

Virginia Woolf's Artistry in *Mrs. Dalloway*: Some Problems of Interpretation

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Introduction

In this paper I am going to deal with several passages in *Mrs. Dalloway*, all of which seem to contain some kind of textual problem: how to interpret a word, a phrase, or a sentence in terms of the whole context of the respective passages; why some particular expression acquires a special connotative implication. My approach is not a philological but a stylistic one, which seems to be much more helpful to understand (or to appreciate) this author's work.

In part 1, I want to treat the problem of Clarissa's frigidity, dwelling mainly upon how and why this frigidity has become a major obstacle in her life; in part 2, I am going to deal with three selected portions, in each one of which there are words or phrases we have to be especially careful to interpret in order to grasp the whole meaning of each particular portion; and lastly in part 3, I will mention one example of *an intentional misinterpretation*. In Virginia Woolf (in this work especially) there are some cases in which we can best interpret a paragraph, not in terms of a strict grammatical sequence, but in terms of *the context of what is happening in that paragraph*.

Though seemingly all the quotations which will be referred to in

the following look like random selections, each one is related directly or indirectly with the innermost core of this work. In this author there is hardly a sentence, a phrase, or even a word we cannot relate to the whole substructure of the novel itself.

(1)

Like a nun withdrawing, or a child exploring a tower, she went, upstairs, paused at the window, came to the bathroom. There was the green linoleum and a tap dripping. There was an emptiness about the heart of life; an attic room. Women must put off their rich apparel. At mid-day they must disrobe. She pierced the pincushion and laid her feathered yellow hat on the bed. The sheets were clean, tight stretched in a broad white band from side to side. Narrower and narrower would her bed be. The candle was half burnt down and she had read deep in Baron Marbot's *Memoirs*. She had read late at night of the retreat from Moscow. For the House sat so long that Richard insisted, after her illness, that she must sleep undisturbed. And really she preferred to read of the retreat from Moscow. He knew it. So the room was an attic; the bed narrow; and lying there reading, for she slept badly, she could not dispel a virginity preserved through childbirth which clung to her like a sheet. Lovely in girlhood, suddenly there came a moment—for example on the river beneath the woods at Cliveden—when, through some contraction of this cold spirit, she had failed him. And then at Constantinople, and again and again. She could see what she lacked. It was not beauty; it was not mind. It was something central which permeated; something warm which broke up surfaces and rippled the cold contact of man and woman, or of women together. For *that* she could dimly perceive. She resented it, had a scruple picked up Heaven knows where, or, as she felt, sent by Nature (who is invariably wise); yet she could

not resist sometimes yielding to the charm of a woman, not a girl, of a woman confessing, as to her they often did, some scrape, some folly. And whether it was pity, or their beauty, or that she was older, or some accident—like a faint scent, or a violin next door (so strange is the power of sounds at certain moments), she did undoubtedly then feel what men felt. Only for a moment: but it was enough. It was a sudden revelation, a tinge like a blush which one tried to check and then, as it spread, one yielded to its expansion, and rushed to the farthest verge and there quivered and felt the world come closer, swollen with some astonishing significance, some pressure of rapture, which split its thin skin and gushed and poured with an extraordinary alleviation over the cracks and sores. Then, for that moment, she had seen an illumination; a match burning in a crocus: an inner meaning almost expressed. But the close withdrew; the hard softened. It was over—the moment. Against such moments (with women too) there contrasted (as she laid her hat down) the bed and Baron Marbot and the candle half-burnt.¹ [*Italics Virginia Woolf's.*]

This is the description of Clarissa ruminating on her marital relationship with Richard. At a first reading, we notice the tone of a kind of invocation underlying the passage, which may be ascribed to the persistent tendency of repetition of the same sentence pattern. All the sentences composing this long paragraph are short and terse as if to suggest the image of Clarissa sitting on the edge of the bed soliloquizing calmly and lonely. Let us take up a couple of repetitive patterns: "There was the green linoleum" and "There was an emptiness"; "Women must put off" and "At mid-day they must disrobe"; "Narrower and narrower would her bed be"; "[S]he had read deep" and "She had read late"; "It was not beauty; it

was not mind. It was something central" All of these patterns are in the style of an invocation implying Clarissa's deep agony occasioned by her own contrariness: her strong penchant for keeping herself clean, refusing any sexual contact with her husband, and her latent longing (thirst) for sexual union with him. Truly, this whole paragraph is a strange amalgam of two opposite desires: an earnest longing to be like a nun and an earnest longing to indulge in the carnal act.

