

Rewriting Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*: Homage, Sexual Identity, and the Single-Day Novel by Cunningham, Lippincott, and Lanchester

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Although *To the Lighthouse* is often cited as Virginia Woolf's finest novel, *Mrs. Dalloway* is the work that in recent years has inspired so much imitation and homage. Since 1998 three novels have appeared that draw from and, in turn, engage in explicit dialogue with *Mrs. Dalloway*: Michael Cunningham's *The Hours* (1998), Robin Lippincott's *Mr. Dalloway* (1999), and John Lanchester's *Mr. Phillips* (2000).

Surely one of the reasons why Woolf's fourth novel has attracted these authors is that, like Joyce's *Ulysses*, it takes place over the course of a single day. The single-day novel is appealing because it provides a clear, manageable, and pre-determined time frame and structure. In addition, it allows the particular (a single day) to reveal the whole (an entire life). As Michael Cunningham explains, "[T]he whole human story is contained in every day of every life more or less the way the blueprint for an entire organism is present in every strand of its DNA."¹ Further, because the external action is quotidian and largely unexceptional, the writer of the single-day novel is compelled to focus on the internal life. As biographer Hermione Lee wrote, for Woolf "the really important life was 'within'" (*Virginia Woolf* 16), a notion echoed by Cunningham in his introduction to Woolf's *The Voyage Out*: "She was revolutionary in her shunning of the outwardly dramatic [. . .], and her insistence on the inwardly dramatic—her implied conviction that what's important in a life, what remains at its end, is less likely to be its supposed climaxes than its unexpected moments of awareness, often arising out of unremarkable experience, so deeply personal they can rarely be explained" (xx).

There are other reasons as well for appropriating *Mrs. Dalloway*. First, it is concerned with the ambiguity of sexual identity and desire, a subject that has even greater currency within a contemporary world actively and openly exploring gender construction. Clearly, changes in public attitudes toward sexual orientation since Woolf's time play some role in the retellings by Cunningham and Lippincott. Second, *Mrs. Dalloway* is unique among city novels in the way in which Woolf establishes a network of external and internal connections between her urban inhabitants, making a large city like London begin to feel like a small town. Woolf's technique for managing the complexities of urban life and for rendering that existence almost pastoral has enormous appeal. Finally, at its core, *Mrs. Dalloway* is about what it feels like to be alive—to be a self passing through the moments and hours of a day. As Cunningham has observed, "Woolf was then and remains today unparalleled in her ability to convey the sensations and complexities of the experience known as being alive. Any number of writers manage the big moments beautifully; few do as much with what it feels like to live through an ordinary hour on a usual day" (Introduction xx).

All of these reasons suggest why a contemporary author may be drawn to *Mrs. Dalloway*, yet a larger question persists, Why *explicitly* retell *Mrs. Dalloway*? (I emphasize "explicit" because, it could be argued, many stories unconsciously, secretly, or implicitly retell other stories.) One of the great modernist novels, Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* is extraordinary. Why do it again, and why, for that matter, would any sane writer wish to invite a comparison with Woolf?

An author rewrites a successful, well-known story for many reasons, and as many theories explain the impulse. In his now famous and largely misinterpreted 1967 essay, "The Literature of Exhaustion," John Barth theorized that over time various forms and modes—the sonnet-sequence, Italian and German grand opera, the nineteenth-century bourgeois novel—become "used up" or "exhausted" in the minds of a significant number of artists. The object, then, for artists is to discover new ways to create lively work, one of which is the explicit, self-conscious, and often ironic appropriation or retelling of older stories. In *Literary Symbiosis: The Reconfigured Text in Twentieth-Century Writing*, David Cowart provides a useful progression from Barth, demonstrating how recent trends in retelling, following the postmodern tendency toward self-consciousness and self-reflexivity, have made the act of borrowing less veiled, more explicit. Focusing on contemporary rewrites of such texts as *Hamlet*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and *Jane Eyre*, Cowart explains how contemporary writers "attach" themselves, biologically speaking, to their sources in a symbiotic relationship that transforms "the monuments of literary history," satisfies the desire to "make it new," and generates a host-guest relationship between the two texts (3).

A different approach, more psychological than biological, more combative than mutual, is Harold Bloom's Oedipal theory of literary history, first posited in *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973) and revised in subsequent works. For Bloom, a writer is locked in struggle with the great writers who came before him; to gen-

erate his own literary creation, he must do away with his father figure, largely by misreading and then revising him. Although Bloom's thesis is less fashionable today than it was twenty-five years ago, it is interesting how feminist critics like Sandra Gilbert, Susan Gubar, and Nancy Walker have questioned and reworked his patriarchal paradigm. As Walker writes, "[W]hen women writers have [. . .] been conscious of a prior tradition of women writers that could nurture and potentially include them, their tendency has been not to be competitive, as in Bloom's model, but instead to view themselves as part of a community and a continuum" (20–21). When women rewrite men, however, the relationship is generally more oppositional, as evident in the various volumes recently published on the ways in which female writers have reworked male texts and masculine traditions. Priscilla L. Walton and Manina Jones's *Detective Agency: Women Rewriting the Hard-Boiled Tradition* explores how women writers like Sue Grafton and Sara Paretsky have challenged and transformed the ideology of the masculine "hard-boiled" detective tradition, epitomized by Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler; and Mica Howe and Sarah Appleton Aguiar's edited volume, *He Said, She Says: An RSVP to the Male Text*, demonstrates how contemporary American women novelists have retold and challenged the authority of myriad texts, including narratives from the Bible, the Torah, and mythology as well as a range of canonical novels and plays.² What is curious, however, about the novels by Cunningham, Lippincott, and Lanchester, which seemingly fit within Walker's paradigm more easily than Bloom's, is that they are attempts by men to retell a canonical text composed by a woman, who is also one of the major literary and feminist figures of Western tradition.

Mrs. Dalloway and its three retellings are unique for other reasons as well. First, retellings typically revise stories that are familiar and prominent within a given culture—for instance, the stories of Cinderella, Odysseus, Hamlet, and Hester Prynne—but the single-day story of Clarissa Dalloway is not a recognizable cultural myth nor is its protagonist generally familiar to most readers. These three recent retellings suggest, however, that Woolf's novel, already one of the esteemed fictions of the twentieth century, is gaining cultural currency, becoming increasingly useful to contemporary readers and writers. Although the genius of Woolf's style and aesthetics may account for this, one should not forget that her handling of gender and sexual identity and her depiction of the fluidity of character remain highly relevant to contemporary readers.

