

The Voyage Out
Curriculum as the Relation Between the Knower and the Known

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*Without going out of my door
I know the universe. Lao Tzu*

*In the child is the adult;
in the seed, the tree;
and in the raindrop, the ocean.*

One task of the curriculum theorist is a continual, careful, insistent pressing against the limits of our thinking. Part of this effort must be critical and historical. In this respect, it is no accident that the reconceptualization began in criticism. It cannot, however, remain there. There must accompany critical, historical work, post-critical work, a phase of theorizing in which the theorist turns his attention away from what exists, and toward what does not. As the tradition is discredited, a new one must be created. And in twenty years time perhaps (although the life-span of an intellectual tradition can hardly be predicted) it will be subjected to the same critical scrutiny which gave it its birth. The concept of the dialectic, while used nearly *ad nauseam*, remains to my mind the most succinct and powerful statement of how development occurs, collectively and individually. Opposing ideas or forces or individuals meet each other in ways which allow each to give itself up for the sake of the transformation of both, and attainment of a hopefully more comprehensive, less parochial point of view. In only slightly different terms really, Dewey's concept of experimentalism expresses the same possibility: new information is integrated into old, allowing the knower to comprehend himself, his environment, and their inter-relation, in more subtle, intelligent and instrumental ways.

This last understanding, that true theoretic advancement carries with it increasing pragmatic sophistication has been nearly completely forgotten in recent time. Part of Habermas' significance for us is his reconstruction of this fact. Pragmatic action cannot be frozen into principles and concepts composed before such action, and assumed to be legitimated logically and empirically. Pragmatic action is born only in the arena of action, and to the extent one enters this arena with static principles of how to behave, one deforms the situation. Necessarily one has shaped, let us say, the pedagogic situation, and selected out many possibilities. Depending upon the extent and rigidity of one's "conceptual grid," one has precluded dialectical interaction and movement. One is, if rigid or mindless of the importance of offering oneself up to social experience, automatically freezing the Other into his position as well. What usually occurs, then, unless the Other is passive or for instrumental reasons pretending to be passive, is conflict. Of course this word describes classrooms across this country. Increasingly this conflict is open and explicit, but even in calm, repressed classrooms the conflict occurs.

Thus the importance of the dialectic pervades many domains: a teacher's relationship to his students, the theorist's relationship to his own theorizing, his relationship to his field, and that field's relationship to its constituents (school personnel). Of course it is pertinent to the student and his social relations, but such a focus is outside the contours of this present writing. What I wish to suggest is that one task of the curriculum theorist is the demonstration of dialectical movement in his own theoretical work, his social-intellectual relations with colleagues and students, and with his field, a category obviously not distinct from the former ones. He must act as antithesis to certain prevailing theses or tendencies, but as well he must aspire to contain within his own self-work and self-self relation a thetic-antithetic tension.

In order to initiate and maintain such an intellectual state, the theorist must continually be willing to give himself up, including his point of view. Of course, a point of view exhibits development. It begins immature, and its intellectual lineage is more visible than the idea itself. As it matures, its linkages to extant ideas and traditions become submerged in its own uniqueness. Mature, it is a clear idea in itself, with linkages to other formed ideas. However, it exhibits a kind of intellectual autonomy. It is at this stage that the theorist is often seduced, particularly if the idea has gained a wide audience, and students have begun to sketch in detail its implications. He is invited to lecture; he has a reputation. If he is seduced, he writes only variations on the basic theme. He may well spend the remainder of his career writing such variations. Such a career is hardly reprehensible. The point is that this person has become intellectually arrested, however useful to himself and to others this arrested state is. In curriculum, a field concerned in part with the relation between the knower and the known, is it especially important for the theorist to demonstrate continued development.

How can one work with oneself in order to initiate and sustain such development? This question was one of those which resulted in the formulation of the method of *currere*. This method, as its most basic, represents a call for the cultivation of an internal dialectic. It is a call to examine one's response to a text, response to an idea, response to a colleague, in ways which invite depth understanding and transformation of that response. One version of the academic sensibility exhibits the notion that one develops a position which must be firm, unyielding. Then one makes cases for it, argues it endlessly, hoping, presumably, to persuade others to adopt it. I cannot avoid thinking of Jonathan Edwards and his "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" at this point. The content of sermons has certainly changed; the fact of preachers has not. A few scholars and theorists lay claim to timeless truths, and having completed the task of their own salvation -- intellectual not spiritual in this secular age -- they then devote themselves to the conversion of others. To change to a political image, this view is tantamount to a kind of intellectual imperialism, with its interest in colonizing the uncivilized regions of one's field.

Part of what attracted me to the study of education, and especially to curriculum, was acknowledgement that one's point of view -- if one were intellectually alive -- is in constant transition; and it is this view of not only one's intellectual life but life itself as some profound experiment which brings me to the present work. In our field this has meant we have tolerated, even encouraged I suppose, dissertations and other forms of scholarly work of varying conceptual sophistication. Our colleagues in the so-called cognate field often view much of

this work disdainfully, considering it primitive. This judgment is accurate. And it is understandable, given our colleague's preoccupation with the quality of scholarly products. What is mistaken and unfair in their judgment involves the ignorance of the nature of the study of education it demonstrates. We are interested in the process of intellectual and psychosocial development, not just its expression in socially agreed-upon forms. We are hardly disinterested in the forms such development takes, witness our vulnerability to attacks on the quality of our students' work. Yet we must answer firmly that quality is not our complete preoccupation, and if it so becomes, our field has lost what made it distinctive: an interest in process.

In one sense we can liken this interest to a psychoanalytic focus upon the unconscious, what lies below the proverbial tip of the iceberg. We are interested not only in the brilliant monograph, but its history as well, its origin in the life of the scholar, its relationship to issues in his life. Why such a focus? By examining the history of ideas in the life of individuals who formulate them we can begin to understand -- and not in the fragmented way which mainstream social science offers -- the nature of intellectual development, the process by which the individual learns, a particular field for instance, but more generally and perhaps more importantly, the process by which one becomes less parochial, more understanding, more interesting, more humane. Of course, academic study hardly ensures the development of such a person, but it is not controversial to note that such development is the traditional ideal of our training. At least in the humanities we have talked of the cultivation of sensibility, the training of a gentleman, by which was meant a certain point of view of experience that is subtle, yielding, capable of transmutation. True, this notion of a gentleman was frozen, and identified with socio-economic status and the capacity to affect gestures and conversation that are *au courant*.