She says, "Women must put off their rich apparel." protesting strongly against man's egoism in sexual life. (Notice the strong sound and acute implication of "She *pierced* the pincushion" [Italics mine.]) But immediately after she deplures the cold and clean sheets. Such contrary tendencies in Clarissa are symbolically or ironically represented in her relationship with Richard in their daily life. While Richard insists that she must sleep undisturbed after her illness (how can she sleep undisturbed tormented by the strong thirst for bodily union with her husband?), she prefers to read the masculine war story of Napoleon's retreat from Moscow. Richard knows that his wife is wide-awake reading the story under the light of the half-burnt candle. We do not know whether Richard's excuse that the House sat so long is genuine or false. We can notice, however, an ironical and sad *crossing each other* in their daily life.

In the sorrowful rumination of Clarissa on her own virginity following the description of their daily life, we can notice again that her seemingly adamant determination to keep herself clean is being subtly replaced by her wistful questioning: "Why am I so stubborn? Is it worthwhile to be clean?" Such a self-questioning attitude is suggested in "Lovely in girlhood, suddenly there came a moment" or in "It

was not beauty; it was not mind," both of which tell of her being deeply confident of being attractive enough to be able to indulge in sexual bliss.

I think that such a waywardness or a confusion which Clarissa is now suffering from is reflected in the sentence structure itself beginning from "It was something central . . ." and ending with ". . . sent by Nature (who is invariably wise)" Let us read again this section:

It was something central which permeated; something warm which broke up surfaces and rippled the cold contact of man and woman, or of women together. For *that* she could dimly perceive. She resented *it*, had a scruple picked up Heaven knows where, or, as she felt, sent by Nature (who is invariably wise). . . . [1. 3 *that* Italics, Virginia Woolf's; 1.1 *It* and 1.4 *it*, mine.]

In this the "It" at the beginning is "what she lacked" in the preceding section. However, the next "that" and "it" are very ambiguous. Grammatically, they seem to indicate "something warm which broke up" Is it, however, utterly wrong to interpret "She resented *it*" as "She resented *what she lacked*"? Between these two interpretations ("She resented *something warm which broke up*" and "She resented *what she lacked*") there seems to be suggested two opposite tendencies in Clarissa's psychology: the former, her determination to keep herself clean and the latter, her deep-seated jealousy of the warm contact between man and woman.

Some scholars suggest Clarissa's penchant for homosexuality.² The section toward the end of this passage seems to corroborate that suggestion. But it is "a mistake" as Harvena Richter says.³ The point is

that the reason why Clarissa is indulging herself in a homosexual fantasy is that she is denied heterosexuality because of her own stubborn virginity. However, Clarissa wants to indulge in sexual bliss. A nun confined in a psychological convent (her own virginity) wants to break through that thick wall of prohibition, hence *the pseudo-homosexuality* as a last resort to quench her strong carnal desire. The nun says, "Only for a moment; but it [is] enough."

We can easily understand how to interpret the section between "It was a sudden revelation" and "an inner meaning almost expressed" in the whole context of the story. This section is highly artistic to say nothing of it being extremely erotic but not necessarily obscene, presenting an exact mechanism of masculine sexuality. Let us consider the whole situation once again. Clarissa is now pondering over her sterile relationship with her husband while she is sitting on the edge of the bed. Her rumination is at first tenaciously lingering on her own "virginity". She wonders why she is so stubborn despite her own beauty and charm as a woman. These seemingly opposite tendencies in Clarissa are gradually pushing her to an extremity: a sexual exultation only for a moment whether stubborn or not, whether with a man or a woman as a partner.

Thus her being desperately thirsty for sexual contact is suggested in *the rough and quick rhythm* noticeable in this indirect suggestion of the sexual process ("rushed to the farthest verge," "swollen with some astonishing significance," "gushed and poured," etc.), making a clear contrast with the calm and supplicatory tone underlying the preceding monologue. We can say that this sexual language is the symbolical representation of a woman (like a nun) who is denied any carnal

activity because of her own attitude, resorting to her last remedy: her vain sexual indulgence in her own fantasy beside the clean and cold bed in an attic.

However, this last description narrowly escapes being a mere erotic presentation of the sexual process by virtue of an exquisite sentence at the end of the passage, making it one of the fine artistic achievements of this author: ". . . she had seen an illumination; a match burning in a crocus . . ." This sentence implies the satisfaction a woman must be experiencing during (or after) the sexual act. Clarissa, who is sitting on the edge of a bed like a nun, is now experiencing a bliss filtered through a frigid woman's fantasy. It is a beautiful acme of revelation: an image of a crocus illuminated from within by a faint yellow light of a match.