Second, whereas the majority of retellings published during the last forty years, including such well-known examples as Jane Smiley's *A Thousand Acres* (*King Lear*)³ and Alice Randall's *The Wind Done Gone* (*Gone With the Wind*), take up serious issues and engage in conflict with the prefigurative text, two of these three retellings of *Mrs. Dalloway* stand explicitly as acts of homage. Although homage is present in almost any act of imitation, even a text as hostile to the original as Randall's, contemporary retellings typically attempt to overturn significant aspects of the prefigurative text. Cunningham and Lippincott,

however, who spent years reading nearly everything Woolf wrote, are clearly in awe of her talent and literary accomplishment; and their novels, among other things, serve as tributes to her as well as gestures intended to stimulate further interest in her work and her contributions to literature.

Finally, whereas novelistic retellings are usually most interested in reworking elements of plot and character, two of the retellings of *Mrs. Dalloway* are unique for their interest in style and for appropriating or extending the stylistic techniques employed by Woolf. Modernism, of course, drew upon the invocation, "Make it new," and as writers begin to retell the great works of modernism, which copyright infringement has made more difficult⁴ stylistic appropriation appears likely to become an even more significant aspect of literary retelling. With these various differences in mind, then, my task is to follow carefully the dialogue between the contemporary retelling and the prefigurative text, identifying variations and analyzing points of departure.

The Hours: An Improvisation

Of the three retellings that I discuss, Michael Cunningham's *The Hours*, which received the Pulitzer Prize and the PEN/Faulkner Award, is the most successful and inventive. Like Smiley's retelling of *King Lear*, which also won the Pulitzer Prize, *The Hours* has propelled Cunningham to the next level of literary accomplishment and made him visible to a far larger audience. The success of these two reworkings, greatly surpassing anything either novelist achieved before, or in Smiley's case since, begs the question of whether the act of retelling is not simply a convenient way for a contemporary writer to enlarge his or her currency. By placing his name and work beside that of the canonical author and text, does not the contemporary writer automatically receive some kind of associative benefit? Or to consider a slightly counter approach that gives more credit to the reteller, does not interaction with and imitation of the precursive genius also *enable* the contemporary writer, pushing him beyond anything he has accomplished prior?

The Hours is a tripartite novel that moves freely through time and space, linking three distinct, loosely related narrative strands, each of which follows the life of a woman over the course of a single day. One strand, "Mrs. Woolf," takes place in 1923 in the London suburb of Richmond and deals with Virginia Woolf, who has recently begun writing her novel, *Mrs. Dalloway*. A second strand, "Mrs. Brown," is set in 1949 in a suburb of Los Angeles and involves Laura Brown, a pregnant housewife and mother who escapes from her daily domestic routine by reading Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. Finally, the third strand, "Mrs. Dalloway," is set in Greenwich Village in the 1990s and focuses on Clarissa Vaughan, a literary editor and latter-day version of Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway who, like her precursor, is planning a party for that same evening. The three strands not only imitate the style and structure and appropriate the motifs and themes of Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*;

but each strand, like the prefigurative text, also focuses on the quotidian events in the life of a woman, progresses toward a party or the arrival of guests, and confronts the possibility of death as well as suicide. Further, each strand remains focused throughout on the literal text of *Mrs. Dalloway*: “Mrs. Woolf” depicts its writing or production; “Mrs. Brown” explores its reading or reception; and “Mrs. Dalloway” serves as a literal updating or retelling. *The Hours*, then, whose title derives from Woolf’s early working title for *Mrs. Dalloway*,⁵ is more than simply a retelling. It becomes a novel about reading and writing and how those activities fit within the larger context of a single day.

Cunningham, who first read and fell in love with *Mrs. Dalloway* as a 15-year-old, views his project as less a rewriting and more an improvisation: “What I wanted to do was more akin to music, to jazz, where a musician will play improvisations on an existing piece of great music from the past—not to reinvent it, not to lay any kind of direct claim to it, but to both honor it and try to make other art out of an existing work of art” (Schiff, “Interview” 113). In his early drafts of the novel, Cunningham played with the idea of writing a more conventional retelling, such as an extended contemporary version of *Mrs. Dalloway* in New York City or a male version of the novel—a *Mr. Dalloway*—that would follow the day of a fiftyish upper-middle-class gay man. However, these and other ideas failed to pan out. Eventually, he discovered a form that, although owing a great deal to Woolf, feels inventive and original.

Following a prologue depicting Woolf’s suicide, which hovers ghostlike over the ensuing narrative, Cunningham weaves together his three narrative strands and, in the process, engages in dialogue with Woolf. In the “Mrs. Dalloway” strand, Clarissa Vaughan, like her precursor, plunges into the morning, walking through Washington Square Park on her way to buy flowers for her party that evening. The narrative remains relatively true to Woolf’s novel, though there are variations and datings: for instance, AIDS has replaced World War I as the catastrophic event that has taken the lives of so many young men. Most significant, however, is that Clarissa is in a long-term relationship with a woman (Sally) rather than a man (Richard). In Woolf’s novel, Clarissa Dalloway is in a heterosexual marriage, yet her most passionate memory is of a kiss shared thirty years earlier with a woman. In Cunningham’s novel, Clarissa Vaughan⁶ is in a lesbian union yet wonders whether she and Richard (an amalgam of Septimus Smith, Sally Seton, Richard Dalloway, and Peter Walsh) could have been happy together. *The Hours*, thus, stands as an attempt by Cunningham to explore and play with “what if” questions posed by Woolf’s novel. As Cunningham explains, “I wondered what would happen if someone very much like Woolf’s Clarissa Dalloway were alive today and free of the constraints that were placed on Clarissa Dalloway in London in the ’20s. What if she were set free? Would it be different or ultimately pretty much the same? Would she impose her own restrictions?” (Schiff, “Interview” 113).

