Examining readers' reactions to difficult narratives

A psycho-stylistic approach to Virginia Woolf's use of *free indirect style*



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I would like to dedicate this thesis to my family, who believed in me and supported me during these years, both emotionally and financially. My father, who is always so proud of me, and my mother, whose silent affection I have learnt to cherish. My grandmother, whose worries know no distance, and my grandfathers with their solid tranquillity.

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Declaration

I hereby declare that except where specific reference is made to the work of others, the contents of this dissertation are original and have not been submitted in whole or in part for consideration for any other degree or qualification in this, or any other university. This dissertation is my own work and contains nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration with others, except as specified in the text and Acknowledgements. This dissertation contains fewer than 100,000 words including appendices, bibliography, footnotes, tables and equations and has fewer than 150 figures.

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Abstract

This thesis aims to explore the processes that readers engage in when they encounter difficulties in literary texts and to add scientific value to existing theoretical assumptions about difficult literature, combining stylistic analyses with psycholinguistic research methods.

The research focuses on complex techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation, using offline surveys and eye tracking to examine the mechanisms by which readers understand and process them. Approaches combining stylistic analyses, cognitive linguistics and psycholinguistic research methods are rare, and previous work has focused almost exclusively on poetry. My work sets to address this gap in understanding how readers respond to and process complex narratives.

This research focuses on Virginia Woolf's most popular novels: *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway*. These are generally considered to be difficult by literary critics, and are believed to represent a challenge for readers, especially because of her experimental use of techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation. Using an innovative mixed methods approach, I analysed Woolf's two novels and isolated eight extracts that contain potential difficulties related to the use of these techniques, in particular ambiguous shifts between perspectives and between different modes of speech and thought presentation. First, a questionnaire was used to verify whether these passages are indeed perceived as difficult by readers, and whether that perception is caused by the hypothesised features. Participants gave the original extracts significantly higher difficulty ratings than modified versions, which had been simplified by removing or altering hypothesised difficulties. When asked to attribute perspectives to the texts, they attributed significantly more perspectives to the original extracts in comparison to the modified ones, suggesting they experienced more difficulty in the comprehension of the original extracts.

This approach provided a strong foundation to more precisely investigate how difficulties impact reading through the use of eye tracking. Eye tracking allows for

natural reading and provides a metric of processing effort, whilst indicating where readers are attending when they encounter difficulties or whether they reread passages to make sense of new information. However, almost no literature exists on the application of eye tracking to narrative texts. The existing literature on reading, mostly of sentences in isolation, suggests that when faced with a difficulty in comprehension, readers typically produce more and longer *Fixations*, more *Regressions* and longer *Total Reading Time*. Some results were consistent with these typical patterns but others were not. Some extracts did not elicit consistent behaviours in all readers; some readers demonstrated longer and more fixations and a higher skipping rate for the modified texts compared to the (more complex) original passages. Closer examination of two extracts, which repeatedly showed inconsistent reading behaviours, did not highlight any specific pattern or feature which could explain these differences in readers' behaviour. Notably, words which are often skipped during reading – function words, pronouns, conjunctions, short verbs – seem to play an important role in the processing of Woolf's texts. These results raise several questions in relation to the nature of the difficulty reported by readers of Woolf's novels, and provide a sound basis for future research in literary understanding, and, hopefully, an inspiration for future eye tracking studies in re-evaluating the role and effects of difficulty in the processing of authentic literary texts.

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Chapter 1

Difficulty, Modernism and the representation of consciousness

1.1 Introduction

Within literary studies, the term 'difficult ' has been used in different ways, generally pointing to texts that are believed to be challenging to understand due to deviant uses of lexical items, syntactic structures that break the rules of written language and unintelligible or elusive references. In order to investigate and define the linguistic properties which make texts challenging, several studies focused on poetry, examining works that are considered obscure and inaccessible (Castiglione, 2013, 2016, 2017; Purves, 1991; Yaron, 2002, 2003, 2008, 2010). Typologies of difficulty in poetry were developed by Press (1958); Steiner (1978); Nowottny (1962), who analysed the phonetic, lexical and syntactic properties of poems considered difficult by critics. More recently, Castiglione (2019) offered an updated and detailed description of the various aspects that can produce difficulty in poetry, pointing out how previous models overlooked readers' responses, and emphasising the importance of empirical methods to determine what can be considered difficult.

It is surprising, however, how rarely similar approaches to difficulty have been applied to narrative texts. Literature on the investigation of difficulty in narrative texts is almost non-existent, and even rarer are empirical approaches to it, especially with regard to the specific linguistic features that produce difficulty. If mentioned by literary critics, difficulty is generally presented as a non-specified feature of the text, which prevents a clear understanding of its 'meaning', and generally related to an intricate plot. Crucially, a disruption of the narrative flow is often caused *by* specific linguistic features. These are not easy to identify, not only because of the large amount of textual material, but also because they are strongly related to the writer's idiosyncratic use of language, as well as to genre and cultural/historical schemata, making the investigation of difficulty in narratives extremely challenging.

Starting from the questions 'is this text difficult?' and 'what makes this text difficult?', and in agreement with Castiglione on the importance of empirical methods to identify and define literary difficulties, the current research addresses this gap in the literature, undertaking an investigation of difficulty within two texts: Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway*. The aim of the present thesis is thus twofold: on the one hand, it aims to explore and examine how readers react to difficult literary texts; on the other, it intends to support and emphasise the importance of empirical approaches to the field of literature, presenting a multidisciplinary approach which brings together perspectives from psychology, linguistics and literary criticism.

First I will introduce the concept of difficulty and explain the reasons behind the choice of these two texts. After providing a picture of the theoretical assumptions on the difficulty with regard to these two novels, I will analyse readers' response to the features that are considered to be at the origin of such difficulty. This examination will include two studies: a first one, designated to validate – or discredit – the theoretical assumptions on difficulty concerning the two novels, and a second, examining readers

eye movement to investigate readers' physiological behaviour and provide an insight into the exploration of difficulty within narrative texts.

1.2 Difficulty and modernist literature

The rise of critical studies on difficulty in narrative parallels that of Modernism. The modernist movement was conceived of as a rebellion against 19th Century academic and historicist traditions, as well as against absolutism and Victorian nationalism. 'Traditional' forms of art were perceived as outdated, and the modernist movement wanted to produce something radically new. This called for the re-examination of every aspect of existence, including the way in which language was used. Modernist writers announced 'the inadequacy of the old language' (Malamud, 1989), and their experiments with it reflect this belief. Language had to 'stretch – had to say more than it had been able to say before; had to reveal more, embody more' (Malamud, 1989). The desire for a new way of representing reality pushed artists to break conventions, inventing new strategies for portraying their impressions of the world, which often resulted in alienating works. Bradbury and McFarlane (1991, pp. 24-25) describe the modernist form as an 'abstraction and highly conscious artifice, taking us behind familiar reality, breaking away from familiar functions of language and conventions of form', and the reaction to it as a 'shock, the violation of expected continuities'. According to them, modernist fictional prose represents thus a departure from traditional narratives, both in terms of language use and in terms of structure.

In his book, *The Difficulties on Modernism*, Diepeveen (2003, p. x) describes the difficulty faced when reading modernist literature as 'an experience. [...] a barrier to what one would normally expect to receive from a text, such as its logical meaning, its emotional expression, or its pleasure [...] the experience of having one's desire for comprehension blocked'. He recognises difficulty as a keystone for the modernist

movement, and argues that it became an 'artistic ideology', embraced by modernist writers and artists as necessary. This is also stressed by Malamud (1989, p. 7) who writes that 'modernists themselves professed to believe that their writing, while difficult, must necessarily be so – that only such difficulty adequately portrayed modern life'.

What, then, made modernist literature difficult in terms of language use, and *why* was it a necessity? If on the one hand it was born as a rebellion against former literary traditions, on the other hand it was the result of the modernist writers' preoccupation with form and their interest in the analysis and representation of reality in the way it is perceived by human beings, and of personality, 'especially a consideration of the fragmented, dehumanized self' (Head, 1992). Lunn (1984) lists some of the most important features that characterise this genre: aesthetic self-consciousness, self-reflexiveness; simultaneity, juxtaposition, paradox, ambiguity and uncertainty; dehumanization and the demise of subjectivity conceived as unified, integrated, self-consistent. What he seems to miss in a more verisimilar way is that this impression of dehumanisation can be seen instead as the ultimate strategy to portray reality: an attempt to represent the human psyche more accurately, with its inconsistencies and in its fragmented nature. Adamson (1998) provides an account of the language of Modernism that emphasises the important role played by oral speech, and points out how prominently Modernism tries to reproduce into written form the features of spoken language, defining 'oral style' as the language form generally associated with conversation, characterised by fragmentation, as well as by the use of context-dependent references.[1].

In her essay 'Modern Novels' (1919; revised in 1925 as 'Modern Fiction'), Virginia Woolf discusses the inadequacy of traditional novels, expressing the need for a form of fiction that must be able to represent the complexities of the human mind and

[1] It must be kept in mind that literary modernism is not a single monolithic movement, but instead a complex ensemble of works of prose and poetry that can be extremely different. Although it is not in easy therefore to define one modernist ideology or one characterising technique, 'fragmentation' has been often described by literary critics as one of its most prominent features (see Frie (2013); Haslam (2002); Frisby (2013); Cuddy-Keane et al. (2013); Trotter (2011); Quigley (2015))

consciousness. Quigley (2015) sees this necessity realised in what she defines as 'vagueness'. If the realist novel builds on conventions which can be summarized with an emphasis on *originality*, on the novelty of the plot, and on 'the particularization of character and background, of naming, temporality, causation, and physical environment' (Quigley, 2015), the modernist novel focuses instead on subjectivity, and is resistant to anything easily definable as plot. Modernist literature often appears disjointed, and at the same time it features an underlying coherence of imagery which is meant to defy rational interpretation. As Mahaffey (2008) points out, this change from 'story' to personal and collective experiences starts from the demolishing of the role of the narrator, and of the spatial and temporal constraints of the plot. This is a change that affects not only the textual level, but also the experience of reading itself, which switches from identifying with the protagonist through the rendering of a fictional world – in which places and characters are related meaningfully – to an experience of immersion into the character's vision, or, as she puts it, an 'imaginative travel through a maze of interpretive and sensual possibilities' (Mahaffey, 2008). This transformation appeals to readers' perception and experience, and it relates closely to the idea of difficulty, which can be seen as the result of a 'defective' representation of the fictional reality (Diepeveen, 2003). This 'defection' can be associated with one of the most characteristic aspects of modernist writing: *fragmentation*. The term fragmentation refers to a number of linguistic and narrative mechanisms, which generate a sense of 'incompleteness' in the reader. Such mechanisms operate at different levels of the text. From a narratological perspective, fragmentation can be seen as a characteristic of the plot; in this case, it refers to a non-linearity – or to the presence of gaps – in the development of the story, which undermines the construction of a clear and logical series of the fictional events. Fragmentation of the plot as a benchmark of the modernist movement applies to a number of well-known modernist works, such as Joyce's *Ulysses*, Eliot's *The Waste Land*, or Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, including Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway*. The term fragmentation can also be used to describe the effect of a deviant

use of syntax, which 'breaks' grammatical rules. This, I believe, is crucial in the identification of difficulty in modernist literature, in particular within Woolf's works, as it relates directly to the techniques used by modernist writers for the representation of consciousness.

1.3 Representation of consciousness and *free indirect style*

The representation of characters' consciousnesses became a keystone of modernist narrative, to the point that Sotirova (2013) refers to it as 'the novel of consciousness'. Modernist writers wished to give the reader an immediate access to the character's mind, eliminating the narrator's mediation. This challenging goal triggered the quest for new techniques that could allow them to convey the non-verbal nature of consciousness within the (inevitably) verbal form of narrative. One of the ways in which this was accomplished was to find new ways to use a technique that already existed, *free indirect style*. Whereas in previous examples of this technique the representation of characters' thoughts was embedded within grammatically coherent sentences, that were logically connected and part of a coherent discourse, modernist writers succeeded in renewing *free indirect style* to a form that mimicked *actual* spoken and mental discourse by making it incongruous, ungrammatical, rich in interruptions and free associations. One of the reasons so many have focused on the representation of fictional consciousness is that it presents a real challenge for the writer as well as for the reader. This challenge arises from the contradiction between the inevitable mediation of the writing medium and desired immediacy modernist writers wished to convey in their narratives. The following paragraphs will provide an overview of existing consciousness presentation taxonomies and lead to an analysis of the form and challenges of one (if not *the*) crucial aspect of Woolf's writing and its difficulty: *free indirect style*.

1.3.1 Single vs. dual voice hypothesis

The exploration of narrative techniques used for the presentation of consciousness in fiction has been largely covered by traditional narratological studies. Scholars have provided numerous conflicting explanations for the forms and effects of *free indirect style*, and developed several models to identify and explain the distinction between the various narrative techniques and modes, which have been employed to portray characters' perspective and 'voice'. *Free indirect style* is generally understood as a narrative technique that allows for characters' words, thoughts, states, emotions and perceptions to be presented to the readers, giving them the impression of accessing the characters' minds directly, and the ability to observe the fictional world from their point of view. It presents specific recurrent linguistic patterns: it is formally characterised by many of the grammatical features of indirect speech (e.g. verb tense, use of third person), alongside elements that are typical of direct discourse, such as colloquialisms, evaluative lexemes, epistemic modals, idiomatic expressions and incomplete sentences. Crucially, *free indirect style* relies on two deictic systems to orientate the reader in the text: on the one hand, the past tense and third-person references distance the reader from the character, signalling (at least formally) a narratorial presence, while on the other hand, spatial and temporal deictic expressions are aligned with the characters' point of view. Verb tenses and personal pronouns are therefore oriented to the narrator, but subjectivity markers, idiomatic expressions, absence of subordination and incomplete syntax are oriented to the character. This coexistence, explains Sotirova (2013, p. 28), 'results in paradoxical constructions of the kind *She was happy now*, which disturb the logic of temporality, but gain empathetic power'.

The complex nature of *free indirect style* has given rise to an unresolved debate concerning its interpretation, the so called 'single vs. dual voice' debate. This debate develops around the question of whether this technique conveys the character's 'voice' directly (annihilating the narrator) or whether it allows for a representation of the narrator

and the character's 'voice' at the same time. Several scholars have tried to justify one or the other hypothesis, attempting to find linguistic evidence in support of their view. On the one side some maintain that *free indirect style* is a technique that conveys multiple perspectives at the same time, exactly because it features a combination of two deictic systems (see Cohn (1966); Pascal (1977); Toolan (1988) and Leech and Short (1981)). The duality of 'voices' in *free indirect style* has been discussed in several earlier studies (Cohn, 1966; Hernadi, 1972) but it is with Pascal (1977) that this hypothesis gained acceptance. Pascal argues that *free indirect style* 'always embodies a narratorial element [...] through vocabulary, sentence structure, and intonation subtly fuses the two voices of the character and the narrator' (Pascal, 1977, pp. 25-26). Pascal considers this coexistence as a fundamental characteristic of *free indirect style*, highlighting the various different effects this technique can evoke, which convey the intentions of the narrator *through* the characters' language, achieving irony, sympathy, approval or reproach. However, Pascal also specifies that the proper narrator in *free indirect style* has to be impersonal and that its presence should only be accessed through linguistic constructions, making the reporter a purely formal entity.

Pascal's account of dual voice is primarily concerned with syntax, but there are other scholars supporting the dual voice hypothesis who approached the duality of *free indirect style* looking at its semantic aspects. Adamson (1994), for instance, finds a way to explain empathetic deixis by arguing that *free indirect style* has its roots in everyday spoken language. She provides examples of how the combination of two 'languages' and perspectives happens regularly in actual speech, where often the speaker of a sentence 'fuses' two deictic systems when reporting someone else's speech: his or her own (which corresponds to the narrator's) and the reportee's. Adamson sees therefore *free indirect style* as the written realisation of a natural form of empathy, which embodies (at least) two 'voices'.

In contrast with the dual voice hypothesis, some scholars – especially those coming from a more linguistic background – have proposed a single perspective reading of *free indirect style*, arguing that no linguistic evidence can justify or motivate a dual voice interpretation (see Banfield (1982) and Fludernik (1993). Interested in the origin of this technique, Banfield (1973, 1981, 1982) for example argues that *free indirect style* (which she denominates RST – Represented Speech and Thought) represents the character's point of view only, as she does not find linguistic evidence of the narrator's 'voice'. She compares direct speech and indirect speech, isolating subjectivity markers that are characteristic of one and the other, to show how their communicative function is radically different – direct speech conveys the communicated words literally whereas indirect speech has a descriptive function and not a communicative one. *Free indirect style* shares features with both, combining the subjectivity of the first with the 'reporting' style of the second. She points out how within *free indirect style* all markers indicating a communicative situation disappear, and this lack, she claims, suggests that this style is not meant to represent a form of communication and therefore eludes a speaker/narrator duality. She introduces the concept of 'SELF', to which she attributes all the expressive elements allowed in *free indirect style*, and claims that in sentences such as '*This time* she managed to re-fasten her veil' – where the subjective temporal deixis is juxtaposed to an objective declarative – the latter is attributable to the author only, and not to the narrator. Banfield's analysis provides a comprehensive linguistic account of how *free indirect style* presents subjectivity, but she relies exclusively on syntactic criteria and therefore ignores contextual factors. This sentence-based approach undermines an interpretation of the style that is strongly dependent on semantics and context.

Building on Banfield's model, also Fludernik (1993) argues for a single-voice reading of *free indirect style*, but she offers a completely opposite interpretation. Fludernik maintains that *free indirect style* (which she refers to as *free indirect discourse*) conveys the reporter's voice only, 'even if it appears to be the reportee's' (Fludernik, 1993,

p. 348). She argues that even when the text seems to convey the subjectivity of a character, it is still the reporter's 'voice' that we find in the text, who is using language to 'imitate' the character's idiom; any marker of subjectivity is therefore attributable to a narrator. Fludernik does not deny the existence of texts where the narrative is filtered entirely through a character's perspective, but considers this case exceptional. Crucially, she rejects the idea of *free indirect style* as a mimetic technique that roots in 'actual' speech/thought acts; on the contrary, she claims that *free indirect style* presents only a schematic representation of verbal and mental activities, and that the perception of subjectivity is an illusion created by the readers themselves.

