**Memory, Desire, Narrative, Time: *Mrs Dalloway***

**Group 1 -- to discuss re. Woolf's passage pp. 28-32**

**Memory**

* **How do the transitions between moments in time (and the tenses used) in the passage (or elsewhere in the novel) relate to the feelings produced? Choose an example to discuss.**
* **What do we learn about memory in these descriptions? (Does it ring true to you?)**
* **More specifically (and this is an open question): does Clarissa (or do we) feel emotion in the present in thinking of the past? If she/we were to do so,  would it be a repetition or a simulacrum of the emotion that was being felt in the past, or would it be something different?**

**Group 2 -- to discuss re. Woolf's passage**

**Fictions of Psychoanalysis**

Clarissa barely mentions Richard in her past memories, thinking of him only in the present. Critic Elizabeth Abel has written: “Bourton to Clarissa is a pastoral female world spatially and temporally disjunct from marriage and the sociopolitical world of (Richard’s) London.” (Abel, *Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis*, 31). **How far is Clarissa’s past (in this passage – and if you have any feel for it, elsewhere) presented as ‘natural’ and feminine as opposed to the socially constructed, masculine world of (the present) London?**

[Abel reads this according to Freudian theory – men and women alike lose the pre-Oedipal bond with the mother/ maternal body. “The loss for women, however, is less well compensated, since the boy’s rewards will include a woman like the mother and full paternal privileges, whereas the girl will be requited with at best a child but no renewed access to the maternal body **and** no acquisition of paternal power” (Abel, 32). **Feel free to discuss this angle/ theory too in relation to *Mrs D*! Does this (has this ever) convinced you?]**

[Separate – or is it related -- question?] **Is there any relation between the ‘sexual’ content (the homosexuality, and/or the fact it is desire between *women*) and time?**

**Group 3**

**Narrative Desire -- to discuss re. Woolf's passage**

Narrative – the play of desire in time. (Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot*, xiii)

[In the text itself – desire to order compels the plot’s unfolding; the space between text and reader, wherein the reader’s desire for plot impels the reading (see Brooks, 37-61)]

Desire is the motor of narrative… Desire is also unarrestable, always desire for something else, since it is constituted in the split between need and demand, born from a lack, founded on fictional scenarios of fulfilment. (Brooks, 78)

**What, if any, desires drive the narrative in *Mrs Dalloway*?**

**Does she remember the past to master it, get control over it, or is it precisely the power it might have to disturb, upset, even floor her that she is seeking? (Or neither of these things.)**

“Marriage in *Mrs Dalloway* provides impetus to rather than closure to courtship plot […] The courtship plot in this novel is both evoked through memories of the past and indefinitely suspended in the present, completed when the narrative begins and incomplete when it ends” (see Abel, ‘Narrative Structure(s) and Female Development’, 81). **How/why/ to what end does she keep replaying the choice (to marry Richard) she made 30 years ago, and how do the “two alluring possibilities” of Sally and Peter feature?** (See Abel, ‘Narrative Structure(s)’, 81.)

**Where does age feature in this – is consciousness of her age at different stages important to a story she is telling herself about her life?**

Abel, Elizabeth (1989), *Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press)

Abel, Elizabeth. (1992) ‘Narrative Structure(s) and Female Development’, in *Virginia Woolf*, ed. Rachel Bowlby (London: Routledge), 77-101.

Brooks, Peter. (1992) *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press)