Cunningham’s response, via *The Hours*, seems hedged. On the one hand, changes in legal standing and public attitudes toward homosexuality enable

Clarissa Vaughan to live a domestic and sexual life largely unavailable to Clarissa Dalloway in 1920s London. As Patricia Cramer observes,

Virginia Woolf grew up at a time when tolerance of public expressions of romantic bonds between women had ended; for the first time, legal and medical authorities recognized the sexual potential in such relationships and scrutinized them for signs of 'perversion.' Sexologists Richard von Krafft-Ebing and Havelock Ellis propagated the stereotype of the mannish lesbian, and Sigmund Freud declared erotic attachments between women a mental illness. (118)

Because of the cultural climate, Woolf was compelled to live a relatively secret and encoded sexual existence, and her character Clarissa Dalloway, whose sexual orientation would appear to be largely toward women, ends up in a rather chaste, heterosexual marriage that crushes her soul. Although Cunningham's Clarissa Vaughan is free to live openly as a lesbian, her interior life is nevertheless plagued by similar regrets and uncertainties about decisions she has made: "How often since then has she wondered what might have happened if she'd tried to remain with [Richard]; if she'd returned Richard's kiss on the corner of Bleecker and MacDougal, gone off somewhere (where?) with him, [. . .] Couldn't they have discovered something . . . larger and stranger than what they've got?" (*The Hours* 97).

Although I do not believe Cunningham is suggesting that it does not matter how Clarissa orients herself sexually—clearly it seems wiser to construct a sexual and domestic identity that satisfies one's desires and instincts—he indicates that even if she were to live an openly gay existence, she would continue to experience doubts. In demonstrating that her life, whether as a lesbian or heterosexual, would be more similar than different, Cunningham suggests that strict demarcations between queer and straight are problematic and that sexual orientation is complex and fluid. In *The Hours*, men and women desire touch and contact with one another and that desire often transcends or contradicts the narrow identity labels, via sexual orientation, that society has constructed.

In the novel's second narrative strand, "Mrs. Brown," Laura Brown appears near-desperate in her desire to escape her roles as housewife and mother in a Los Angeles suburb. Here, the dialogue with Woolf continues. Laura's first name is derived from Woolf's half-sister who, Cunningham explains, "was just squirreled away and was really not spoken of. [. . .] rather like Mr. Rochester's wife in *Jane Eyre*" (Schiff, "Interview" 118). Her surname comes from Woolf's well-known essay, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," in which the latter is the name given to an unknown woman spotted in a railway carriage who serves as the inspiration for a literary character; Mrs. Brown, thus, represents the artist's ability to imagine the lives of others.⁷ The relationship between Laura Brown and Woolf develops through Laura's reading of *Mrs. Dalloway*, which enables her to escape into a parallel world: "[S]he has left her own world and entered the realm of the book" (*The Hours* 150), where she is "herself and not herself. She is a woman in London, an aristocrat, pale and charming, a little false; she is Virginia Woolf; and she

is this other, the inchoate, tumbling thing known as herself" (187). Brown is, among other things, Woolf's "common reader." Through her presence, Cunningham creates a metafictional experience for his own reader, who, in effect, is invited into the pages of *The Hours*. In addition to generating a world into which the trapped Laura can enter, Woolf serves as a mentor, an amalgam of genius, artist, and feminist icon, whom Laura can believe in and aspire to: "[S]he is reading Virginia Woolf, all of Virginia Woolf, book by book—she is fascinated by the idea of a woman like that, a woman of such brilliance [. . .]. She, Laura, likes to imagine (it's one of her most closely held secrets) that she has a touch of brilliance herself, just a hint of it" (42).

Through these two narrative strands, "Mrs. Brown" and "Mrs. Dalloway," set on the streets and within the culture of New York City and suburban Los Angeles, Cunningham Americanizes and popularizes Woolf's text. Her novel about an upper-class English socialite living in London is transformed and democratized, in part, into an American novel about a middle-class housewife suffocating in the suburbs. References to English toffee, the Prime Minister, and Regent's Park are replaced by American references to Folgers coffee, Meryl Streep, and Washington Square Park; and the novel becomes generally more familiar to a contemporary American audience. In addition, and more important, Woolf's novel, which is relatively difficult and challenging, becomes more accessible when retold by Cunningham. In *Mrs. Dalloway* as in other modernist texts, we are plunged into the narrative without knowledge of where we are, what exactly is happening, or who the characters are. In *The Hours*, there is not the same degree of ambiguity or confusion. As readers we generally have less work to do. Although Cunningham remains true to Woolf's general vision and depiction of human consciousness, he clips her style and popularizes her techniques.

In the novel's third and final strand, "Mrs. Woolf," Cunningham depicts the author herself—waking at Hogarth House, planning her new novel, writing its first lines, wondering whether Clarissa will kill herself, hosting a visit from her sister Vanessa, sharing a kiss with Vanessa, taking a walk, and contemplating whether to board a train for London. Although Jonathan Dee has been highly critical of authors who appropriate historical figures—it is much easier, he claims, to employ such figures than to create characters from scratch—Cunningham's decision to bring the precursive author into his narrative is rather creative and engaging.⁸ This is, after all, a novel about reading and writing, and so Cunningham takes us into the writer's den as well as into her head during the composition process. Further, Cunningham's attempt to slip into the thoughts of such a commanding literary and feminist figure as Virginia Woolf is no easy task, contrary to Dee's argument, but an audacious act at which he largely succeeds. In reviewing *The Hours*, biographer Lee, who generated her own version of Woolf's life, wrote, "What does ring astonishingly true is Cunningham's vision of Woolf's struggle between life and death, her swings between pleasure, relish, excitement and vacuity, self-annihilation, despair" ("Ms. Brown's Secret" 19).

What becomes apparent in *The Hours* is that almost every technique, trope, motif, and theme derives from Woolf (e.g., Cunningham's appropriation of such motifs as flowers, mirrors, and kisses, and his thematic preoccupation with suicide, art, and identity). However, Cunningham employs these Woolfian elements to create something slightly different, something that is his own. Consider the seamless and fluid movement through time and space that one finds in *Mrs. Dalloway* as well as the way in which Woolf establishes connections between characters who do not actually know one another. In *The Hours*, Cunningham appropriates and extends both techniques, interweaving and linking characters who live in three different historical eras—1923, 1949, the 1990s—and three different places—a London suburb, a Los Angeles suburb, Greenwich Village. Much as Woolf compressed London, making it feel rather small and intimate, Cunningham compresses the twentieth century and demonstrates how a novel can contain many worlds, including the one Woolf created in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Whereas the grand nineteenth-century novels, of Tolstoy for example, used size, scope, history, and omniscience to give the impression that the book was a godlike creation, comprising an entire world, Cunningham in this thin volume depends on leaps through time and space to generate a world that feels surprisingly vast, inclusive, and interconnected.