On the one hand, Banfield's perspective is reductive in terms of the context and the pragmatic function of *free indirect style*, whereas on the other Fludernik seems to give too much importance to the narratorial framing by dismissing the possibility of a perceived fictional 'voice' that is not mediated by a narrator. Her evidence is not universally applicable to all examples of *free indirect style*.

Expanding Banfield's theory, Ehrlich (1990) takes instead a discourse approach to the interpretation of *free indirect style*. She examines sentences that do not display the linguistic features identified by Banfield and yet, Ehrlich notices, can be read as evocative of a character's viewpoint. Her focus shifts from individual sentences as self-contained units to whole passages, highlighting the role of cohesive markers and discourse features such as referential and semantic links, conjunctions, and temporal and aspectual continuity, which allow for an established viewpoint to be protracted beyond sentence boundaries. In her work on D.H. Lawrence, Sotirova (2011) builds on similar premises, approaching *free indirect style* within a broader discourse perspective but showing how the markers pinpointed by Ehrlich often have an opposite function, allowing for multiple voices to coexist. Sotirova points out how, when considered in relation to the expression of narrative viewpoint, Ehrlich's cohesive markers often coincide with shifts in perspective. Analysing in detail D. H. Lawrence's use of *free*

indirect style, Sotirova shows how it allows for an overlapping of voices that emphasises the *dialogic* nature of this technique, and how this is created especially by means of referring expressions, sentence-initial connectives and repetition.

Even if the single vs. dual voice debate has not yet been resolved, it is crucial for the present thesis for one essential reason: the fact itself that such a disagreement exists in terms of *how* to interpret instances of *free indirect style* signals that *there is* something difficult about it. Works featuring *free indirect style* have often been described as 'challenging', even 'unnatural' (Alber et al., 2012, 2013), both because of the fragmented nature of this techniques and because of the intepretative challenges it causes in identifying perspectives (Ehrlich, 1990; Diepeveen, 2003; Eckardt, 2014; Cui, 2014; Sotirova, 2013, 2016a; Blakemore, 2009, 2013). [2]

1.3.2 Taxonomies of consciousness representation techniques

Despite the number of existing studies that focus on the techniques used for the representation of consciousness, especially in relation to modernist literature, the term *free indirect style* is far from having a single and widely accepted definition. Originally named *style indirect libre* (Bally, 1912), *free indirect style* was re-designated numerous times, namely as *narrated monologue* (Cohn, 1966), *free indirect speech* (Pascal, 1977), *represented speech and thought* (Brinton, 1980; Banfield, 1982), *free indirect discourse* (Fludernik, 1993), *empathetic narrative* (Adamson, 1994), and *free indirect speech and thought* (Vandelanotte, 2009). These variations in terminology are exemplary of the many different ways in which various scholars see the functions and implications of *free indirect style*, and of the importance they attribute to its features, often disagreeing

[2]Nielsen (2011) defines unnatural narratives as 'subset[s] of fictional narratives that – unlike many realist and mimetic narratives – cue the reader to employ interpretational strategies that are different from those she employs in non-fictionalized, conversational storytelling situations. More specifically, such narratives may have temporalities, storyworlds, mind representations, or acts of narration that would have to be construed as physically, logically, mnemonically, or psychologically impossible or highly implausible in real-world storytelling situations, but that allow the reader to interpret them as reliable, possible, and/or authoritative by cuing her to change her interpretational strate'.

on the exact parameters of its construction. Whereas some models focus mostly on the formal distinctions between various *free indirect style* categories, others concentrate on the semantic implication of these techniques, on the effects it has on readers, or on the type of activity they represent (speech, thought, states).

Cohn (1978), for example, focuses primarily on the distinction between the *phenomena* that can be represented through the use of this technique, and she is particularly interested in the way in which *free indirect style* conveys non-verbal aspects of consciousness. Her model encompasses three main different categories of mental activity representation: *psycho-narration*, *quoted monologue* and *narrated monologue* , offering detailed grammatical and lexical criteria for her categorisation. She defines *psycho-narration* as a mode of consciousness presentation that conveys a character's state of mind – or other mental operations – in the voice of the narrator, rather than using the mental language of the character, but without implying an external vantage point, such as in *Lisa felt incredibly tired now*. Cohn distinguishes between 'dissonant' and 'consonant' psycho-narration: whereas in the first the narratorial voice is external to the character, and the point of view is therefore mediated, in consonant psycho-narration the narrator's 'voice' cannot be separated from the consciousness it is describing. With *quoted monologue* Cohn identifies what other models call *interior monologue*, a technique that renders verbalised thoughts directly, characterised grammatically by a self-referred first person pronoun and present tense for the narrated moment. *Narrated monologue* describes then a 'midway' technique between the psycho-narration and quoted monologue, in that it presents characteristics of both, featuring third-person pronoun to refer to the consciousness portrayed, and at the same casting 'the immediacy of the present experience into a past narrative' (Cohn, 1966) and adopting the character's expressive language, as it happens in quoted monologue. She writes:

> A typical narrated-monologue sentence stands grammatically *between* the two other forms, sharing with quoted monologue the expression in the principal clause, with psycho-

> narration the tense system and the third-person reference. When the thought is a question, the word-order of direct discourse is maintained in the narrated monologue, increasing its resemblance to quoted monologue and its distinction from psycho-narration:
>
> *quoted monologue*
>
> (He thought:) Am I late?
>
> *narrated monologue*
>
> Was he late?
>
> *psycho-narration*
>
> He wondered if he was late.
>
> (Cohn, 1978, p. 105)

Interestingly, she does not identify the words presented in *narrated monologue* as 'running through the mind' of the character, instead she seems to stick to a narratorial control of the style, and seems to minimise the complexity of this technique by stating that it has an idiosyncratic ambiguity to it (Cohn, 1978, p. 103).

The most known and cited model for speech and thought presentation techniques is probably the one developed by Leech and Short (1981) and later expanded by Semino and Short (2004). Following McHale (1978), their model identifies free indirect speech/thought schematically as one of several linguistic categories of speech and thought presentation. These are divided in two parallel groups, depending on whether they convey speech or thought, and are positioned on a cline that associates each of them with the reader's perceived degree of narratorial intervention, as exemplified in Figure 1.1.

	Narrator in total control of report		*Narrator in partial control of report*			*Narrator apparently not in control of report*
speech presentation	**NV** narrator's report of voice	**NRSA** narrative report of speech acts	**IS** indirect speech	**FIS** free indirect speech	**DS** direct speech	**FDS** free direct speech
thought presentation	**NI** narration of internal states	**NRTA** narrative report of a thought act	**IT** indirect thought	**FIT** free indirect thought	**DT** direct thought	**FDT** free direct thought

Fig. 1.1 Reproduction of Leech and Short (1981) model of speech and thought presentation in narrative, including Semino and Short (2004) improvements.

Cohn's *narrated monologue* corresponds here to Leech and Short (1981) FIT, whereas Cohn's *quoted monologue* is split into *direct thought* and *free direct thought*, which are differentiated by the respective presence or absence of quotation marks. Cohn's *psycho-narration* is also subdivided, in this case in three: *narration of internal states* (NI), *narrative report of a thought act* (NRTA) and *indirect thought* (IT). In terms of formal differences, they write:

> The FIT version differs from that of DT by virtue of the back-shift of the tense and the conversion of the first person pronoun to the third person (indirect features) and also by the absence of a reporting clause and the retention of the interrogative form and question mark (direct features). The IT version has an introductory reporting clause, explicit subordination, and a declarative form for the reported clause. The NRTA sentence incorporates what minimal report there is within the main clause by nominalising the reported clause. (Leech and Short, 1981, pp. 270-271)

This model, as well as other models such as McHale's (1983) or Toolan's (1998), seeks for a formal identification of the various techniques of speech and thought presentation, and focuses on syntactic transformations and semantic differences in relation to one assumed 'baseline' category, respectively DS for speech presentation and IT

for thought presentation. The formal differences between categories are supposed to mirror their two main semantic effects: the degree to which the represented speech and thought can be considered as produced by the character/with the character's words, and the control the narrator has on them. Speech and thought are treated identically in Leech and Short (1981), who initially excluded non-verbal aspects of consciousness representation, later added in Semino and Short (2004) as NI and NV, in line with Cohn's 'psycho-narration'. These two categories give more credit to the possible representation of non-linguistic mental states and feelings that the characters experience. This model seems however to have a restricted view on the degree of narratorial mediation in each mode. For instance, even if NI is placed at the left end of the model, indicating that it should convey a prominent narratorial intervention, this mode has been proven by Cohn (1978) to evoke a strong figural subjectivity. Also Sotirova (2016b) notices that NI does not have to be narratorial simply because the character's inner states that are represented are not verbalisable.

The boundary of verbal and non-verbal mental activities is part of an ontological discussion on the nature of the human being that goes far back in the history of human philosophy. Within narratological studies, this has been debated extensively, especially in relation to *free indirect style* (Palmer, 2011; Sotirova, 2013). Whereas along with Leech and Short (1981) many scholars consider the semantics of *thought* categories to be essentially mirroring those of *speech* presentation techniques, others disagree (Palmer, 2002), claiming that mental processes are much more complex than the verbal production would allow, and that equating the two categories puts a limiting boundary to the array of non-verbal mental activities that characterise human behaviour, such as perceptions, mind states, emotions and sensations. This claim goes further into the questioning of what *thinking* means and implies, and how human minds work (this goes far beyond the focus of the present thesis and will not be further investigated here). What is interesting about this debate, however, as Rundquist (2016, p. 8) points out, is that

thought itself is very rarely defined as equivalent to *inner speech*, embedding instead states, feelings, perceptions, emotions that cannot always be expressed verbally. This impossibility is at the base of the difficulty in producing and understanding a text that tries to go beyond the limits of verbalisability and represent consciousness.

Focusing on the nature of *thought* and on the concept of *consciousness*, both Sotirova (2013) and Rundquist (2017) build on earlier scholars' perspectives on the semantic value of *free indirect style* and its representation in modernist writing, proposing a revised model of techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation. Both argue for the need to create a model that incorporates existing theories of *free indirect style* and is based on a careful linguistic analysis of techniques of consciousness presentation with a particular focus on their semantic effects.

Rundquist (2017) in particular consolidates existing literary theories on *free indirect style* into a renewed model that is based around consciousness presentation. Focusing in particular on modernist writers and their experimentalism, Rundquist demonstrates how the techniques that previous models defined by their formal properties can be integrated within a semantic scheme. His meticulous analysis highlights on the one hand the importance of preserving and understanding the formal markers of each category of *free indirect style* – which he, like Sotirova, sees as an umbrella term encompassing Leech's *Free Indirect Thought* and *Free Indirect Speech*, Brinton's *Represented Perception* and Cohn's *Psycho-narration*. Both Sotirova (2013) and Rundquist (2017) demonstrate, crucially, how the [mental] experiences of characters are connected and intertwined 'dialogically', and how their thoughts and viewpoints are linked. They show – as well as Cui (2014), who focuses on the use of parentheticals – how, particularly in Woolf, the different modes of consciousness presentation serve to interrupt, intertwine and juxtapose different characters' points of view, often *within* sentences, capturing the multiple aspects and levels of consciousness of the characters' minds. Rundquist (2017) shows that Woolf achieves this through the experimental manipulation of consciousness

presentation categories, and that shifts between modes correspond to shifts between different levels of consciousness, and capture the simultaneous layering of perceptions, thoughts, states. At the same time, he pinpoints however how both shifts between characters' perspectives and shifts between modes can be semantically difficult to separate and often interpretatively ambiguous. It is the model proposed by Sotirova (2013) and Rundquist (2017) that I will adopt in the present thesis, and in the following section I will define the categories used as a baseline for the investigation of this ambiguity.

1.4 The present thesis: categories of speech, thought and consciousness presentation

As mentioned briefly while outlining the debates on the implications that permeate the different perspectives and modes of speech and thought presentation, several scholars have been instrumental in defining the techniques that fall into the grey area between (and beyond) direct and indirect discourse. In accordance with Sotirova (2004, 2010, 2013), and Rundquist (2014, 2016), the present thesis uses *free indirect style* as the umbrella term that encompasses several techniques used for the representation of speech, thoughts, perceptions and internal states in narrative, namely *Free Indirect Speech* (FIS), *Free Indirect Thought* (FIT), *Represented Perception* (RP), *Consonant Psycho-narration* (PN). In line with Sotirova and Rundquist, I believe that these 'modes' – sometimes used in combination with *Interior Monologue* (IM) and *Free Direct Speech* (FDS) – are able to cover the spectrum of the various facets of characters' consciousness, perceptions and feelings, which are conveyed to the reader. The term *free indirect style* is particularly appealing as it emphasises the linguistic basis for the formal construction of the various modes that are encompassed in it, and, differently from other terms, it suggests that this techniques are not limited to the presentation of verbalised discourse, but that instead

it includes the representation of characters' states and perceptions and therefore their 'psychological point of view' (Uspenskij, 1973), thus emphasising the semantic effects of this technique. For a better understanding of this narrative technique, it is useful to define its general formal features, which are:

- **shifted pronouns**: third person pronouns **she** or **he** are the subject of consciousness; *it* is the referent of the expressive content of the sentence;
- use of **pronouns** rather than proper names;
- third person **reflexive pronouns** used even when there is no third person sentence subject;
- narrative **past tense** is juxtaposed with present and future temporal **deictic items**;
- use of **past progressive** and **non-finite progressive verbs** to suggest simultaneity and experientiality;
- **shifted tenses** of **modals** with past meaning (typically found in indirect discourse);
- occurrence of pronouns, demonstratives, definite articles, and definite noun phrases which have **no antecedent** in the previous discourse;
- **non-embeddable, independent clauses** typical of direct quotation (i.e. direct questions and imperatives);
- **rhetorical questions** and clauses with **preposed adverbs (never)** or **initial conjunctions (and, for, but)**;
- **interjections**, **exclamations**, **lexical fillers**, **repetitions**, **hesitations**
- **optative or incomplete sentences**;
- lexical items which express the **character's emotions**, **attitudes**, **judgements**, **evaluations** and **beliefs**;

- **qualifying adjectives** (such as prenominal ones, i.e. *dear*, *good*, *damned*), **epithets**, **qualifying adverbs (probably, miserably)**, **nicknames**, **attitudinal nouns** (i.e. fool);
- **verbs of consciousness** or **communication** in the form of **parentheticals**.

(adapted from Sotirova, 2006)

To understand *why* and *how free indirect style* may represent a challenge for readers, it is crucial to understand in what ways *Free Indirect Speech* (FIS), *Free Indirect Thought* (FIT), *Represented Perception* (RP), *Consonant Psycho-narration* (PN) and *Interior Monologue* (IM) differ from direct and indirect discourse as well as among themselves, and to be aware of their formal features and semantic effects.

1.4.1 Free Indirect Speech/Thought

Banfield (1973) offers a systematic syntactical analysis of the distinctive features of free indirect discourse, starting from the differences between direct and indirect discourse. She highlights in particular four aspects that distinguish and characterise these two narrative techniques:

1. indirect speech is introduced by subordinating conjunctions;
2. indirect speech verbs undergo tense rules (when using a reporting verb in the past, the verbs used in the original speech are usually moved one tense further back);
3. the grammatical person of pronouns with the same referent in the main and embedded clauses of indirect speech is identical;
4. the demonstrative elements which refer to the time or place of the quoted speech act differ in direct and indirect speech (words expressing nearness in time or places are generally changed into words expressing distance).

Stressing the fact that indirect speech does not derive from direct speech or vice versa, she then offers numerous examples of several constructions, which exist only in direct discourse, and different verbs which can only be used to introduce reported speech. The first are 'sentences which have undergone 'last-cyclic' or 'root' transformations' (i.e. subject-auxiliary inversion in questions, topicalization of constituents, preposing of directional adverbs) (Banfield, 1973, p. 6), expressive elements and constructions (exclamations, verbless exclamatory constructions, repetitions, hesitations), direct address and vocative noun phrases, and incomplete sentences that can nonetheless be integrated as part of a discourse. Semantically, then, whereas direct speech reports the *exact words* uttered by characters, indirect speech can be seen as presenting the reporter's *comment* on the quoted words, and this difference is crucial in her presentation of the two discourses as not directly translatable, and not related by mutual dependencies.

Free Indirect Speech (FIS), as mentioned earlier, shares characteristics of both direct and indirect speech. It presents the characters' utterances without the typical marks of direct speech, uses third person pronoun to refer to the speaking self and the past tense, typical of indirect discourse. At the same time, it features the expressive constructs and discourse patterns of a character's spoken language, namely those mentioned before as characteristics of direct speech: 'root' transformations', expressive elements and constructions, repetitions, vocative noun phrases, and incomplete sentences. Particularly important are temporal and spatial deictic items, which are associated with the present tense of the direct speech and with the location of the speaking character in first person. *Free Indirect Thought* (FIT) is one mode within *Free Indirect Style*, but it expresses characters' mentally articulated thoughts instead of their utterances.

Consider for example the following extract from *To the Lighthouse*:

> He had eaten attentively. **It was rich; it was tender. It was perfectly cooked**. **How did she manage these things in the depths of the country?** he asked her. **She was a**

> **wonderful woman.**
>
> Woolf (1927, p. 72), my emphasis

After the first sentence, which directs the reader's attention to Mr Bankes through the opening pronoun 'he' (this sentence will be discussed in more details in Chapter 3), the impression given by the following clauses is that of reading words that are produced *by* the character. The repetition *it was.. it was..*, typical of orality, as well as the evaluative *perfectly*, semantically resembles direct discourse, but these elements are placed alongside the past tense *was*, and used without quotation marks. What strikes the reader here is that it is impossible to determine whether the reported words (which we can mentally convert to direct discourse as something like *it is rich; it is tender. It is perfectly cooked*) are thoughts or utterances.