You see something of the tradition I'm working from. It is nearly a lost one, as I am hardly the first or only to acknowledge. With specialization -- now a cliché, yet like most clichés, still true, only blurred from overuse -- we view our task as the training of professionals. Skills are what we impart, not a more generalized attitude toward experience. You know this story too well. You also know that there are important currents of modern intellectual life which have not succumbed: existentialism, psychoanalysis and Marxism the most important. I hope the current project will be viewed as one, however modest, expression of resistance. For historical and contemporary reasons, curriculum is a field in which this neglected educational ideal can be established, and perpetuated. I say historically because curriculum professors have always tended to demonstrate more interest in concrete issues and concrete individuals than in abstractions and the development of a conceptually coherent field. (That this interest finally worked against us and the field is a phenomenon I have discussed elsewhere.) We have the precedent, as yet not maturely developed theoretically, which allows investigations not possible in other subfields of education. The contemporary reasons have to do with the crisis in the curriculum field, in a word, that we are a field that is nearly extinguished. The name "curriculum" has been dropped from the departmental designations of several institutions, recently at Ohio State. The symbolic significance of this fact is that time is running out on us to develop any field at all. Given the paralysis of will and intellect which seems to pervade the field, in discouraged moments one wonders if any effort will not fail. It is remembrance of our tradition,

particularly those curriculum scholars with whom one studied, and the possibility of establishing an extraordinary field, which persuades one to make what may be a final effort. I think we have ten years left, at most. There may remain departments called "curriculum and teaching" after that date, but they will be empty of any genuine disciplinary meaning unless by that time it is clear to us who are committed to this field, and to those in other subfields who observe us, that we are working in a vital area, with important consequences not only for the advancement of the general field of education, but for the transformation of the nation's educational institutions as well.

What is our task in the coming decade? The superficial answer involves scholarly production. Less superficial are considerations of motive. We cannot produce curriculum scholarship for the sake of producing curriculum scholarship. There is no point in rescuing a field merely for the sake of rescuing a field. That should be obvious. Why do this work? The Jonathan Edwards among us answer that it is for the sake of salvation of the ignorant and reactionary. There is little or no loyalty to a field here. The field is only another medium through which the ideological struggle is waged. Another answer is less concise, partly because I do not fully understand it myself. But the sense that it is an answer is unmistakable, and persuades me to write about that which I am only vague. This answer has to do with giving up the safety of the rigid point of view, whether it be Marxism or Experimentalism or Empiricism. It involves allowing one's point to be transformed in dialectical process, with oneself and others. The possibility is staggering. What is possible is a genuinely experimental field, a field which sees itself as deliberately abandoning present understandings, unearthing material of which we have been unconscious hitherto, which may have seemed outside our domain of study.

How can such a spirit be cultivated? I think it involves focusing upon the quality of our relationship with our work, how it functions for us, and giving up the obsession with the judgment of others. The judgments of others can be left to others. We must take our eyes off our colleagues in the other subfields of education, and if necessary off our colleagues in curriculum -- if their gaze functions to make one intellectually timid -- and examine closely our experience. This may mean social and economic analyses; it may mean class analyses. Certainly it may not mean autobiographical study (and those who read this exposition as a thinly disguised argument for the necessity of autobiographical work have missed its point completely). We cannot know now what it will mean. This is the meaning of experimentation in its most profound sense. We give ourselves up to where our experience leads us. We attend as closely and faithfully as we currently can to our immediate experience of educational institutions -- we are experts, most of us have never left them since age six -- and we describe and attempt to understand this experience as honestly as we can. Of course such work forces us to make use of work in related disciplines. To read this as a call for intellectual myopia or isolationism is also a total misreading. It is a call for authentic investigation of experience, in which our theoretical expositions are dialectically tied to that experience. We curricularists are conservative people. Regardless how experimental, our studies will not be chaotic. They will not be idiosyncratic. Our built-in conservatism will guarantee that if we err, it will be on the side of safety and conservation of what exists already. Finally, what a field means is that we tell each other what we think of each other's investigations, and this social-intellectual process also functions in the service of caution. We will, on occasion, take unproductive lines of work; there will be culs-de-sac. But we will make important discoveries as well.

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The autobiographical study which follows is, in one sense, an attack on the concept of design. Some will say it is already a dead concept, or if alive, one not worthy of attack. I agree it is dead for some students of curriculum. However, if one peruses university catalogues, one observes still many courses entitled curriculum design. It is, I think, a concept many in our field still take seriously, and that, in my mind, gives it a kind of social if not intellectual currency. After Kuhn, one must acknowledge that the basic idea or paradigm of a field is one agreed upon by that field's practitioners, and this process of agreement (and the process of agreement breaking down, as in our case) is not altogether a purely rational one. Thus while many who regard themselves in the forefront of the field cannot take seriously the notion of curriculum design, I argue we must, given our colleagues' continuing acceptance of it.

There is much wrong about the idea. What I will argue is that one cannot, in any meaningful sense, design an educational experience. I will not only argue this point, I shall demonstrate it. The obvious yet evidently generally unknown fact is that one cannot predict human response, except in trivial matters and in artificially circumscribed circumstances, as necessary for experiments. Classrooms, while certainly artificially limited, are not sufficiently limited for the teacher to know with much certainty the response his or her lesson will receive. Conventional educational researchers typically bemoan this fact, i.e., the classroom is said to contain too many variables to permit a true experiment, given the state of methodological science. Thus the information educational experiments now yields is too tentative and circumstantial to permit one to design an experience.

All of this strikes this writer, and probably many of my readers, as tediously obvious. Yet the course titles remain; at A.S.C.D. and A.E.R.A. meetings the concept "curriculum design" is still discussed as if it were meaningful. Of course, curriculum must be planned, described in brochures, but it can hardly be a matter of serious scholarly and theoretical attention. It is work for competent journalists and publicity personnel in the case of catalogues, and work for teachers in planning their courses. But it is hubris to imagine one can design and predict experience. What must be retained in teachers' plans is their individuality. To force them to follow some "scientific" course plan, forcing them to write behavioral objectives, only impersonalizes their classroom, helps turn teachers into bureaucrats, alienated from their teaching and their students. This is, of course, a kernel portrait of our public schools in the late 1970s, and so-called scientific models of curriculum and teaching can claim credit, albeit modest credit as they are more expressions than causes, for this dismal state of affairs. While ridding ourselves of the concept of design is hardly a primal move in the transformation of curriculum theory and of our schools, it is another small step that must be taken. In fact, there is little evidence that, at the present time and in the foreseeable future, anything but small steps will be possible. Often critics are unwilling to fool with such order of issue, arguing that such work is only tinkering. My current view is that tinkering is our only option, and while not losing sight of fundamental issues, the broad view, it is quite appropriate to aim one's arsenal at a somewhat modest target: curriculum design.

What are my objections to the idea. One, as mentioned, is that one cannot predict with much certainty the response of one's listeners. One's utterances, I am thinking of the teacher here, are not heard exclusively in the context in which they are spoken (although this

sometimes occurs), but as well in the context in which they heard. This latter context is that of the individual lives of those listening. They are vastly, though of course not completely, different from that of the teacher. Even momentary thought reveals this fact. It is the fact of individuality. Even if those the teacher addresses were roughly the same age -- and more likely to be facing similar developmental issues -- his words are heard through the "filter" of individual interests and preoccupations. For elementary and secondary school teachers there is as well the matter of age, which insists upon greater psychological and intellectual distance between them. Their biographic issues are different -- as junior-high school teachers often lament and all will recognize. This is nearly platitudinal; yet many in the curriculum field treat the notion of design -- which these facts undercut -- as if it were an issue that could be resolved by principles or procedures. Impossible. Of course teachers ought to attend to their daily lessons, to the sequences of lessons over a week and longer, and certain individuals -- such as department chairman -- ought to keep a look over the entire program. But this is work to be done casually, through deliberation as Walker and Reid have both shown and argued for, and through individual teachers keeping journals of their interests and those of particular students. This matter of planning ought to be kept as informal and personal, i.e., individual, as possible, to allow and encourage each teacher and each department to shape its offerings according to its preferences. After all, that is the gift (hopefully it is a gift) of being with a teacher -- and not a televised lecturer -- at all, to share in her presence, to observe the gestures and mind-state behind the talk, to help participate in the formation of the classroom experience.