Consider also how Cunningham plays with and reproduces the Woolfian trope of the kiss. In Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa recalls a kiss with Sally Seton as being "the most exquisite moment of her whole life [. . .]. Sally stopped; picked a flower; kissed her on the lips. The whole world might have turned upside down!" (35). This kiss, which stands as Clarissa's brief foray into same-sex love, is referenced often in lesbian interpretations of the novel. In *The Hours* Cunningham essentially mass-produces the kiss, including one in nearly every major scene. The Woolfian kiss is replicated in multiple configurations and circumstances: kisses between Clarissa and Richard, Virginia and Vanessa, Laura and Kitty. Generally speaking, these kisses are depicted as awkward or ambiguous, and sometimes they serve as transgressive, climactic moments in the text:

Without quite meaning to, without deciding to, [Laura] kisses Kitty, lingeringly, on the top of her forehead. [. . .]

Kitty lifts her face, and their lips touch. They both know what they are doing. They rest their mouths, each on the other. They touch their lips together, but do not quite kiss.

It is Kitty who pulls away. (110)

In a novel in which the self is most often depicted as alone and detached, a kiss serves most crucially as the initial point of physical contact, the moment at which the gap between people is bridged. Though often desired, this moment of intimacy is also frightening because characters remain uncertain, particularly if the kiss threatens or violates social order, of how it will be interpreted and whether

it will be returned. By delivering a many-mirrored variation on a significant Woolfian moment, Cunningham not only riffs on the precursive author's text but also universalizes the ambiguity of sexual identity and desire. Whereas in *Mrs. Dalloway* one woman shares a single kiss with another woman, in *The Hours* myriad characters of varied sexual orientation (straight, queer, bi) experience a desire to kiss someone they are not supposed to kiss.

In novels that foreground the ambiguity of sexual orientation, the instability and complexity of identity is often prominent, which is true in both Woolf's and Cunningham's novels. As Woolf critics have pointed out, Clarissa's identity is neither fixed nor absolute: "Clarissa Dalloway is seen as an individual whose identity varies according to the situation in which she finds herself; at different times, and with different people, she appears to be a different person" (Hawthorn 9). Cunningham follows Woolf in that each of his three central female figures—Virginia Woolf, Laura Brown, and Clarissa Vaughan—possesses various or alternative selves. In this brief exchange between Virginia Woolf and her servant Nelly, Cunningham alerts us to the ways in which performance and impersonation figure in mundane activities:

Virginia walks through the door. She feels fully in command of the character who is Virginia Woolf, and as that character she removes her cloak, hangs it up, and goes downstairs to the kitchen to speak to Nelly about lunch.

In the kitchen, Nelly is rolling out a crust. Nelly is herself, always herself; [. . .]. How does she remember, how does she manage, every day and every hour, to be so exactly the same? (84)

That the self is fragmented and unstable, comprising multiple selves, is further enhanced in *The Hours* by the fact that these three women, whose lives echo one another, can be viewed as "identities-in-relation," aspects of a collective female self, three versions of a twentieth-century woman. In addition, given that each of these women desires to touch or kiss someone whose gender is not that to which they are usually drawn, Cunningham universalizes the human desire for contact that transgresses narrowly defined labels of gender orientation. Again, it is as if Cunningham has brought various mirrors to his text, in this case extending and improvising on Woolf's exploration of the fragmentation, complexity, and multiple nature of the self.

Some may argue that Cunningham's novel relies excessively on imitation and is an exploitation of Woolf's literary innovations, but Oscar Wilde reminds us, "It is only the unimaginative who ever invents. The true artist is known by the use he makes of what he annexes, and he annexes everything."⁹ Just as Hemingway borrowed from Gertrude Stein, or more recently as Jonathan Franzen has borrowed from Don DeLillo, Cunningham annexes the style, structure, characters, and vision of Woolf. Yet, his novel is neither clonelike nor hollow; rather, it is an exhilarating enhancement that, in turn, has greatly expanded Cunningham's range and abilities as a novelist.

Mr. Dalloway: Queering Richard Dalloway

Robin Lippincott's *Mr. Dalloway* is, perhaps, the most conventional of these three refashionings of Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. Since at least the publication of Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), a companion story to *Jane Eyre* focusing on Rochester's first wife, the so-called "madwoman in the attic," and John Gardner's *Grendel* (1971), a retelling of *Beowulf* from the monster's perspective, one trend in retellings has been to give previously unheard voices an opportunity to speak. In recent decades, as attention to issues of gender, class, sexual orientation, and race has altered the way in which we read canonical texts, many retellings have sought to shift the narrative perspective to a more marginal locus. For example, in *Mary Reilly* (1990), Valerie Martin retells *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* from a servant's point of view. Although Lippincott's decision to shift his narrative focus from an upper-class white woman to an empowered white male, a former member of Parliament, hardly suggests marginalization, Richard, through Lippincott's reworking, is limned as gay or bisexual. The impetus here is to demonstrate that the sexual orientation of Richard, like that of his wife Clarissa, is equally ambiguous, complex, and veiled in secrecy. The relatively dull and conventional man whose life is briefly sketched in Woolf's novel proves to have an even more engaging and surprising interior life than his wife.

As a retelling, Lippincott's novel remains even closer to Woolf's than Cunningham's, particularly in the way in which he imitates her style and *feel*:

Mr. Dalloway said he would buy the flowers himself.