The following interrogative sentence has identical features, and the past tense *did manage* combined with the third person pronoun *she* characterises it as an instance of FIS (in this case, the inquit *he asked* makes the utterance explicit).

As the word 'indirect' suggests, despite the expressive constructs, the reported words in FIS and FIT do not necessarily represent the *exact* words uttered by the character. As Leech and Short (1981, p. 261) claim: 'It is in a sort of halfway house position, not claiming to be a reproduction of the original speech, but at the same time being more than a mere indirect rendering of that original'. The last sentence of the extract, for instance, could indeed be translated into direct thoughts by simply changing the verb tense to present, resulting in *she is a wonderful woman*. However, the possibility that this is not an articulated thought but rather a representation of his sensations exists. As mentioned in previous sections, the nature of *thoughts* is debated among scholars of different fields, as well as idea that it is not always possible to conceive them in a fully articulated and verbalised form. Scholars of *free indirect style* have realised that there are several levels of consciousness: Kuroda (1976, p. 121) distinguishes between reflective and unreflective consciousness (where reflective does not imply

any connotations of reminiscence or meditation). Building on this distinction, also Banfield (1973) takes into consideration the existence of non verbalised thoughts, such as sensations or experiences, and limits FIT and FIS to the expression of reflective consciousness. A full discussion of the theoretical implication of the boundaries of thought and consciousness representation in literary and linguistic theory is beyond the scope of this research. For the purpose of the present research, I will follow Banfield in referring to FIS and FIT as techniques representing respectively reported utterances, and fully articulated thoughts. Where the represented thoughts are not articulated, or describe mental activities that cannot be directly translated into direct thought, I will use the two following categories: Represented Perception and Psycho-narration.

1.4.2 Represented Perception

Brinton (1980, p. 370) defines Represented Perception (RP) as a literary style 'whereby an author, instead of describing the external world, expresses a character's perceptions of it, directly as they occur in the character's consciousness.' RP conveys the characters' impressions of the surrounding fictional world without expressing verbalized thoughts, and this allows for the portrayal of impressions and experiences that are not mentally articulated.

Even if RP is formally very close to narration, it does not convey the narrator's presence, which instead disappears, existing only as a 'means' to report the character's perceptions. This is achieved by some characteristic linguistic choices that help create the impression of conveying the character's perspective. Verbs such as *look*, *gaze*, *watch* or *listen*, which in pure narration are used to describe a situation and that generally place the reader within an external and observational vantage point, are substituted in RP by verbs that instead carry the implication of an inner perspective, such as *see*, *smell*, *hear*, *perceive*, *become aware* etc. The deictic system also favours the representation of an

inner point of view, with temporal and spatial deictic items directed to the character, as well as attributives and adverbs adding an emotional value to the described situation. Additionally, RP is frequently adjacent to FIT or FIS: the proximity of articulated thoughts and speech provides a further incentive to interpret RP situations from 'inside' the character's mind.

An example of RP can be seen in the following extract, from Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*:

> **And really Clarissa's eyes filled with tears.** Her mother, walking in a garden! But alas, she must go.
> **For there was Professor Brierly, who lectured on Milton, talking to little Jim Hutton** [...], **and even at this distance they were quarrelling, she could see.** (Woolf, 1925, p. 127), my emphasis

The opening sentence is a very interesting example of RP: a purely narratorial sentence could have been something like *Clarissa's eyes filled with tears*, however, we can see here that the adverb *really* adds a personal value to the description. Another strategy to render RP – particularly prominent in Woolf's rendering of this technique is the use of a grammatically unnecessary conjunctions as sentence openers, generally *and* – as in the example – *for*, and *but*, which work as a 'bridge' into the character's mind (more on the use and function of conjunctions and parentheticals in Woolf can be found in Sotirova (2004); Cui (2014), and will be briefly discussed in section 1.5). The same strategy can be observed in the next instance of RP, which begins with the conjunction *for*, features deictic items pointing to Clarissa (*this* distance), and a verb of perception *see*. This is preceded by the past progressive *were quarrelling*, another element highlighted by Brinton (1980) as a key feature of RP, in that it marks and evokes simultaneity. The two sentences in RP are interrupted by an intervention of Clarissa's thoughts in FIT: *Her mother, walking in a garden! But alas, she must go.*, which makes the readers' immersion in her perspective even more natural. The sentences in RP are clearly portraying Clarissa's view on the scene, and her feelings in relation to what she

sees. As mentioned above, this technique does not allow for a direct translation into direct thoughts, as the perceptions are not articulated.

1.4.3 Consonant Psycho-narration

Another subcategory of *free indirect style* used for the representation of inner perspective is *Consonant Psycho-narration* (henceforward PN) (Cohn, 1978). [3] This technique conveys a character's state of mind or other mental operations in the voice of the narrator, but without implying an external vantage point. Differently from RP, PN is not used to describe a situation surrounding the focaliser, it is instead a reference to – or description of – internal states that are not necessarily articulated. If, for example, a character is feeling happy because of a situation or an event, it is unlikely that this would be rendered as verbalised thought, in a form such as *I am so happy*. More realistically, complex thoughts and feeling about internal states are narrated, and yet belong to the character's self-perception. Cohan and Shires (1988, p. 100) define it as a technique that 'follows a character's own self-apprehension, often to the point of imitating his or her vocabulary and syntax'.

PN is characterised by the absence of the 'disparity between the narrating and the figural consciousness' (Cohn, 1978, p. 31) that characterises Dissonant Psycho-narration and omniscient narration in general. This annihilation of the distance between narrator and focaliser is achieved through the removal of gnomic present statements, commentaries and analytical observations about the character's state of mind. The narrator 'disappears', and the narrating voice melts with that of the character, intertwining feelings and sensations. Often, Cohn points out, PN has also the effect of 'suspending' the

[3] Cohn distinguishes between *Consonant* Psycho-narration and *Dissonant* Psycho-narration. In Dissonant Psycho-narration the narrator's distance from the narrated mind can be clearly deduced – often along its judgement and/or evaluation – thanks to gnomic present tenses, highly abstract vocabulary and an analytical approach to the analysis of the characters' psyche. Dissonant psycho-narration does not put the reader 'inside' the character's mind, and will therefore not be considered in the present research as a technique falling under the umbrella-term *free indirect style*.

time of the narration: by focusing on inner feelings everything that is external to the character is in fact excluded from representation. Formally, PN typically features mental verbs and abstract nouns denoting psychological states (such as *feel*, *sense*, *suppose*, *hope*, *be aware*), expressive elements that resemble the character's language, abstract concepts, and again proximity with FIT and FIS, for the same reasons explained in relation to RP.

> (1) **All Lily wished was that this enormous flood of grief, this insatiable hunger for sympathy, this demand that she should surrender herself up to him entirely, and even so he had sorrows enough to keep her supplied for ever, should leave her, should be diverted** (2) (she kept looking at the house, hoping for an interruption) (3) **before it swept her down in its flow**. Woolf (1927, p. 113), my emphasis

The above extract from *To the Lighthouse* is almost entirely PN. The repetition of mental verbs (*wished, had sorrows*) is a first signal of this technique, which is confirmed by the abstractness of the sentence describing Lily's reflections, the acknowledging of her own feelings towards Mrs Ramsay, and her impotence in front of a situation that she somehow despises. All these impressions are conveyed through images, metaphors and similes that evoke the character's discourse and her impression of Mr Ramsay as a menace to her well-being (*this enormous flood of grief*), a predator (insatiable *hunger*), but that would not plausibly be converted into direct thoughts. In a similar way to RP, the deictic items are aligned with the thinking figural consciousness (*this*... flood, *this*... grief).

1.4.4 Interior Monologue

Like FIT, *Interior Monologue* (IM) – also called *Free Direct Thought* in Leech and Short (1981) – presents thoughts that are mentally articulated in verbal form. Interior Monologue can be distinguished from techniques falling under the umbrella term *free*

indirect style as it renders a character's thoughts in the present tense, it omits speech marks, and narration is consistently in the first person.

IM has been used in extremely experimental forms by prominent modernist writers, in particular by James Joyce, and the term is often used interchangeably with *stream of consciousness*. However, while the latter describes a literary style in which the author attempts to represent the 'full richness, speed, and subtlety of the mind at work' by incorporating 'snatches of incoherent thought, ungrammatical constructions, and free association of ideas, images, and words at the pre-speech level' (Luebering, 2014) (often *using* IM *and/or* FIT to do so), IM is used to describe one specific technique of consciousness presentation. Whereas it can be used in a stream of consciousness novel, it may also be restricted to an organized presentation of that character's rational thoughts, as can be observed in the following extract from *To the Lighthouse*:

> They both looked at the sea. **Why**, thought Mr. Ramsay, **should she look at the sea when I am here?**
> (Woolf, 1927, p. 113), my emphasis

The short extract above is taken from one of the final scenes, where Lily and Mr Ramsay, now widower, have a brief conversation. He hopes to receive some warmth and empathy from his old acquaintance, without success. His impatience becomes unbearable, and the passage is rich of instances of IM, through which Mr Ramsay's anxieties are clearly verbalised into thoughts. IM can be very similar to direct thought, with the exception of quotation marks.[4] It features first person referential pronouns (*I* in the example), and present tense (*should she look, I am*) in combination with spatial deictic (*here*) and temporal items pointing to the present of the narrative.

[4]It must be kept in mind, however, that some scholars maintain that IM and FDS are historically rather different phenomena (Leech and Short, 1981; Sotirova, 2011).

1.5 Indices of viewpoint shift

As illustrated in the previous sections, *free indirect style* can be considered difficult both grammatically and semantically. It combines the directness of verbalised speech and thoughts with the third person reporting style typical of indirect speech, using the *flavour* of characters' expressivity to portray the fictional world from their angle whilst annihilating the narratorial 'voice', mixing therefore two (or more) deictic systems. It can convey speech and thoughts that could be plausibly articulated and verbalised by characters, as well as characters' impressions of the fictional world that surrounds them, therefore allowing speech, thoughts and other aspects of consciousness to be presented to the reader.

A crucial aspect of *free indirect style* is that it embeds various techniques, which are able to evoke several levels of consciousness, and to juxtapose the perspectives of different characters. The effect of such techniques is that 'it is often difficult to identify precisely the source of the speaking voice' (Bosseaux, 2007, p. 54), especially because most of the times these are juxtaposed without explicit markers to signal where one ends and the next begins.

The lack of linguistic investigations into the mechanisms related to the manipulation of viewpoints as a consequence of *free indirect style* in Woolf was first pointed out by Leaska (1970), who produced a systematic analysis of perspectives in *To the Lighthouse*, focusing specifically on the identification of points of view as the consequence of specific patterns that distinguish the various characters' use of language. He analysed, using corpus methods, the distribution of words in the text to determine what linguistic features characterise characters' mental processes and spoken discourse. His approach, however, does not take into account the mechanisms behind shifts between perspectives, nor the reason behind the ambiguity of certain passages.

Torsello (1991) tried to fill this gap, applying functional grammar to the identification of points of view in *To the Lighthouse*. She examines the opening pages of this novel focusing on process types, and isolating linguistic factors that signal the narratorial voice as opposed to those that indicate a character's viewpoint. For instance, when a character is the agent of a mental process, it is likely that his/her point of view is being portrayed, whereas when the process is one of doing or happening (i.e. material process) it is more likely for the narrator to be in control. Crucially, she also identifies some linguistic indices of shifts between points of view, namely clauses that are introduced by a disjunct[5] – *disjunct clauses* – and instances where there is a transition from a general situation to an immediate and character-specific one, in particular by means of the demonstrative temporal references such as *now* – this points to one of the most important indices of *free indirect style* in presenting figural subjectivity (see Adamson (1994, 1995)). She also identifies as an index of viewpoint shift what she refers to as *marked thematization of a prepositional phrase anticipating the point of view of a character*, where a prepositional phrase anticipates a change of perspective and acquires a prominent role in directing the readers' attention. Torsello's research examines in depth the formal aspects of the text, and brings interesting insights into how Woolf manipulates narrative viewpoints, but her limited amount of examples, taken from the very beginning of the novel, prevents her from uncovering significant textual patterns. Crucially, the examples she takes into consideration concern mostly shifts from narration to *free indirect style*, without any focus on shifts between characters or between different modes of consciousness presentation.

In her examination of the representation of point of view in Woolf, Ehrlich (1994) identifies *repetition* of events as a key signal of viewpoint change, especially in relation to narrative time. She points out how Woolf often interrupts the development of the plot

[5]Disjuncts are adverb that are 'less integrated in the clause structure and may modify the whole sentence or utterance'; often 'evaluative and viewpoint adverbs' (Carter and McCarthy, 2006, p. 458). *Disjuncts* indicate the 'mood' in which a sentence is being spoken.

not only by inserting digressions into the characters' thoughts, but also repeating certain events. Ehrlich (1994) claims that such repetitions signal a change in perspective. In her book *Point of view: a linguistic analysis of literary style* Ehrlich (1990) discusses in more depth the discourse patterns involved in the representation of points of view. She initially highlights the syntactic and grammatical markers of Banfield's RST – equal to FIT/FIS – and proceeds with a discourse based approach, looking at coherence and cohesion and highlighting how sentence based approaches are often limiting, since often, even where there is no explicit marker of RST, readers can perceive a shift in perspective. She identifies several discourse features, including repetition, referential and semantic links, temporal and aspectual continuity and conjunctions. These all work as cohesive ties, which allow the flow of viewpoints to work meaningfully across sentence boundaries. Ehrlich's conclusion, however, is somehow limited by the fact that her analysis takes into account exclusively RST – FIT and FIS – ignoring the techniques for the representation of states and feelings (RP, PN).

Sotirova too stresses the importance of context along with syntax when discussing perspective change. In her analysis of D. H. Lawrence's manipulation of narrative viewpoint (2011) she examines the juxtaposition of various modes of consciousness presentation. She isolates three markers of viewpoint shift: *referring expressions*, *repetition* and *sentence-initial connectives*, and explains their function in narrative by comparing it to their use in conversation, where all three can be commonly found across different speakers' turns. In a similar way to Ehrlich (1994), also Sotirova sees repetition of events as a sign of potential viewpoint shift, but she expands her interpretation of repetition including *syntactic parallelism* and *lexical repetition*. Her analysis is mainly focused on the exploration of the 'dialogicity' of *free indirect style*, rather than on the identification of viewpoints, and she sees repetition as a device through which different characters' minds are 'connected'. Sotirova (2007) identifies also *referential links* as

elements around which multiple perspectives develop and intertwine, and *sentence-initial connectives* as links of different narrative points of view, placing them in interaction.

Building on these studies, Cui (2015, 2014, 2016) examines for the first time the patterns of viewpoint shifts in depth, both within sentences and across sentences. Crucially for the present thesis, she focuses exclusively on Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway*. Cui identifies the following indices of viewpoint shift: *discourse parentheticals*, *attributing parentheticals*, *adjacency pairs*, *connectives* and *repetition*. Her investigation covers the first four.[6]

Starting from Blakemore's 2009 analysis of the functions of *parentheticals*, Cui focuses specifically on the significance of this device with respect to shifts in point of view. She defines parentheticals as follows:

> a parenthetical is an independent structure inserted linearly into its host. It does not play any syntactic role in the construction of the host sentence, but has semantic and pragmatic relation with its host. Parentheticals contribute to the entire structure by producing semantic and pragmatic meanings.
> Cui (2015, p. 128)

After distinguishing several categories of parentheticals, she shows through a systematic analysis of different examples from *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway* how Woolf employs particularly *discourse parentheticals* to simulate orality, and how she uses these to enact shifts in point of view. Woolf breaks the 'standard' syntax and 'subverts the convention of adhering to a unified narrative point of view' (2015, p. 150). Crucially, discourse parentheticals in Woolf's novels allow for the coexistence of different subjectivities, even within a single sentence, in contrast to the general use of this device in spoken discourse, where 'a discourse parenthetical and its host function together to produce the meaning that a speaker intends to express' (2015, p. 150). Her conclusive claim, based on the material she analyses, is that discourse parentheticals in Woolf's *To*

[6]Cui recognised the importance of repetition but chooses to exclude it as it has already been investigated by Ehrlich (1994) and Sotirova (2011).

the Lighthouse and *Mrs Dalloway* are employed as an effective linguistic mechanism that triggers a viewpoint shift from one character to another. I agree with Cui, but would argue that this device also functions as a trigger for shifts *within* characters, i.e. from one mode of consciousness presentation to another.[7] Whereas a discourse parenthetical generally signals a digression from the on-going discourse, and may affect the interpretation of the host sentence, *attributing parentheticals* (such as *he (she) thought*) have a different function: they are used to specify the source of the represented consciousness and they do not affect the semantic nor the pragmatic meaning of the host.

Cui clarifies the distinction between a *reporting clause* and an *attributing parenthetical* in terms of syntactic dependence and interpretation: the first tends to be regarded as the main clause to the subordinated reported clause, whereas the second can be seen as a *digression* from the host structure. Reporting clauses, she writes, appear to convey a narratorial 'dominance', whereas the use of parentheticals emphasises the point of view of the character. After providing an extensive amount of examples, Cui concludes that in a similar way to discourse parentheticals, attributing parentheticals are used by Virginia Woolf to 'break the constraints of the linearity of syntactic progression' (Cui, 2015, p. 223), allowing for multiple consciousnesses to alternate extremely quickly, or even to be represented simultaneously. Building on Sotirova (2004, 2011, 2013), she also discusses *connectives* in relation to viewpoint shifts, highlighting in particular the use of *and*, *but* and *for* in *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway*, as does Ikeo (2014). Woolf's use of these connectives is in fact sometimes ambiguous, as she often subverts their grammatical status, using them instead to establish a 'dialogical connection' between perspectives. Connectives operate both within sentential units and across sentences, creating a connection between different points of view through their semantic and pragmatic functions. The last index Cui identifies is Woolf's use of *adjacency pairs*, which relates once more to the 'dialogicity' of *free indirect style*. Adjacency pairs

[7] Examples of this function of discourse parentheticals will be provided in the detailed analyses of passages from *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway* that can be found in Chapter 3.

are a unit of conversation, which contain an exchange of turns by two speakers. By placing two or more characters' viewpoints in an interactive relation that mimics such conversational patterns, Woolf highlights the connection between characters. Because adjacency pairs are often connected pragmatically but not syntactically, Woolf uses this device to manipulate and alternate perspectives 'around' a certain topic, in a cinematic motion that can be ambiguous and difficult to interpret.

