is traumatized in “Mrs. Dalloway”, the sufferer of trauma the way he is introduced Septimus Smith we find that one of his crisis is he cannot distinguish anymore between what is organic and what is inorganic, what is real and what is unreal and his lack of distinguish, his inability to distinguish becomes a main cognitive problem for him.

For having lived in Westminster, how many years now? Over twenty, one feels even in the midst of the traffic or walking at night Clarissa was positive, a particular hush or solemnity an indescribable pause, a suspense but that is something of a heart. Now this is interesting because Westminster is a very posh neighborhood in London as you know that is a place where the very white privileged people live.

That white privilege is something which is described in almost parodied in some sense in “Mrs. Dalloway” because we have this very genteel white people and very posh neighborhood in London Westminster. But then that circle that genteel circle views about Londoners that is being described obviously but also caricatured in some sense as Mrs. Dalloway has been in Westminster for almost twenty years now.

And then she feels a particular hush or solemnity an indescribable pause, a suspense the whole point is the whole idea of familiarity and unfamiliarity. So she is familiar with this neighborhood, but at the same time there is a degree of unfamiliarity about the neighborhood as well.

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(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, 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

“But that might be her heart, affected they said by influenza before Big Ben strikes.” The whole point of being a stranger in a place where you spent twenty years that becomes interesting because the whole idea of strangeness becomes a phenomenal condition. It is not really a geographical condition, it is not really a logical condition, and it is a phenomenal condition. It is about your experience, your existential experience.

We find exactly when Peter Walsh comes back, he is Londoner, he is a white man, and he has been in India for many years. He has been back and forth from London but when it comes back to London after India, he feels absolutely strange. He feels this estrangement about him. The city looks unfamiliar, the city looks de-familiarized in many ways and its production and consumption and experience of strangeness becomes important because that can be connected interestingly with the spectrality of the war.

One of the first things that a war does to everyone and we can relate as we do today living in this global pandemic of Covid that one of the first things which a pandemic does it makes your world our world, the recognized world it certainly makes it de-familiarized. This certain production of strangeness is the first causality of war, the first causality of a pandemic, the first casualty of anything which takes huge preparations in terms of violence.

Strangeness is created. The familiar world suddenly becomes de-familiarized. A familiar neighborhood becomes de-familiarized. Now this constant entanglement of familiarization

and de-familiarization is something which happens in Mrs. Dalloway quite extensively and obviously in a very subtle way. Now the Big Ben becomes interesting because the Big Ben obviously is a big clock in London which keeps timing out its times.

Now one of the very symbolic things which a Big Ben does obviously is it becomes the example of shall we say the chrono normative architecture, the normative chronos, the normative times, so hence chrono normative. The normative time, the hegemonic time, the clock time, the clock time which is supposed to be shared and consumed by everyone that gets represented by Big Ben throughout the novel.

Now the technique Woolf is using it she is playing two orders of time against each other. There is this Big Ben time which is normative, which is hegemonic, which is chrono normative, which is supposed to be this big patriarchal time which should be shared by everyone so there is that order of time, calendar time, clock time, etc. But equally and perhaps most complexly we have this order of psychological time.

The time that is emotional, time there is experiential, the time that locates you at a certain spot, a certain space at a certain point of time. So, the time that you experience. So time as an experience and time as a factor, time as a number. So, these two orders of time play against each other in "Mrs. Dalloway" quite a lot. The Big Ben becomes symbolic of the hegemonic order of time of the grand order of time.

The grand narrative of time shall we say against which we have these different micro narratives of time, experience for different people, different human beings while they are transported in time, while they travel back and forth across different odors, different spots of time and space. In a different complex combinations of time take place in "Mrs. Dalloway" and there is this Modernist experience of time, the absorption of time which is epiphany.

The whole experience of epiphany is an act of absorption, so you are absorbing time, time has something which transports you, and time is something which takes you different positions, different existential positions. So, the epiphany quality of time and the normative quality of

time, the experiential quality of time and the hegemonic quality of time they all play against each other extensively in “Mrs. Dalloway.”