For he wanted to surround Clarissa with them; to choose those flowers, those colours, which would set her off to the best possible advantage; which would complement her. But what colours those would be, he had no idea. And so he had asked Lucy (now he was applying his bowler hat as he examined himself in the hallway looking-glass). And what was it Lucy had said (she was polishing silver at the time; he remembered the refracted artificial light slicing through the room): pinks; lavenders; shades of yellow; periwinkle blues? "Pale colours, sir," he thought she had said. Yes (he straightened his tie), that was it. (3-4)

Lippincott's act of ventriloquy is accomplished, even beautiful in places; but the final product is somewhat disappointing and hollow, as is often the case with the work of copyists who imitate famous paintings. In addition, although Lippincott, like Cunningham, appropriates events from *Mrs. Dalloway*—the buying of flowers, the eruption of a loud noise from the street while at the florist—those allusions do not necessarily serve a significant purpose. Whereas a retelling set in the contemporary era may offer a contrast or engage in dialogue with the world within Woolf's novel, Lippincott's decision to set his novel in the same general time period as Woolf's prevents us from experiencing the kind of temporal interplay that is found in *The Hours* or John Updike's "*Scarlet Letter* Trilogy." Further,

Lippincott largely appropriates the same cast and set, making his London really Woolf's. Whereas Cunningham reinvented, Lippincott mostly borrows. Nevertheless, by focusing on Richard and bringing his story into play, Lippincott significantly alters our understanding of the Dalloways' marriage and, thus, contributes to the evolution of the *Mrs. Dalloway* story.

Lippincott sets his novel four years subsequent to Woolf's, on 28 June 1927. Although the characters' lives have changed—Elizabeth is now studying veterinary sciences in Liverpool; Peter Walsh is in India with his new wife; Richard has retired from Parliament—things are largely the same. As in Woolf's novel, the narrative leads to a party, although the host is not Clarissa but Richard, who has organized an elaborate thirtieth wedding anniversary celebration for Clarissa. Requesting that his guests arrive in the evening at King's Cross Station, Richard has ordered two trains to carry them to North Yorkshire where they will then board buses for Bardon Fell, a spot from which they can most clearly view the total eclipse of the sun (Lippincott appropriates this event from Woolf's biography and fiction).¹⁰ As for Richard Dalloway's objective in planning such a party, we are told:

[H]e wanted nothing less than to take Clarissa and Elizabeth and their friends and to bring them out of the drawing rooms and the parlours, out of their houses, out of doors, away from all that artifice, and then—somehow as one, as *a party* of people—to connect them, *en masse*, with the natural world, something larger than themselves, something more than merely the who, what, when, where, and how of their meager day-to-day existences, something bigger and more profound. (136, emphasis in original)

Richard's wish to bring his friends together outdoors indicates his desire to reveal publicly, and thus to legitimize, his secret inner life, which echoes Lippincott's central objective of bringing to light the secret male homosexuality inherent in the story.

In reanimating Richard, Lippincott builds on passages and moments from Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and from her first novel, *The Voyage Out* (1915), which introduced the Dalloways. In the earlier text Richard briefly appears, cast as a male chauvinist and imperialist with lascivious tendencies, but a decade later in *Mrs. Dalloway* he is limned more sympathetically, as a solicitous albeit slightly dull husband (his worst characteristics have been transferred to Hugh Whitbread and Dr. William Bradshaw). In a prefatory section to his novel titled "Extracts," Lippincott lists ten passages, mostly from these two novels, which hint at the various aspects of Richard's character that have not yet been fully developed or articulated. For instance, in several passages, questions are posed regarding Richard's whereabouts: "For in marriage a little license, 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? [. . .])" (Lippincott i). In addition, questions are raised about his relationship with his father (they did not get along), his likability (Woolf wrote in a letter, "I meant

Richard Dalloway to be liked”), and, interestingly, his potential androgyny. In *The Voyage Out*, Clarissa says of her husband: “He’s man and woman,” which was said of various men and women in Bloomsbury; Vita Sackville-West referred to such individuals as “dual personalities,” a term that today may be likened to “bisexual” (Lippincott ii, i; Garber 26).

These ten extracts give an early clue to where Lippincott is headed. We soon learn that Richard has a “secret” (7). Strolling about London and observing people on the street, he thinks: “*If she only knew. If he only knew. If they only knew*” (10). Richard is in love with Robert Davies—a fact known only to Clarissa. The two men have carried on an affair for ten years, and on this particular summer day they impulsively test and transgress some of the ground rules governing their relationship: Richard shows up unexpectedly at Robbie’s house; Robbie shows up unexpectedly and enters Richard’s house for the first time; though not invited, Robbie attends Richard and Clarissa’s anniversary party. Much of the novel’s tension stems from uncertainty as to what each of the men will do on this day and from the conflict between Richard’s public life with Clarissa and his secret life with Robbie.

Like Cunningham, Lippincott appropriates many of Woolf’s tropes and themes, such as the notion that we possess multiple selves: “[Richard] felt refreshed, restored, returned to himself—to Mr. Dalloway, to Richard, Dick, Richie, Rich—returned to whomever he was for whichever person at whatever time or place: he could be all or any of them simultaneously (for he *was* all of them)” (71, emphasis in the original). The mutability of the self is often highlighted in queer texts; yet what makes *Mr. Dalloway* most intriguing is the way in which Lippincott, by focusing on Richard, brings male sexuality into the narrative. Although much recent attention has been devoted to sexual orientation and gender in Woolf studies, the focus has been on lesbianism. *Virginia Woolf: Lesbian Readings* (1997), for instance, consists of the work of more than a dozen critics who seek, among other things, to counter Quentin Bell’s image of Woolf as a “sexless sappho” and demonstrate how central lesbianism was to both her life and her work (Barrett 6). Whereas Woolf’s and Cunningham’s texts are female-centered, Lippincott is more interested in male characters (Richard, Robbie, Richard’s brother Duncan Dalloway) and their interaction with one another. In Lippincott’s London, Oscar Wilde is still in the air. Although his trial and imprisonment for homosexual offenses took place three decades earlier, his example continues to remind gay men of the perils of public disclosure: “[W]hat Wilde had done and, subsequently, what had been done to him, had been hammered, repeatedly, again and again, into the minds of the young men of Robert Davies’s generation” (67). In constructing a past for Richard, Lippincott posits a significant homoerotic relationship between Richard and his brother Duncan: “[O]ne of his earliest memories was of Duncan and him in bed together, after everyone had gone to their rooms and the house was dark. [. . .] it was his first, felt experience of the warmth cast off by

the human body, and it was wonderful" (40–41). Impulsive and passionate, Duncan was the most deeply felt attachment in Richard's early life; he stirred Richard the way Sally Seton stirred Clarissa. Further, like Clarissa's sister Sylvia Parry, Duncan died in adolescence; he was, in fact, a suicide like Septimus Smith, and his absence proved devastating for Richard: "[I]t was the very absence of Duncan, and the great cavity created by that absence, which had made him yearn for and be susceptible to a Robbie" (61).

