

AN APPROACH TO THE LANGUAGE OF MRS. DALLOWAY¹

1. INTRODUCTION.

The discussion of the language of a literary work, in this case Virginia Woolf's **Mrs. Dalloway**, involves assuming a linguistic position in our approach. One such linguistic position is to consider the literary sign in the image and likeness of the linguistic sign, i.e., to establish a parallel between the two signs². Hence, the literary sign will possess a signifier and a signified. In abstract terms, the literary signified will be the plot, which we shall call **récit**, and the literary signifier will be the language, which we shall call **discourse**.

The **discourse** contains the **récit**, and draws it along, but each has its relevance within the literary work. In most classic novels, it is the **récit** which stands out; in Modernism and post-Modernism, what is highlighted is **discourse**.

As we have already said, the **récit** is the plot, and here we distinguish a series of functions corresponding to the patterns repeated through the narrative. Following Greimas³, these functions may be defined as semantic units formed by the condensation of syntagmatic units relating to movements or spheres of action. In speaking of semantic units, we should bear in mind that the **récit** takes the places of the **signified**, as in the pairing **signifier/signified**, to use the well known terminology of Saussure⁴, or **expression/content**, following the metalanguage of Hjelmslev⁵.

Among the functions listed by Greimas, after Propp⁶, we might select the follo-

1. This paper was originally delivered as a lecture in Málaga University's **Homenaje a Virginia Woolf** (April, 1982). I should like to express my gratitude to Mr. Brian Hughes for assistance in the revision and translation of the text.

2. Dubois, J. **Rhétorique générale**. Paris: Larousse, 1970, page 187.

3. Greimas, J.A. **Sémantique structurale**. Paris: Larousse, 1966, page 19.

4. de Saussure, F.A. **Course in General Linguistics**, (trans. Wade Baskin). New York: Philosophical Library, 1959.

5. Hjelmslev L. **Prolegomena to a Theory of Language** (trans. Francis J. Whitfield). Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1961.

6. Propp, V. «Morphology of the Folk-tale», **International Journal of American Linguistics**, vol. 22.4., Indiana University Press, 1958.

wing examples: absence, interdiction, violation, delivery, fraud, complicity, villainy, lack, mediation, departure, struggle, victory, return, etc. etc.

In Thackeray's **Vanity Fair**, Becky, Rawdon and Lord Steine perform some of the quoted functions, as do Sarah, Maurice and Henry in Graham Greene's **The End of the Affair**. However, in **Mrs. Dalloway** there is virtually no plot: what matters is the emotions, sensations and recollections of the characters one day in June, 1923, in London. It could be said that there is a sub-plot involving Septimus Smith, Dr. Holmes, the psychiatrist Sir W. Bradshaw and Septimus's Italian wife Lucrecia.

The main plot is very straightforward: Clarissa Dalloway, aged 52, gives a party in the evening, but before this, in the morning, she sets out to buy flowers in a shop where she is known. In the course of the day she comes into contact with a variety of people, the most unpleasant of whom is perhaps Miss Kalman, a religious bigot who tries to win over Clarissa's daughter, Elizabeth. The brilliance of the party is overshadowed by the news of the unexpected death of Septimus, who has committed suicide by throwing himself out of a window.

We said earlier that what matters most in **Mrs. Dalloway** are sensations, emotions and recollections. And it is here that discourse overrides *récit*, since the expression of these experiences belong to linguistic artifice taken in its most etymological sense.

The study of discourse falls under what is known as textual linguistics, which can take two directions, either **macro-linguistics**, which would be concerned with large-scale linguistic items, such as chapters or paragraphs; or **micro-linguistics**, which examines linguistic items within a specific, limited field. We have chosen the second of these, and for our purpose, we have selected the discourse which runs from the point in the *récit* when Mrs. Dalloway **departs** from her house to buy the flowers until she **returns** home with them. The passage runs, in the edition used for the present essay, from page 5 to page 28⁷.

Within the discourse contained therein, we have been concerned with three linguistic components: morphosyntax, lexis and phonology. There is a fourth relevant component —the graphic component— which we have included under the morphosyntactic and phonological components, since punctuation, graphically reflects, on the one hand, the limits of the utterances and their syntactic ordering in the form of clauses, and on the other hand, the various tonemes or information curves of expressions of surprise, joy, consternation, etc.