And this last phrase takes me to the second objection. Of course, there are more than two, but these settle the matter for me, and it is difficult, I confess, to imagine the reader for whom they do not. What is special, what is unrepeatable, potentially interesting and on occasion revelatory, is the moment by moment experience of particular individuals in particular rooms particular times. There are always issues to be addressed, often not conscious for either students or teacher, which the conscious teacher can help identify, and make use of to ground whatever the planned lesson is in the actual immediate experience of everyone in the room. Much misbehavior, from one point of view, is related (although not caused in a simple-minded linear way) to the teacher refusing, because she has become an automaton teaching a standardized curriculum, simply trying to get through her day, to address the specific individuals in front of her, to acknowledge in any explicit way what is occurring at any specific time. Or if it is acknowledged -- usually when there is misbehavior -- it is to mold it into her plan. I don't want to follow this line of thinking further, as it begins to sound like "blame the teacher," easy enough to do, not entirely inappropriate, but useless in the present context. However a teacher drones on, and there are many individual as well as bureaucratic and cultural reasons for it, we curriculum specialists can be accused of having contributed to it to the extent we have supported standardized curriculum and teaching procedures. To the extent we have standardized is the extent we have disallowed idiosyncratic behavior which is the extent to which alienation must be said to characterize social relations in the classroom. Information may be processed and acquired in such settings -- it is unlikely except for the most programmed, usually suburban students -- but education -- dialogical encounter in which the social and intellectual situation is dialectically transformed -- does not and cannot occur.

If we delete "curriculum design" as a central concept in the conceptual structure of the field, have we not weakened that structure? If design is not worthy of serious study, what is? Much is, but in this essay I will limit myself to one area: the relation between student and curriculum. More abstractly, I am focusing upon the relation between the knower and the known, as Madeleine Grumet has described the subject matter of the curriculum theorist. With such a conception of our work, we immediately leave the ethically questionable and intellectually vacuous area of design. Much more interesting as well than manipulating the "educational environment" in order to secure predetermined "outcomes", a view which claims all agency for itself, ensuring passivity for the Other, is examination of what the response is. Response is not the most apt word I suppose, as it subtly continues the active-passive dichotomy, and can lead to a simplistic "information processing" view. What I intend by the word is not just the text's influence upon a particular student or teacher, but the reader's influence upon the reading of the text as well.

In order to reveal the detail of this relationship between knower and known, to ground this abstraction in concrete experience, I will describe one student's reading of one text, Virginia Woolf's *THE VOYAGE OUT*.

To show detail of this interaction between individual and text, I will attempt to construct a "blow-up" of the process, much as a photographer might do. To so construct, the reading will be portrayed in discrete units, although it must be remembered that each unit is part of an experiential continuum which occurs as a whole, and in an instant and series of instants. These units, which also constitute steps of the method, are as follows. First, as the student reads he notes passages (words, sentences, paragraphs) which interest him in any way. Perhaps the language is felicitous, perhaps it is the thought which is provocative. Perhaps he has no conscious idea why he marks a particular passage. What is important during this first step is to attend closely to reading and make note of what in the text strikes him. At this stage he does not interpret; he gives himself to the text. What he records, i.e., the passages which interest him, represent the surface content of his reading.

Next, the novel has been read now, we go over the passages noted, and study them. What, if any, themes are evident? While his selection may seem fortuitous (he had no predetermined criteria by which to select except his interest), examining the passages shows that he was drawn to certain themes in the novel. These present themselves, and under each thematic heading -- for instance, "the social" -- he lists the page numbers on which pertinent passages can be found. After this second step is completed, he sets the material aside for a few days. When he returns to it, he studies each theme and the identified passages which express it. Now he writes -- loosely in the tradition of literary criticism -- short pieces about each of these themes, based on the passages cited. This writing is still focused upon the text. Of course, it is not strictly speaking the novel's view, given that he writes from passages according to his interest rather than according to their importance to the novel. In fact, the text has been employed as a kind of Rorschach test in which what the viewer reports he sees indicates as much about his inner experience as it indicates about the text. This description of themes distorts the reading process as it occurs ordinarily. But it is a necessary distortion, much like that involved in the magnification of a photograph. In both instances we now see detail that before we could not. However, in order to understand the detail we see we need yet another sketch, this time of something quite different from the text. We want a sketch of what we will call the reader's biographic situation, a deliberately

nebulous term which allows him to describe to us his life at the time of the reading. The shape he gives to his life through its descriptions is significant in the same way his choice of passages signified his reading of the text. As with the reading of the text, we ask him to focus upon the "object", and describe as concretely as possible -- it is not yet time for interpretation -- the elements which comprise his biographic present. After this description is completed (and completion in this stage, as in the others, is somewhat arbitrary; in the raindrop the ocean), we place both pictures side by side, and see what, if any, correspondence exists. In a certain sense we have a blow-up of the text and one of the reader; now we attempt to trace the relationship between the two. In so doing, we glimpse the relationship between knower and known.

As interesting and instructive as this glimpse may prove to be, as important as understanding, however incipiently, the relationship between knower and known is, we remain dissatisfied. With Habermas we must ask what human interest does this knowledge satisfy. It is not a technical interest; nor is it a practical one. It is a liberative one. That is, we seek in this work not only to present information which permits us to understand the relation between knower and known, we seek transformation of both. By attending closely to individual experience of the text, and by reflexive description and analysis of that experience, we alter that experience.

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I dream of the intellectual who destroys evidence and generalities, the one who, in the inertias and constraints of the present time locates and marks the weak points, the openings, the lines of force, who is incessantly on the move ...; who, wherever he moves, contributes to posing the question of knowing whether the revolution is worth the trouble, and what kind (I mean what revolution and what trouble), it being understood that the question can be answered only by those who are willing to risk their lives to bring it about.

Foucault

The focus upon the singular, upon the concrete, has been attacked in the curriculum literature. This attack suggests the excesses of contemporary Marxian theory. Taken as a whole, this work is probably the most vital body of serious scholarship in the various sub-fields of education (particularly history) in our time. However, as I noted in "The Abstract and the Concrete in Curriculum Theorizing", it is incomplete. In its appropriate attack on bourgeois individualism it has tended to delete the individual in any form, except as a moment in historical process. As Sartre argued twenty years ago and the so-called new philosophers argue today, neglect of the concrete individual in concrete circumstances invites only another form of oppression. The abuse of the masses by self-aggrandizing individualists must be not traded for the abuse of individuals for the sake of "the people."

In the obsession with abstractions, such as "cultural reproduction," the individual evaporates into a conceptual sea of raging forces and currents (classes, structural determinants of various kinds). While any form of theorizing requires abstraction, such abstraction must retain its explicit links to concrete, material reality. This loss of the concrete represents an excess of contemporary Marxian theory.