Although Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* is a far more subtle and encoded text, there are, as critics have demonstrated, various references and allusions not only to lesbianism but to male homosexuality. Eileen Barrett views Septimus, "haunted by his love for his comrade Evans" ("Unmasking" 152), as a homosexual who is unable to do anything about it: "Bereft of the love of comrades, Septimus accepts the prevailing homophobia, envisioning his homosexuality not as an 'astonishing revelation' but as a crime against human nature: 'He had committed an appalling crime and been condemned to death by human nature'" (153). Barrett argues that marriage in Woolf's novel destroys not only women—Clarissa, Lucrezia Smith, Evelyn Whitbread—but also those "men whose passion is for their own sex" (154). Septimus's inability to accept the truth about his own sexual identity, Barrett suggests, contributes to his self-destruction.

In Lippincott's novel, male homosexuality rises to the surface and becomes central. Over the course of this single summer day Richard and Robbie are continually tempted to act upon their feelings for one another in a more public manner. Curiously, Lippincott generates a textual environment in which characters are encouraged not to deny their true feelings but rather to experience the liberating effect of honest self-expression. His characters, as Linda J. Langham writes, are able to create "space for an authentic self, once they have discovered and accepted themselves" (70). By bringing Woolf's characters out of their parlors and drawing rooms and placing them in the context of the natural world, Lippincott facilitates their self-discovery. On the plains of Richmond, far from the narrow confines of London society, Richard experiences a moment of true liberation as he joins hands, however briefly, with Robbie and Clarissa:

He looked to Clarissa, who was marvelling over the eclipse. [. . .] all he could think was that this might be his last chance to prove to himself that his soul was not dead.

He tightened his grasp on Clarissa's hand (and, still talking with Lady Hosford, she squeezed his hand in return). Then, there, in the sunlight, amidst the crowd, he took Robbie's hand in his, briefly, without even looking at him, and then he let it go. Only for a moment, but it was enough. It was a beginning. (215)

Lippincott celebrates this moment of public disclosure; and in bestowing on his characters a freedom and self-acceptance that they are denied in Woolf's text, he provides a kind of corrective.

Although Lippincott's novel is filled with playful nods and allusions to Woolf's text, his re-creation of Richard and his marriage to Clarissa are more significant. By adding depth and complexity to Richard's character—a past with his dead brother, a present with his male lover—Lippincott generates a more interesting, conflicted, and sympathetic figure, a man caught in the dilemma of loving two people. In addition, by acknowledging that Clarissa is aware of and “understands” Richard's love for another man, Lippincott reveals the Dalloways' marriage to be more complex and resilient than might otherwise appear. However, because Lippincott risks so little and remains so reverential to Woolf and her world, the effort finally feels more like imitation than reinvention.

Mr. Phillips: A Male, Middle-Class Mrs. Dalloway

Of the three retellings I discuss, John Lanchester's *Mr. Phillips* is the least obeisant to Woolf and her novel. Whereas Cunningham and Lippincott appropriate the structure, events, characters, themes, and style (use of semicolons, exclamation points, and so forth) found in Woolf's novel, Lanchester largely limits his dependence on Woolf to structure and place, as he writes about the internal and external events in the life of a man as he wanders through London during a single day. Although class and gender provide the means by which he revises and engages in dialogue with *Mrs. Dalloway*, Lanchester seems less interested in talking back to Woolf. His strategy, instead, is simply to borrow her technique of moving a character around a city during a single day, which allows him to explore the character internally while externally generating the felt presence of the city.

Lanchester's protagonist is Victor Phillips, a fifty-year-old accountant from the South London suburb of Clapham. Mr. Phillips lives in a middle-class neighborhood with his wife Sharon and their younger son Thomas (an older son, Martin, who runs his own small company in London, no longer lives at home). Set on Monday, July 31, 1995, the novel begins with Mr. Phillips waking, then heading off to work on public transportation. Before he exits the train at Battersea Park, we realize that this particular day is not quite typical. Mr. Phillips, like Lippincott's Mr. Dalloway, has a secret: He no longer has an office or job to go to. After working nearly thirty years as an accountant for the catering firm of Wilkins and Co., he was declared “redundant” and let go on the preceding Friday. With this slight mystery in mind—why has he dressed for work? why hasn't he explained to his wife that he was fired?—the reader follows Mr. Phillips as he wanders the streets of London, observing people and places as if for the first time. In Battersea Park he watches the peacocks and also two girls playing tennis, then speaks with a man who turns out to be a publisher of porn magazines. From there he crosses the Thames, rides a bus, visits the Tate Gallery, walks along the Embankment, meets his son Martin for lunch at a Soho restaurant, wanders into

a sex shop and porn movie house, enters a church, then spots his dream girl, television newscaster Clarissa Colingford and follows her into a bank. There he witnesses an attempted robbery, survives in spite of an act that is both heroic and stupid, then takes the train back to Clapham Junction. The novel concludes with his return home, where he finds his younger son Thomas washing the car. As he opens his front door, we are left with an uncertain send-off, "He has no idea what will happen next" (291).

In responding to Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, Lanchester ostensibly has class issues in mind. His protagonist is not an upper-class hostess strolling through a pastoral and glorious London, planning her evening party that will be attended by the Prime Minister. Instead he is a solidly middle-class accountant with a mortgage, conservative financial habits, and currently, no job. Mr. Phillips is a British Everyman, closer in nature to John Updike's Rabbit Angstrom than Woolf's Clarissa Dalloway. Through him we view a different London, one that is noisy (there is cursing, shouting, and honking), hot, malodorous, and clogged with traffic and crowds:

Today the cars in the cut-through sit fuming and revving in the July warmth, the air already close and polluted. Mr. Phillips watches the inhabitant of a dark blue Vauxhall Astra, a thirtyish man with a suit jacket hung in his driver's-side rear window, pick his nose, consider the product of his excavation, and then, with a decisive gourmandly air, eat it. (40)

In addition, just as the external experience of London differs from that found in Woolf's novel—less romantic, more sordid—so is the internal experience of being Mr. Phillips. As with Rabbit Angstrom, Mr. Phillips' internal life is largely concerned with sex and women.