As discussed in previous paragraphs, techniques of *free indirect style* have been examined and classified by numerous literary scholars, both in terms of formal features and in terms of interpretation. While many, somewhat surprisingly, have claimed that there is one proper execution of the style and thus a more legitimate interpretation of it, what emerges from the analysis of existing models seems to be, on the contrary, that techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation cannot always be neatly distinguished by means of linguistics markers only, and that their interpretations can vary. The viewpoints conveyed through the representation voices, thoughts, perceptions and feelings alternate and sometimes overlap, and while indices such as those identified by Cui can signal a shift between perspective or between modes, these do not necessarily indicate whose voice, thoughts or consciousness is being presented.

Crucially, as Sotirova (2016a) highlights, existing models of speech and thought presentation categories often worked on the assumption that these correspond to sentences as complete syntactic units. However, such coincidence is often not applicable, and on the contrary different modes of speech, thoguht and consciousness presentation can conflate *within* the boundaries not just of the same sentence, but of the same clause. It is the syntactic discontinuities resulting from the shifts between modes which signal different facets of the character's consciousness that, together with shifts between characters' viewpoint, pose a challenge for readers.

Woolf's experimental narratives offer a particularly interesting case for an investigation of techniques of consciousness presentation and the difficulties associated with

them. Her texts have been used in several studies, both to define *free indirect style* and to explore questions about readers' reactions to literature (Zyngier et al., 2007; Wilson, 1981; Miall, 1989; Zunshine et al., 2003; Van Peer et al., 2007a; Brooke et al., 2016). Only few studies, however, approached her texts empirically to investigate whether readers indeed find her texts challenging, and to understand what exactly represents a source of difficulty in her works (Sotirova, 2007, 2016a; Cui, 2017). The next chapter will focus on these, offering an overview of empirical approaches to literature in general and discussing existing studies of Woolf's texts, on which the present thesis builds.

Chapter 2

Empirical approaches to literary texts

2.1 Introduction

In order to present the current research and discuss readers' responses to difficult narratives, it is important to consider the reasons that led in recent years to a widespread application of 'scientific' methods for the analysis of literary texts, and to draw a picture of the current state of empirical approaches within stylistics that have focused on real readers' responses.

Methods traditionally used by critics and scholars to examine literary texts have often been speculative and of a rather subjective nature, focusing on the quest for 'meaning' in relation to the author's intentions and on the role of socio-historical factors rather than on the linguistic characteristics of the texts and their effects. While such analyses have their benefits in that they generate concepts, ideas and theoretical frameworks, they often do not provide objective evidence to their points. Stylistic approaches have historically aimed to overcome these limitations by applying 'reliable, rigorous and replicable' (Pascal, 1977) methods for the examination of literary texts. Stylisticians have been interested in the investigation and definition of the linguistics features and mechanisms that enable literary texts to achieve certain effects on readers, with a 'desire

to make literary scholarship more scientific and to find out what makes poetic texts poetic' (Burke, 2014, p. 2).

The need for concrete and objective data to corroborate theories about the mechanisms that characterise literature, and especially to understand their effects on real readers, has increased the number of scholars making use of qualitative and quantitative analyses towards such 'scientific investigation of culture' (Van Peer et al., 2012, p. 7). Their work integrated traditional text and discourse analyses with disciplines and methods that are closer to natural sciences, such as psychology and sociology, highlighting how certain patterns and features could not be otherwise detected, nor a variety of interpretations and responses examined, which only a wider set of data or a wider pool of subjects can provide.

The importance of such interdisciplinary approaches to the study of literature has been explicitly stressed by numerous scholars, such as Emmott (1997); Dixon and Bortolussi (2001); Zyngier et al. (2008); Van Peer et al. (2007b); Dixon and Bortolussi (2011), who proposed some parameters for a renovation of the research methodology within narratology. These brought to attention the importance of distinguishing between text *features* and text *effects*, and highlighted how narratology alone is ill-equipped to proceed with an objective and reliable investigation of the two, suggesting that an interdisciplinary approach bringing together narratology, discourse processing and cognitive psychology would offer numerous methodological and interpretive tools for investigating readers' processing and their reactions to literary texts.

It is important to keep in mind that empirical approach alone could not exhaustively take account of all the linguistic features that characterise a text, and that quantitative analyses won't ever be able to substitute subjective intuitions (Leech and Short, 1981; Miall, 2006; Sampson, 2002, among others). Yet interdisciplinary approaches are key to bringing literary studies one step forward, not only as means to support or confute existing theories, but as windows to understanding what *literariness* means and how

it relates to actual readers' responses. This thesis positions itself within this trend, and aims to contribute to a better understanding of readers' processing of literary texts by combining a stylistic perspective with experimental methods typically used in psycholinguistics.

2.2 Readers' responses to narrative texts

In the last decades, one of the major contributions of literary theory has been to draw attention to the importance of *the reader*. Theorists of *reader-response theory* and *reception theory* in particular put an emphasis on the role of the reader as an active constructor of the text rather than a passive consumer (Fish, 1980; Iser, 1974, 1978; Eco, 1979; Eagleton, 2008; Suleiman and Crosman, 2014; Holub, 2013; Jauss and De Man, 1982; Tompkins, 1980; Davis and Womack, 2002). In contrast with the text-based approaches that dominated literary studies up to the 70s – such as Russian Formalism or New Criticism (Newton, 1988; Ransom, 1941; Graff, 1974) – – these approaches argued that a text alone has no value without a reader. Their focus shifted from the text as a self-contained item to the different ways in which readers – or groups of particular populations of readers – produce meaning from it, looking at how personal and cultural experiences might influence their reception of the text and their interpretation.

Reader-response theory received increasing attention after the 70s, and it soon divided into several sub-branches. Despite some divergent views on the reading process, reader-response theorists share two key beliefs: (1) that our understanding of literature depends on the reader and on its interaction with the text, and (2) that readers do not simply understand (or misunderstand) an existing 'meaning' presented to them by an 'objective' literary text, but that instead they actively construct it, in response to specific text features and by applying to it their general and personal knowledge. It must be kept in mind that these theoretical frameworks often referred to the so called *implied reader*

(Iser, 1974) or *ideal reader* (Fillmore, 1983) – one with a specific cultural background and assumed general knowledge – rather than to the 'actual reader' (i.e. the particular individual who reads a book on a specific occasion). The focus on the latter (and the consequent increasing interest in the qualitative and quantitative approaches) has become more central in contemporary stylistics, where more attention has been explicitly directed towards real readers' responses. In particular, several studies have focused on the effects that literary texts can have on readers' behaviour and their emotional affect, showing how personal factors and cultural experiences might influence reception and interpretation (see for example Hakemulder and Koopman (2010); Hakemulder (2011); De Mulder et al. (2017); Miall (2015); Gerrig (2011); Kuijpers and Hakemulder (2018); Kuzmičová and Bálint (2019)).

This emphasis on real readers is in line with existing work in psychology, which has long been interested in the ways in which readers process and store information, make inferences about texts or interpret them. However, psychology as the science of the human mind often takes the role of the reader for granted, and studies examining readers' responses in psychology mostly do not address problems that are central from the perspective of linguistics and literary studies, such as the importance of certain stylistic features, or the aesthetic value of a work. Even more crucially, psychologists often use the words *text* or *discourse* to describe their data, but these are not what a discourse analyst would regard as such. Experimental psychologists have traditionally used short made-up material rather than long texts, and almost never authentic narrative ones. This has clear advantages in terms of control over the text and over what the readers should react to, but such items might not require the same processing effort, nor have the same effect that a narrative texts would have. Such constructed texts are rarely longer that one two sentences, and are typically meant to be self-sufficient, i.e. to bear enough information to be meaningful without necessarily requiring extra knowledge about the represented personae or objects. A longer text provides the reader gradually

with knowledge about the author's writing style and about the fictional world, and such information is (at least partly) retained by the reader while making inferences about the text, and plausibly contribute to its interpretation (Emmott, 1997).[1]

2.3 Experimental approaches to literary reading

A great amount of studies in psychology investigated reading processes with very short and *ad hoc* texts. These brought evidence towards the different behaviours readers adopt in front of unknown lexicon, incoherent texts, syntactic ambiguities, how they use their general knowledge to make inferences and 'fill the gaps', or how they remember stories. However, they did not aim to answer questions that are central for literary scholars and stylisticians, such as what makes a text literary in the first place or what feature of style triggers certain emotional responses.

The idea that literary texts might possess some properties that distinguish them from non-literary ones is one of the most important concerns within literary studies. *Literariness* has been discussed by numerous scholars, who often agree that literary texts are peculiar in that they achieve certain effects on readers, which are not triggered by non-literary texts (Miall, 2011, 2015; Miall and Kuiken, 1998; Zyngier et al., 2007). These are thought to be able to evoke strong feelings in the readers and to 'capture' their attention, 'detaching' them from reality. Such effects are generally related to *foregrounding* (Jakobson, 1966; Leech, 1969; Hakemulder, 2004; Leech, 2014; Van Peer, 2007; Zyngier et al., 2007) – i.e. the practice of making something stand out from the surrounding text – and are believed to facilitate *absorption* (Kuijpers et al., 2014; Tan, 2013; Stockwell, 2019; Troscianko, 2012) – i.e. a temporary loss of attention to and

[1] It is important for the present thesis to clarify that 'interpretation' here does not necessarily describe a highly valued meaning or a subtle implicit message of the text. Interpretation is seen here in its 'low-level kind' (Chatman, 1980, p. 31), as the relatively intuitive process of making sense of the narrative, by having knowledge of which characters are being referred to, and keeping track of spatial and temporal information while establishing causal links between events.

detachment from the 'real' world, typically caused by a deep immersion in the fictional storyworld (the narrative and its mental representation).

Because of its crucial role within theories of literariness and its intrinsic dependency on readers, foregrounding has been at the centre of several studies that have set ground for the application of empirical methods within stylistics. Foregrounding is a well-established (yet still debated) concept within literary studies, which typically describes linguistic devices that 'stand out' from the surrounding textual material. The theory of foregrounding can be traced back to Russian Formalism at the beginning of the 20th century, but it was Shklovsky (1917) who proposed that literature is capable of defamiliarising the readers, and therefore of renewing their awareness of the world around them. The term foregrounding was introduced by Mukařovský (1983), who defined it as a range of deviations in style, which occur in literary texts. In the primary understanding of this term – i.e. of features which are prominent in a text because of their 'abnormality', as opposed to the 'norms' of the language (Leech, 2014, p. 30) – foregrounding refers to two distinct strategies: *parallelism*[2] and *deviation* (Jakobson, 1968). Deviation typically violates the conventions of communication (e.g. grammatical conventions), of genre, or even of society (e.g. moral conventions), and is typically thought to achieve striking and estranging effects. Parallelism, on the other hand, describes the author's choice to willingly repeat patterns, even where language would typically tend to variate. In all its forms, foregrounding is assumed to influence the shaping of readers' interpretative and evaluative operations.

Borrowing a range of methods from psychology, several scholars have investigated *how* this narrative strategy affects reading by testing real readers. These studies have been mostly concerned with examination of 'offline' responses, i.e. those collected after the reading process, such as questionnaires and reports, and only occasionally

[2] *Parallelism* is intended here in its broader sense as 'the introduction of extra regularities, not irregularities, into the language' (Leech, 1969, p. 62), and refers to repetition on the level of grammar (grammatical parallelism), on the level of sound it (phonological parallelism), on the level of meaning (semantic parallelism), and to the repetition of actual words (lexical parallelism) (Burke, 2014, pp. 94-95).

with 'online' data, collected *during* the reading (measuring for example reading times or eye movements). Van Peer, for example, focused on the connection between the linguistic features of texts and their literary quality, investigating whether this could be related to foregrounding. In his influential work (Van Peer, 1986) he hypothesised that foregrounded elements would be more *memorable* than the rest of the text, that they should be perceived by readers as more *striking* and more *important*, and that they would be of a higher *discussion-value*. Van Peer conducted a stylistic analysis of six short poems by different authors, listing and rating all their foregrounding features at the phonetic, grammatical and semantic levels and examined readers' responses to a paper questionnaire. They were asked to identify or evaluate the words or portions of the texts that they found striking, memorable or important, and to provide information about their literary experience and their attitude towards poetry. Results of van Peer's study suggest that there is indeed a correlation between foregrounding and perceived strikingness, as well as importance and discussion value. They also show, interestingly, that literary training does not affect the recognition of foregrounding, and that foregrounding does not make the poems more memorable.

Building on van Peer's study, Miall and Kuiken (1994a,b) also focused on foregrounding in their empirical approach to literature, adding a cognitive perspective to their analysis. Taking into account psychological studies such as Joanette and Goulet (1991) and Kutas and Hillyard (1982) – Miall and Kuiken broadened their interpretation of foregrounding, including *affect* and *feelings* as crucial effects of this strategy, and considering it essential for the interpretation of literary texts (something that had been in part suggested by Miall (1992)). They proposed that the crucial aspect of foregrounding – and therefore of literariness – is its ability to 'defamiliarise', and that therefore readers would require a certain amount of interpretative effort to 'refamiliarise' and construct a *meaning*. By means of four studies, where reading times and ratings for three different short stories were collected, Miall and Kuiken (1994b) extended the boundary

of literary research to psychology, postulating that defamiliarisation would increase readers' cognitive effort, and that this could be reflected in an increase of reading times for passages featuring foregrounded elements. They confirmed and extended van Peer's (1986) previous observations, finding in general a correlation between foregrounding and its assumed effects: strikingness, affect, importance and discussion value, and showing again that response to foregrounding does not seem to depend on literary competence or experience. Importantly, they found a relation between foregrounding and reading time, providing a concrete evidence that foregrounding increases processing effort.

These results are also in line with Dixon et al. (1993), who hypothesised that literary texts are intrinsically more complex than non-literary texts,[3] and that multiple readings would elicit a deeper understanding and appreciation of the firsts, because these 'are generated only later through study and reflection' (Dixon et al., 1993, p. 14). They postulated therefore that the difference between the first (and more 'superficial') reading, and the second ('deeper' reading) should highlight what the authors call *depth of appreciation*, and with it the *literariness* of the text. Importantly, the authors tested whether the presence of particular linguistic features contribute to the readers' appreciation of literary texts. By removing these features, they expected appreciation to decrease. Results of Dixon et al. (1993) showed that readers indeed appreciated the original version of the story they used (*Emma Zunz* by Borges) more than its modified version, suggesting that the striking/foregrounding features influence the appreciation of literary texts. Importantly, Dixon et al. (1993) also took into account readers variables, and their results showed that a certain amount of reading experience was necessary for their readers to appreciate narratorial ambiguity in the story used, suggesting that literary appreciation might be mediated by experience and knowledge.

[3]It must be kept in mind that the authors' definition of 'literary' is somewhat problematic, as they seem to consider literary works only those that belong to the 'canonised' literature, as opposed to popular fiction or other texts that they see as 'non-literary'.

Hakemulder (2004) replicated and extended this study across two experiments, using different literary texts: two extracts from Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* and Nabokov's poem 'The Old Bridge', both compared to a third non-literary control text. While the premises are very similar, there is one subtle but important theoretical difference between this study and Dixon et al. (1993), i.e. that Hakemulder does not talk about the text 'literariness' but rather of its 'literary experience', stressing on the very subjective nature of effects such as appreciation and interpretation. In his reviewed proposal of the rereading paradigm, Hakemulder focused more closely on foregrounding devices, testing whether their presence/absence would affect readers' response not only in terms of appreciation, but also of empathy towards a social behaviour/attitude, i.e. whether readers' opinion on the text's main topic would change after reading literary texts (*immigration* and *discrimination* in the case of Rushdie's text, and *love* for Nabokov's poem). His results showed that the removal of foregrounding features affected some of the aspects he investigated: *perceived literary quality*, *enjoyment*, and *readers' interest in reading the rest of the text*, but did not affect appreciation nor reader's opinions on the text's topic. In contrast with Dixon et al. (1993), Hakemulder (2004) found no significant effect of readers variables on appreciation.

More recently, Kuijpers and Hakemulder (2018) investigated the rereading parading proposed by Dixon et al. (1993) once more, refining their empirical approach as well as their statistical analysis. Interestingly, their result did not replicate previous findings, showing that responses to the investigated measures (appreciation and comprehension) could not be linked to predetermined levels of foregrounding in the narratives. Instead, their results showed that the general increase in appreciation was related mostly to the increased comprehension perceived by the readers. This was consistent across all the texts they used (Borges' *Emma Zunz*, Rushdie's *The Satanic* Verses and the short story *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* by Ambrose Bierce), manipulations,

and samples. In line with Hakemulder (2004), no correlation was found between comprehension/appreciation and readers' variables.

The studies described above added concrete evidence to the assumption that *foregrounding* contributes to the general appreciation of a text as well as to the reader's perception of 'literariness', and seem to support, at least in part, the idea that there is indeed something distinctive about literary texts, or about how readers perceive them. However, it appears that in order to investigate this narrative strategy in general, literary scholars tended to simplify the concept of foregrounding, losing sight of the fact that it is a strategy obtained by means of several – and very different – linguistic devices. It is certainly possible – as argued by several of the studies mentioned above – that in terms of aesthetic effects and perceived literariness, different foregrounding devices could ultimately achieve similar response in the reader. However, not all of these have comparable effects terms of how they affect understanding or interpretation, and especially in terms of processing. If we consider for example lexical deviation, it is plausible to assume – as supported by existing studies in psychology – that if a lexically deviant word attracts more attention and results more memorable for the reader (for example a neologism), this would make the reading process slower, mirroring the processing effort (and/or difficulty). On the other end, if a poem features a word repeated several times, while this could also be more memorable and striking, it would not necessarily be the cause of processing difficulties. While it is important to determine that these have a common denominator, I believe it is crucial to distinguish each technique and to analyse it individually to understand how exactly it affects the reading process.