Pointing to this excess must not be interpreted as another, albeit disguised, attack from the Right. It must not be misinterpreted as insisting that the conceptual tools of dialectical

analysis are inherently distorting. What must be understood is that for many of us a companion order to analysis and program of action must be developed. It is obvious that classes and individuals are companion realities. Marxian critiques of curriculum, of education in general, are "*part of the larger struggle to gain control of our lives.*" (Wexler, 1977) Accompanying the critique of the socio-economic functions of curricula and educational activity must be critique of the biographic functions of such curricula and activity. "Auto-biographic" points to a perspective rooted self-consciously in individual life, a sense of "my life" from "my point of view" It has embedded in it political, economic as well as sexual and intellectual dimensions of that life. In fact, each of these dimensions achieves actuality in the material everyday life of the individual. As antithesis to the philosophical idealism evident in some Marxian critiques must come autobiographic description and analysis which functions to establish, theoretically and concretely, the perspective of the individual. Curriculum scholarship generally lacks such a perspective, despite characteristic calls for attention to "individual needs." In the literature, and often in practice, this call has rarely left abstraction, and Marxists have rightly criticized this "*cult of the abstract individual*" as finally phony, a construct only, and in the service of, at worst, capitalism, at best, progressive reform of same. This political function becomes evident in these traditional writers' irascible refusal to acknowledge the political function of the school. Thus the focus upon the abstract individual in the traditional literature *does* function to discourage class solidarity, and the location of oppression in structural relations among classes and economic forces.

Autobiographic description and analysis offers the curriculum field a point of view it simply has not had. In the literature we have no concrete descriptions of an individual's experience of texts, teachers, students. Only in Freire's PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED do we glimpse concrete individuals uncovering and analyzing the meaning of their everyday experience. It is now past time for such description and analysis. But it must be acknowledged that such work provides us more than information and a point of view of experience we have not had before. Autobiography has its political function as well. It can offer us another strategy by which we "*struggle to gain control of our lives.*"

One basic expression of the historical situation is alienation, among groups and individuals, and fundamentally, the individual from himself. As Marcuse, and from other tradition, Laing and Cooper have suggested, we are hidden from ourselves. Our needs are often false, as often are our personae. Coming of age is a process of losing oneself to role, to a complex configuration of interpersonal, economic and political influences. The fact of a "*false self-system*" (Laing, 1969) and an oppressive economic system are meaningfully related. Combating oppression must occur in both "domains". What is necessary is dialectical analysis of socio-economic systems, of hegemony, and the location of same in individual life. But the examination of individual life must not be limited to these concepts. It must be more free-floating, because part of mystification of self and culture is blindness by abstraction. Thus, part of this work must involve recovery of the body, of feeling, of a primitive self which the abstract individual has suppressed but not escaped. Individual strength, born and kept alive in self-knowing, in reflexive analysis of experience, is a necessary although insufficient condition for liberative movement. The same is so of collective solidarity. The fact of fascism in the Soviet Union indicates that public ownership and class solidarity guarantee only the perpetuation of the State. Individuals whose consciences cannot be

sacrificed for achievement of a collective objective are safeguard, albeit a tentative, vulnerable one, of a genuinely progressive culture.

But individual lives are often boring, often messy. This former comment I have heard many times these seven years I have studied autobiography as a mode of curriculum research. With repetition the comment has become more interesting, its latent meaning clearer. Such a comment can come from one whose life is avoided. Reading another life, which can be boring to the extent its representation has missed its singularity and captured itself stereotypically, refers the reader, as Doris Lessing has noted, to himself. It offers not escape into a world of logical forms and elaborate conceptual scaffolding. It offers a kind of mirror to oneself, and to the extent it reflects itself clearly, without reducing itself to preconceived ideas, is the extent to which the reader is invited to challenge his own taken-for-granted explanations of his life.

In the excerpt of the study to follow the individual's understanding of his reading and his situation is of course incomplete. A careful reading indicates he is captured by several "domain assumptions" which allow him to see only certain aspects of his situation. His tendency to view his situation in more-or-less Buddhist terms, terms which seem unchallenged in his analysis, blunt his capacity to see himself, and his choice of reading, as politically meaningful. But the point of this study is not achievement of some objectivist-inspired level of self-understanding. It is to illustrate the order of reflexive examination of experience, in this case reading, which is necessary to the recovery of the individual from abstraction.

Due to considerations of space, much of the study is deleted, although its illustrative function is not deformed. The listing of passages from the text, step one, is deleted. Assembling them according to themes is also deleted. We begin with the third step, brief sketches of these themes, using the passages identified. Three of seven sketches are printed here. Following is the fourth step, description of the reader's situation. Finally, we read his analysis of that situation and its relation to his reading.

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Step Three: Themes in Virginia Woolf's *THE VOYAGE OUT*

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The references to happiness are sparse. *THE VOYAGE OUT* is hardly a happy story. The mood throughout is varied, as is the rhythm of the prose. A certain somberness, sobriety, and slowness change quickly to intensity, rapidity, and a movement that is rushed. This becomes lightness, as in many of the social scenes at the hotel, as well as quickness, but then can disappear to become depth, fear, and far below the surface, desperation. There is a sort of happiness in the book; most of the visitors in the hotel are happy, if only in a superficial social way. More precisely, they are cheerful. They make jokes, and make conversation which then makes for smoothness and ease of meeting, but only their surfaces are engaged. One senses troubled people underneath those surfaces.

The few explicit references to happiness indicate that it comes, what little of it comes, after youth, if at all. Mrs. Dalloway tells Rachel how "crammed" the world is with "delightful things". Her happiness is a sort of fascination with objects. One easily imagines Mrs. Dalloway endlessly going to parties, to theater, to restaurants, an unceasing round of diversions. There is a rapidity to her movement and conversation that hints at "running", and one

has no difficulty imagining "rough spots" (as she would no doubt call them) in her life. These probably come from inside, and one's impression is that Mrs. Dalloway, if ever as a youth looked to her center, decided against it. The strength of her absorption with the "pleasures" of life, the material ones that is, implies flight from an unpleasant internal state.

Rachel is not happy, although in the first section of the novel she appears to be in some middle state, neither this nor that. As she is uninitiated in love, so she is in emotion. It lies dormant inside, built up over years, waiting for expression. This imbalance, i.e. repression, is indicated in the quickness with which she is ready to disclose herself. Soon after they begin talking, she tells Mrs. Dalloway "*I am lonely.*" (58) We are told that she is "*overcome by an intense desire to tell Mrs. Dalloway things she had never told anyone.*" (58) Her loneliness and need for expression require a confidante.

Mrs. Dalloway also reflects the importance of the Other for happiness. She tells Rachel: "*No one understood before Richard. He gave me all that I wanted.*" His importance for her is also consonant with her general "outward" orientation. The implication of her statement is: before I met him I was alone, misunderstood or at least not understood. Since we can see that Mrs. Dalloway is not so unusual and idiosyncratic as to make likely this state of affairs, we can read her statement as code for "*I didn't understand myself.*" Clarity about herself remained absent until Richard came and apparently told her who she was. True understanding and meaning come from outside, and in the form of another.