Coupled with his sexual obsession is his instinctive tendency, by trade, to view everything in numerical terms—percentages, sums, probabilities, statistics. The consummate accountant, Mr. Phillips grades his sex dreams from one to ten. He calculates the percentages of how likely he is to have sex on any given day: "an average daily probability of 96.7 percent against having sex" (25); he tabulates how many British women are "happy to take their clothes off for money per annum"—16,744, "a whole small townful of naked British women among us disguised as normal people" (48–49). While on a bus, he calculates how many people have never been on the Thames, seen a corpse, or experienced anal intercourse:

Putting together the figures for this bus, and assuming figures of 70 percent for no anal intercourse, 75 percent for not having been on the Thames, 80 percent for not having seen a dead body, and saying that there were 80 people on the bus, you multiply 70 percent by 75 percent by 80 percent to get 42 percent, which means that a total of 33.6 people on the bus have never been on London's river, seen a corpse, nor experienced anal intercourse. Thanks to Sharon [his wife] and his father [who is dead], Mr. Phillips is in the relatively suave and experienced subset who have only not been on the Thames. He has lived. (99)

In comparison to Woolf's novel, Lanchester's version of an interior life and of how one spends a single day in London, is more male, middle-class, sordid, and comic. Yet this is only part of his agenda. The most curious aspect of the novel is the mystery just beneath the surface of the entire day: namely, why Mr. Phillips goes through the motions of a routine day when he has no job. This mystery is highlighted when police examiners, upon learning of Mr. Phillips's current unemployment (they question him following the attempted bank robbery), discuss a similar "chap" who had also been made redundant, had not told his family, yet spent his days in London sitting on a bench. Lanchester may be suggesting the redundancy of a certain type of Englishman: the old-fashioned, externally proper, middle-class, white male dressed in conservative suit with briefcase. In addition, Lanchester uses Mr. Phillips to demonstrate various truths about contemporary daily urban existence: namely, its anonymity (Mr. Phillips's encounters in London are mostly with strangers, in contrast to Mrs. Dalloway's London where people seem to know one another) and the tenuous relationship for those of the middle class between routine existence and redundancy (until three days ago, Mr. Phillips' situation had seemed safe).

Perhaps the overarching theme of *Mr. Phillips* can be found in a passage from Saint Augustine that Mr. Erith, Mr. Phillips's former religious education teacher, referred to often: "we are born '*inter urinam et faeces*'" (114), which suggested to Mr. Erith that we live "above a rotting superstructure of sewage and effluent. Think of how much hideous waste is evacuated from this very school building every day. The pipes creaking and straining with it. The plumbing stretched to full capacity to deal with your unspeakable effluvia. Then multiply that by the number of similar buildings in London" (116). Emphasizing the plumbing, rot, and excrement of life that are present beneath the quotidian surface, Lanchester generates a busy, polluted, peculiar, yet lively and engaging contemporary city, one that is more Joycean than Woolfian.¹¹ Lanchester also provides an interesting twist on the single-day novel: In treating an unusual day like a normal one, he demonstrates how desperate we are to retain and follow quotidian routine, and how failure and emptiness lurk just beneath the surface of everyday bourgeois existence.

Of these three novels, Lanchester's is least dependent on Woolf's. In fact, the connection between the two novels feels rather slight except that both are single-day novels, set in London, and titled to highlight the bourgeois and domestic role of their protagonists. Whereas it is difficult to fully appreciate or understand Lippincott's novel without some knowledge of Woolf's, familiarity with *Mrs. Dalloway* is not absolutely crucial to our study of *Mr. Phillips*. However, Lanchester's novel probably would not have been written were it not for *Mrs. Dalloway*, which suggests that literary borrowing and appropriation are not always apparent but can take place below our critical radar. For example, although Kathy Acker and John Updike have composed explicit retellings of *The Scarlet Letter*, one could also argue that Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, hardly explicit in their responses to the prefigurative novel, are nevertheless dependent on and

engage in dialogue with Hawthorne's canonical text. My point is that although critics have identified many novels that explicitly retell earlier fictions, if one were to widen the net, study texts such as Lanchester's that retell earlier stories, albeit loosely and tangentially, we may be surprised to see that literary appropriation, revision, and intertextuality are even more pervasive than one might have imagined.

Conclusion

As it rests on a bookshelf, Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* appears to be a finished and stable text, a tangible commodity; yet, the reality is that over time and through retellings it acquires new meanings and becomes something slightly different. Consider Woolf's novel, if you will, as a "mannequin in the shop window upon which all sorts of changing displays may be exhibited," and from which new imaginative opportunities present themselves (Righter 33). The objective is not necessarily to improve on the original story but, rather, to play with and engage "the text's narrative assumptions, implicit values, and accumulated critical reputation" (Rozett 6)—to dress it up and make it different; to reshape the narrative into something that the contemporary author can call his own. Through these three retellings of *Mrs. Dalloway*, all composed by men, two of whom are gay, we discover how relevant Woolf's work is to contemporary culture, particularly in the area of gender and sexual orientation, and the degree to which her novel inspires imitation and invites dialogue. Further, that men are explicitly rewriting a text composed by a woman, and doing so with great reverence, makes these retellings particularly interesting. Perhaps it makes sense that men, even more than women, would be eager to revise and borrow from the work of a woman, as if the otherness of her gender provides them with new possibilities for building their fictions. Further, the myriad opportunities for altering narratives within the male canon are so vast that women, at least for now, may be less interested in revising and reclaiming texts composed by other women. It is interesting that in these three retellings, the contemporary writer's attitude toward the prefigurative text is, for the most part, neither angry nor contentious. Rather, the contemporary writer in each case seems more eager to borrow, learn from, and improvise on the work of the earlier author. The retellings by Lippincott and Lanchester feel relatively minor compared to the more significant creative effort by Cunningham, but all pale somewhat when compared to Woolf's novel.¹² Eighty years after its publication, *Mrs. Dalloway* remains more timely than ever, drawing readers and writers not only to the genius of Woolf—her stylistic innovations and her facility for conveying the experience of being alive—but to the possibilities inherent in the single-day novel.

