

**Twentieth Century Fiction**  
**Prof. Avishek Parui**  
**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Madras**

**Lecture - 31**  
**Mrs. Dalloway - Part 2**

(Refer Slide Time: 00:12)

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 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



So, hello and welcome to this NPTEL course entitled Twentieth Century Fiction, where we are looking at Virginia Woolf's novel, Mrs. Dalloway. So, we have had already a lecture on this and we talked about some of the themes that are, the over-arching themes of this particular novel. And this is obviously, a post first world war novel that occupies one day in London. And the references to war are very obliquely done though, so they are not direct graphic references of the war, but the effect of the war is very much there. It is some kind of a spectral presence across London across metropolis.

So, the war is there as some kind of a reminder. You know there are always these reminders of the war, the references of war which are made sometimes very indirectly, sometimes offhand. But the indirectness and offhand quality is exactly what makes the entire spectrality of war very menacing.

So, superficially this is about Mrs. Dalloway, Clarissa Dalloway trying to throw a party at a London home, and the whole day is a preparation for the party that she is making. And there is also the other characters Septimus Smith, who is the war veteran who has

come back to London after the war and he finds himself completely abandoned and alienated in a post-war metropolis.

Now, let us take a look at this section which should be on your screen where the references to war is made, are made very obliquely, very complexly. I mean with the sense that the novel is trying very hard, the narrative is trying very hard to tell us the war is over, everything is behind us. But at the same time the residual violence of the war is very much there and you know there is a degree of denial about the losses the war had created historically. So, this should be on your screen.

For it was the middle of June. The war was over, except for someone like Mrs. Foxcroft at the Embassy last night eating her heart out because the nice boy was killed and now the old Manor House must go to a cousin. So, again look at the way in which even the losses out of the war are made into some kind of a banal thing, right. So, because someone was killed, someone has been killed, some property will go to someone else. So, the banality of violence is something which has been described to us, hypocrisy of the upper middle class Londoners' over here.

(Refer Slide Time: 02:29)

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 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!



Our 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 the 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 up in a 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 man, the 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 shouting out, 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 green sea-green brooches from 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 the people were counters, courtiers once in a time of the Georges, she too, was going that very night to kindle and illuminate to give a 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 the back 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.

So, the entire passage is full of very happy images, images of, which carry a lot of life in them, vitality, life like qualities. But there is also this tension, that you can see very clearly that he is trying very hard to look happy, he is trying very hard to look very vital and you know is almost having a party every day. And there is this compulsive condition which is very thinly disguised in this particular passage. I mean trying to come out of the war, trying to move on from the war, as it were and this compulsion to move on from the war is exactly which contains the trauma of the war.

The fact that it has not been confronted with the fact that it has not been talked about, the war is over is some kind of a temporal thing. It is a thing of the past, some people have lost their lives, but then even those losses are mediated through some markers of banality, like you know property, the repossession of property by someone who is not supposed to possess it, etcetera. So, all these markers are given to us in just to sort of banalize the whole thing.

And there is this constant references to people having parties, people being happy, etcetera ok. So, and that is something which we should be payin some attention to in terms of looking at the spectrality of war in Mrs. Dalloway, ok.

(Refer Slide Time: 05:10)

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.



So, we have the reference of Peter Walsh, who was a former lover of Clarissa Dalloway and we are told that Peter has come back from the colonies, he has comeback from India. India, of course being a British colony at that time and he had married some Indian woman there presumably some Anglo-Indian women and that is something which is looked down upon by Clarissa Dalloway. It is like Peter marrying someone who is racially different, and that disregard, that disgust that Clarissa Dalloway has, is very important for us to notice because that is the typical white metropolitan disgust towards people of mixed races in the colony.

So, even though the Anglo-Indians are ethnically British or ethnically white because they have been quote unquote polluted with the mixing of another race, the sexual miscegenation that they have had, that makes them something to be looked down upon. And that is something that Clarissa Dalloway is exhibiting that disgust, is precisely because of her racial miscegenation that has that has embordered by the Anglo-Indians.

(Refer Slide Time: 06:13)

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.