We get further evidence of Mrs. Dalloway's confusion and unhappiness as a youth when she remarks to Rachel: "*I think young people make such a mistake about that -- not letting themselves be happy.*" Such a generalized statement, that is, one without a specific referent, tends to be projective in nature, and one can infer that she speaks autobiographically. Yet she talks as if unhappiness were somehow willful, somehow a function of ignorance -- young people "*make such a mistake.*" If Mrs. Dalloway's life is a model of happiness, then the mistakes consist of isolation and being too much with oneself. Her husband agrees children are not happy and says: "*I never suffered so much as when I was a child.*" (68)

So it would seem that happiness, if it comes and to the extent that it comes, comes with age and with the end of isolation, the finding of another, and active absorption with diversions. But fairly clearly this version of happiness is a mixed one. Mrs. Dalloway is happy, as far as we and she can tell (although, as I have suggested, it is possible to infer some deep, repressed unhappiness), but it is at the expense of something. Is it depth; is it autonomy (what would she do without Richard); is it intelligence, that kind of intelligence which comes from one's depths, and is the expression of those depths? Mrs. Dalloway stays on the surface, fluttering from object and person to another, amazed, happy. But a subtle hysteria lies not far underneath, for there is no place to land for long. Except for Richard.

There is another sort of happiness hinted at in the novel, and that is one more rooted in oneself, and less in the other. Of Evelyn, after one of her outbursts, it is said: "*Her voice mounted too, in a mild ecstasy of satisfaction with her life and her own nature.*" (261) Regardless her later uncertainty (after Rachel's death) and her own slightly ridiculous character, this statement stands. It implies that acceptance and satisfaction with oneself, not dependent on the conduct of tea, or on one's husband, is possible. In fact, Evelyn is not married, and while her independence is not precisely used, she accepts who she is, and we see one can take satisfaction, and one surmises, feel happiness, in being who it is one is. This

happiness would seem the more desirable, at least ideally, although we cannot deny both characters are not the more admirable. However grudgingly, we must grant them their happiness.

* * *

June 13, 1974

Spirit

"Does it ever seem to you, Terence, that the world is composed entirely of vast blocks of matter, and that we're nothing but patches of light" -- she looked at the soft spots of sun wavering over the carpet and up the wall -- "like that?" (292-293)

We are the *"soft spots of sun"* on the material world. We are transparent; one looks at sunlight on the wall and one sees the wall. If the light is subtle enough one might easily miss the light and see only the wall, although of course one could see nothing without the light. Light, given our current developmental status, can be perceived only as it lies on a material surface. *"Consciousness is always consciousness of something,"* writes Sartre; it is always of something else. I am conscious of the ink being left on the page as I write, of the cat grooming herself near me on the bed where I work, and it is those objects of which I am conscious, but what is this *"I"*? It is my hand which writes, but it is *"my"* hand, it belongs to me. I am my body; I feel it from my toes to my head, but it is not what I am. It is as if I were inside a bottle; I feel myself pressed against its wall, my skin, but inside, where I am, I can move. I can be in my head (where I confess to be most of the time), but as well in my feet, in my genitals, or with my cat still on the bed, or with Virginia Woolf's photograph hanging on the wall opposite. But I am none of that, I am here, moving, watching. I am aware of my unconscious, which I experience as a weight, a burden. It lies below me, sedimentations of memories, emotions, fantasies, primarily pain, and so, frightened, I cling to the surface and what is outside me. I cultivate a calm, because I know I must go down, but I must do so manageably, as undistruptingly as possible. I digress; what I wish to say: my unconscious, while I am it also, it is not I. I am no thing; I am consciousness, I am light.

The morning was hot, and the exercise of reading left her mind contracting and expanding like the mainspring of a clock. The sounds in the garden outside joined with the clock, and the small noises of midday, which one can ascribe to no definite cause, in a regular rhythm. It was all very real, very big, very impersonal, and after a moment or two she began to raise her first finger and to let it fall on the arm of her chair so as to bring back to herself some consciousness of her own existence. She was next overcome by the unspeakable queerness of the fact that she should be sitting in an armchair, in the morning, in the middle of the world. Who were the people moving in the house -- moving things from one place to another? And life, what was that? It was only a light passing over the surface and vanishing, as in time she would vanish, though the furniture in the room would remain. Her dissolution became so complete that she could not raise her finger anymore, and sat perfectly still, listening and looking always at the same spot. It became stranger and stranger and stranger. She was overcome with awe that things should exist at all ... She forgot that she had any fingers to raise ... The things that existed were so immense and so desolate ... She continued to be conscious of these vast masses of substance for a long stretch of time, the clock still ticking in the midst of the universal silence. (124-125)

I go over these words very slowly, taking one by one, phrase by phrase, allowing their meaning to melt, looking up from the page and the pen, to the walls of my room, my bed, the plants and the windows over them, and the gray light of a cloudy midday lighting it all. It is my room I repeat, I live here, work here, but it does seem odd at times. Why I am here rather than there, why with these people rather than those, and so on. Looking over the passage again, I feel unstuck from the physical, the interpersonal, even internally ajar.

If we are light, then our dwelling apart from each other, encapsulated in our bodies and social habits, is not inevitable. This possibility is indicated in THE VOYAGE OUT.

The dreams were not confined to her indeed, but went from one brain to another. They all dreamt of each other that night, as was natural, considering how thin the partitions were between them, and how strangely they had been lifted off the earth to sit next to each other in mid-ocean, and see every detail of each others' faces, and hear whatever chance prompted them to say. (52)

The partitions are thin, and the word has its social and psychological senses as well as its physical ones. At night one leaves the publicly constructed world, and one lingers, descending, in the upper layers of the unconscious. In such a state, one's distance from another would be less concrete, and less final.

The characters' cultural hold is loosened in that its familiar physical and geographical settings are removed. They create a facsimile of England in the hotel, but the land and people around them are different. So the visitors are less inclined to accept the taken-for-granted, more inclined to see their modes of relation as constructed and contingent. Rachel, in this unfamiliar setting, comes out of herself, emotionally, intellectually, sexually, and she dies. Just before the voyage ends, she visits Evelyn, whose visit to the new land has also loosened her hold on the familiar.

Suddenly the keen feeling of someone's personality, which things they have owned or handled sometimes preserves, overcame her; she felt Rachel in the room with her; it was as if she were on a ship at sea, and the life of the day was as unreal as the land in the distance. But by degrees the feeling of Rachel's presence passed away, and she could no longer realize her, for she had scarcely known her. But this momentary sensation left her depressed and fatigued. What had she done with her life? What future was there for her? What was make-believe, and what was real? Were these proposals and intimacies and adventures real, or was the contentment which she had seen on the faces of Susan and Rachel more real than anything she had ever felt? (364)

What is real, and what make-believe? "Soft spots of sun wavering over the carpet and up the wall."

* * *

June 17, 1974

Relationship

"On the following day they met - but as leaves meet in the air." (70)

Thus are the possibilities of relationship in THE VOYAGE OUT. Cut from our source

and our home, we drop toward death, buffeted by the wind, sunned on, rained on, and by chance (it would seem) we meet another, he on his descent, she on hers, together only for the time and in the way the currents permit, then separate again, falling.