(2)

In this section I want to deal with three quotations each one of which contains a problem (or problems) of how to interpret the author's true intention.

(a)

The first one is the description of Peter Walsh pursuing a lady along Piccadilly and Regent Street. This happens on his way back from his visit to Clarissa after not having seen her a long time. There may be some discussion or inference about why he plunged himself into such a reckless adventure (while pursuing the unknown lady along the streets, he calls himself "a romantic buccaneer"). However, the point I am interested in is not how and why this event happened, but the way the woman is described while she is walking along the street with

Peter earnestly following her.

But other people got between them in the street, obstructing him, blotting her out. He pursued: she changed. There was colour in her cheeks; mockery in her eyes; he was an adventurer, reckless, he thought, swift, daring, indeed (landed as he was last night from India) a romantic buccaneer, careless of all these damned proprieties, yellow dressing-gowns, pipes, fishing-rods, in the shop windows; and respectability and evening parties and spruce old men wearing white slips beneath their waistcoats. He was a buccaneer. On and on she went, across Piccadilly, and up Regent Street, ahead of him, her cloak, her gloves, her shoulders combining with the fringes and the laces and the feather boas in the windows to make the spirit of finery and whimsy which dwindled out of the shops on to the pavement, as the light of a lamp goes wavering at night over hedges in the darkness.⁴

Here, toward the end of this passage there is a description of the lady walking past the shop windows ("On and on she went . . . over hedges in the darkness").

The point is the delicate correlation between the two images: the image of the lady ("her cloak, her gloves, her shoulders") and the image of the shop windows ("the fringes and the laces and the feather boas"). Let us look at the actual scene of the lady walking by the shop windows in which the various items of finery are being displayed. "[H]er cloak, her gloves, her shoulders" seem to be combining with "the fringes and the laces and the feather boas in the windows . . ." This directly indicates that the fancy image of the lady is mingling with the finery in the shop windows. For an instant, the lady herself seems to be playing the role of a mannequin standing in the shop

windows in order to augment the images of the luxuries in the windows.

However, this fantastic combination of the images of the lady and the shop windows ("the spirit of finery and whimsy") is *not a fixed one*. The lady is now swiftly walking away from the windows. In other words, the whole fantastic image of the lady and the windows is swiftly dissolving into two parts; or, to be more exact, the small portion of the finery (the image of the lady) is swiftly dissociating itself from the whole mixture of fantasy: "the spirit of finery and whimsy . . . dwindled out of the shops on to the pavement . . ." [Italics mine.]

(b)

The next example presents another problem if we take it in terms of the connotative implications of a word or a phrase. Moreover, these words or phrases seem to be performing the major parts in the passage.

It seemed to her as she drank the sweet stuff that she was opening long windows, stepping out into some garden. But where? The clock was striking—one, two, three: how sensible the sound was; compared with all this thumping and whispering; like Septimus himself. She was falling asleep. But the clock went on striking, four, five, six, and Mrs. Filmer waving her apron (they wouldn't bring the body in here, would they?) seemed part of that garden; or a flag. She had once seen a flag slowly rippling out from a mast when she stayed with her aunt at Venice. Men killed in battle were thus saluted, and Septimus had been through the War. Of her memories, most were happy.

She put on her hat, and ran through cornfields—where could it

have been?—on to some hill, somewhere near the sea, for there were ships, gulls, butterflies; they sat on a cliff. In London, too, there they sat, and, half dreaming, came to her through the bedroom door, rain falling, whisperings, stirrings among dry corn, the caress of the sea, as it seemed to her, hollowing them in its arched shell and murmuring to her laid on shore, strewn she felt, like flying flowers over some tomb. ⁵

This is the psychological expression of Rezia who is lying almost unconscious immediately after her husband (Septimus) killed himself by jumping out of a window. The whole quotation seems like Rezia's dream consciousness. Let us read again the latter half of the second paragraph in order to clarify the problem:

In London, too, there they sat, and, half dreaming, came to her through the bedroom door, rain falling, whisperings, stirrings among dry corn, the caress of the sea, as it seemed to her, *hollowing them* in its arched shell and murmuring to her laid on shore, strewn she felt, like flying flowers over some tomb. [Italics mine.]

Here the whole sentence is very beautiful due to its ambiguities in grammar and in meaning, which again seem to be occasioned by Rezia's anguish which she is now suffering almost unconsciously.