She would not say of any one in the world now that they were this or were that. She felt very young; at the same time unspeakably aged. She sliced like a knife through everything; at the same time was outside, looking on. She had a perpetual sense, as she watched the taxi cabs, of being out, out, far out to sea and alone; she always had the feeling that it was very, very dangerous to live even one day. Not that she thought herself clever, or much out of the ordinary. How she had got through life on the few twigs of knowledge *Fraulein Daniels* gave them she could not think. She knew nothing; no language, no history; she scarcely read a book now, except memoirs in bed; and yet to her it was absolutely absorbing; all this; the cabs passing; and she would not say of Peter, she would not say of herself, I am this, I am that.



And this is the very unflattering depiction of Indian women, Anglo-Indian women, but those Indian women they presumably silly pretty flimsy and 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, talked of his whole life had been a failure. It made her angry still. So, Peter Walsh over here he embodies a very important symptom over here, a symptom of decadence, a symptom of tiredness and he too, he comes back to London and does not quite understand the city because he had left London many years ago and he has spend his time in the colonies and now he feels bit alienated.

So, you have different kinds, different experiences of alienation in Mrs. Dalloway, there is Septimus Smith of course, who comes back from the war and feels completely disconnected from the metropolis, there is Peter Walsh who come backs from the colonies and cannot quite connect to the vitality of London life and of course there is Clarissa Dalloway who feels alienated because of her gender, because of her seemingly seeming sort of insularity with the goings on all around him, ok. So, that is something that is important for us to understand, ok.

(Refer Slide Time: 07:19)

of being herself invisible, unseen, unknown, there being no more marrying, no more having of 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 any more; this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway.

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 the shop where her father had bought his suits for fifty years; a few pearls; salmon on an iceblock.

"That is all," she said, looking at the fishmonger's. "That is all," she repeated, pausing for a moment at the window of a glove shop where, before the War, you could buy almost perfect gloves. And her old Uncle William used to say a lady is known by her shoes and her gloves. He had turned on his bed one morning in the middle of the War. He had said, "I have had enough." Gloves and shoes; she had a passion for gloves; but her own daughter, her Elizabeth, cared not a straw for either of them.

Not a straw, she thought, going on up Bond Street to a shop where they kept flowers for her when she gave a party. Elizabeth really cared for



And now we have a reference to Bond Street. This is a commercial place in London where you have all these high-end shops, and we talked about, we will see how Bond Street is mentioned as this very fascinating, happy space. So, again we have this very compulsive consumerism which is coming out from the war and that compulsive consumerism, compulsive compulsion to its you know consumed by buying things by throwing parties, etcetera is part of the denial package, part of the denial narrative that is sort of termed, described and dramatized in Mrs. Dalloway.

So, it's like a conspicuous consumption of different things, right after the war just to prove, to hammer home the point that we have moved on from the war and that and you know that actually accentuates the spectrality of the war, that makes the war a more present thing, a more present phenomenon which is always there at the backdrop of this narrative.

So, we are told that 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 the shop where her father had bought his suits for fifty years; a few pearls; salmon on the iceblock. "That is all," she said, looking at the fishmonger's. "That is all." she repeated, pausing for a moment at the window of a glove shop where, before the War, you could buy almost perfect gloves.

And these are the little touches of Mrs. Dalloway which make it such an interesting and complex novel. The fact that we are told that before the war, from this particular shop you can make almost perfect gloves. The obvious implication is, post-war it is not so perfect anymore, the gloves are not so perfect anymore. The gloves are a bit you know disfigured, the gloves are a bit misshapen, and that there can be all kinds of readings out of it, there can, one of the reading obviously is that, as people come back from the war the veterans have come back from the war sometimes they had missing fingers. So, maybe the gloves had to be made differently, had to be designed differently post-war. So, the perfection of the gloves before the war is being contrasted with the imperfection and the imperfection of course, could be a medical or cosmetic compulsion after the war because of the sufferings the physical sufferings that the war had caused the people, ok.

And her old uncle William used to say that a lady is known by her shoes and her gloves. He had turned on his bed one morning in the middle of the War. He had said, "I have had enough." Gloves and shoes; she had a passion for gloves, but her own daughter, Elizabeth, could care not a straw for either of them. So, we have this generation gap which is beginning to be dramatized over here. Elizabeth Dalloway who is obviously, the daughter of Clarissa Dalloway seems to be very different from her mother. She does not care for the things that her mother had cared for. She did not care for gloves, she did not care for shoes, you know which is something that she had always been fascinated with, ok.