7. Woolf, Virginia. **Mrs. Dalloway**. London: Triad Granada, 1982. (Published in 1925 by The Hogarth Press, London).

2. THE MORPHO-SYNTACTIC COMPONENT

We shall select for examination five features of the morpho-syntactic component of the discourse which pertains to the idiolect of Virginia Woolf in **Mrs. Dalloway**. These are:

- (a) Connectives and asyndeton.
- (b) Atypical thematic organisation.
- (c) Anacoluton and relatives.
- (d) Exuberant profusion of words ending in **-ing**.
- (e) Affected features of syntax.

(a) Connectives and asyndeton

To begin with, the reader's attention is arrested by the extremely frequent use of the causal conjunction «for». Causal and final clauses are very necessary in expressing our ideas, virtually indispensable, since all actions have a cause and a reason (causal clauses) or some purpose (final clauses). But though the causal conjunction par excellence is «because», it seldom appears in the text; its place is taken by «for», which, moreover, usually occupies a position other than the classic one, its own place properly so called. Grammar reserves the causal conjunction «as» and «since» for cases in which the subordinate clause precedes the principal clause: **As** I don't like it, I will say nothing; **since** it's too late, let's, finish it tomorrow, etc.

In **Mrs. Dalloway**, however, «as» and «since» are rarely apparent as causals, and in the position which is characteristically theirs, «for» appears instead. Between pages 5 and 28, an average occurrence of 3 causal «for's» may be calculated per page, almost half of them in the initial position:

- For Lucy had her work cut out for her (page 5)
- For it had always seemed to her (page 5)
- ... for his letters were awfully dull (page 5)
- For having lived in Westminster... (page 6)
- For Hugh always made her feel... (page 7)
- For Mrs. Walker was Irish and whistled all day long (page 28)

This approximate average occurrence per page of the conjunction «for» is constant throughout the pages which we are concerned with here. Why, then, is «because» not used as a stylistic variant for «for»? «Because» is used on a very few occasions like this:

- Mrs. Foxcroft... eating her heart out **because** that nice boy was killed (page 6).

In their dictionary of usage⁸, Bergen and Cornelia Evans state that «in current English a **for**-clause never precedes the other statement,» and «the conjunction **for** always shows that a following statement is being offered as a **reason** (my italics) for something that has just been said». «The word **because**, on the other hand, always introduces a clause», and «in current speech is preferred to **for** because we feel that **facts** (my italics) are more interesting than opinions».

We may, therefore, draw three conclusions concerning the use of «for» and «because» in **Mrs. Dalloway**:

1) Virginia Woolf does not exactly abide by the rules, in her collocation of «for», given her persistent tendency to place it initially.

2) Her use of «because» is consistent, since this causal conjunction may be used at will, but particularly when speaking of facts: «... because that nice boy was killed (page 5)» is a fact, whereas «For Lucy had her work had out for her (page 6)», or «for his letters were awfully dull (page 5)» are mere opinions.

3) There is a preference, or a marked taste, for the conjunction «for», perhaps with the aim of imparting, consciously or unconsciously, to the text that artificial or bookish tone that Bergen and Cornelia Evans note⁹.

In any case, it is not only the causal conjunction «for» which has a high level of appearances in the text; the preposition «for» too, with its considerable semantic «polisemy», is omnipresent:

for a girl of eighteen as she then was (page 5)

for that very reason (page 6)

not buy things rashly for Elizabeth (page 7)

she had a passion for gloves (page 12)

Nevertheless, this preponderance of the preposition «for» is justified by its considerable semantic wealth. And yet it is surprising that the preposition «for» and the conjunction «for» are frequently found near one another, without any attempt being made to avoid the possible cacophony:

For Lucy had her work cut out **for** her (page 5, my italics)

Virginia Woolf cannot be said to be an advocate of «polysyndeton» or use of conjunctions in her discourse, since she does not take advantage of the abundant variety of such connectives offered by grammar. She makes use of the inevitable

8. Evans, Bergen and Cornelia Evans. **A Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage**. New York: Random House, 1957, page 184.