The Big Ben becomes a very symbolic instrument, a very symbolic architecture shall we say in this novel. “There! Out it boomed. First a warning, musical; then the hour, irrevocable.” Again, the hour is irrevocable. Once the hour is pronounced, you cannot revoke it anymore, hence the irrevocable quality of the hours, something you cannot take back.

It is something which is hegemonic to linear, something which must have a progression. This compulsion has to be progressive, this compulsion has to be linear, there is something very phallogocentric about it, something very phallogocentric about it. Phallogocentric is a combination of phallogocentric and logocentric, the male logic.

This progression of male logic does this compulsory and compulsive progression of male logic against which we have different kinds of time, different kinds of experience, different kinds of existential experience, it is something which we see in “Mrs. Dalloway” throughout the novel. Such fools. “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 various frumps, the most dejected of miseries sitting on doorsteps drink their downfall, do the same, cannot be dealt with, she felt positive, by Acts of Parliament for that very reason they love life.” In people's eyes, in the swing, tram 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 in London this moment of June.” Again, the way in which novelist actually trying very hard at this point, this narrative it is trying really hard to appear full of life, to appear full of love for life.

This is a celebration of London, everything is wonderful. There is velocity in the air, there is sweetness in the air, there are machines everywhere, the omnibuses, aeroplanes, and everything is moving perfectly. This grand image of a very mobile metropolis, this grand image of a very well-functioning metropolis something which keeps coming back again and again in “Mrs. Dalloway”.

But as established by now these images are very deceptive in quality in “Mrs. Dalloway” because beneath all these velocities, beneath all these grand narratives of progress and growth and movement we have exactly this existential darkness, this existential stagnation where people do not really move, they cannot move on because they are so numbed by loss.

They are so numbed by the loss of agency by their very repressed lifestyles. So, the very repressed condition of the human being in “Mrs. Dalloway” is something which we need to pay very close attention to. But at this moment the opening it seems to be full of life, it seems to be celebrating life, it seems to be really consuming this happiness of June morning.

This moment of June, it all becomes very grand narrative of euphoria of happiness, of celebration which “Mrs. Dalloway” does not partake. There is a reference to the Act of Parliament because they seem to love life as well, it is very pro-life right. Politics, existential experience everything seems to coalesce together and produces grand image.

It was grand celebration of happiness in this metropolis in a little brief of course we know this is a very deceptive construct which we will soon be done away with and we have the darker experiences coming in a bit.

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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

Now we have the reference to the war. For it was the middle of June. The war was over except for someone like Mrs. Foxcroft at the Embassy last night eating a 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 a telegram in her hand. John her favorite killed, but it was over, thank heaven over.

We have all these little snippets of caricature because someone has mourned, someone died in the war but the more relevant issue here is that the inheritance would go to someone else and this is exactly this very genteel inheritance politics of white British privilege and that becomes more important than the human loss over here, as in “The Fly” by Katherine Mansfield.

In that short story we find that the human loss it is almost secondary to the loss of inheritance of the boss suffering and who is going to be the next boss with the son dead. Something similar happens here as well. There is a reference to a character of Mrs. Foxcroft at the Embassy, it was very sad, there was mourning because the nice boy was killed, and presumably her son was killed.

And now the old Manor House. This very typical British aristocratic architecture will now go to a cousin. So again, the whole politics of inheritance becomes more foregrounded shall we say than the human loss and the human bereavement. And then there is a reference to another

character lady Bexborough, so Lady Boxborough, obviously she has got a title, so she is part of the aristocracy presumably.

She is an honorific address, so the honorific address obviously is reflective of the circles of Mrs. Dalloway. It is a very genteel white privileged circle and it is white privilege something which we must pay very close attention to through the novel. It is a novel about white privilege but also a novel about the cracking up of white privilege. It caricatures white privilege, it parodies what privilege to a certain extent.