(Refer Slide Time: 10:02)

people who came to murder me and not care a thing about my experiences that the religious ecstasy made people callous (so did causes); dulled their feelings, for Miss Kilman would do anything for the Russians, starved herself for the Austrians, but in private inflicted positive torture, so insensitive was she, dressed in a green mackintosh coat. Year in year out she wore that coat; she perspired; she was never in the room five minutes without making you feel her superiority, your inferiority; how poor she was; how rich you were; how she lived in a slum without a cushion or a bed or a rug or whatever it might be, all her soul rusted with that grievance sticking in it, her dismissal from school during the War – poor embittered unfortunate creature! For it was not her one hated but the idea of her, which undoubtedly had gathered in to itself a great deal that was not Miss Kilman; had become one of those spectres with which one battles in the night; one of those spectres who stand astride us and suck up half our life-blood, dominators and tyrants; for no doubt with another throw of the dice, had the black been uppermost and not the white, she would have loved Miss Kilman! But not in this world. No.

It rasped her, though, to have stirring about in her this brutal



And then we are told how the war which was obviously, fought on a more macro space and had its extensions and spillovers in more domestic, more intimate spaces. And then you know there is a description over here which is interesting. Her dismissal from school during the War, poor embittered unfortunate creature. This has been we are talking about someone called Miss Kilman and you know who was obviously, a sorry figure. For it was not her one hated but the idea of her, which undoubtedly had gathered into itself a great deal that was not Miss Kilman; had become one of the spectres with which one battles in the night. One of those spectres, one of the spectres who stand astride for us and suck up half our life blood, dominators and tyrants; for no doubt with another throw of the dice, had the black been uppermost and not the white, she would have been, she would have loved Miss Kilman. But in this world. No.

So, again the whole idea of Miss Kilman being this other woman over here, racially other you know symbolically other, culturally other and she is universally detested because of the cultural conditions around London at that particular point of time. And that spectrality of the war is very much there, and that spectrality of the war it further accentuates racism it further accentuates cultural othering, it further accentuates xenophobia because the war had created such lot of trauma, such a lot of violence in the minds of people and that obviously, generates xenophobia which is very palpably be present in Mrs. Dalloway, ok.

(Refer Slide Time: 11:27)

were the evening and girls in muslin frocks came out to pick sweet peas and roses after the superb summer's day, with its almost blue-black sky, its delphiniums, its carnations, its arum lilies was over; and it was the moment between six and seven when every flower – roses, carnations, irises, lilac – glows; white, violet, red, deep orange; every flower seems to burn by itself, softly, purely in the misty beds; and how she loved the grey-white moths spinning in and out, over the cherry pie, over the evening primroses!

And as she began to go with Miss Pym from jar to jar, choosing, nonsense, nonsense, she said to herself, more and more gently, as if this beauty, this scent, this colour, and Miss Pym liking her, trusting her, were a wave which she let flow over her and surmount that hatred, that monster, surmount it all; and it lifted her up and up when – oh! a pistol shot in the street outside!

"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.



Now, the next section is interesting because till now we have seen a series of very tranquil abundant images of flowers, and jams, and lovely shops in Bond Street, and everything seems to very tranquil and seamlessly beautiful, and everything seems to be very functional as well in this metropolis, and the war is just a historical reference is something which happened temporarily at some point of the past. But there is no point till this point, there is no reference to the war having created any difference in a cognitive system. Any difference in the way people perceive and cognize things.

And then you have an example of this how a simple accident or a simple sound in this street can actually shock people because of the constant fear of bombardment, the constant fear of being attacked by bombs and how that it is sort of eating into the nervous systems. So, that any sound which create will create a start now, any sound will create a traumatic you know trigger now, a Deja vu now ok.

And this is the reference that is mentioned over here with the sound of the pistol shot in the street outside, there is some kind of a gun shot in the street outside and everyone gets startled, everyone gets you know straightened up because of a gun sound.

“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.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:44)

And as she began to go with Miss Pym from jar to jar, choosing, nonsense, nonsense, she said to herself, more and more gently, as if this beauty, this scent, this colour, and Miss Pym liking her, trusting her, were a wave which she let flow over her and surmount that hatred, that monster, surmount it all; and it lifted her up and up when — oh! a pistol shot in the street outside!