Such a view of relationship (and of life) involves isolation and frustration. Different characters speak to these conditions. Richard Dalloway complains to Rachel: "*This reticence -- this isolation -- that's what's the matter with modern life!*" (75) Earlier he had said to her: "*D'you know, Miss Vinrace, you've made me think? How little, after all, one can tell anybody about one's life! Here I sit; there you sit; both, I doubt not, chock-full of the most interesting experiences, ideas, emotions; yet how to communicate?*" (68) As we noted earlier, the social forms we observe in the novel are inadequate to the message they must carry. Consequently the split between public and private; what is significant lies within, usually inaccessible to the other (thus the importance of the so-called "stream-of-consciousness" technique). So come withdrawal and isolation. Of Mr. Ambrose it is said: "*Unfortunately, as age puts one barrier between human beings, and learning another, and sex a third, Mr. Ambrose in his study was some thousand miles distant from the nearest human being, who in this household was inevitably a woman.*" (170)

Distance like this brings frustration. Richard Dalloway and Rachel are unable to reach to each other except erratically and confusedly. Terence and Rachel are similarly estranged at first; Rachel even does not know herself the extent of her involvement. For his part, Terence is ambivalent and uncertain. And when some sort of emotional exchange begins, when relationship between the two becomes established, Rachel dies. Frustration of relationship dominates the book. Helen remarks, and not with inordinate cynicism: "*The lives of these people ... the aimlessness, the way they live. One goes from one to another, and it's all the same. One never gets what one wants out of any of them*" (263)

Like leaves, human lives scatter, this way then that, and what one wants from others? It may well be what one wants from others cannot be gotten, at least not without a crushing cost. It may be what we want is the stability of attachment, the living of the semi-conscious memory of floating safely in the womb. That order of stability may not be achievable interpersonally.

Autobiographic Situation

June 23, 1974

Willa, John, and I went to Mendon Park today, and walked and walked. I'm tired now, but I don't want to sleep. Thinking about this work, and how to proceed.

What I'm considering is writing a journal, with the idea that my situation will present itself more honestly, more artlessly if I write about what occurs day to day than if I begin to summarize and analyze. I would need to do that at some point, making explicit any connections between reading *THE VOYAGE OUT* and my situation.

Stephen Spender's photograph on the frontpage of today's *TIMES BOOK REVIEW*. The lines, creases, the flesh sagging, and his eyes, slightly dull, vacant, looking past the photographer. I remember Virginia Woolf's remark that the lines on the faces of the middle-aged makes one think they see something horrible the young can't yet see. My own face and body will age like that; already it begins. When I've had a lot to drink -- like last night -- I can

see the lines coming, the face aging. It awes me, and I suppose, frightens me. Always wanted to age slowly, as if I were getting away with something, as if I'd avoided some of the harsher effects of living. Although one incontestable thing I've managed to learn these past couple of years is that life must not be avoided, that the pain of trying to avoid the pain -- flight and the accompanying isolation -- is, as Kafka noted, the only pain that might have been avoided.

Joseph just here. Thursday night after Jim's I told him I responded to him with anger. Today he asked me why; I told him. It feels as if he doesn't take me seriously. He doesn't. I'm sure it's complicated and interesting why he doesn't -- cross transference, etc. -- but I don't care enough to unravel it with him. Nor does he.

* * *

A cabin on Lake Keuka. With Paul. A relief to be away from Brighton Street; maybe now I can write about it. Such a relief in fact that I remind myself to be cautious, don't ride this wave too far, prepare now for its conclusion, being washed ashore. Thoughts of moving out as soon as I return, of working in the office. This work has been stalled; I've been stalled.

July 3, 1974

Brighton Street. No one there is an intellectual, although each is bright. Willa, when she chooses, discusses astutely capitalism and psycho-social development. People who know her any considerable length of time cannot help but see the brilliance she evidently works to keep hidden. As John's reticence dissolves, a perceptive and analytic mind is disclosed. Johanna is practical if not shrewd, reads more than any of us, and even takes an interest in what I'm trying to do. So it is not that my companions are dull; it is that their primary *mode d'être* is not mental. Their basic method of functioning is not cognitive, but, I would say, intuitive. I tend to be more mental. For instance, I continue to be astonished how necessary it appears to be for me to articulate at relatively abstract levels what it is I experience. Otherwise my experience does not appear to surface. I suppose this is the salient characteristic of the intellectual, a characterological type who must overcome his over-reliance upon the mental.

At Brighton Street we speak to each other less often than I am accustomed to. Willa speaks the least, then I, then John. Johanna speaks, it seems, the most, in fact constantly. Our talks tend to refer to matters associated with the house, and often they refer to our internal states at the time. There is comparatively little talk about people who are not present. There is little talk of the "news", or of books just published, or of our individual futures. The focus tends to be the present and ourselves. I see this as somewhat consciously chosen, a consequence of our belief that continual self-reference heightens our awareness of immediate experience, an awareness which permits us more understanding of the present biographic situation, what is at stake, and what our paths must be.

I fear I sketch a group of egoists. We are in a certain sense -- we have not forgotten ourselves and work not to -- but we do spend considerable time in de-centered listening to each other, attempting to help the other explicate his condition, offering observations and suggestions when possible. During these times the self slips into background; I am focused on John who describes his dream of the night before. I listen carefully to his choice of words; I watch his gestures, the tone of his voice and his apparent emotional state, in order to attempt to see underneath his words to what they (and the dream they describe) refer to. Then, if possible and solicited, I offer my analysis.

Mornings. Usually I awaken some time between seven and nine. Sip coffee, propped up in bed or in the back yard, warming myself in the morning sun. Then yoga postures, then zazen. Then, if possible, I work, I write. I have met with difficulty recently. Always, I suppose, I meet with difficulty, but now with school over and the summer set aside for writing, I face it more. Often, after an hour of being blocked, I accompany Willa to the park, or walk in the neighborhood, visit friends in the afternoon, or take a nap, practice the piano and the saxophone, and it is then six o'clock: Willa who has been waitressing, John who has been doing carpentry, and Johanna temporarily a receptionist, come home. Dinner, drinking, and long walks as night falls.

Walking. Looking at houses, expressing preferences occasionally, mostly observing. The summer nights have been cool or just right, the air comfortably flows around the face, the legs, the arms. Traffic on major streets sounds dully in the distance. Trees accentuate the sense of stability the old houses give the area. Imagining it in 1770, woods and Indians. How contingent, how theater-like social life is. How isolated we are now, how fearful (bright street lights newly installed, everything lit harshly like a freeway). Ugly stained hard streets, metal boxes and their fumes, danger, to Molly dog "hoa!" at each corner. A few on their porches, watching as we pass, sometimes a gesture, a visible acknowledgement of each others' presence. Walking, walking, fast at first, then block after block a little slower, something inside ground down, a tension made dull, like a knife worn dull by use. I in my head, my body gliding underneath, each picture slightly different, moving past this tree, approaching that house, a car, memories, associations, patterns I'm tired of, a tiny effort to return to the walking, to the street, the houses, the night, this night. The presence of John next to me, walking rhythmically, a word, then nothing, then "ready to go back?" Number 22 Brighton Street closer, on the porch the people who live upstairs, guitar, voices, beer bottles, the moon overhead, my body, my head still now, tired, enough has past to be done with the day.