9. Op. cit.

«and's» and «but's»; beyond these, the most apparent are the temporal conjunction «as» and the concessive «though». The former serves to remind us continually of the simultaneity of actions, especially those of the body and the course or stream of consciousness:

- as the day wore on (page 6)
- as he bustled on (page 7)
- as she watched the taxicabs (page 9)
- as she joined that (page 25)
- as she took the pad (page 27)

The concessive «though» is the only one of its kind that we have detected, and it is used to reduce the intensity or deflate the tone of what is said:

- though she was over fifty (page 5)
- though it was still so early (page 6)
- though Richard was nearly driven mad by him (page 8)
- though she had borne about her... the grief... (page 9)

Nevertheless, what we have said about the three conjunctions «for», «as» and «though» does not imply that there is not an overall preference for asyndeton, or omission of connectives or conjunctions. The mind, on occasion, takes flight: thoughts, ideas, concepts, sensations follow one another pell-mell, and there is no «linguistic» time to link them:

But no; there he was; still sitting alone on the seat, in his shabby overcoat, his legs crossed, staring, talking aloud (page 23).

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... (page 6)

(b) Atypical thematic organisation

Linguistics distinguishes between utterance and sentence. The sentence is subject to certain norms of syntactic organisation; usually, in an affirmative sentence, subject precedes predicate, and the complements and extensions must follow a certain order. In utterance, such syntactic rigour does not exist: we thus have a semantic chain which has not yet passed through the final semantic filter. However, utterance possesses communication; the message is not blocked or interrupted, since both the linguistic and the situational contexts help to interpret it. We shall call the first semantic unit the **theme** of a message, and the information following it the **commentary**. In the typical affirmative sentence, the theme usually coincides with the subjects, and the commentary with the predicate. Such coinci-

dence is frequent in a considerable majority of the sentences of the traditional novel, as can be demonstrated empirically in traditional novels such as Greene's **The End of the Affair** or Jane Austen's **Sense and Sensibility**.

In Mrs. Dalloway, utterance wins out over sentence since the message has not gone through the whole strict process of syntax. What immediately arises is the first thing that springs to mind, and an atypical thematic organisation thus appears. For example, instead of writing «Scrope Purvis thought her a charming woman,» Virginia Woolf writes: «A charming woman, Scrope Purvis thought her» (page 5). The same occurs with:

out it boomed (page 6)

in people's eyes, in the swing, tramp and trudge... was what she loved (page 6)

Cold, heartless, a prude he called her (page 9)

the perfect hostess he called her (page 9)

but failure one conceals (page 16)

away and away the aeroplane shot (page 26)

(c) Anacoluton and relatives.

The foregoing atypical thematic organisation, characterised by the non-coincidence with the classical order of subject and predicate of the openings of many sentences and by the preponderance of utterance over sentence, is closely connected to anacoluton, which we must now discuss. By this term is meant the absence of syntactic rigour of a message through the endless clustering of sentences and clauses, or their continuous branching.

In **Mrs. Dalloway**, one feels that the absence of semantic rigour is a result of the desire to reflect the instantaneousness or simultaneousness of thoughts, ideas, concepts, sensations and feelings. Linguistics must, of course, find a place for these. In almost every case, the reader is in a position to reconstruct the semantic rigour, since the resources used are parenthetical sentences, shown graphically by commas, dashes, brackets or relative pronouns, e.g.:

Lady Berborough, who opened a bazaar, they said, with the telegram in her hand, John, her favourite, killed (page 6).

Instead of saying, «As she watched the taxicabs, she had a perpetual sense of being out,» which is already sufficiently suggestive of the simultaneousness of the actions, the authoress, for greater immediacy, brings in an anacoluton which interrupts the normal order:

She had a perpetual sense, as she watched the taxicabs, of being out (page 9).

In other cases, a conjunction is interrupted by a parenthetical clause formed by a prepositional phrase, followed by a non-defining relative clause, e.g.:

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 (page 5).

On almost every page, we find parenthetical clauses separated by commas, like the just mentioned, or by brackets or dashes, like the following:

and yet (for a girl of eighteen as she then was) solemn (page 5) a suspense (but that might be her heart, affected, they said, by influenza) before Big Ben strikes (page 6)

when millions of things had utterly vanished —how strange it was!— a few sayings like this about cabbages (page 5)

For having lived in Westminster —how many years now? over twenty— one feels even in the... (page 6)

The reader is aware that here it is the brain, the intellect that is at work, not only through the repeated anacoluta, but also through the constant use in the text of «he» or «she thought». In some cases, as on page 26, «she thought» appears as many as five times.