“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



The violent explosion which made Mrs. Dalloway jump and Miss Pym go to the window and apologize came from a motor car which had drawn to the side of a pavement precisely opposite Mulberry's shop window. That is a perfectly normal accident, there is a perfectly machining accident in the metropolis, but then the violent explosion reminds some of other serious and more sinister explosions which had happened in the war. So, this is a Déjà vu, a trigger which is constantly created which can constantly be created by any kind of sound in the post-war metropolis.

And that is what I meant when I said the war as I said is a spectral presence, it is never really away from the minds of people to such an extent that any sound, any noise which reminds of of any explosion will only trigger those traumatic memories in the mind. So, everyone startles, everyone jumps up in fear whenever a similar kind of sound is heard, a violent explosion.

So, passers-by, Hugh 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.

(Refer Slide Time: 13:45)



monster, surmount it all; and it lifted her up and up when — oh! a pistol shot in the street outside!

"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



So, someone of some eminence was passing by. It could be a minister, it could be a person from the royalty, but someone was in the car. And a passersby could just see a glimpse of the person from inside the window and you know there was this, you know one little moment when a male hand drew the blind and there was nothing to be seen

except a square of dove-grey, right. So, again the visual narrative or the visual grammar over here is very cinematic. These are certain close-up, an accelerated close-up, on a particular person's facial features to indicate the persona to indicate the character of the person who is there but it is never quite mentioned who is the person. So, the entire representation is very metonymic in quality, very fragmented in quality, ok. So, that is something which we which we which we see.

(Refer Slide Time: 14:27)

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 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



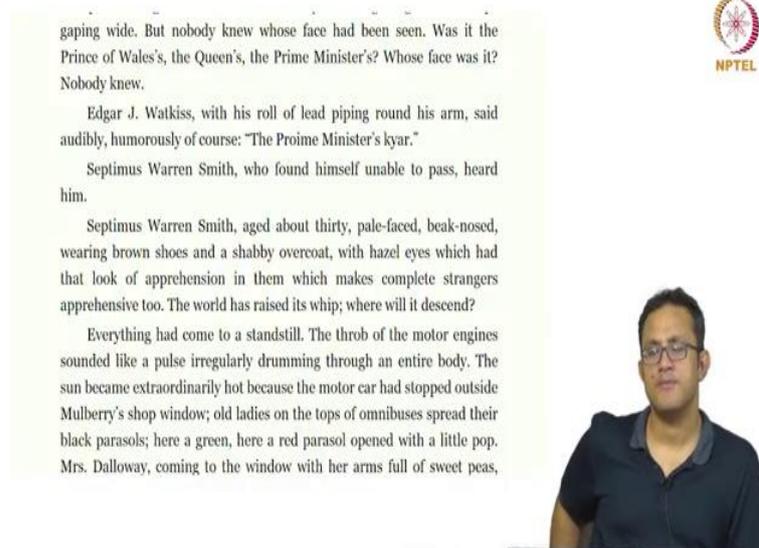
Yet rumours were at once in circulation from the middle of Bond Street to Oxford Street on one side, to Atkinson's scent shop on the other, passing invisibly, inaudibly, like a cloud, swift, veil-like upon hills, falling indeed with something of a cloud's sudden sobriety and stillness upon faces with a which a second before had been had had utterly disorderly. But now mystery had brushed them with a wing; they heard the voice of authority the spirit of religion was abroad with the with his eyes, with her eyes bandaged tight and her lips gaping wide. But nobody knew whose face had been seen. Was it the Prince of Wales, the Queen's, the Prime Minister's? Whose face who was it? Nobody knew.

So, again this is the very contagious quality of gossip, a very contagious quality of rumours which are in circulation, it just spreads like clouds across vales and hills; so, it is almost like a Wordsworthian quality about how rumours spread across the city. So, there is a talk about people seeing someone of importance, but no none quite knew who

exactly the person was and there are all kinds of speculations made. Was it the Prince of Wales? Was it the Queen's face? Was it the Prime Minister's face? Nobody knew.

Edgar J. Watkiss, with his roll of lead piping around his arms, said audibly, humorously of course: "The Prime Minister's kyar." So, again the accent is important, the prime minister's kyar, it sounds like a cockney accent that has been parodied over here. And now we come to the other important character in Mrs. Dalloway and that is Septimus Smith.