* * *

Birds. Sitting in the cottage, writing this. The leaves, like muffled applause, crescendo, then subsiding, chirping here, answered over there. An insistent sound, like a windhammer only it's a bird, soft, life-full. Now a motor from the lake. Fishermen. My head dull, everything odd, everyone asleep as dawn begins. The wind louder, louder; rain falls.

Johanna and I are friends. She is fond of me, and I of her. As she puts it, she leans on me, tests her ideas on me, and complains to me, even about Willa and John. I am sympathetic mostly.

She is talented; she sings, plays the trumpet, acts. She is flamboyant, exuberant, loud, sometimes stubborn. Sexually she is frank, and discusses her sexual interests and acts in detail. Regards herself bisexual, although her explicit sexual interest in women seems small, her experience with them limited.

Willa and I are friends, but the fit is less snug than it feels with Johanna. We listen to each other, discuss our dilemmas, get advice; we're there for each other. But we don't lean upon each other; she continually refers me to myself, often unsympathetic to my unhappiness or frustration. She comes to me more to hear herself, to get out what is blocked, then to seek advice and sympathy. This is her way, but it is also correct in terms of our relationship. Finally we are at cross purposes; we speak past each other, never hit the mark. Our gift

to each other is mutual respect.

I admit I am fascinated with her. She is spirit in body; sometimes I almost expect her to step out of it. Whenever I look at her she is artful. It is only partly conscious. She appears to glide, though inside I know she's working hard nearly all the time. She is earnest about living. She breaks down of course, regresses, becomes petty, aggressive, self-indulgent. Sometimes she is a shrew, but the odd thing is that, finally it makes no difference. All of us in the house try to avoid her anger; we dislike the bitch in her, but it is obscured by her grace, her intelligence, in a word, her presence.

"John is wonderful." Each of us talks about him that way. On the surface he is steady, and I feel steady when around him. Underneath he feels angry, and this is blocked on the whole. In fact, he is generally repressed, and knows it. He has worked hard to make contact with his repressed material, and his movement is laudable. It is astonishing actually, and often I am delighted and surprised by an observation he makes. We take long walks together, discuss our dreams, emotions, ideas; we like and respect each other. Sometimes he frustrates me; I imagine he talks to me because I am the only other male in the house. Yet, a friendship not quite that impersonal develops, however much in the shadow of Willa it is. He and Willa are splitting up however. Already a week has passed since they slept together, although he still comes over, considers her his lover. Willa told me the day I left she considers him a friend. I hope he can make the adjustment it appears he'll have to make relatively easily.

* * *

What am I doing? On Brighton Street, living with people so different from me. It is temporary; I sense that. I'm to learn from them; learn to live with diversity, to see my interests, particularly my intellectual interests, in a broader context, to diminish my egocentricity, to speak out from my heart, to live on another basis and put the intellect in its place. All these reasons yes, but it's so instrumental. I want a family, a home, a place to rest from work, not yet another place to work. Is that self indulgent?

I am backed down, unable to work. I know enough not to force it, but what if it never comes of itself? This week I'm rewarded. In this cottage by Keuka Lake I am able to write. But when I return? And what is this I am writing?

I am blocked, uncertain, isolated, unhappy. A Zen master says the twenties are the most difficult. I am twenty-six.

July 30, 1974

Blackwater Falls, West Virginia. In a cabin, in the middle of woods, with Mark, birds in the background, sun and shadows. Again it takes absence for me to write. After the week on Lake Keuka, a week in Rochester, much of it spent at the office, all of it spent quickly. Then a week in Columbus, back to Rochester and the move.

I had decided, rather realized, while at the lake I must move, that what I was doing at Brighton Street was over. Mild fear of living alone dissuaded me, but away I saw how little work I was doing, how dissatisfied I was emotionally, in a word, how I must leave.

When I returned from the lake (a Saturday morning, everyone still asleep, my room used and unrepaired, a plant dead from no water, another overturned and unattended), I began looking for a place, saying nothing to anyone for a couple of days.

As it turned out, Willa had taken a place too, around the block. Johanna took to bed, feeling abandoned. She acted hurt, then angry, then cold. As usual, I withdrew. I moved quickly, feeling guilty a little, angry a little. Disappointed that three of us (Willa and I had had a silly fight which angered me disproportionately) were unable to separate more calmly. Initially I blamed the two of them (John remained constant throughout: uninvolved, aloof but friendly): Willa had started the fight; Johanna was overdramatising her practical situation (no roommates to help with the rent) and her emotions. Now I know I participated in the general tension. I remember being angry and withdrawn and attempting to mask this state with a rather frozen friendliness.

So I left Brighton Street. To East Avenue. The George Eastman house sits on East Avenue, an avenue lined with hugh old places. The house I moved into, I am told, Mr. Eastman built for his mistress; another says it was for his physician.

Whoever it was built for lived in a remarkable place. One room has a wall that is nearly all glass. Outside the window is an ancient lilac bush, smaller trees and bushes and a hedge which forms a back curtain. The windows face west, and the soft late afternoon sun is filtered into leaf-like patterns on the walls and floors by the plants outside.

The other room is long. At one end is a marble fireplace, its mantle, polished and dark-grained, with lion's heads carved at each end. Leaded windows. The two long walls are old, polished, worn wood. The ceiling is stone and carved to form lines of flowers every twelve to fifteen inches.

In contrast to Brighton Street, the apartment is order and stability. One room is light, nearly outside, the other dark, somber yet not depressed. Quiet, and now that I am its only inhabitant, reflective of my mood.

Analysis

June 9, 1976

Sitting in my office on campus, sweating in summer heat.

It occurs to me to take each theme I identified in *THE VOYAGE OUT* and use it as a sieve through which to pour my biographic situation. Correspondences, if any, should become discernible.

First I read the piece on happiness in the novel. I thought of the reference to a Zen master somewhere in the biographic description; he says the twenties are difficult. In the novel happiness comes, if at all, after youth. It is clear to me I focused on this aspect in the novel -- on happiness and when in the characters' lives they felt it -- because it is something of an issue with me in 1974. As I remember this time now, I see I was fairly unhappy. I wonder if this is evident in the biographic description, and if I acknowledge it. I'll read this section now.

There is a conscious fear of aging near the beginning of the June 23rd entry. Soon after a mention of pain, of the pain created by trying to avoid pain. In the cabin by the lake: "*it's a relief to be away from Brighton Street.*" "*I've been stalled.*" Conscious of my readers when I write: *I fear I sketch a group of egoists.*" It makes me think that some of the fear I sense in this section comes from anticipated criticism. I do not know how to extricate this fear from fear of my housemates or fear of my future. All I can say is that some of it was

focused here, some there: what is fundamental is the fact of fear. I carry it with me, and pour it onto different "objects."

Just before the section beginning "walking," I describe my day briefly, and succinct as the description is -- well, that's the point isn't it. It is succinct, bordering on terse; the lack of emotion is indicative of the defense, repression in this instance. The quality of my lived experience of those days was sufficiently painful to have to exclude it. I feel pleased I'm now more able to allow myself to feel more my pain.

The "walking" section. *"How isolated people are .. how fearful. Ugly stained hard streets. Walking, fast at first, then block after block a little slower, something ground down, a tension made dull."* This passage corresponds with Richard Dalloway's remarks to Rachel on the isolation and tension of modern life.