There are other cases, like the exhibited in the next quotation, when there are so many split or superadded clauses that when the writer wishes to return to the clause originally left dangling in suspense («made her feel...»), it becomes necessary to restructure it syntactically:

For Hugh always made her **feel**, as he bustled on, raising his hat rather extravagantly and assuring her that she might be a girl of eighteen, and of course he was coming to her party tonight, Evelyn absolutely insisted, only a little late he might be after the party to which he had to take one of Jim's boys **she always felt** a little skimpy beside Hugh; schoolgirlish; but attached to him (page 8, my italics).

As we see, the infinitive without «to», «feel», has been changed to the personal form, «she felt».

In still other cases, the syntactic rigour is not lost, and it is the semantic rigour of the discourse that disappears: clause follows clause without any semantic connexion:

Ah, but that aeroplane! Hadn't Mrs. Dempster always longed to see foreign parts? She had a nephew, a missionary. **It soared and shot.** She al-

ways went on the sea at Margate, not out o'sight of land, but she had no patience with women who were afraid of water. **It swept and fell.** Her stomach was in her mouth. **Up again.** There's a fine young feller aboard of it, Mrs. Dempster wagered, and **away and away it went fast and fading** (page 26; my italics correspond to the movement of the aeroplane).

In any case, the abundant use of relative clusters help to create the effect sought after by anacoluton:

Look, the unseen bade him, the voice **which** now communicated with him **who** was the greatest of mankind, Septimus, lately taken from life to death, the Lord **who** had come to renew society, who lay like a coverlet... (page 24, my italics).

(d) Words ending in «-ing»

After perusing a few lines, or perhaps a couple of pages, the reader notices an exuberance of words ending in «-ing», which produces a peculiar music and rhythm. Bearing in mind that a large number of English words are monosyllabic (walk, run, find, go, etc.), the constant repetition of the unstressed syllable «-ing» gives the utterance a special rhythm (□ □) which, together with the music produced by the lightness of the vowel /i/ of the morpheme «-ing», creates a special symphonic effect in this prose, allowing us to refer to this as a «poematic» novel:

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?» (page 5, my italics).

In contrast with the immediacy we referred to earlier in discussing anacoluton and thematic organisation, the «-ing» forms, owing to their descriptive nature, produce an effect of lingering slowness, apart from the musicality achieved by this rhythmic prose.

This form occurs in all its possible functions:

- 1) Substantive: It was his **sayings** one remembered (page 5).
- 2) Verbal Noun: She had the **makings** of the perfect hostess (page 9).
- 3) Gerund: How one sees it so, **making** it up, **building** it round, **tumbling** it, **creating** it (page 6).
- 4) Attributive Adjective: A charming woman (page 5); **laughing** girls (page 6); a beating, a stirring of **galloping** ponies, **tapping** cricket bats (page 6).
- 5) Premodified attribute: slow-**swimming** happy ducks (page 7).
- 6) Post modifier: the pouched birds **waddling** (page 8); the sparrows **fluttering, rising** and **falling** (page 22); boys **carrying** stumps (page 24).

- 7) Gerundive: on **entering** the park (page 7); after **dancing** all night (page 6);
Gliding along Picadilly (page 18).
- 8) Progressive Form: Rumpelmayer's men were **coming** (page 5); the shopkeepers were **fideting** (page 7).

(e) Affected features of syntax

For the contemporary reader, the syntax of **Mrs. Dalloway** presents certain features which in most cases, belong neither to modern spoken or literary English. They seem to belong rather to the speech of a social group which no longer exists in our time, or which avoids using these features. Among such features we include:

1) The use of «for», already mentioned, which brings in an artificial and affected overtone, bordering on pedantry, known to natives as **bookish English**.