(Refer Slide Time: 16:00)



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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 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,

Septimus Warren Smith. So, someone has been a war, a war veteran has come back from the war and now obviously, completely enervated by the trauma of war someone who suffers shell shock, so to say, and most important, someone who feels like an outsider to the metropolis as well as to the people treating him in medical science. So, no one in medical science knows what is the problem with Septimus Smith. So, he becomes the unaccommodative man, the abandoned man to a certain extent.

So, the first reference to Septimus Smith obviously, reflects his condition. Septimus warren Smith, aged about thirty, pale-face, beak-nosed, wearing brown shoes and a shabby overcoat, with hazel eyes which had the look of apprehension in them which makes complete strangers apprehensive too. The world has raised its whip; where will it descend. So, he obviously, you know there is a look of apprehension in his face all the time which makes other people looking at him apprehensive as well. So, presumably he

suffers some post-trauma anxiety, and there is always this anxious look in his face, anxiety embodied by him and that is something which we are told over and over again. So, he is someone who is suffering trauma, the trauma of war, the violence of war is sort of suffering over and over again, and that anxiety is showing spectacularly in his face.

So, Septimus also found himself unable to pass, it is like almost a crowd you know of people. Now, what is interesting is to see how despite the fact that is you know, Mrs. Dalloway and Septimus never get to meet each other in this novel, their paths crisscross all the time, in the same way as the narrators crisscross all the time. So, the narrators, each narrator sometimes inhabits the character in someone else's narrative, and at only the end of the novel do you find Clarissa Dalloway having some degree of empathetic gaze at Septimus when Septimus kills himself by jumping from window, and his broken body is carried over by an ambulance, Clarissa Dalloway hears the ambulance's siren and feels sorry for the person inside.

So, that establishes an empathy between the two characters because both are equally repressed. And as I mentioned at the very beginning of this fiction, this particular novel, it is very uncanny the similarity that was there between the shell-shocked male soldier and a quote unquote "hysterical" woman, who was confined to her bedroom, was confined to her house, who was forcibly fed a particular diet to be strong in nerves again.

How it is important you know there is a degree of overlap medical existential overlap experiential overlap with the shell-shocked soldier whom nobody seem to understand, nobody seem to have any clue of what really happened to him. So, in that sense they too are abandoned, they too are unaccommodated, they too are misunderstood, and this degree of being abandoned unaccommodated and misunderstood is something which connects Septimus Smith and Mrs. Dalloway in a very experiential and existential level.

So, we are told this should be on your screen. Everything had come to a standstill. The throb of the motor engines sounded like a pulse irregularly drumming through an entire body. So, if you remember waste land, the Fire Sermon, we had this image of the taxi throbbing waiting, so again the machines were becoming more human-like and humans becoming more machine-like. This is exactly what happens in Mrs. Dalloway as well. The machines are becoming more and more humanized, their moves would like, almost human motor movements, whereas the human motor movements are getting more and

more numbed, that is any degree of sensation left – there is very little sensation left, very little cognition left, so the human nerves are drying up. So, the entirety of Mrs. Dalloway is about a nervous condition and this obviously connects to Georg Simmel’s argument of modernity being a nervous condition as I may have mentioned already, ok.

So, the throb of the motor engine sounded like a pulse irregularly drumming through an entire body. The sun became extraordinarily hot because the motor car had stopped outside the 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.

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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 sallow pointed face; an Italian girl.

But Lucrezia herself could not help looking at the motor car and the tree pattern on the blinds. Was it the Queen in there – the Queen going shopping?



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Now obviously, the last bid is the very clear depiction of the purposelessness that Septimus Smith suffered. There is no purpose in his life, he has just come back from the war and we are also told that he is just back from the war. So, he senses, he experiences a sense of enervation, a sense of liquidation, everything is being liquated, his sense has been shut down essentially. There is no empathy left as such. And this lack of empathy is interesting, because that empathy is what enervates him completely, right. And that also includes, informs his purposelessness to a certain extent.

So, the whole idea of rooted to the pavement for what purpose, but for what purpose and the question comes again for a purpose, but what purpose, right. So, the purposelessness is important for us to understand over here, ok. And that is something which we need to pay some attention to, ok.

So, the whole idea of purposelessness is important for us to understand because you know here we have a man, who once had a lot of purpose, who once was presumably patriotic, went to the war, fought for the war. He got involved in very hyper masculinist machinery of violence and now that he is back from the war, he finds himself in complete directionless-ness. So, the complete directionless quality of Septimus, a purposeless quality of Septimus is what is being emphasized over and over again.