The work of Kuijpers and Hakemulder (2018) in particular highlights the complexity of relating literariness and/or foregrounding directly to appreciation, and suggests that the contrasting results found in different studies might be explained by the use of readers' self-reported measures, which do not allow the researchers to observe responses as they are triggered. The use of online measures such as reading times and eye movements

could thus be crucial in the investigations of foregrounding and of readers' responses to literariness.

What these studies also highlight is how ambiguous the role of readers' variables might be in the processing and appreciation of literary texts. While Dixon et al. (1993) found that readers' experience had an effect of appreciation, this was contradicted by several studies (Hakemulder, 2004; Kuijpers and Hakemulder, 2018; Sotirova, 2006). It is possible that this relationship is not linear, and that this discrepancy depends on the use of different literary texts, and on the different level of challenge that these present to the readers. [4].

2.4 Empirical approaches to point of view

That point of view is an essential factor in the processing of texts in general, and in particular of narratives, is evident from the large number of narratologists, linguists and cognitive scientists who discussed this aspect of written language, focusing on its formal characteristics as well as on the discourse strategies it represents and on how these are perceived (Uspenskij, 1973; Booth, 1961; Banfield, 1982; Simpson, 1993; Chafe, 1994; Ehrlich, 1990; Hühn et al., 2009; Bruder, 1995; Wiebe, 1990, 1994; McIntyre, 2006; Duchan et al., 2012, among others).

In oral conversations, an utterance is generally understood with respect to the situation in which the conversation takes place (Barwise and Perry, 1981), and deictic expressions such as *now*, *here*, *come* and *go* have meaning with respect to the time and place of the utterance, as well as to the individuals producing it (Fillmore, 1983). In fictional narratives, on the other hand, spatial and temporal deictic terms do not derive meaning from the time and place of the author or the reader, instead they are understood

[4]It may even be that they reveal a reversed U-curve, with both low and high levels of reading experience leading to low appreciation and with intermediate levels leading to maximal appreciation (Berlyne, 1970)

with respect to the time of the story (Hamburger, 1973; Kuroda, 1976; Banfield, 1982; Bruder, 1995; Rapaport et al., 1989). By keeping track of the spatial and temporal deictic items, readers are able to mentally render narrative objects and events and to relate them to each other (Uspenskij, 1973). The other crucial component of point of view in the mental representation of the fictional world involves knowing which character is producing thoughts and utterances. In the most obvious case, the speaker is presented as the referent of a first-person pronoun, who would also be the source of beliefs, emotions and evaluations expressed by utterances and thoughts. In third-person narratives, however, sentences can express a character's subjectivity even when he/she is referred to in the third person, and even if no direct markers of subjectivity (e.g. attributing parentheticals) are featured. This 'psychological point of view' (Uspenskij, 1973) in third-person narrative is often conveyed through several techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation, in particular those falling under the umbrella term *free indirect style* (see Chapter 1 for more details). Look for example at the following extract:

> He wanted to talk to Dennys. How were they going to be able to get home from this strange desert land into which they had been cast and which was heaven knew where in all the countless solar systems in all the countless galaxies?
>
> (L'Engle, 2010, p. 91)

In this passage, events are not narrated objectively by some external omniscient entity. Instead, the emotions and thoughts of the character are presented. It is to the character *He* that the land appears as strange, and his doubts that are expressed by the colloquial 'heaven knew where.' It is crucial to notice that nothing in the second sentence, featuring Free Indirect Thought, explicitly marks that the sentence is expressing the thoughts of the character referred to as *He* in the previous one, yet the reader has to understand this to make sense of the passage.

Because of the 'mixture of direct and indirect discourse' (Tobler, 1887) that characterises *free indirect style*, it is often not clear whose perspective the reader is witnessing

while reading. This lack of clarity has led to the development of different hypotheses concerning narrative point of view, or 'voice'. On the one hand, the *single voice* hypothesis (Banfield, 1982; Fludernik, 1993) sees *free indirect style* as a means of expression of a single narrative persona (either the narrator or one character), while on the other the *dual voice* hypothesis (Pascal, 1977; Cohn, 1978; Toolan, 1988; Leech and Short, 1981) sees the combination of third and first person elements as the mark of a combined perspective, which melts or superimposes the character's consciousness with the narrator's view (see Chapter 1 for more details). Because of the numerous – and often contrasting – opinions on how to interpret narrative perspectives, techniques of speech and thought presentation and narrative points of view have been at the centre of several empirical investigations.

Some scholars used empirical methods to focus on the identification of the formal aspects of narrative perspective. Semino et al. (1997) and Semino and Short (2004) did so by analysing the characteristics of the different techniques of speech and thought presentation using a corpus of written fictional and non-fictional narratives. The authors annotated all instances of speech and thought presentation categories in order to shed light on how these vary in several written narrative genres. In their remarkable work, the authors gathered several selected extracts from twentieth-century British prose fiction and contemporary newspapers, and proceeded then with a manual annotation of the whole corpus, basing on a revised version of the model of speech and thought presentation proposed by Leech and Short (1981). The use of a model that is mostly grounded on syntax to distinguish techniques of speech and thought presentation can be seen as a limitation of their approach, as it completely left out the focus on their semantic aspect, which is considered crucial for their interpretation by several scholars (see Rundquist (2017)). However, it allowed the authors to proceed in the identification of the various techniques systematically, showing, crucially, that a number of ambiguities occurred as a consequence of the use and juxtaposition of different forms of *free indirect*

style, as several instances could not be attributed clearly to one mode or the other by means of pure formal qualities.

Along the formal properties of these techniques, scholars have been interested in investigating the *effects* that different perspectives have on readers' interpretation of narratives. Van Peer and Pander Maat (1996) investigated empirically *whether* textual perspective has indeed an effect on readers and how readers' knowledge and expectations influence their reactions. They hypothesised that readers would show a higher degree of sympathy for characters whose 'psychological perspective' was presented, and did find an effect in this direction. This effect was however 'less strong and less general than presumed' (Van Peer and Maat, 2001, p. 233), and this led the authors to run a second study where the same question was further investigated. This time, they hypothesised that the distribution of sympathy could have an effect on the *interpretation* of narrative texts, and this might influence readers' explanations of character behaviour. Results supported this assumption, showing again that point of view affects sympathy, and that this can be also seen in the way readers describe the characters' actions.

Millis (1995) investigated instead whether readers incorporate perspective into their mental representations of a literary text by measuring reading times. Building on previous research on situation model/deictic view of comprehension (Van Dijk and Kintsch, 1983) – which proposes that readers construct a representation or mental model of the fictional world as they read – Millis hypothesised that if readers incorporate perspectives into their mental representations, they would need to update the deictic centre when there is a shift in perspective in the narrative, and this updating would be accompanied by an increase in reading times. Such increase would be visible during the first reading in comparison to the second reading, as in the latter readers would have already constructed their mental representation. 23 undergraduate Psychology students were instructed to read *The Demon Lover* by Elizabeth Bowen twice on a screen, as their reading times were recorded. After defining and including a number of predictors

that might affect reading times – either text related (i.e. word frequency) and situation model related (i.e. suspense) – Millis (1995) performed three regression analyses to determine whether the two readings differed significantly, and how the other predicted variables influenced reading times per sentence. Results indicated that sentences which introduced a shift in perspective featured an increased reading time for the first reading but not for the second, supporting the hypothesis that perspective shifts require more processing effort, and that during second reading the point of view seems to be already encoded in the participants' mental representation. Interestingly, these results provided some evidence towards the important role of the predictors that the author defines as *situation model related*, which can be related to features typical of *free indirect style* (i.e. deictic shifts) and to its semantic properties. In fact, even if the author does not mention it, the literary text selected by Millis to test readers' reaction to shifts in point of view, *The Demon Lover*, features several instances of *free indirect style* – see below – and the shifts identified by Millis are mostly happening *within* the main character and can be analysed in terms of juxtaposed techniques of consciousness presentation.

> She thought first – then the caretaker must be back. All the same, who, seeing the house shuttered, would have dropped a letter in at the box? It was not a circular, it was not a bill. (Bowen, 1999, p. 661)

Starting from a similar theoretical background, Miall and Kuiken (2001) concentrated their analysis on the aesthetic components of the text allowing for shifts in perspective. They postulated that the more the narrative invites readers to experience internal thoughts (or feelings), the more processing effort would be required of them. Their results indicated that there was indeed a correlation between reading times and foregrounding features, and that readers reacted emotionally to stylistic change.

Similar conclusions were reached by László (1999), whose study analysed whether variations of internal versus external perspective would make a difference in the way readers process narrative texts, and whether the alternation of internal and external

point of view in one text would increase the readers' interpretive effort. He measured reading times of participants who were asked to read an original piece of literature and compared it with reading times for a modified version of the same text, where focalisation was turned into a consistent one. To do so, the authors replaced verbs expressing the characters' perceptions such as *see* and *hear* with behavioural verbs (*gaze at*, *listen*). They also inserted what they called 'estranging modifiers' such as 'it seemed' or 'as if' where the mental states of the characters were represented. His results, however, were not conclusive, showing no difference between the two versions. Laszlo hypothesised that this might be because of the *literariness* of the text itself, which, he suggests, might slow down the reading process independently from the kind of focalisation and perspective presented. However, when looking at the texts Laszlo used, it appears that the supposedly internal/external contrast between the original and the modified versions is not clear. Look for instance at two of the 13 'locations' where the text was modified:

> **Internal POV**
>
> Both of them heard the hoof beats. They heard horses stop behind their backs, and then the scrape of a match as cigarettes were lit. Still they did not turn round gut went on chopping wood as though they had heard nothing. Two armed men had emerged from the pine forest, where they had been standing for a long time in the concealment of the trees, while they gazed at the shepherd, the flock of sheep, the small hut, the barking dog running to and fro.
>
> **External POV**
>
> In the wood two men on horseback came behind them. At the edge of the wood they halted, lighting cigarettes. The shepherd and the boy did not turn round, they continued chopping the wood as if nothing worth attention had happened. Before emerging from the pine wood the two armed men had been standing for a long time in the concealment of the trees, in front of them were the shepherds, the herd of sheep, the small hut, the barking dog running to and fro.
>
> **Internal POV**
>
> He saw the toe of the riding boot, the stirrup and part of the horse's belly, and the grass.

External POV

Before his eyes were the toe of the riding boots, the stirrup, and part of the horse's belly and the grass.

Both versions feature several markers of internal and external perspective, and some of the changes even seem to achieve the opposite effect from the one described and desired by the author – see for instance the clause *they gaze at the shepherd* in the first 'Internal POV' extract, the deictic verb *came* in the version that should portray external focalisation, or the substitution of *He saw* with *Before his eyes*, in the second extract.

It is not completely surprising that Laszlo's results are in contrast with the ones presented by Black et al. (1979), who also measured reading times for sentences that featured either an internal/character-oriented focalisation or an external one. Black et al. (1979) did not specifically look into literary texts, but investigated readers' response to shifts in perspective, postulating that they would have a preference for texts with a consistent point of view rather than for texts featuring focalisation shifts. Focusing specifically on cohesive relations in discourse, the authors narrowed their examination by examining shifts in point of view caused in particular by spatial and temporal deixis – a key element of *free indirect style*. Different groups of participants were asked to read 16 short texts created by the researcher where the perspective was either constant or shifted from one internal to external. Their reading time was recorded, and they had either to provide ratings for comprehensibility, to recall the story after a distraction task or to re-write the text by trying to make it 'better' or 'easier to read'. The results provided by Black et al. (1979) were extremely solid in pointing out the difference between the processing of texts with consistent vs. non-consistent points of view, as sentences with a consistent point of view were read faster, rated as more comprehensible, and recalled more accurately than sentences in which the point of view changed. Interestingly, when asked to rewrite sentences to make them more comprehensible, subjects would typically modify them producing versions of the texts in which the perspective was consistent.

How readers assign perspective in texts featuring potentially ambiguous instances of *free indirect style*, and whether they choose to read perspectivised sentences as stemming from the narrator, from the character, or from both is another question concerning narrative point of view that has interested literary scholars, and that is particularly relevant for the present study. In her attempt to find an answer to this issue, Sotirova (2006) used a paper questionnaire to understand how readers interpreted points of view. In four separate sessions, she presented 86 participants with a selected passage from D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* containing instances of *free indirect style* that made the attribution of perspectives ambiguous. She asked participants with no prior knowledge about narrative theory or *free indirect style* to identify whose point of view was presented in each sentence by ticking one of the characters (including the narrator) listed in a multiple answer (first stage of the study) or *one or more* of the proposed characters (second stage). Three of the four groups were also asked to provide information about their educational background and their reading practices. When comparing responses for each sentence, results showed that almost one third of the participants (32.9%) selected multiple perspectives, especially in sentences featuring *free indirect style*, and that in those sentences the participants' consensus decreased, somewhat supporting the possibility of a perceived dual or even multiple perspective. In most of these cases, the multiple selection consisted in the narrator along with one character, as expected if we consider the linguistic markers of *free indirect style*.

Also Bray (2007) investigated how readers respond to *free indirect style* in relation to the single vs. dual voice debate. Similarly to Sotirova (2006), he asked participants to identify voices within two literary passages – one from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and one from Charlotte Smith's *Marchmont* – by selecting either one named character, the narrator only, both the narrator and the character, or by declaring their inability to decide whose point of view was presented. They were also asked to indicate which features in the text led them to that decision. Participants in Bray's study were

32 first-year English undergraduates, none of whom had any specialist knowledge of *free indirect style*. Bray was also interested in the role of succeeding co-text, and provided half of the participants with a shorter version of Smith's *Marchmont* to see whether this would affect their interpretation of points of view. Results showed that attributions for sentences containing *free indirect style* varied between readers, but that the experiencing of a dual voice seemed to belong to a very small, specialized group of readers: those who were familiar with techniques of consciousness presentation. In relation to co-text, it appeared that 10 out of 16 readers who were presented with both paragraphs (instead of one) attributed the perspective to a character or to a character *and* the narrator, whereas 12 out of 16 of those who read only the first paragraph identified the voice as the narrator's only. Bray results show that there was no neat preference in the attribution of perspectives in passages that are ambiguous because of the use of *free indirect style*. More importantly, they show that the ambiguity might be resolved one way or the other in relation to the amount of co-textual cues that are available to the reader, i.e. as a consequence of what Emmott (1997) refers to as *text knowledge*, which plausibly plays an important role in the way readers infer information.

Both Sotirova's and Bray's studies featured few methodological weaknesses: both presented readers with texts in which the sentences were enumerated, and this naturally led participants to attribute point of view according to that division. In *free indirect style*, the play of shifts between characters' 'voices' and between different modes of consciousness presentation often goes beyond syntactic divisions, with shifts happening at times *within* one sentence, and other times involving more than one. By forcing the reader evaluate perspectives for each sentence, Sotirova and Bray reduced the possible outcomes of perspective attribution by the readers' part. Moreover, their analyses did not make use of any established statistical tools, relying on the visual and intuitive interpretation of their results. Nonetheless, by showing the multiplicity of responses to literary texts featuring *free indirect style*, both studies added empirical evidence to the

idea that these techniques play a role in making the attribution of perspectives difficult for readers, and this is demonstrated by the variety in their responses.

Woolf's texts

It is interesting to notice that although Virginia Woolf is one of the most prominent modernist authors, and one that – as will be discussed in Chapter 3 – made a significant and experimental use of techniques of speech and thought presentation, her works have only rarely been used for empirical investigations in relation to perspectives and shifts in point of view. One of these is a qualitative study by Sotirova (2016a), who looked into readers' responses to a passage from Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* featuring frequent shifts in point of view, and to how these might be influenced by the readers' literary experience. A small group of participants (15 undergraduate students of English at the University of Nottingham and 8 postgraduates, of which 3 non native speakers of English) was asked to identify perspectives and to signal the boundaries between viewpoints. The study aimed to examine to what degree readers with different reading experience (undergraduate vs. postgraduate students) agreed or disagreed in interpreting and assigning perspectives. Results showed that postgraduate students more often opted for a dual voice interpretation, assigning perspective to a character and to the narrator at the same time. They appeared to be generally more sensitive to *free indirect style*, suggesting that experience with hlmodernism and knowledge about techniques of speech and thought presentation could play a role in how readers interpret points of view. Despite the small and unbalanced number of participants, what emerges from this study is that crucially, even within a short extract such as the one used in this experiment, a large number of shifts were signalled by both groups, with many different possible interpretations. Sotirova (2016a) took a step forward from her previous study, presenting the text unmarked, and avoided mentioning the sentence as a unit in the instructions given. This is important, as shifts between modes of consciousness presentation in Woolf's

writings frequently happen *within* sentences (more on this in Chapter 3). Sotirova however did not distinguish between different modes of consciousness presentation, asking readers to indicate only whose 'viewpoint' or 'voice' was expressed in the text, therefore not accounting for the differences in the interpretation of verbalised speech and thoughts vs. non-verbalised thoughts/impressions, which play an important role in the definition of the 'psychological point of view', and, I argue, contribute to the difficulty of Woolf's novels.

In a similar vein, Cui (2017) explored the attribution of perspective in three extracts from Jane Austen's novel *Sense and Sensibility*, Katherine Mansfield's short story 'Life of Ma Parker', and Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, and expanded her approach by including online measures in her examination. Participants were asked to read the texts on a computer screen twice, and their reading times were measured. They were then asked to identify whose point(s) of view the whole passage was narrated from, and to rate the passage in terms of perceived difficulty. Cui found a higher degree of agreement in perspective attribution for passages with no shifts between points of view compared to those featuring shifts. With regard to difficulty, the passage with shifts was rated as slightly more difficult than the others (but no statistical evidence was provided). Finally, reading times, Cui writes, were 'roughly consistent' with the results of the rating of difficulty. These results seem to support the present dissertation's hypothesis that *free indirect style* poses a challenge for readers, particularly the variety practised by Woolf. However, several aspects of Cui's study warrant further investigation: firstly, although the passages from *Sense and Sensibility* and 'Life of Ma Parker' did not feature shifts from one character's perspective to another's, they did feature *free indirect style*, and not consistently in a single mode. This means that shifts occurred between represented speech, thoughts and perceptions of the characters. Moreover, by presenting the passages as a whole on a screen, it is possible, or even likely, that participants only signalled the most prominent perspective they perceived, or the most prominent in combination

with that of the narrator. Crucially, Cui's results show that multiple perspectives were assigned by readers in all passages, all of which featured *free indirect style*. Finally, the assumption that shifts in perspective should cause slower reading times has to be considered in light of the stylistic differences between authors (more or less parataxis, word frequency), and, crucially, in light of the different uses of *free indirect style*.