2) The constant use of «one» as an impersonal pronoun. Bergen and Cornelia Evans, in their dictionary of usage, quoted above, state that «one» as an impersonal pronoun was standard and acceptable in Great Britain from the Elizabethan to the Victorian periods. Since then it has been held to be bookish and inappropriate. This is not the case in the U.S.A. where, as is well known, a greater number of archaic forms survive, and where it is in common use. The impersonal «one» can be met with on virtually any page of **Mrs. Dalloway**:

- for it was his sayings one remenbered (page 5)
- as one does know people who live next door to me (page 5)
- one feels in the midst of the traffic (page 6)
- For Heaven only knows why one loves it so (page 6)
- how one sees it (page 6)
- but one must economize (page 7)
- but failure one must conceal (page 16)
- a little moderate in one's expectations (page 26)
- one must pay back from his secret deposit (page 28)

3) Virginia Woolf frequently employs inversion, which confers a more literary tone on her language:

- so that should she be very old (page 25)
- Never should she forget all that (page 9)
- Only for a moment did they lie still (page 25)

4) She uses «lest» which is virtually obsolete in contemporary British English:
 lest she should see Septimus (page 25)

5) On occasion, her turns of phrase makes us feel we are back among 19th century Greek or Latin primers:

for rather would she that he were dead (page 22)

3. THE LEXICAL COMPONENT

On the first page of the text we have selected, we may distinguish three lexemes which we feel to be central, given their connotations and the fact that they reveal isotopies preferred by the authoress. These are AIR, WAVE and SOLEMN.

«AIR» is important not only because it occurs frequently:

into the open air (page 5)
the air was in the early morning (page 5)
the leaden circles dissolved in the air (page 6)
the grey-blue morning air (page 6)
to chafe the very air in the park (page 8)
a breeze (**partial synonym**) flaunting (page 19)
breeze-kissed company (page 25)

but because of the connotations it suggests. In my reading it connotes «nature» and «light».

As «nature», it is the setting for the constant allusions to **trees, branches, buds** and **flowers** with which, in all their diverse classes and species, the text is inundated.

In its connotation as «light» (sunlight, page 17; daylight, page 23), it spans the gamut of colours incessantly kept in view, from white to black, passing through the greys, browns, duns and hazels, and producing the most unexpected combinations:

the jay, blue-green (page 5)
grey-blue morning air (page 6)
sea-green brooches (page 7)
its almost blue-black sky (page 14)
the grey white moths (page 14)
dove-grey upholstery (page 14)
deep orange (page 14)
hazel eyes (page 15)
brown shoes (page 15)
pink face (page 15)
lemon or pale grey (page 17)

she had seen something white (page 17)
blue and pink smoke (page 20)
white smoke (page 20)
white things (page 24)
the white and blue barred with black branches (page 22)
washing the walls white and grey
dun coloured animals (page 24)
blue and pink smoke (page 24)
grey churches (page 26)
dark brown woods (page 26)

Moreover, the «air» is the habitual habitat of the bird, the writer's favourite creature, to which she devotes especially privileged attention:

a touch of the bird (page 5)
the rooks rising, falling (page 5)
the jay, blue green (page 5)
there she perched (page 5)
(a face) beaked like a bird's (page 11)
dove-grey upholstery (14)
beak-nosed (15)
a sparrow perched on (23)
adventurous thrushes (26)
canaries (26)

The second key lexeme is **WAVE**, in both its nominal and verbal forms. Its frequency of occurrence in the text is high, attracting the reader's attention:

like the flap of a wave (page 5)
the kiss of a wave (page 5)
on waves of that divine vitality (page 8)
were a wave which she left blow (page 14)
but it had left a slight ripple (partial synonym) which flowed (page 17)
of a hollow wave (page 21)
waves of sound (page 21)

But, in addition, the important point about **wave** is its connotation. **Wave** suggests something ephemeral, something which is but which is beginning to cease to exist. A series of verbs with this shared characteristic is grouped around this connotation (my italics):

The leaden circles **dissolved** in the air (page 6)
Clarissa saw the car **diminishing disappearing** (page 17)

smoke **faded** (page 20)
the sound **fading** up there (page 20)
smoke words **languishing** and **melting** (page 21)
her words **faded** (page 23)
so a rocket **fades** (page 23)
fast and **fading** (page 26)
the sound **fading** (page 26)

Wave also suggests «softness», which is to be one of the semantic features of the third key lexeme: SOLEMN. The words **solemn** points in two directions, one formed by partial synonyms (dignity, magical, greatness, et.) leading us to **ecstasy** and **religion**; and the other formed of semantic features of solemn; **peace, calm, hush, still**, etc.