Among these poetic ambiguities there is one phrase we can never leave ambiguous if we want to interpret this sentence accurately: “. . . hollowing them in its arched shell . . .” What is the sense-subject of *hollowing* and who or what are *them*? This part is usually paraphrased. “. . . [the caress of the sea seems to be] hollowing [the sounds of rain falling, whisperings, stirrings among dry corn] in its arched shell . . .”⁶

However, there seems to be something inadequate in this interpretation.

This *hollowing* seems to mean "to be sucking up" or "to be emptying out into" and *them* is indicating both Rezia and her husband. This author seems to be fond of using "to be sucked (up)" in various situations meaning invariably "[somebody] is being deprived of [something]" or "[somebody] is feeling utterly emptied out." The following are examples:

"... he at his age should be sucked under in his little bow-tie by that monster!"⁷ (This is the impression Clarissa has at Peter's confession of his new love affair.)

"It was as if he were sucked up to some very high roof by that rush of emotion, and the rest of him, like a white shell-sprinkled beach, left bare."⁸ (This is Peter Walsh's sensation on his way back from his crucial confession to Clarissa.)

Thus, in the work of this author "to be sucked (up)" seems to invariably mean "to be hollowed out" or "to be emptied out" in terms of the psychological connotation.

Let us return to "hollowing them in its arched shell" in the present quotation. Here Rezia, half dreamingly, is listening to the sounds of "rain falling, whisperings, stirrings among dry corn" or "the caress of the sea" through the bedroom door (she is now lying almost unconscious). In her very obscure consciousness there is an image of herself and her dear husband sitting somewhere on the edge of a cliff, the soft sounds of the waves incessantly reaching them. Suddenly Rezia feels that both she and her husband are gradually sucked up into (hollowed out into) a big arched shell still listening to the

rain falling or stirrings among dry corn outside. I think this interpretation much more suitable to the situation of Rezia who is now lying unconscious, suddenly robbed of her dear husband.

(c)

Beauty anyhow. Not the crude beauty of the eye. It was not beauty pure and simple—Bedford Place leading into Russell Square. It was straightness and emptiness of course; the symmetry of a corridor; but it was also windows lit up, a piano, a gramophone sounding; a sense of pleasure-making hidden, but now and again emerging when, through the uncurtained window, the window left open, one saw parties sitting over tables, young people slowly circling, conversations between men and women, maids idly looking out (a strange comment theirs, when work was done), stockings drying on top ledges, a parrot, a few plants. Absorbing, mysterious, of infinite richness, this life. And in the large square where the cabs shot and swerved so quick, there were loitering couples, dallying, embracing, shrunk up under the shower of a tree; that was moving; so silent, so absorbed, that one passed, discreetly, timidly, as if in the presence of some sacred ceremony to interrupt which would have been impious. That was interesting. And so on into the flare and glare.⁵

This is a scene of the main streets in London. Peter is now going along these streets in order to attend Clarissa's party. Everyone seems to be enjoying his or her evening after finishing a day's work. Walking along the streets Peter is observing how people are enjoying themselves in their homes. But there is again a problem in the middle of the passage. Let us reread this part:

. . . one saw parties sitting over tables, young people slowly cir-

cling, conversations between men and women, maids idly looking out (a strange comment theirs, when work was done), stockings drying on top ledges, a parrot, a few plants. Absorbing, mysterious, of infinite richness, this life.

Here the "one" at the beginning is Peter himself now observing the whole scene. However, the parenthesized "*a strange comment theirs, when work was done*" is a little difficult to locate properly in the whole context of the scene. We can understand that Peter is now watching the maids idly looking out of the window after their work was finished. He thinks that such idleness is the maids' strange comment on the world. But whose observations are the following ". . . stockings drying on top ledges, a parrot, a few plants"? Are these again Peter's direct observations? I think that these domestic descriptions (stockings, a parrot or a few plants) are the observations of *the maids* who are now looking out of their window. Furthermore, these rather humble items seem to be making a sheer contrast with the preceding "parties sitting over tables, young people slowly circling, conversations between men and women," all of which indicate a merry atmosphere contrary to the lonely images of the maids now vacantly looking out.