2.5 What do existing empirical approaches tell us?

As it appears from the studies on the subject and from the disparate insights they brought to light, shifts in points of view and techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation have been an important object for qualitative and quantitative investigations for literary critics as well as for scholars in Stylistics and Psycholinguistics. An objective examination of these techniques and their effect has proven however very difficult. On the one hand, scholars with a more traditional literary background provided crucial insights into the form and functions of these techniques using corpus techniques (Semino and Short, 2004; Semino et al., 1997), or to the aesthetic effects they might elicit in the readers (Van Peer and Pander Maat, 1996; Miall and Kuiken, 2001), with the use of questionnaires and sometimes the measurement of reading times. On the other, scholars focusing on the psychological processes focused closely on specific textual features, providing evidence towards some of the behavioural responses to perspective shifts. None of them, however, was able to relate the literary techniques used to achieve perspective shifts and their specific linguistic features to the readers' reactions: for scholars from a literary and stylistics background, this might be attributed to some methodological limitations – no control over the investigated features, no comparison with controlled versions of the text, too small pool of participants, too broad generalisations about literary effects, inadequate data analyses – whereas for those coming from psychology

the focus on perspective shifts was often unrelated to literature and narrative techniques, and they used artificial sentences rather than original pieces of literature.

Despite the limitations and the differences among them, these studies and their results support nonetheless two main hypotheses. First, that techniques of consciousness presentation, especially those described by the term *free indirect style*, are difficult to identify syntactically, and that their formal features often overlap. Because of these unclear boundaries, the perspectives/voices/points of views depicted in narrative texts are somewhat difficult to identify for readers, who tend to disagree, when asked to attribute perspectives. Secondly, that shifts in perspectives seem to require an increased processing effort by the readers' part, and that readers typically find it easier to read texts that portray one consistent point of view rather than multiple ones.

There seems therefore to be a connection between the use of certain narrative techniques, the juxtaposition and alternation of points of view, and the readers' potential processing difficulty. None of the studies mentioned above was able to relate these three empirically, and it is this gap that the present thesis is trying to fill, undertaking an investigation of difficulty within Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway*. After examining the theoretical assumptions of difficulty with regard to these two novels, the next chapters will present an analysis of readers' responses to the features that are believed to contribute to such difficulty. This empirical examination is designated to validate – or discredit – the theoretical assumptions on difficulty concerning the two novels, and to provide insight into further exploration of difficulty within narrative texts.

Chapter 3

Difficulty and Virginia Woolf's use of *free indirect style*

3.1 Introduction

As one of the most prominent writers of the her time, Virginia Woolf's novels and critical essays are often quoted, not only in discussions concerning consciousness presentation techniques, but also as icons of the experimentalism and complexity of modernist literature in Britain. Her writings, especially her novels, are considered difficult by many literary critics, and are generally believed to represent a challenge for readers (Diepeveen, 2003; Goldman, 2006; Quigley, 2015; Mahaffey, 2008). The quote below – only a short extract from a recent critical article on Woolf's writings – illustrates a typical opinion of one potential reader to her novels: the complete rejection of a writing style that is perceived as obscure and incomprehensible – typically in comparison to more 'popular' novels – and the frustrating sense that there is no plot, no actions, no development of events or characters, all within a confusing cauldron of perspectives and voices:

> [...] the single worst thing about her books is how badly written they are. They were published by Woolf herself, without any editorial intervention, and it shows. An editor might have queried her habit of writing 'for' when she meant 'because', her way of forever beginning her sentences with the present participle, and worst of all, her addiction to the word 'suddenly'. Everything in her books happens 'suddenly'; sometimes four times in a paragraph. It is a clear sign of an author who has no real idea why anything should happen, or what naturally should happen next. Hensher (2003)

This impression seems to be shared by several readers, as suggested by many online discussion forums on 'difficult literature' and informal surveys where her novels feature prominently.[1] Look for example at the following comments extracted from the popular online platform *Goodreads*:

> Commenting on *Mrs Dalloway*:
>
> **reader 1**: I wasn't ready for Woolf. The fragments of thoughts, page-long sentences and utter absence of chapter divisions demand an intensity of concentration I just couldn't commit to.
>
> **reader 2**: One of the hardest books I have read so far. The syntax is really challenging and the amount of hard vocabulary is massive.
>
> **reader 3**: It took me a while to get into this book. In fact, I bought this back in college 10 years ago and read a few pages at the time, but put it aside because I just didn't get it.
>
> **reader 4**: One of the most difficult to read novels I've encountered. Totally worth it.
>
> **reader 5**: They say it's the birth of the modern novel. Very happy that novels have progressed since then.
>
> Commenting on *To the Lighthouse*:
>
> **reader 1**: I read this book for a book club. Well, TRIED to read it. I did not finish. It was SOOOOO BOOOOOOORING. A tiny piece of torture. I mean, there were sentences that lasted almost an entire page. That made NO FREAKING SENSE. And nothing happened.
>
> **reader 2**: My first venture to Virginia Woolf. I think I need to read it again.

[1] Based on actual readers' ratings, various online magazines propose a ranking of the 'most difficult novels of all times'. Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway* feature among the first twenty positions in almost all surveys (see for example Flood (2012); Wilkinson and Hallberg (2012); Levenson (2013); Hammond (2013)).

> **reader 3**: did not find her style easy to adjust to, in fact from the start it was difficult for me to pick up the flow of her writing. I often found myself having to re-read several sentences over and over again, trying to catch her meaning. Woolf will not write three or four sentences if she can contrive to construct a single, extraordinarily long sentence, punctuated with more commas and semi-colons than most writers use in a chapter.
>
> **reader 4**: I think this is one of the books that are praised because they're very hard to understand/grasp/follow the sequence of actions and characters. i never understood who was talking to whom, who was in the room, who was drawing a painting and who just barged in. So many characters squeezed in, and she doesn't clarify who's who! [...] it's a very absurd way of writing, you never know if she's imagining/analyzing things in her head, or if she's actually witnessing these people she's mentioning suddenly! And please tell me why a sentence has a zillion commas and lasts for a whole paragraph?!
>
> **reader 5**: The narrative jumps around not only from time to time and from place to place, but also from narrator to narrator. At times it is difficult to understand who is speaking, but you eventually come to recognize who's [sic] mind you are in without being told.

In line with literary criticism (see following paragraphs), these surveys highlight aspects of her writing that seem to represent a major challenge for readers: the lack of overall cohesion of the story, the sometimes incomplete or intricate syntax, and the difficulty in understanding whose perspective or voice is presented within a specific passage. What the present thesis argues is that these challenging aspects can be regarded as the result of her use of the techniques of consciousness presentation, especially those described by the term *free indirect style*, along with Free Direct Speech (FDS) and Interior Monologue (IM).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, modernism is characterised in general by a twisting and reshaping of realist prose and poetry into renewed forms of literature, which aimed to express the vastness and complexity of human nature. In particular – as Hensher (2003) rightly notices in relation to the use of the word *suddenly* – modernist writers wanted to express the immediateness of feelings and emotions, and to free the texts as much as possible from all that they considered laboured and artificial. Woolf was a very strong

promoter of such a change, and pushed towards a new form of writing, questioning the forms and value of literature in general. She did so in several of her essays, challenging her contemporaries to take distance from tradition. In her famous essay 'Modern fiction' (Woolf, 1921) she writes:

> if a writer were a free man and not a slave, if he could write what he chose, not what he must, if he could base his work upon his own feeling and not upon convention, there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted style, and perhaps not a single button sewn on as the Bond Street tailors would have it.
> (Woolf, 1921, p. 160)

Woolf stressed in particular that the interest of literature should lie in the 'dark places of psychology', and that the purpose of writing should be to record 'the pattern, however disconnected in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness', something that would not be possible in the form of a neat linguistic structure or a coherent storyline. Woolf's essay is – in her own words – 'a voice of protest', a call for a new age of literature that 'rips away any structure, convention, or artifice that distracts from communicating the true, pure, and raw shape of human thought' (Martin, 2010, pp. 1-2).

Woolf worked first of all on her own writing to bring about this revolution, and did so especially by experimenting with techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation. The significance of her writings resides exactly in the combination of these two factors: on the one hand she turned *consciousness* itself into the main subject of her novels, and on the other she developed a way to represent it in order to capture the complex processes of the human mind.

3.2 Woolf's experimentalism

3.2.1 Consciousnesses and perspective shifts

Throughout her career – and particularly in her four novels *Jacob's Room*, *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *The Waves* – Woolf explored the nature of consciousness, focusing on the relationship between the external world and the mind. Existing studies on Virginia Woolf's novels often touch on the themes of alienation and isolation in relation to the representation of Woolf's characters and their consciousnesses in her novels, describing them as essentially distant from one another. In his study of *Mrs Dalloway*, for example, Hawthorn (1975) interprets London as represented by Woolf as an estranging place, and notices that often in the novel scenes are dominated by individual characters who are alone and isolated despite being often surrounded by other people. This feeling of loneliness is noted also by Scheck (2011) in his interpretation of *To the Lighthouse*. According to him, Woolf constantly portrays the characters' impossibility of communicating with others, taking as an example Lily's frustration as her desire to share Mrs Ramsay's thoughts cannot be satisfied.

Martin (2010) also points out the solitude of Woolf's characters in both *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, but she acknowledges how Woolf uses several strategies to build a connection between them. She sees this happening through the representation of shared experiences – such as when characters' attention rotates around the same object, but also, I believe, when characters have a perception – which can be, as it is in real life, either right or wrong – of the other's feelings and expectations. Think for example of the empathy between Mrs Ramsay and her son in *To the Lighthouse*, when he is oppressed by the rigidity of his father, or of the failure to communicate on either side between Mr Ramsay and Lily, when they are looking at the Lighthouse at the end of the novel. Cui (2014, 2016) shares a similar view, and even argues for a social and interactive quality of consciousness in Woolf's novel, suggesting that this is achieved in particular through the

juxtaposition of perspectives that results from Woolf's use of consciousness presentation techniques.

Cui sustains her thesis through a close analysis of shifts in viewpoint, highlighting the importance of linguistic devices such as adjacency pairs, conjunctions and parentheticals in the portrayal of consciousnesses that dominates Woolf's novels. These devices allow Woolf to intertwine characters' voices, feeling and impressions, creating those perspective shifts that are so often mentioned in relation to her novels. Cui's view aligns with what was already expressed by Auerbach et al. (2013, p. 536), that 'the essential characteristic of the technique represented by Virginia Woolf is that we are given not merely one person whose consciousness (that is, the impressions it receives) is rendered, but many persons, with frequent shift from one to another'. Presenting multiple consciousnesses by switching between different characters' viewpoints was not a technique exclusive to Virginia Woolf, but the frequency and rapidity of the shifts between points of view in her novel are unique. Sotirova (2013, p. 49) also highlights how 'Woolf's characteristic fingerprint [is] to enact such shifts in quick succession, so that the effect on the reader is comparable to a vertiginous movement of the camera'.

Scholars attribute different functions to perspective shifts as a narrative device: Lodge (2002), for example, sees it as a mimetic strategy, an attempt to imitate the 'elusiveness of consciousness', while Adamson (1998) interprets it as a strategy used to subvert pre-existing literary conventions, and in particular to break the coherence of the narrative. I believe that these two views are not mutually exclusive, and that both are part of Woolf's attempt to detach from previous Realist prose by creating – in a seemingly paradoxical way – an *extreme realism*, a new type of novel that, as mentioned above, can capture the multiplicity of impressions that several characters have – and sometimes share – within a common situation or experience.

Both in *Mrs Dalloway* and in *To the Lighthouse* the narration follows primarily the internal states of characters, foregrounding not dialogue, actions or interactions, but

rather the nature of their consciousnesses and their perception of the fictional world and of their own mind-processes. Crucially, in both novels Woolf's narrative provides readers with the impression of floating among characters' consciousnesses. Woolf drifts between the thoughts and perceptions of her characters with very little indicative language, alternating voices several times even within a single paragraph. Look for example at the following passage, where Mr and Mrs Ramsay go for a walk. Within such a short paragraph, the reader has access to both his and her thoughts, in a seemingly unbroken stream:

> And all the poverty, all the suffering had turned to that, Mrs. Ramsay thought. The lights of the town and of the harbor and of the boats seemed like a phantom net floating there to mark something which had sunk. Well, if he could not share her thoughts, Mr. Ramsay said to himself, he would be off, then, on his own.
>
> (Woolf, 1927, p. 68)

Alternating between RP and FIT, Woolf smoothly transitions from Mrs. Ramsay's thoughts to her husband's. The switch is fast and unsignalled, to the point that the middle line *The lights of the town...* becomes ambiguous, and the reader can't be certain about which character is producing this thought, or whether they are sharing it. Note also how Woolf plays here with the readers, presenting characters who are, ironically, thinking about *not* being able to share thoughts.

Such frequent shifts in point of view require readers to track multiple characters' consciousnesses in order to get a clear picture of the narrative world. The text prompts readers to look at the juxtaposed minds together, as if they were different cameras filming the same object, allowing for several simultaneous impressions to be conveyed. Readers are invited to look at characters' consciousnesses in connection to one another, and yet, to render the fictional world, they have to make an interpretative effort and attribute words and thoughts to one character. This process, I argue, is at the root of the difficulty readers face when reading Woolf novels, both because of the fragmentation she creates by reducing events and action to the minimum, and because of the lack of linguistic

markers announcing shifts from one technique of consciousness presentation to another and among different viewpoints.

Taking into consideration Woolf as an author who practises shifts in point of view *par excellence*, I believe that her writing offers ideal stimuli for a systematic investigation of readers' response to techniques of consciousness presentation and their interpretation of character's voices, thoughts and consciousnesses, to understand whether her texts actually represent a challenge for natural readers.

3.2.2 Experiments with syntax

Woolf's use of the different techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation is experimental in many ways. In her attempt to convey the complex set of human emotions and perceptions, Woolf not only fragments the unity and development of the narrative, but she does so by breaking a number of syntactic conventions and grammatical rules. Her manipulations often result in elaborate and ambiguous sentences, where it becomes difficult to attribute utterances and thoughts to one character or another and to create a representation of the fictional world in general.

Ehrlich (1981) singles out and classifies the deviant structures in Woolf's writing, choosing to use precisely *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway* as material for her analysis. She distinguishes between two major categories of deviant strategies: on the one hand, she describes sentences that 'involve the mixture of direct and indirect discourse', pointing essentially to *free indirect style*, and highlighting that the deviance in Woolf's narrative accounts for the constant shifts between narrator's and characters' perspectives. I argue here that such deviance, or difficulty, mirrors not only shifts between characters, or between characters and narrator, but also shifts between modes of consciousness presentation.

On the other hand, she identifies sentences that prevent the reader from 'storing syntactic structures' and from 'organizing constituents correctly' (Ehrlich, 1981, p. 66). Within this second category she classifies three different deviant techniques used by Woolf in both novels. The first one is her failure to 'extrapose' (Ehrlich, 1981, p. 67) relative clauses: this happens when a relative clause is interposed between the noun phrase and the verb phrase, forcing the reader to suspend the syntactic and semantic interpretation of the main clause. Such structures often result in long and complicated sentences, such as in the following example from *To the Lighthouse*, provided by Ehrlich:

> [...] she must interrupt for a moment, as they passed the tennis lawn, to **ask Mr. Carmichael**, who was basking with his yellow cat's eyes ajar, so that like a cat's they seemed to reflect the branches moving or the clouds passing, but to give no inkling of any inner thoughts or emotion whatsoever, **if he wanted anything.**
>
> Woolf (1927, p. 7), my emphasis, adapted from Ehrlich (1981)

What Ehrlich does not highlight is that through this device Woolf breaks the narrative, introducing an abrupt shift between two distinct yet intertwined perceptions, both conveying Mrs. Ramsay's viewpoint. The syntactic discontinuity is therefore a means *by which* Woolf enacts shifts between modes, which cause the incoherence and difficulty perceived by readers.

A second device she identifies is Woolf's failure to observe the *Right Node Raising* rule (Postal, 1974). This mechanism allows two or more parallel structures to share a constituent, which is generally situated to the right of the parallel structure, such as in *Jack may be – and Tom certainly is – a linguist*. Even when the constituent can soon be recovered in the text, Woolf twists on this rule leads to an impression of a missing verb phrase, and it is likely to require more processing effort, as suggested by several studies (Frazier, 2008; Frazier and Clifton, 2006; Kehler, 2000; Poirier et al., 2010). See for example the following extract from *To the Lighthouse*:

> [...] or if one thought of her simply as a woman, one must endow her with some freak of idiosyncrasy—she did not like admiration—or suppose some latent desire to doff her

> royalty of form **as if her beauty bored her and all that men say of beauty**, and she wanted only to be like other people, insignificant.
>
> Woolf (1927, p. 22) my emphasis, adapted from Ehrlich (1981)

It contains a conjoined structure with a shared constituent – *bored her* – such as, if the *Right Node Raising* rule had been applied correctly, the verb phrase *bored her* would be positioned to the right, resulting in *as if her beauty – and all that men say of beauty – bored her*. By choosing to ignore this rule, Woolf deletes the second occurrence of the shared constituent, with the effect that the second clause of the conjoined clauses seems to lack a verb.

Again, however, Ehrlich does not explain the specific function of this strategy in Woolf. The parallel structures create here again a shift, this time too *within* the character's mind: a diversion from the ongoing line of thoughts to another, as to represent the fragmented nature of the character's consciousness.