chill and sharp and yet **solemn** (page 6)
hush or **solemnity** (page 6)
only this astonishing and rather **solemn** progress (page 11)
that **divine** vitality (page 8)
she had **adored** all that (page 8)
very **dignified** (page 11)
religious **ecstasy** (page 12)
sudden **sobriety** (page 14)
the **spirit** of **religion** (page 14)
greatness was passing hidden (page 16)
that **greatness** was seated within (page 16)
• the same dark breath of **reverence** (page 16)
she wore a look of extreme **dignity** (page 17)
she had seen something white **magical** (page 17)
the **immortal** presence fell upon them (page 18)
perceived instinctively that **greatness** was passing (page 18)
all taken together meant the birth of a new **religion** (page 18)
eternal **loneliness** (page 24)
blessed (page 27)
devotion (page 27)
ecstasy (page 27)
soul (page 27)
like a **sacred** weapon (page 28)

From this second direction, we may pick out some features of **solemn**:

calm (page 5)
stiller than this (page 5)

a particular **hush** (page 6)
an indescribable **pause** (page 6)
the **silence** (page 7)
calmly (page 8)
stillness (page 14)
very **silently** (page 17)
silence and **peace** (page 20)
silent (page 20)
there was no **sound** (page 20)

To round off the listing of these three key lexemes we may say the «peace» and «silence» conjured by «solemn» is broken with the exception of the sound of a car and a passing aircraft, which acts as counterpart, («the violent explosion... came from a motor car», page 14; «the sound of an aeroplane bored...» page 20; «the sound boring into the ears», page 21), «only by the song of sparrows, thrushes, canaries and by the noise of «twigs cracking» (page 13), referred to as «gay sounds» (page 28), or «sounds made harmonies with premeditation (page 22).

4. THE PHONOLOGICAL COMPONENT

As a counterpoint to the refined language in which the text is so rich, there appear some words and expressions which attempt to imitate the dialect or the careless speech of the ordinary people of London whom the heroine bumps into on her way. These following examples give some idea of the graphic transcription of the segment allophones:

m'dear (page 26)
not out o'sight (page 26)
there's a fine young feller
The Proime Minister's kyar

Unfortunately, the punctuation marks (brackets, dashes, commas, semi-colons, etc) are an inadequate means of representing the richly expressive melodic curves which criss-cross and collide on being uttered. The abundant use of the semi-colon is striking, and I believe the writer has attempted to use it to represent a special intonation curve, half-way between the rising curve produced by the comma, and the falling curve produced by the full-stop.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Two points may be made by way of conclusion. Firstly, all or nearly all the characteristics noted in the discourse of the excerpt selected of **Mrs. Dalloway** can be

found on many pages opened at random. I happened upon page 124, and found a fair number of the listed elements. What is more, in the first paragraph of the last page at present under study (page 28) almost all the listed elements occur:

flowers (1) of darkness they are, she **thought** (2) (as if some lovely rose had blossomed for her eyes only) (3); **not for a moment** (4) did she believe in God; but all the more, she **thought** (5), **taking** up (6) the pad, **one** (7) must repay in daily life to servants, yes, to dogs and **canaries** (8), above all to Richard her husband, **who** (9) was the foundation of it —(10) of the **gay sounds**, (11) of the **green** (12) lights, of the cook even whistling, **for** (13) Mrs. Walker was Irish and whistled all day long— **one** (14) must pay back from this secret deposit of exquisite moments, she **thought** (15), lifting the pad...

- (1) predilection for nature
- (2), (5) and (15) stress on the working of the intellect
- (3) parenthetical clauses
- (4) syntactic inversion
- (6) «-ing» form
- (7) and (14) impersonal «one» of a bookish type
- (8) fondness for birds
- (9) use of relative
- (10) parenthetical dash
- (11) silence, pleasant sounds
- (12) colours
- (13) conjunction «for»

Secondly, to end with, I would stress the fact that what we have been saying tends to justify the critical placing of **Mrs. Dalloway** within the trend of Impressionism. The exquisite and, as we have said occasionally, affected prose reflects the fragility of life and all its splendour as an incessant flickering of the mind, and this is borne out by the syntax which we have examined in detail, and by the brilliant, delicate choice of vocabulary, which I believe the authoress has accomplished, to create an eminently feminine literary language.

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