The principal character Mrs. Dalloway even she's parodied in some points in the novel okay. But the war was over, thank heaven over. It was June. The king and the queen were at the palace. And everywhere though it was still so early there was a beating, a stirring of galloping ponies, topping of cricket bats, Lords, Ascot, Ranelagh and all the rest of it wrapped in a soft mesh of the grey-blue morning air.

Which as the day wore one would unwind them and set down to their lawns and pitches the bouncing ponies whose forefeet just struck the ground and up they sprang, the whirling young men, 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.

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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 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 hap-

Their lovely old sea-green brooches in 18th 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 a time of the Georges. She too was going that very night to kindle and illuminate to give her party. Long sentence, a huge sentence, it is almost unwinding, it just goes on forever.

But the whole point is we take a look at the images. It is an image of celebration, images richness, image of appropriation, image of acquisition and then we come to the party. She is connected to the Georges, her people, her family, her ancestors were courtiers at some point. She is connected in this aristocratic royal privilege bit and she is trying to illuminate today, she is trying to give a party today.

The whole novel becomes about the party that she is supposed to draw at night. The party gets mentioned for the first time in the novel but also we find the character of the presence of the war and this very compulsive and almost anxious retelling, this anxious articulation of the fact that the war is over, the war is over, the war is over you often wonder why is there such a compulsion to keep repeating that over and over again.

One could have the guess it was probably not really over, the war is very much there as a spectral psychological presence, is almost like a spectral shadowy character, it is not really gone although the city is trying very hard to move on, it is trying to become very speedy, fast,

it has lots of metonymic markers, speed and sophistication but the war is far from being over and that becomes the very important issue in “Mrs. Dalloway”.

But you know we get to know that she is giving a party and that is something which we need to be aware of this whole point why she is going out to buy flowers in Westminster okay.

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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

“But how strange on entering the Park the silence, the mist, the hum, the slow swimming happy ducks, the pouch birds waddling, and who would be coming along with his back against the Government buildings most appropriately carrying a dispatch box stamped with the Royal Arms, who but Hugh Whitbread, her old friend Hugh, the admirable Hugh.”

We see all these very white privileged neighbors and friends meeting each other, bumping into each other, running into each other in this very genteel white neighborhood of Westminster which is where the novel the opening of the novel is set okay. And this is the London in a post first world war trying to move on, trying to look happy, trying to look celebratory and so on and so forth.

Now we come to the other character Mrs. Dalloway who is the other principal character and that is the traumatic character of “Mrs. Dalloway” and that is Septimus Smith. Septimus suffers from trauma, Septimus has been in the war and someone who cannot integrate back with the civilian life in the post-war London.

It is lack of integration something which we see throughout the novel and that is of course a very extreme extension of the repression that Clarissa Dalloway suffers as well. So we find at some point of the novel there seems to be some kind of an empathy between Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Smith and that empathy is important for us to locate and why is there an empathy at all between two characters who are so different from each other.

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“Dear, those motor cars,” said Miss Pym, going to the window to look, and coming back and smiling apologetically with her hands full of sweet peas, as if those motor cars, those tyres of motor cars, were all HER fault.

The violent explosion which made Mrs. Dalloway jump and Miss Pym go to the window and apologise came from a motor car which had drawn to the side of the pavement precisely opposite Mulberry’s shop window. Passers-by who, of course, stopped and stared, had just time to see a face of the very greatest importance against the dove-grey upholstery, before a male hand drew the blind and there was nothing to be seen except a square of dove grey.

Yet rumours were at once in circulation from the middle of Bond Street to Oxford Street on one side, to Atkinson’s scent shop on the other, passing invisibly, inaudibly, like a cloud, swift, veil-like upon hills, falling indeed with something of a cloud’s sudden sobriety and stillness upon faces which a second before had been utterly disorderly. But now mystery had brushed them with her wing; they had heard the voice of authority; the spirit of

Here we have, this should be on the screen. We have an example of a violent explosion. We are talking about how this London is trying very hard to look like a city full of machines, a city full of very free-flowing speedy machines, fast gadgets, fast machines, etc. But then the constant reference of violence, this constant proximity to violence is exactly the important point here.