On a superficial level, Peter is observing the maids looking out of the window and he thinks that such behavior may be the only way for them to relax after a day's work. But the next ". . . stockings drying . . . Absorbing, mysterious, of infinite richness, this life" seems to be representing a kind of double implications: one is to regard it as a mere continuation of Peter's direct observations or sensations on the whole scene; the other, to take it as the maids' strange comment on *their own dreary lives* (their stockings are drying on top ledges and

again, on the same ledges there are a parrot and a few plants. These items are the most precious things for them). So, the last "Absorbing, mysterious, of infinite richness, this life" may also be—by Woolf's deliberate ambiguity—the maids' sorrowful observations contrasting their own lives with the enjoyments of the young people.

(3)

"Dear Sir Harry!" she said, going up to the fine old fellow who had produced more bad pictures than any other two Academicians in the whole of St. John's Wood (they were always of cattle, standing in sunset pools absorbing moisture, or signifying, for he had a certain range of gesture, by the raising of one foreleg and the toss of the antlers, "the Approach of the Stranger"—all his activities, dining out, racing, were founded on cattle standing absorbing moisture in sunset pools).

"What are you laughing at?" she asked him. For Willie Titcomb and Sir Harry and Herbert Ainsty were all laughing. But no. Sir Harry could not tell Clarissa Dalloway (much though he liked her; of her type he thought her perfect, and threatened to paint her) his stories of the music-hall stage. He chaffed her about her party. He missed his brandy. These circles, he said, were above him. But he liked her; respected her, in spite of her damnable, difficult, upper-class refinement, which made it impossible to ask Clarissa Dalloway to sit on his knee. And up came that wandering will-o'-the-wisp, that vagous phosphorescence, old Mrs. Hilbery, stretching her hands to the blaze of his laughter (about the Duke and the Lady), which, as she heard it across the room, seemed to reassure her on a point which sometimes bothered her if she woke early in the morning and did not like to call her maid for a cup of tea: how it is certain we must die.

"They won't tell us their stories," said Clarissa.

"Dear Clarissa!" exclaimed Mrs. Hilbery. She looked to-night, she said, so like her mother as she first saw her walking in a garden in a grey hat.¹⁰

This is the scene of the party Clarissa is giving. Despite her original intention¹¹ something is going wrong ("Oh dear, it [is] going to be a failure . . ." ¹²). This scene indicates how the party is different from the one she had originally planned. In the first paragraph, there is Sir Harry who is described with satirical touches. He wants to ask Clarissa to sit on his knee. However, the problem of this scene consists in the latter half of the second paragraph. Let us read again this part:

And up came that wandering will-o'-the-wisp, that vagous phosphorescence, old Mrs. Hilbery, stretching her hands to the blaze of his laughter (about the Duke and the Lady), which, as *she* heard it across the room, seemed to reassure *her* on a point which sometimes bothered her if she woke early in the morning and did not like to call her maid for a cup of tea: how it is certain we must die. [Italics mine.]

This scene is seemingly very clear: old Mrs. Hilbery wanted to join in the laughter of Sir Harry by which she seemed to be reassured on the point "how it is certain we must die." However, I think that Mrs. Hilbery's appearance, not least her worrying about the problem of death, seems a little out of place here. She is merely a guest at the party. This is the first time she is introduced in this novel. Then suddenly we are informed that this old guest is secretly worrying about the problem of death. On the other hand, we are very familiar

with Clarissa, who is constantly pondering over this problem (though she is not necessarily worried by death). For example, she thinks:

All the same, that one day should follow another: Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday; that one should wake up in the morning; see the sky; walk in the park; meet Hugh Whitbread; then suddenly in came Peter; then these roses; it was enough. After that, how unbelievable death was!—that it must end; and no one in the whole world would know how she had loved it all; how, every instant . . .¹³

We can easily find many other examples throughout the novel describing Clarissa's view of death.¹⁴ So "a point which sometimes bothered her if she woke early in the morning and did not like to call her maid for a cup of tea: how it is certain we must die" seems to be a problem more appropriate to Clarissa than to Mrs. Hilbery. Clarissa, however, *can never be reassured* so easily on this problem. This is one of the main themes of this novel. Much less can she be reassured by the boisterous laughter of Sir Harry who intimated his vulgar intention of putting her on his knee.

To Clarissa, who is watching Mrs. Hilbery approaching Sir Harry, attracted by his laughter, the same laughter of the painter have sounded very hollow and sad, intimating the miserable failure of her party. "[*T*he blaze of his laughter" [*Italics mine.*] is not a blaze to warm Mrs. Hilbery but a fire burning *very cold* to symbolize the complete failure of Clarissa's plan (Sir Harry is laughing, obscenely talking of stories of the music-hall stage).