The last deviant structure Ehrlich highlights is what she called *Illegitimate Deletion*. In this case, Woolf deletes the subject of the second of two conjoined clauses, as to suggest that it is shared between the two. However, the two clauses do not actually share the same subject, and this generates an ungrammaticality that cannot be resolved. Look for example at the following extract from *To the Lighthouse*:

> And it was then too, in that chill and windy way, as she began to paint, that there forced themselves upon her other things, her own inadequacy, her insignificance, keeping house for her father off the Brompton Road, **and had much ado** to control her impulse to fling herself (thank Heaven she had always resisted so far) at Mrs. Ramsay's knee and say to her – but what could one say to her?
>
> Woolf (1927, p. 14) my emphasis, adapted from Ehrlich (1981)

The missing subject forces the reader to interpret the verb phrase as related a subject (she) that is not presented in the sentence, and that can only be inferred from the context.

What Ehrlich does not seem to consider when dividing deviant strategies in syntactic ones on the one hand and *free indirect style* on the other, is that these cannot be

separated. Syntactic deviant strategies are part of the linguistic choices that allow the achievement of a complexity in consciousness presentation. The interruption of one clause by interposing another often happens in Woolf with the purpose of shifting from one facet of consciousness to another, from voice to thought, perceptions to feelings. Interruptions such as the one in the example above often feature an alternation of modes of consciousness presentation, and most of the times such shifts interest the same character. Frequently such interruptions are shorter than the one above, and while these might be less challenging syntactically, they can be challenging for readers to interpret when they introduce a sudden and fast change in terms of *what* is being observed, felt or thought by the character, in relation to one or more simultaneous situations.

The semantic effect of the failure to raise a right node serves as a simulation of orality, typical of *free indirect style*. Whereas the use of the Right Node Rising rule reads 'better' in written language, its absence here resembles the character's train of thought. In fact, the sentence above is part of an instance of *free indirect style*, in which Mr. Bankes' represented perception is alternated by thoughts about Mrs Ramsay. Within a fragmented narrative, with shifts from articulated thoughts to impressions, *and all that men say of beauty* could as well be read as Mr. Bankes' articulated thought.

Both the syntactic deviance *and* the shifts between modes can be considered as means by which Woolf's experiments with techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation, including *free indirect style*. Both relate intrinsically to shifts between perspectives and between facets of consciousness, and thus to the identification of difficulty within *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway*.

As was touched upon, the juxtaposition of various techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation makes it challenging to distinguish between thoughts, perceptions, feelings and speech, as well as to determine who is producing them – a particular character or the narrator. In the following section, I will explain in more detail why these two novels are particularly suitable for an empirical study to investigate

readers understanding and response to such techniques, and present the material used for the two empirical studies presented in this thesis.

3.3 The choice of research data

As mentioned above, Virginia Woolf makes use of several techniques of consciousness presentation, which are particularly prominent in four of her novels: *Jacob's Room* (1922), *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and *The Waves* (1931). For the present investigation, it was decided to use extracts from *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*. On the one hand, since the present research focuses predominantly on reader response, it seemed necessary to take into consideration the opinions of actual readers' that are available online, such as those quoted at the beginning of this chapter. Surveys reporting readers' rankings for the most challenging novels in English Literature feature *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* among the 'most difficult novels of all times'. These results might simply reflect the popularity of these two novels in comparison to *Jakob's Room* or *The Waves*, but this does not diminish their value as representations of the general public's opinion of them. More importantly, Woolf's use of techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation in *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway* is very similar. It is with *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* that her use of *free indirect style* becomes mature, in comparison to *Jacob's Room*, where her initial experimental use of this technique somehow damages the narrative structure of the novel (Cui, 2015), or to *The Waves*, in which 'characters' thoughts are presented mostly in a mode that approximates dramatic soliloquies (Cui, 2015).

Despite the prominent role of Virginia Woolf in experimenting with these narrative techniques, only a few scholars (Sotirova, 2007; Cui, 2014, 2015, 2017) have investigated systematically the linguistic features of her way of handling them and related these to readers' responses. This thesis aims to expand this kind of investigation in two phases:

first, by bringing evidence towards the difficulty of Woolf's novels for actual readers, namely examining readers' interpretation of perspectives and their own evaluation of the texts' complexity. Once proven whether this assumption is true, readers' online behaviour while reading these narrative texts will be analysed by means of eye tracking technology, to see how they process Woolf's novel, and whether the assumed difficulties are reflected in their eye movements.

3.3.1 Analysis of selected passages from *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway*

Eight extracts from Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway* were chosen as material for the two studies presented in chapters 4 and 5. These, as most of the two novels, consistently feature different techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation, offering a plethora of syntactic and semantic features that can potentially pose a difficulty for readers. These techniques enable the numerous sudden and unmarked shifts between characters' points of view, and I hypothesise that the presence of several shifts between points of view and between modes of consciousness presentation can make the assignment of viewpoint – and therefore the interpretation of the text – challenging.

The method applied in this study has some limitations as well, first and most crucially because it is grounded inevitably in a subjective judgement of what constitute difficult examples of consciousness representation and how they can be rewritten as clearer representations. I relied on my own impressions to determine what viewpoints were presented in various parts of the extracts, and validated these with the help of an experienced stylistician and expert of techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation, Prof. Sotirova. I annotated perspective shifts, and made a note to passages where the identification of source of the viewpoint was ambiguous, while looking at linguistic devices signalling points of view and shifts from one viewpoint to another.

The current section presents the analysis of the extracts selected for the present research, focusing on the identification of passages and sentences where, due to Woolf's use of *free indirect style*, IM and FDS, an interpretative difficulty or ambiguity may arise in relation to the identification of the way points of view and consciousnesses are represented. I emphasised in bold the words or sentences in the text that, to my own reading, appear ambiguous or difficult to attribute to one character only or to the narrator, or where it is not clear whether the words are uttered or instead they represent thoughts, perceptions or states, and I will try to explain why this is the case. Crucially, the chosen extracts feature a fluctuation between various consciousness presentation categories, providing a context for investigating their semantic implications on the reader's intuitive understanding of the characters' thinking process, and for an examination of the connection between techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation that enable the representation of mental processes at different levels. To refer to the various techniques used by Woolf to represent speech, thoughts and consciousnesses (see Chapter 1 for more details) I will use the following acronyms:

- Direct Speech = DS
- Direct Thought = DT
- Free Indirect Speech = FIS
- Free Indirect Thought = FIT
- Represented Perception = RP
- Psycho-narration = PN
- Interior Monologue = IM
- Free Direct Speech = FDS
- Indirect Discourse = ID

Extract 1

The first extract selected for the present research is taken from Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*. This is one of the most famous scenes of the novel, which Leaska (1970, p. 107) describes as follows:

> Utilizing eight angles of perspective, Mrs Woolf not only created a sequence of startling and often ironic juxtapositions, but also designed a mental hall of mirrors furnished with human emotions, reflections, memories. Like a kaleidoscope being slowly rotated, each piece – each thought, each reverie—slips into its appropriate place to design a poised pattern of stresses and strains, an exquisite balance of human relationships.
> (Leaska, 1970, p. 107)

It depicts the Ramsay family – Mrs. Ramsay, Mr. Ramsay and their daughter Minta – and their guests – Lily Briscoe, Paul Riley, William Bankes and Charles Tansley – who are sitting at the table and about to start their dinner. The conversation and their attention is initially directed to the main dish, which, as Leaska points out, works as a convergence point for Mrs. Ramsay's and Mr. Bankes' perspectives. Quite suddenly, however, the readers find themselves looking at Mrs. Ramsay from a different viewpoint, Lily's, whose thoughts take over the narrative.

> (1) 'It is a triumph,' (2) said Mr. Bankes, laying his knife down for a moment. (3) **He had eaten attentively.** (4) **It was rich; it was tender. It was perfectly cooked.** (5) How did she manage these things in the depths of the country? (6) he asked her. (7) **She was a wonderful woman.** (8) **All his love, all his reverence had returned;** (9) **and she knew it.**
> (10) 'It is a French recipe of my grandmother's,' (11) said Mrs. Ramsay, speaking with a ring of great pleasure in her voice. (12) **Of course it was French.** (13) **What passes for cookery in England is an abomination** (14) **(they agreed)**. (15) **It is putting cabbages in water. It is roasting meat till it is like leather. It is cutting off the delicious skins of vegetables.** (16) 'In which', said Mr. Bankes, 'all the virtue of the vegetable is contained.' (17) And the waste, (18) said Mrs. Ramsay. (19) A whole French family could live on what an English cook throws away. (20) Spurred on by her sense that William's affection had come back to her, and that everything was all right again, and that her suspense was over, (21) and that **now she was free both to triumph and to mock, (22) she laughed, she gesticulated, (23) till Lily thought, (24) How childlike, how absurd she was**, sitting up there with all her beauty opened again in her, talking about the skins of vegetables. (25) There was something frightening about her. She was irresistible. Always she got her own

> way in the end, (26) Lily thought. (27) Now she had brought this off – Paul and Minta, one might suppose, were engaged. Mr. Bankes was dining here. She put a spell on them all, by wishing, so simply, so directly, (28) and Lily contrasted that abundance with her own poverty of spirit, (29) and supposed that it was partly that belief (30) (for her face was all lit up – without looking young, she looked radiant) (31) in this strange, this terrifying thing, which made Paul Rayley, the centre of it, all of a tremor, yet abstract, absorbed, silent. (32) Mrs. Ramsay, (33) Lily felt, (34) as she talked about the skins of vegetables, (35) exalted that, worshipped that; held her hands over it to warm them, to protect it, and yet, having brought it all about, somehow laughed, led her victims, Lily felt, to the altar. (36) It came over her too now – the emotion, the vibration of love. (37) **How inconspicuous she felt herself by Paul's side!** He, glowing, burning; she, aloof, satirical; he, bound for adventure; she, moored to the shore; he, launched, incautious; she solitary, left out – (38) and, ready to implore a share, if it were disaster, in his disaster, (39) she said shyly: (40) 'When did Minta lose her brooch?'
>
> Woolf (1927, pp. 72-73), my emphasis

This extract offers a perfect setting for Woolf's 'cinematic' representation of events and minds, where the point of view moves inside and through the different characters sitting around the table. Woolf is able to create here a very dynamic scene within a relatively still setting, where the focus smoothly transitions from the presentation of a collective experience to the inner mental processes of one character. When looking closely at the text, it can be observed that the details of the conversation at the centre of the first half of the extract are scarce: only few instances of DS reveal the actual words uttered by Mrs. Ramsay and Mr. Bankes, while the rest of the spoken discourse is fragmented, reported and filtered through several possible points of view. This vagueness is created in particular by Woolf's use of FIS and FIT, which often prevents the reader from understanding who is actually doing the talking. In the second half of the extract the focus moves away from the conversation, which becomes the background to Lily's reflections.

But let's have a look at the text sentence by sentence: the initial DS in (1) and the following adverbial in (2) draw the reader immediately close to Mr. Bankes' point of view, that is maintained in the following sentence *He had eaten attentively*. The final adverb *attentively* links in fact the sentence not only to the previous discourse – Mr.

Bankes' initial observation derives from his being attentive – but also connects (3) to (4), where Mr. Bankes' impressions are conveyed more directly through FIS/FIT, as the parallelism *it was.. it was..* , and the use of the past tense suggests. Interestingly, there is no way to know whether these words are uttered (FIS) or simply thought (FIT), and there is no formal marker signalling that the character producing them is indeed Mr. Bankes, though this is the most likely interpretation. It is interesting to notice how here – and often in both novels – Woolf seems to use the narration (RP or FIT) in (3) as a 'bridge', which pushes the reader into Mr. Bankes' perspective before this becomes explicit in (4) with his articulated thoughts/words.

The past tense in the opening of (5), *How did she*, and the spatial deictic reference *these things* signal again the presence of FIS, which is confirmed by the following reporting clause in (6). While (7), (8) and (9) too present the typical features of FIS/FIT – the past tense, the third person pronoun, the attribute *wonderful*, the evaluative nouns *love*, *reverence* and the past perfect – their interpretation is more ambiguous. Once again it is not possible to determine from textual elements whether these represent spoken discourse or mental thoughts. More importantly, although the previous clauses might initially prompt the reader to interpret (7) and (8) as expressing Mr. Bankes' evaluation of Mrs. Ramsay,[2] the final *and she knew it* in (9) surprises the reader with a potentially different point of view. Although (9) relates to – and appears to result from – the previous clause, because of the conjunction, the verb *knew* suggests that this could be interpreted as PN, and that it could be conveying Mrs. Ramsay's viewpoint rather than Mr. Bankes'. This calls for a potential reassessment of (8), which on the one hand could be portraying Mr. Bankes' feelings for her, while on the other it could represent Mrs. Ramsay's *perception* of his feelings for her. It is also possible, as suggested by Cui (2014), that this might even be a case of representation of a shared experience, connecting the two characters. It is impossible to determine whether one interpretation

[2]Existing studies suggest that readers tend to keep an established interpretation within and across sentence boundaries (Mey, 1998, p. 33).

is more valid than the other (and this alone calls for an empirical approach), but what is certain is that the understanding and the interpretation of this particular sentence is not an easy one. It is also particularly interesting to notice how here – and frequently in both novels – Woolf juxtaposes the different techniques of consciousness presentation *within* a single sentence to create syntactic discontinuity and alternate between thoughts, speech, perceptions and feelings, and potentially between one character and another.

One of the most interesting sections of this extract in terms of perspective attribution can be observed in sentences (12)-(15). After the DS in (10), Woolf continues the conversation in FIS. *'It is a French recipe of my grandmother's* seems to signal the beginning of a conversation between Mrs. Ramsay and her guests, and this is supported by the parenthetical *they agreed* in (14). However, the interpretation of (12) and (13) is open to several possibilities. On the one hand, these could be part of Woolf's representation of a conversation among two or even more than two characters. If so, (12) and (13) could be understood as uttered by any of Mrs Ramsay's dining companions joining the conversation. On the other hand, however, the whole uttered discourse could be produced instead by Mrs. Ramsay alone. Knowing her character, it is easy to imagine this as a judgmental monologue about French food, where her only acknowledgement of the others is represented by her perception of their 'agreement', ultimately being the very aim of her interaction. Some analyses of this same extract even argue for a 'collective perspective', suggested in particular by the clause *they agreed* (Sotirova, personal communication, June 2018), while others see this same phrase as a narratorial sentence with 'an economical touch of omniscience' (Leaska, 1970, p. 52). It is Mr. Bankes DS in (16) that interrupts the speaking voice, building directly from the previous spoken discourse through relative pronoun *in which*, and in a similar way it is Mrs. Ramsay's voice that interrupts him again in (17), reintroducing her FDS. In parallel to (10), the DS marks here the beginning of the exchange between Mr. Bankes and Mrs. Ramsay up to (19), featuring an alternation of DS and FDS. While this is not necessarily

challenging to interpret – unless some readers might struggle because of the lack of quotation marks – it is interesting to think about the reasons behind Woolf's choice to use FDS rather than a simpler sequence of DS only. This stylistic choice makes the text more varied and dynamic in comparison to a list of quoted utterances: the absence of reporting clauses, and of the natural pauses imposed to the readers by the punctuations typically associated with these, speeds up the reading of the conversation between the two characters. This contributes on the one hand to the rendering of a more immediate scene, while on the other it could be a strategy to convey the conversation through a character's point of view. The fact that only few of the utterances are directly reported might indicate that these are more salient to the subject 'behind the camera', and at the same time conveying a dismissive attitude towards the rest of the exchange.

The conversation reaches an end in (20), which marks the beginning of the second half of the extract. Here Mrs. Ramsay's feelings about Mr. Bankes are suddenly introduced: as suggested by the verb phrase *spurred on*, disclosing her mental state, and by the repetition of the parallel structure *and that*, together with the use of pronouns and the past tense, this can be interpreted as PN. It conveys in fact Mrs. Ramsay's increasing sense of relief and satisfaction, but its articulated form, the opening in particular, does not seem to suggest that these could be verbalised thoughts. (20) draws the reader close to Mrs. Ramsay's inner world, but (21) brings another sudden change of 'flavour' that contrasts with the previous part of the sentence. Whereas it is plausible that Mrs. Ramsay would feel that *everything is all right*, it seems rather odd that she would perceive herself as *triumphant* and *mocking*. As the text goes on, the perspective takes even more distance from Mrs. Ramsay: while (22) can initially be interpreted as pure narration, the shift to Lily's point of view becomes clear after the parenthetical in (23), which precedes Lily's FIT. (22) can then be reinterpreted as Lily's RP. Interesting to notice is also the conjunction *till*, which signals the shift to Lily's mind, interrupting the sequence of represented perceptions (Mrs. Ramsay's first and Lily's afterwards),

while creating a connection between them. (24) and (25) represent Lily's verbalised thoughts in FIT, as confirmed by the use of verb tenses, by the third person pronoun and by evaluative attributes such as *childlike*, *absurd*, or the conversational determiner *all* in *all her beauty*. Her point of view is then maintained through PN in (28), (29), (31) and (36), where she reflects on her own state and feelings. While keeping her perspective central, Woolf alternates PN with RP in (30) and later from (32) to (35), where her impressions about the surrounding scene and her dining companions are presented. The rhetorical exclamation and the richness of evaluative attributes in (37) and (38) are some of the typical markers of FIT – and introduce the reader to the final question, uttered by Lily in (40).

As can be observed from this first example, the 'difficulty' of this text is inevitably related to *free indirect style*, but it acts on various levels of the text. The first half of this extract offers some good examples of the challenges that this technique presents to readers in terms of the identification of 'voices' and perspectives caused by the quick and sudden changes from one point of view to another. The second half of the extract, on the other hand, is more introspective, and its difficulty derives mostly from the long digression into Lily's thoughts, and the numerous shifts between different modes of consciousness presentation, which also creates a delay in the unfolding of actions in the narrative.