Because that convinces us as readers today that this is a London which is not very far away from the very heavily bombed London, not very far away from the very war-torn London shall we say. The violent explosion over here is important. The one explosion which made Mrs. Dalloway jump and Miss Pym go to the window and apologize came from the motor car which had drawn to the side of the pavement precisely opposite Mulberry's shop window.

There is a motor car which just the engine count off, the engine exploded but the sound was violent. Now interestingly look at the reaction of civilians. It is almost like a knee-jerk

reaction. There used to be these kinds of sounds which obviously they did remember the bombs, perhaps remember the violence of the war. See any innocuous sound which is a little above the normal pitch reminds them of the war, reminds them of the violent sounds of the war.

They did jump, the nervous reaction was one of the knee-jerk reaction is one of jumping, is one of paranoia to a certain extent. They all go to the window, they all cringe in fear, they turns out that this explosion came from a car engine, very innocuous. Passersby of course stopped and stared, had just the time to see a face of the great greatest importance against the dove-grey upholstery, before a male hand drew the blind.

And there was nothing to be seen except a square of dove gray. Someone seemingly important is traveling in the car. The people passing by just got a little glimpse of the person inside, we never told who this person is, it could be a minister, it could be a politician, and it could be someone very important in other fields as well. But a little glimpse is given to us, a little peep show is given to us, very cinematic again.

It is a very cinematic novel. The visual politics in “Mrs. Dalloway” is very cinematic. There is a blink and miss sight of someone who is supposedly famous and then life goes on again. But then this explosion and people's reaction explosion is important because that connects them immediately to the war, right. So this is the London which is trying very hard to move on to appear very integrated and in a free-flowing and mobile.

But actually, in reality it is a post war London still ruminating from the losses in the war. “Yet rumors were at once in circulation from the middle of Bond Street to Oxford Street on one side to Atkinson's scent shop on the other passing invisibly, inaudibly like a cloud, swift, veil-like upon hills, falling indeed with something of a cloud's sudden sobriety and stillness upon faces which a second before had been utterly disorderly. But now mystery had brushed them with her wing.”

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religion was abroad with her eyes bandaged tight and her lips gaping wide. But nobody knew whose face had been seen. Was it the Prince of Wales's, the Queen's, the Prime Minister's? Whose face was it? Nobody knew.

Edgar J. Watkiss, with his roll of lead piping round his arm, said audibly, humorously of course: "The Proime Minister's kyar."

Septimus Warren Smith, who found himself unable to pass, heard him.

Septimus Warren Smith, aged about thirty, pale-faced, beak-nosed, wearing brown shoes and a shabby overcoat, with hazel eyes which had that look of apprehension in them which makes complete strangers apprehensive too. The world has raised its whip; where will it descend?

Everything had come to a standstill. The throb of the motor engines sounded like a pulse irregularly drumming through an entire body. The sun became extraordinarily hot because the motor car had stopped outside Mulberrv's shop window: old ladies on the tops of omnibuses spread their

"They had heard the voice of authority. The spirit of religion was abroad and eyes bandaged tight." The references of someone famous is there. In a way this is again the very oblique method of Woolf. She is not really telling us who the person really is, but there are different kinds of questions, "Was it the Prince of Wales', the Queen's, the Prime Minister's? Whose face was it? Nobody knew."

We have this glimpse a very quick glimpse, very metonymic projection of someone famous but we do not quite know who the person really was and the sense of mystery about identity is something which we see in "Mrs. Dalloway" throughout in more existential frames as well. And now we find the introduction of Septimus the first time in the novel.

"Septimus Warren Smith, aged about thirty, pale-faced, beak-nosed, wearing brown shoes and a shabby overcoat with hazel eyes which had a look of apprehension in them which makes complete strangers apprehensive too. The world has raised its whip; where will it descend?" Septimus as a character is introduced for the first time in the novel. We find that Septimus is pale-faced, beak-nosed, something very decadent the bottom.