Speaking of Brighton Street: *"I want a family, a house, a place to rest from work, not yet another place to work. Is that indulgence?"* There is pain here. Today I see the importance of the work I did then. It has to do with relationships, with the emotional life in general, and today I don't want to escape from it as I wanted then. I don't expect escape. There are times of rest, but it is clearer now than it was then that a major portion of life's work involves relationships, involves the intimacy and emotional disturbance often attending them. This sense of relationships is reflected in my reading of the novel.

The tension involved in this writing. Fear. Yes, there it is, just before the July 30th entry: *"I am blocked, uncertain, isolated, unhappy. A Zen master in Japan says the twenties are the most difficult."* The hope at the end of the description.

I was not conscious of how unhappy I was during that period in 1974. It is easy to see why I chose happiness as one theme of the text. (In the same vein, it is easy to see why I chose THE VOYAGE OUT itself). There is little of it in the novel. Rachel is repressed; her life in the novel is a kind of emotional coming out. The parallel is my own repression. I begin the description with everyone but myself, and only after I've worked through the others I find myself, and it is a constricted and unhappy self. That's what Rachel finds as well. For her, however, the pain is physical, the result of the illness she contracts. There is divergence at the end: in the novel Rachel dies and in the description there is hope.

June 11, 1976

Describing Brighton Street, just after the paragraph on the university. *"Our talk tends to refer to matters ... in the present."* Such an agenda is in reaction to trivial talk, talk no more significant than baseball statistics. The commitment is to speak about what occurs within, refusing to become like those Rachel imagined in churches: *"innumerable men and women, not seeing clearly, who finally gave up the effort to see, and relapsed into praise and acquiescence, half-shutting their eyes and pursing their lips."* Anything but half-shut eyes, pursed lips, lives not lived.

June 12, 1976

Spirit. Having read the piece on spirit in the novel, I have nothing to say. To the description.

Early in the June 23rd entry. Stephen Spenders' photograph and aging. I think of Rachel musing on how the furniture remains after one disappears. The aging of the body fascinated

me then. The spirit inside changes, moves, expands, but the body: it slowly creases and sags. In contrast to Rachel's observation, it seems as if it is the spirit which has duration, and material objects, like the body, which seem to deteriorate before our eyes.

At Brighton Street we were committed to what we called development, to what many friends called spiritual work. At that stage we worked to focus on the present, on the biographic meaning of events, and our response to it. This is a different sense of "spirit" than occurs in the novel, but the fact of an interest in the spiritual in my life, and the interest in it in the text, cannot be fortuitous.

About Willa I write: "*she is spirit in body; sometimes I almost expect her to step out of it.*" I think of Rachel's question: "*'does it ever seem to you, Terence, that the world is composed entirely of vast blocks of matter, and that we're nothing but patches of light' -- she looked at the soft spots of sun wavering over the carpet and up the wall -- 'like that?'*" Willa is like sunlight in flesh.

My questions near the end of the description mirror Evelyn's at the end of the novel. She asks: "*what had she done with her life? What future was there for her?*" From the biographic description: "*What am I doing on Brighton Street, living with people so different from me?*" A sense of unreality, of things not grounded, of light on solid objects but unattached, roving here then there. Solid objects have stability; light does not. My life was like light: unattached, meandering, unstable.

June 13, 1976

The description of my housemates reminds me of many relationships in THE VOYAGE OUT, relationships characterized by a certain formality and lack of consciousness. One plays a role for another; one makes use of the other. She complains; I listen. Two people present to each other, mutually negotiating that presence: such a relationship seems absent in the text (except for Terence and Rachel) and absent at Brighton Street (except for the relationship between Willa and me, which, while attenuated, was nonetheless present).

Reading the description of Willa I notice that I haven't portrayed the relationships among us. There is little mention of her relationship to John (except that it is ending) or to Johanna. There is discussion of my response to the three, but I am struck now how little discussion of relationship generally there is in this biographic situation.

Regarding Willa's relationship with me. "*Frustrated because no man she has met is so developed ... she tends to express her frustration, anger, and disappointment in her analysis of the other. Thus her knife cuts deeper and with coarser movements than such a delicate operation properly permits, and some injury and bleeding occurs.*" Remembering this I feel anger, anger at Willa, most anger at relationships generally. Always after something not found in oneself. I think of Helen's observation in the novel: "*The lives of these people ... the aimlessness, the way they live. One goes from one to another, and it's all the same. On never gets what one wants out of any of them.*" This morning I see why I chose THE VOYAGE OUT, why it came to me that spring. Its relationships mirrored mine at Brighton Street.

* * *

In this brief exercise we discern the reciprocal relation between knower and what is known. The student of the text creates the text as it creates the student. Issues "in the

text", it becomes clear, are issues "in the reader". His issues shape the character of his reading, and the reading shapes his understanding of his biographic situation. If the work is done investigatively, that is without attempting to force a reciprocal relation, it has developmental effects. These are brought by heightened awareness of what is at work in his situation, a situation, we note, which changes as he works. Reading the novel functioned to invite awareness of the situation, and this awareness invited its transformation. That is a fundamental psychoanalytic premise which we find demonstrated in this autobiographical work.

In this specific text-situation relationship we note a basic structural relationship between intellectual work in general and, if you will, the intellectual worker. One's intellectual interests are formed by the character of one's biographic issues, whether conscious of these or not, and these issues are in turn shaped by the content of one's intellectual issues. Employing this version of the method of *curre* one invites first heightened awareness of both interests and situation, in what Habermas terms the relation between knowledge and human interest (although in kernel -- individual -- form), and such awareness thus invites transformation of both interest and situation. In a certain sense the method is one device by means of which the curriculum theorist -- the scholar of any field -- may work to cultivate his own intellectual development. If he feels himself arrested intellectually, he can be sure he is arrested biographically. If he wishes to focus upon his interests, he cannot do so without attention to the situation these interests are both cause and consequence of.

Awareness and transformation are never absolute, final acts, and while material circumstances may change, the fundamental biographic issues -- say of relationship or happiness -- may remain. The notion of figure-ground is useful in describing the relative prominence of any given issue in any given period of one's life. While one hardly is finished with issues of relationship, one may work through these issues sufficiently that another, until now latent, issue presents itself as central to the composition of the biographic present. There is, we have found in our researches, a definite sense of development to the identification and examination of these issues and their symbolic expression in intellectual interests. It is not a matter of a static "*this issue then that one.*" "That one" depends upon resolution of a prior one, and one experiences them as sequential. While such a concept is quickly too linear to comprehensively describe the experience of development, it is partially expressive. Success in this work is felt as movement, as awareness of issues and the biographic function of intellectual work that were before veiled, and transformation of both issues and work. One experiences intellectual and biographic movement.

In a certain sense this work often feels like a voyage out, from the habitual, the customary, the taken-for-granted, to the unfamiliar, the more spontaneous, the questionable. The experimental attitude in its most profound meaning suggests this openness to what is not known, a willingness to attempt action the consequences of which cannot be predicted fully. Such a capacity to risk -- intellectually, biographically -- can be cultivated through the work described here. It is a capacity we are obligated to develop.

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