He does not have anything to look forward to. So, in that sense he becomes a very perversely timeless man. So, in the sense that time has left him, he does not have a past, you know all his past, this traumatic, you know everything is past everything is traumatic for him. The present is very fragile for him, he does not have a future; there is no integration possible for him in this post-war metropolis that becomes an important situation for us to understand, ok.

“So, Let us go on, Septimus,” said his wife, the little woman, with large eyes and sallow painted pointed face; an Italian girl. So, it is also important to see how many white British men over here, they end up marrying non-British women. So, you know Septimus over here has married to an Italian girl, and it is interesting because Italy was not really an ally of England in the First World War. So, that relationship that they had, the marital relationship he develops with this girl and then obviously, then they are marrying each other is important against the political sort of context in which this novel is written. And her name is Lucrezia.

But Lucrezia herself could not help looking at the motor car and the tree pattern on the blinds. Was it the Queen in there, the Queen going shopping?

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“Let us go on, Septimus,” said his wife, a little woman, with large eyes in a sallow pointed face; an Italian girl.

But Lucrezia herself could not help looking at the motor car and the tree pattern on the blinds. Was it the Queen in there – the Queen going shopping?

The chauffeur, who had been opening something, turning something, shutting something, got on to the box.

“Come on,” said Lucrezia.

But her husband, for they had been married four, five years now, jumped, started, and said, “All right!” angrily, as if she had interrupted him.



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But her husband, for they had been married for four, five years now, jumped, started, and said, “All right” angrily, as if she had interrupted him, right.

So, there is a very jumpy quality about Septimus, is a very edgy quality about Septimus, it is interesting because he is a very fragile person, his entire cognitive system, his entire nervous system is sort of informed by fragility and that fragility obviously, comes from a trauma and this constant trauma, and repression that he suffered in the war. And obviously, the trench trauma is important for us to understand because, you know a lot of the shell shock medical condition, actually emerge from the trenches, sometimes it was not really about getting hit by a shell or getting hit by any artillery bombing. It is just the entire experience of being in a very claustrophobic space of the trench and waiting for a bomb to come. And that wait for a bomb to come, the wait for violence to come in a very claustrophobic closed space that in a way generated the trauma.

So, in that sense the close confines to the trenches and the close confines of the domestic house you know that is sort of connected, the shell-shocked male soldier, and a Victorian hysteric woman and they seem to have a degree of empathy with each other in this particular novel as well. Because Clarissa Dalloway, is also very confined woman, is also some someone who does not really have a lot of agency, apart from the superficial shopping that she does.

And Septimus too obviously, as we have just seen is a purposeless, directionless man. So, in that sense there is a degree of empathy they have for each other, although they never meet in this novel and that is an interesting crisscrossing that we see Woolf performing, ok.

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SHUTTING SOMETHING, GOING TO THE USA.

"Come on," said Lucrezia.

But her husband, for they had been married four, five years now, jumped, started, and said, "All right!" angrily, as if she had interrupted him.

People must notice; people must see. People, she thought, looking at the crowd staring at the motor car; the English people, with their children and their horses and their clothes, which she admired in a way; but they were "people" now, because Septimus had said, "I will kill myself"; an awful thing to say. Suppose they had heard him? She looked at the crowd. Help, help! she wanted to cry out to butchers' boys and women. Help! Only last autumn she and Septimus had stood on the Embankment wrapped in the same cloak and, Septimus reading a paper instead of talking, she had snatched it from him and laughed in the old man's face who saw them! But failure one conceals. She must take him away into some park.

"Now we will cross," she said.

She had a right to his arm, though it was without feeling. He would



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So, the whole idea of Septimus, the transition of Septimus has from being a warrior, from being a war hero, to someone who is shivering, someone who is a nervous wreck now is something which is suffered by Lucrezia, you know her wife his wife. And this romantic past this very interestingly glorified past, is constantly contrasted with a very enervated and fragile present, that Septimus inhabits now.

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"Now we will cross," she said.

She had a right to his arm, though it was without feeling. He would give her, who was so simple, so impulsive, only twenty-four, without friends in England, who had left Italy for his sake, a piece of bone.