Something very deathly about him and the deadness is something which we must pay attention to and then we find out that "the world has raised its whip, where will it descend?" Whip becomes a very important metaphor for punishment, for torture, for suffering. So, for Septimus the world has raised its whip, where will it descend? It must descend on someone's

back, it must come to someone. Whip becomes an instrument, a symbolic instrument of torture in Septimus' imagination.

We find again this is example of great literary writing. Even before the character is fully introduced, we find the metaphors around and the metaphors in his imagination, they give way his existential location, so how is it located emotionally. He is someone who is located at the plane of the sufferer, the sport of the sufferer. Someone is suffering in his mind and that sense of suffering is very much there throughout the characterization of Septimus.

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Everything had come to a standstill. The throb of the motor engines sounded like a pulse irregularly drumming through an entire body. The sun became extraordinarily hot because the motor car had stopped outside Mulberry's shop window; old ladies on the tops of omnibuses spread their black parasols; here a green, here a red parasol opened with a little pop. Mrs. Dalloway, coming to the window with her arms full of sweet peas, looked out with her little pink face pursed in enquiry. Every one looked at the motor car. Septimus looked. Boys on bicycles sprang off. Traffic accumulated. And there the motor car stood, with drawn blinds, and upon them a curious pattern like a tree, Septimus thought, and this gradual drawing together of everything to one centre before his eyes, as if some horror had come almost to the surface and was about to burst into flames, terrified him. The world wavered and quivered and threatened to burst into flames. It is I who am blocking the way, he thought. Was he not being looked at and pointed at; was he not weighted there, rooted to the pavement, for a purpose? But for what purpose?

"Let us go on, Septimus," said his wife, a little woman, with large eyes in a

"Everything had come to a standstill. The throb of the motor engine sounded like a pulse irregularly drumming through an entire body. So again, you can take a look at how the organic and the inorganic blend together. The throb of the motor engines they feel like a pulse through an entire body." The organic body and the inorganic machines blend together.

There is something very indistinguishable, you cannot distinguish at all between the organic and the inorganic at this point. The sun became extraordinarily hot because the motor car has stopped outside the Mulberry's shop window. Old ladies on the top of omnibuses spread their black parasols, here a green, here a red parasol opened with a little pop. Mrs. Dalloway coming to the window with the arms full of sweet peas looked out with her little pink face pursed in enquiry.

Everyone looked at the motor car. Septimus looked. Boys in bicycles sprang off. Traffic accumulated. And there the motor car stood with drawn blinds and upon them a curious pattern like a tree, Septimus thought and this gradual drawing together of everything to one centre before his eyes as if some horror had almost come to the surface and was about to burst into flames, terrified him.

The world wavered and quivered and threatened to burst into flames. It is I who am went blocking the way he thought, was he not being looked at and pointed at, was not weighted there, rooted the pavement for a purpose but for what purpose? It is to say that we have the sense of purposelessness and melancholia and self-loathing which you find in Septimus already.

It is a very Freudian kind of melancholia which is characterized by self-loathing with a depletion shall we say of the ego. This dignified ego goes away, Septimus is like a vegetable, he is like a zombie, a leftover from the war, was walking around the metropolis completely directionless, completely purposeless and he thinks of himself as someone who is blocking the integration, someone as an impediment to integration, someone who comes in a way of integration.

We have this very interesting metonymic representation of machines and velocity and a city which is trying to move on, machines popping in and popping out and then we have this very shadowy ghostly presence of Septimus who is very much an incompatible misfit shall we say into this entire mourning metropolis. But then this is a mourning metropolis trying very hard to look smart, to look speedy, and to look sophisticated.

We need to pay attention to the machines in "Mrs. Dalloway" because the difference between the innocuous machine and a violent machine is very thin. It often become one the innocuous domestic machine and the violent machine, a machine which reminds you of violence of war, a trauma becomes important and the sense of purposelessness is something which characterizes Septimus' persona from the very beginning.

The very opening of the “Mrs. Dalloway” find these different trends coming in, different issues have been played out in a very complex combination. I stop at this point today and move on with some selected passages in the next lecture. Thank you for your attention.