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NOTES

1. Michael Cunningham. "The Hours Brought Elation, But Also Doubt." *New York Times* 19 Jan. 2003, 1, 22.

2. In addition to these critical voices and theories, a range of critics, writers, and theorists—Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Linda Hutcheon, Brian McHale, Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, Jean Baudrillard, Adrienne Rich, E. L. Doctorow, Patrick O'Donnell, John J. White, and Matei Calinescu, to name just a few—have weighed in by generating shelves of books and essays on such topics as intertextuality, myths and mythical retellings, renarrativization, reading and misreading, fiction and history, literary influence, parody, originality, revision, plagiarism, reworking masculine traditions, repetition, reinscription, signifying, and "stolentelling." In 2001 alone, multiple new books appeared on the subject, including Howe and Aguiar's aforementioned volume; Marcel Cornis-Pope's *Narrative Innovation and Cultural Rewriting in the Cold War and After*, a densely theoretical text that foregrounds the political implications and strategies of narrative innovation; and Christian Moraru's *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning*, which considers how contemporary American writers, by reworking nineteenth-century canonical fictions, have critically revised our national cultural mythology. Some may begin to wonder whether the subject of literary retelling itself may be nearing "exhaustion"; however, each of these new volumes, in taking a different approach, makes a solid scholarly contribution. Further, some of the most interesting recent work on retellings comes from Shakespeare studies, where adaptation and refashioning are nothing new. In the last decade, numerous volumes have appeared, including Christy Desmet and Robert Sawyer's *Shakespeare and Appropriation* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Marianne Novy's *Cross-Cultural Performance: Differences in Women's Re-Visions of Shakespeare* (Urbana, IL: U of Illinois P, 1993); Peter Erickson's *Rewriting Shakespeare, Rewriting Ourselves* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1991); and Rozett, who brings reader-response and pedagogy into the discussion as she demonstrates the ways in which retellings, literary criticism, and classroom writing assignments all engage in some form of "talking back" to the original text: "[M]y students belong to a long and lively tradition of editors, bowdlerizers, stage directors, parodists, playwrights, libretticists, novelists, and film makers, all of whom are appropriating Shakespeare and are influenced, whether they realize it or not, by prior appropriations and transformations of what we call Shakespeare" (3). In addition, a wealth and range of volumes have appeared in recent years discussing cinematic adaptations and retellings of Shakespeare's plays.

3. For an analysis of Smiley's retelling of *King Lear* and further discussion of literary retellings, see Schiff, "Contemporary Retellings: *A Thousand Acres* as the Latest *Lear*."

4. Pia Pera's *Lo's Diary*, a retelling of Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*, and Randall's *The Wind Done Gone* both encountered legal difficulties in their attempts to be published. Pera was eventually published in English (translated from the original Italian) after a legal settlement that, among other things, allowed Nabokov's son, Dmitri, to write a preface to the volume. Publication of Randall's book was initially prevented by the Mitchell Trusts, which claimed that Randall's text would hinder their efforts to license additional sequels to *GWTW* (Alexandra Ripley's *Scarlett* [New York: Warner, 1991] was authorized as a sequel through the Mitchell Trusts). Although a lower court, finding that Randall had engaged in "unabated piracy" by borrowing characters and scenes, issued an injunction preventing publication of the novel, the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals lifted the lower court's injunction. Eventually, an out-of-court settlement took place between Randall's publisher, Houghton Mifflin, and the Mitchell Trusts. Under the terms of the settlement, Houghton Mifflin agreed to make an unspecified contribution to Morehouse College, and Mitchell's estate agreed to stop their efforts to block sales of Randall's book, which was promoted on its dust jacket as "The Unauthorized Parody." The novel was published in June 2001 and remained on the best-seller list for several weeks.

5. For a manuscript version of "The Hours," the first full-length draft of Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, see Wussow.

6. Clarissa's new surname appears to derive from Madge Symonds Vaughan, who was, Eileen Barrett writes (quoting Quentin Bell), "the first woman [. . .] to capture [Woolf's] heart" and also the inspiration behind Clarissa Dalloway's love for Sally Seton ("Unmasking" 151).

7. Although Laura Brown was initially modeled after Cunningham's mother, she evolved into a character resembling Susan Rawlings, the protagonist from Doris Lessing's short story "To Room Nineteen" (in *The Hours* Laura checks in to Room 19 at the Normandy Hotel). Rawlings is another woman who escapes her domestic entrapment by spending her afternoons alone in a hotel room; however, at the story's conclusion she takes her own life.

8. In his essay "The Reanimators: On the Art of Literary Graverobbing," Dee considers ten recent novels by such writers as Cunningham, J. M. Coetzee, Norman Mailer, Joanna Scott, and Don DeLillo that employ historical figures as characters. Dee writes, "there's no debating that the practice of conscripting flesh-and-blood people into novels has become a veritable epidemic in the last twenty-five years or so" (77).

9. Wilde quoted in Cowart 1.

10. In July 1927, Woolf and her husband Leonard, along with Vita Sackville-West and her husband Harold Nicolson, "travelled by special trains and coaches from Euston to Yorkshire, to see the total eclipse of the sun on Bardon Fell above Richmond"—an event Woolf later described in her diary as well as in "The Sun and the Fish" and *The Waves* (*Virginia Woolf* 502).

11. It could be argued that, unlike the other two novels, Lanchester's *Mr. Phillips* has nearly as much in common with Joyce's *Ulysses* as it does with Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. Though its title and location (London) derive from Woolf, the wanderings, musings, and observations of Mr. Phillips could also be linked, perhaps, to Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus as they move through Dublin.

12. As I discovered, however, through teaching Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and Cunningham's *The Hours* to various classes—undergraduate, graduate, and a community book group—readers generally had difficulty following and finishing the former whereas the latter was viewed as accessible and highly engaging. Tuzyline Jita Allan reports something similar in her experience of teaching *Mrs. Dalloway* in an undergraduate women's literature course: "*Mrs. Dalloway* elicited the traditional student response to unconventional narratives: frustration, extreme frustration" (97).

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