The motor car with its blinds drawn and an air of inscrutable reserve proceeded towards Piccadilly, still gazed at, still ruffling the faces on both sides of the street with the same dark breath of veneration whether for Queen, Prince, or Prime Minister nobody knew. The face itself had been seen only once by three people for a few seconds. Even the sex was now in dispute. But there could be no doubt that greatness was seated within; greatness was passing, hidden, down Bond Street, removed only by a hand's-breadth from ordinary people who might now, for the first and last



"Now we will cross," she said.

She had a right to his arm, although it was without feeling. He would give to her, or give her who is so simple, so impulsive only twenty-four, without friends in England, and who had left Italy for his sake, a piece of bone, right.

So, again we have another example of an alienated person. So, Lucrezia who is an Italian woman, Septimus was married to, she finds herself completely homeless in London. She does not know anyone. She cannot connect to anyone, and as I mentioned the political context is interesting because Italy was not an ally of England at that point of time. And yet we have an English soldier marrying an Italian woman and coming bringing her back to London and that becomes very interesting you know,

It sort of undercuts the political alliances at that point of time which obviously shows how human relationships are formed despite the political relationships, and how the

political relationships ended up consuming the human relationships in the case of Septimus consuming him quite biologically, right.

Now, the one phrase which keeps coming over and over again is without feeling, and the feeling-less-ness of Septimus is important because it is almost like a cognitive condition. He loses his whole idea of attachment, the whole ability to attach to things has gone, because of his traumatic experience, he cannot empathize with things, he cannot feel things. So, he becomes essentially a blank sheet, a completely emptied out person, cognitively speaking and this is obviously, a neural such a situation a medical situation. But also, a very deep and dark existential situation and this medical existential trauma of Septimus is interesting because that generates the feeling-less-ness, that generates his inability to connect to people at the level of empathy, at level of imagination it becomes more and more inward looking, more introspective and the introspective inward looking self begins to cannibalize a self in a way that you know it takes away, it eats up all his feelings. So, he consumes himself in that sense.

So, the violence of war is not just a physical violence of people dying in the war. And we have examples of people referred to Septimus's own friends who have died in the war, which in turn is gets him survive his guilt of having not died and his friends have died that gives him some sort of guilt which adds to his trauma. So, it is not, just about that violence of dying in the war, but it is also this endless process of dying which happens post-war and that makes it more painful for Septimus. And we see how the entire city of London is trying very hard, and almost making a very compulsive, a neurotic attempt to move on from the war, everyone is busy shopping, throwing parties, looking very happy etcetera and that becomes a very compulsive neurotic condition, to very quickly move on a very heavy hand away from the war and he gets left behind.

So, again that sense, as I have just mentioned he becomes very perversely timeless, right, not in positive sense of timelessness, but being left behind by time, by being abandoned by time. Right, so everyone is moving on very quickly and he cannot move on because he cannot connect to things, right. And that becomes part of the problem, part of the trauma, part of the existential alienation that he faces as a human subject, ok.

So, the whole idea of being unaccommodated, the whole idea of being alienated you know gets more and more gets replayed at so many levels. Peter Walsh comes back from

India. He cannot connect to London anymore because he has spent a lot of time in India, in the colonies, he is married to an Anglo-Indian woman, who Clarissa Dalloway hates because of her racial miscegenation. Septimus coming back from the war, cannot connect to London who is which is very quickly trying to move on as a celebratory metropolis hiding, its mourning status. Cannot connect you know, he as a war hero, he comes back and completely feels alienated from the civilian life.

Lucrezia, over here who is an Italian by birth who is linguistically cut out from London, who is culturally cut off from London who cannot connect to any part of London at all. So, we have all different degrees of disconnect, embodied by different people and of course, Clarissa Dalloway was very much part of the mainstream upper-class British gentility. But she feels completely alienated because all she has is superficial markers of connect, like shopping, throwing parties, etcetera, there is no real human organic connect that she has.

So, this constant drama of disconnect which Mrs. Dalloway keeps playing over and over again, by portraying several characters is what makes it such a complex novel, especially given the backdrop of the First World War which is there as some kind of a spectral presence, a hauntological presence, as it were. It is there as well as not there it is not being talked about, but there everyone has lost something at the war, someone in the war, everyone secretly mourning, although trying to look very happy. So, that hauntological spectral presence of the war is something which must or can never be overlooked in a way that Woolf presents this novel.

So, we continue with this discussion in the next lecture.

Thank you for your attention.