Side by side with the ominous expectation of the failure of her party there arises another expectation in Clarissa's mind: the problem of

death "which sometimes bothered her if she woke early in the morning" Though grammatically impossible (*she* and *her* in the paragraph quoted above clearly refer to Mrs. Hilbery), we are tempted to interpret this problem of death in terms of Clarissa's psychology rather than that of Mrs. Hilbery. Perhaps Clarissa is regarding Mrs. Hilbery, who is approaching the vulgar laughter of Sir Harry, as *an alter ego* of herself performing a foolish part contrary to her intention. To her Mrs. Hilbery is "that wandering will-o'-the-wisp, that vagous (=unsettled) phosphorescence" who is needlessly "stretching her hands to" that cold blaze symbolizing the failure of her party.

Conclusion

As I stated in the introduction, all the foregoing passages may be arbitrary selections, none of which has any correlation with the others in the original work. However, the point I wanted to illustrate regarding these separate (textually at least) selections is that the author's virtuosity can be best approached not in terms of the so-called thematic understanding (observing the fundamental view of life and death of this author symbolized in this work, for example), but in terms of an evaluation of a word, a phrase, or a sentence in a given paragraph, further enlarging this metaphorical (or connotative) interpretation to the whole context of that paragraph. I have offered several examples of such special interpretations. My intention was to reach the innermost implications the author wanted to give to a word or a phrase in that paragraph.

For example, the delicate correlation between a person's psychology and his or her actual surroundings is superbly represented in the case

of Clarissa Dalloway ruminating on her own frigidity in the cold bedroom, or in that of the maids vacantly looking out of the window after a day's work. Such an overlapping image of a person and his or her surroundings (mixture of a person's psychology and reality) seems to be possible only through the meticulous and sensitive usage of a word or a phrase, as was shown (I hope) in the foregoing discussions.

Mrs. Dalloway is not a flat story of Clarissa Dalloway's married life, nor a loose stream of consciousness of a frigid woman, but an aesthetic accumulation (or series) of images created by the superb artistry of this author.

Notes

- 1 Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1976), pp. 35-37.
- 2 The critics who suggest Clarissa's homosexuality seem to be putting an unnecessary importance on the remarks in the preceding quotation insinuating a lesbian interest: ". . . yet she could not resist sometimes yielding to the charm of a woman . . ." and ". . . she did undoubtedly then feel what men felt." Hence the hasty conclusions such as "Clarissa Dalloway . . . [is a] repressed homosexual who refuse[s] to conform to the stereotypical [pattern] ascribed to [her] sex" or, in another view, "Her own musings show her to be sexually frigid, her spontaneous lesbian impulses repressed." Suzette A. Henke, "Mrs. Dalloway, the Communion of Saints," *New Feminist Essays on Virginia Woolf*, ed. Jane Marcus (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1981) p. 134. Jane Novak, *The Razor Edge of Balance: A Study of Virginia Woolf* (University of Miami Press, 1975), p. 125.
- 3 Harvena Richter, *Virginia Woolf: The Inward Voyage* (Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 119n. Jean Alexander also says, "Such an interpretation ('Sapphic implications in *Mrs. Dalloway*') would be misleading . . ." Jean Alexander, *The Venture of Form in the Novels of Virginia Woolf* (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1974). p. 93.

- 4 *Mrs. Dalloway*, p. 60.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 165.
- 6 See *Mrs. Dalloway*, with introduction and notes by Tetsuo Snibata and Yasuo Yoshida (Tokyo, Kenkyusha, 1962), pp. 412-13.
- 7 *Mrs. Dalloway*, p. 50.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 167.
- 9 *Ibid.*, pp. 179-80.
- 10 *Ibid.*, pp. 192-93.
- 11 For example, there is a passage explaining why Clarissa gives a party: "[It was an] offering for the sake of offering, perhaps. Anyhow, it was her gift. Nothing else had she of the slightest importance" (p. 135).
- 12 *Mrs. Dalloway*, p. 184.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 135.
- 14 For example, the following are two passages suggesting Clarissa's view of death:

Did it matter then, she asked herself, walking towards Bond Street, did it matter that she must inevitably cease completely; all this must go on without her; did she resent it; or did it not become consoling to believe that death ended absolutely? (p. 11)

. . . "if it were now to die 'twere now to be most happy." That was her feeling—Othello's feeling, and she felt it, she was convinced, as strongly as Shakespeare meant Othello to feel it . . . (p. 39)

In a word, we can say that to Clarissa death is not a special event. She can accept it with good grace, though not necessarily willingly.