Extract 2

Taken again from *To the Lighthouse*, this extract creates a temporal stasis similar to the one discussed above. It rotates in fact entirely around two characters whose thoughts and speech alternate. Mr. Ramsay and Lily, an acquaintance, are back to the house on the Isle of Skye after many years. With his son and his daughter, he is about to sail to the lighthouse. While his kids get ready, he observes Lily and talks to her: his wife is dead and he is looking for sympathy. They both stand on the shore, looking

at the sea, and as Mr. Ramsay's unfulfilled desire for attention and empathy grows, so does Lily's uneasiness, as she is aware of his needs but does not intend to fulfil them. Their impossibility to meet each other's needs is paradoxically the link between them, the element that bounds their reflections and their discomfort in realising that they are both bound to solitude. Shifting and alternating between the two characters' viewpoints, Woolf makes the identification of boundaries between their perspectives unclear, somehow highlighting their undisclosed communion, and emphasising again the temporal 'paralysis' of the scene.

> (1) Was anybody looking after her? he said. Had she everything she wanted?
> (2) 'Oh, thanks, everything,' (3) said Lily Briscoe nervously. (4) No; she could not do it. (5) **She ought to have floated off instantly upon some wave of sympathetic expansion: the pressure on her was tremendous.** (6) **But she remained stuck.** (7) **There was an awful pause.** (8) **They both looked at the sea.** (9) Why, thought Mr. Ramsay, should she look at the sea when I am here? (10) She hoped it would be calm enough for them to land at the Lighthouse, she said. (11) The Lighthouse! The Lighthouse! What's that got to do with it? he thought impatiently. (12) Instantly, with the force of some primeval gust (13) (**for really he could not restrain himself any longer**), (14) there issued from him such a groan (15) that any other woman in the whole world would have done something, said something – (16) all except myself, (17) thought Lily, girding at herself bitterly, (18) who am not a woman, but a peevish, ill-tempered, dried-up old maid presumably.
> (19) Mr. Ramsay sighed to the full. He waited. (20) Was she not going to say anything? Did she not see what he wanted from her? (21) Then he said he had a particular reason for wanting to go to the Lighthouse. (22) His wife used to send the men things. There was a poor boy with a tuberculous hip, the lightkeeper's son. (23) **He sighed profoundly. He sighed significantly.** (24) **All Lily wished was that this enormous flood of grief, this insatiable hunger for sympathy, this demand that she should surrender herself up to him entirely, and even so he had sorrows enough to keep her supplied for ever, should leave her, should be diverted** (25) (she kept looking at the house, hoping for an interruption) (26) before it swept her down in its flow.
>
> (Woolf, 1927, p. 113), my emphasis

The extract opens with a short exchange between the two characters, which begins immediately in FIS (1), signalled by the interrogative form, the past tense *was* and the third person pronoun *her*. After Lily's DS in (2), it is the final adverb of the reporting clause (3), *nervously*, that introduces the reader to Lily's mind. This is fully accessed in (4), which presents the typical markers of FIT: the third person pronoun *she*, the modal

verb in past tense *could*, and the opening conversational marker *No*. This, as well as the verb *do* and the pronoun *it*, creates an anaphoric connection to the preceding text, which refers, interestingly, to Mr. Ramsay's unspoken requests. This is a perfect example of what both Sotirova (2005) and Cui (2015) refer to as 'dialogicity': (4) acts in fact as part of an adjacency pair, but Lily is responding here to something unsaid, namely to Mr. Ramsay's expectations. This interpretation can be fully accessed only when (5) is read: here, Lily's emotional state is further developed through PN, and her awareness of his struggles is made even more explicit, as the modal verb phrase *ought to have floated off* suggests, and the metaphor *some wave of sympathetic expansion*.

The PN in (5), where the reader is brought to empathise with Lily, influences the interpretation of (6), (7) and (8), which can be initially seen as a continuation of Lily's state and perceptions. This is also suggested by the initial connective *But* – referring back to the lack of sympathetic response, of which Lily is aware – the predicative *stuck* and the descriptive *awful*, both part of the character's language. However, a sudden change in perspective takes the reader's observation point into Mr. Ramsay's mind in (9), where his thoughts are represented in the most direct of the categories of consciousness presentation: Interior Monologue (IM). This highly mimetic category reports the character's words as they are plausibly articulated in his/her mind. The first person pronoun *I* in (9) and the present tense, together with the deictic item *here* and the modal *should*, allow the reader to connect with the 'present' moment of the narrative, accessing Mr. Ramsay's perspective and empathising with him. In light of this shift, the interpretation of (7) and (8) needs to be reassessed: on the one hand, as an initial reading might suggest, these could express Lily's perspective and her sensation of impotence. On the other hand, however, (7) and (8) can also be seen a prelude to the shift, an introduction and a first glimpse at Mr. Ramsay's feelings. (9) begins in fact with a question, which relates directly to (8) (they both look at the sea → he asks himself why she does not look at him.) Woolf gives particular prominence here to this

'game of the unsaid', making the communication beyond words the core of this extract. The dialogical nature of the techniques of consciousness presentation she uses can be clearly observed here, where it is possible that the 'bridge' sentences between Lily's viewpoint in (5) and Mr. Ramsay's in (9) are representing experiences that are shared by both characters. It is interesting how Woolf emphasises the importance of internal processes as opposed to utterances, by minimising as much as possible the instances of spoken discourse, which, when featured, is represented mostly in FIS. This happens for example with Lily's speech in (10), signalled almost exclusively by the attributing parenthetical situated after her statement. Interestingly, the pronoun *it* in Lily's utterance refers once more to an unpronounced part of Mr. Ramsay's previous thought, *the sea*, stressing again Lily's awareness of Mr. Ramsay's intentions and emotions. Because (10) is enclosed between two instances of IM expressing Mr. Ramsay's thoughts, it is also possible that (10) is not conveying Lily's point of view, but instead representing Mr. Ramsay's perception of her speech.

From (12) to (16) – crucially *within* one long sentence – another shift occurs, from Mr. Ramsay's point of view to Lily's. Again, this happens gradually: (12) moves away from Mr. Ramsay's mind, interrupting his flow of thoughts and providing instead a description of his behaviour. The formality of the sentence, both in term of syntax and lexicon, (*instantly*, *primeval gust*, *such a groan*) and its articulate structure, distances it from the colloquialism of FIT/FIS and FDT/FDS, and reports instead feelings that cannot be mentally articulated, making it plausible to identify (12) – and (14) – as PN. (12) is also noticeable for the effect of Woolf's 'broken' syntax, accomplished by the sudden insertion of FIT in the parenthetical (13) before its continuation in (14). Such syntactic interruptions make not only the text more difficult to process for readers, but also contribute to the rendering of multiple simultaneous sensations and mental processes, which Woolf manages to represent in her narratives by juxtaposing different techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation.

The causal clause in (15) initially seems to sustain Mr. Ramsay's point of view, especially because of the expression *any other woman in the whole world*. After the dash, however, another attributing parenthetical reveals that these are in fact Lily's own considerations, which are further expressed through her IM in (16) and (18), as signalled by the use of first person and the present tense. These are only interrupted by the reporting clause (17), which breaks the character's articulated thoughts, giving a glimpse on her mental state through PN in *girding at herself bitterly*. The new paragraph signals then a new shift in point of view: (19) places the reader immediately behind Mr. Ramsay's eyes, especially through the attributive *to the full* and the incisive *He waited*, between full stops. This latter in particular emphasises the heaviness of the silent pause following Mr. Ramsay's sigh. His articulated thoughts are then finally disclosed in (20), where the rhetorical questions in FIT clearly expresses his impatience. But already in (21) the narration takes distance again from his consciousness, reporting his indirect speech with no apparent psychological point of view. The incipit alone, *then he said*, is sufficient to allow the readers to understand (22) as part of his speech, despite the lack of direct markers or references. The generalisation *things* and the lack of syntactic cohesion between the two sentences might suggest that the psychological point of view here is not the speaker but the listener, Lily. This finds support in (23) – where the pauses created by the short sentences and the parallelism *he sighed* point to Lily's emotional burden. As if it was an answer to (23), the final sentences report Lily's emotional reaction in the form of PN (24 and 26) and RP (25).

As the previously analysed extract, the juxtaposition of various modes of consciousness presentation allows Woolf to render numerous facets of characters' consciousnesses, shifting from voice to thoughts, from impressions to perceptions. This strategy serves Woolf to emphasise the failure of communication between the two characters, allowing the reader to experience their complex emotions beyond what gets uttered, and beyond the temporal restriction of actions. At the same time, it increases the difficulty of the

extract, where perspectives alternate and merge without explicit markers and often within single sentences.

Extract 3

The next extract is taken instead from *Mrs Dalloway*: here too the representation of thoughts is prominent, and contrasts with the scarcity of utterances. Once more, Woolf's use of *free indirect style* results in fragmented sentences and shifts between points of view, which makes the identification of perspective often ambiguous. The scene takes place at Lady Bruton's house, a high-society woman with numerous social and political connections. She has invited Richard Dalloway and Hugh Whitbread for lunch to discuss politics with them. Richard's point of view dominates most of the extract, and it is mainly through his viewpoint that Lady's Bruton's character is rendered, but the reader has access to her psychological point of view too.

> (1) Lady Bruton raised the carnations, holding them rather stiffly with much the same attitude with which the General held the scroll in the picture behind her; (2) she remained fixed, tranced. (3) Which was she now, the General's great-grand-daughter? great-great-grand-daughter? (4) Richard Dalloway asked himself. (5) Sir Roderick, Sir Miles, Sir Talbot – that was it. It was remarkable how in that family the likeness persisted in the women. She should have been a general of dragoons herself. (6) And Richard would have served under her, cheerfully; he had the greatest respect for her; he cherished these romantic views about well-set-up old women of pedigree, and would have liked, in his good-humoured way, to bring some young hot-heads of his acquaintance to lunch with her; (7) as if a type like hers could be bred of amiable tea-drinking enthusiasts! (8) **He knew her country. He knew her people.** (9) **There was a vine, still bearing, which either Lovelace or Herrick –** (10) **she never read a word of poetry herself, but so the story ran –** (11) **had sat under.** (12) Better wait to put before them the question that bothered her (13) (about making an appeal to the public; if so, in what terms and so on), (14) better wait until they have had their coffee, (15) Lady Bruton thought; (16) and so laid the carnations down beside her plate.
>
> (17) 'How's Clarissa?' (18) she asked abruptly.
>
> (19) **Clarissa always said that Lady Bruton did not like her.** (20) Indeed, Lady Bruton had the reputation of being more interested in politics than people; of talking like a man; of having had a finger in some notorious intrigue of the eighties, which was now beginning to be mentioned in memoirs. (21) Certainly there was an alcove in her drawing-room, and a table in that alcove, and a photograph upon that table of General Sir Talbot Moore, now

> deceased, who had written there (22) (one evening in the eighties) (23) in Lady Bruton's presence, with her cognisance, perhaps advice, a telegram ordering the British troops to advance upon an historical occasion. (24) **(She kept the pen and told the story.)** (25) Thus, when she said in her offhand way 'How's Clarissa?' husbands had difficulty in persuading their wives and indeed, however devoted, were secretly doubtful themselves, of her interest in women who often got in their husbands' way, prevented them from accepting posts abroad, and had to be taken to the seaside in the middle of the session to recover from influenza. Nevertheless her inquiry, 'How's Clarissa?' was known by women infallibly, to be a signal from a well-wisher, from an almost silent companion, whose utterances (26) (half a dozen perhaps in the course of a lifetime) (27) signified recognition of some feminine comradeship which went beneath masculine lunch parties and united Lady Bruton and Mrs. Dalloway, who seldom met, and appeared when they did meet indifferent and even hostile, in a singular bond.
>
> (Woolf, 1925, p. 77), my emphasis

The extract begins with a description of the fictional scene, but the colloquial phrases *rather stiffly* and *much the same attitude*, together with the definite article in *the General* add a character-oriented flavour to the narration, and entail knowledge about Lady Bruton that can only be attributable to another character. (3) confirms this impression by suddenly presenting Richard Dalloway's thoughts in FIT – see the past tense and the temporal deictic adverb *now* – therefore suggesting that (1) and (2) are instances of Richard's RP. His verbalised thoughts are presented then again in (5) and (7), interrupted by a long digression of PN in (6). Richard's feelings are here clearly expressed through modal verbs (*should have been, would have liked*), evaluative adverbs, adjectives, and colloquialisms (*cheerfully, romantic views, well-set-up hot-heads*).

It is from sentence (8) onwards that the reader is faced with potentially ambiguous shifts in point of view: having just read (7), (8) is likely to be initially interpreted as part of Richard's thoughts. However, the following sentence takes distance from his perspective. The two short sentences in (8) feature the typical markers of *free indirect style*: lack of quotation marks, past tense to refer to the narrative present and third person pronoun, and it is only after reading to the end of (12) that the scene can be rendered meaningfully. Woolf manages here to create once again a very cinematic scene, which shifts abruptly from Richard's thoughts, to Lady Bruton's considerations about Richard

in (8), and then to her FIS or FIT in (9), (10) and (11), where the extremely realistic oral quality of this technique is emphasised by Lady Bruton digression, interrupting her own sentence to provide an explanation (if speaking), or to make a consideration (if thinking), that she never really read poetry. And as soon and the reader is acquainted with her speech, here Woolf shifts back again to her thoughts in (12). These shifts between speech (FIS) and thoughts (FIT), are sudden and unmarked, and it is only the content of the sentences within the developing discourse that allows the reader to interpret them as one or the other.

After the DS in (17), the perspective moves away from Lady Bruton, representing Richard's FIT (note that it is the past tense alone that distinguishes it from IM). His psychological point of view is suggested by the temporal adverb *always*, which implies his knowledge of Clarissa's attitude towards Lady Bruton, and it is confirmed by the opening adverb *indeed* in (20), which uses the content of (19) as a trigger for further considerations. (20) is rich of expressions that sustain Richard's point of view (*talking like a man, having a finger in some intrigue*), but its complexity and length strikes somehow with the typical features of FIT, making it difficult to understand whether these are indeed verbalised thoughts or instead a particularly articulated representation of Richard's perceptions. This same mode of consciousness presentation is maintained by Woolf up to the end of the extract, interrupted only by three parentheticals – (22), (24) and (26), along with Richard perspective. However, whereas (20) depicts Richards considerations, the RP in parenthetical (24) reveals to the readers that at least part of what we are 'seeing' from his point of view is in fact a story told by Lady Bruton. But what exactly is the story remains vague. It is interesting how with a single parenthetical Woolf manages to let the readers understand how Richard is very likely not paying a great amount of attention to what Lady Bruton is saying, and this is even more clear after (24), where, despite the brief acknowledgement of her talking, what is conveyed until the end of the passages are exclusively Richard's considerations about her and his

wife Clarissa, with no further references to his present situation nor the surrounding characters.

In comparison to the previously analysed extracts, this one is more introspective and even more static. Through Richard's observations the reader is aware of a few details about the location in which the scene takes place: the alcove, the picture of the general, and yet the whole focus is directed to the mental processes. This results in an extreme dilation of time, which stops to give space for the thoughts of the character, and an almost complete absence of 'happenings'. It is in this, I believe, that the main 'difficulty' for the reader of this extract lies, especially for those unacquainted with Woolf's writing.

Extract 4

As shown in the previous extracts, the lack of formal boundaries between modes of consciousness presentation often makes it difficult to distinguish between voice and thought, and to identify whose perspective is presented. This difficulty becomes especially remarkable in passages where Woolf makes use of very long sentences, as she does in the following extract from *Mrs Dalloway*. Differently from the previous extracts, the scene is very dynamic, rich of characters and movement. It is indeed Woolf's aim to render the chaos that precedes the party taking place at Clarissa Dalloway's house. The extract focuses in particular on Lucy and Agnes (Mrs. Walker), two of Mrs. Dalloway's housemaids, who are finalising the preparations for the party. It is mostly through their FIS and FIT that the stress of the preparations is conveyed: Woolf manages therewith to convey to the reader the rich ensemble of duties the two women have to carry out, their acknowledgement of the arriving guests and their attentiveness to Mrs. Dalloway's needs.

> (1) Lucy came running full tilt downstairs, having just nipped in to the drawing-room to smooth a cover, to straighten a chair, to pause a moment and feel (2) whoever came in must think how clean, how bright, how beautifully cared for, when they saw the beautiful silver, the brass fire-irons, the new chair-covers, and the curtains of yellow chintz: (3) she

> appraised each; heard a roar of voices; (4) **people already coming up from dinner; she must fly!**
> (5) The Prime Minister was coming, Agnes said: so she had heard them say in the dining-room, she said, coming in with a tray of glasses. (6) **Did it matter, did it matter in the least, one Prime Minister more or less?** (7) It made no difference at this hour of the night to Mrs. Walker among the plates, saucepans, cullenders, frying-pans, chicken in aspic, ice-cream freezers, pared crusts of bread, lemons, soup tureens, and pudding basins which, however hard they washed up in the scullery seemed to be all on top of her, on the kitchen table, on chairs, while the fire blared and roared, the electric lights glared, and still supper had to be laid. (8) All she felt was, (9) one Prime Minister more or less made not a scrap of difference to Mrs. Walker.
> (10) The ladies were going upstairs already, (11) said Lucy; (12) **the ladies were going up, one by one, Mrs. Dalloway walking last and almost always sending back some message to the kitchen,** (13) **'My love to Mrs. Walker,' that was it one night.** (14) **Next morning they would go over the dishes – the soup, the salmon**; (15) the salmon, Mrs. Walker knew, as usual underdone, (16) for she always got nervous about the pudding and left it to Jenny; so it happened, the salmon was always underdone. (17) **But some lady with fair hair and silver ornaments had said**, Lucy said, about the entrée, was it really made at home? (18) **But it was the salmon** that bothered Mrs. Walker, (19) as she spun the plates round and round, and pulled in dampers and pulled out dampers; (20) and there came a burst of laughter from the dining-room; (21) a voice speaking; then another burst of laughter – (22) the gentlemen enjoying themselves when the ladies had gone. (23) The tokay, (24) said Lucy running in. (25) Mr. Dalloway had sent for the tokay, from the Emperor's cellars, the Imperial Tokay.
>
> Woolf (1925, p. 120), my emphasis

The extract begins immediately with a long sentence (it takes the whole first paragraph), which features two different modes of *free indirect style*: RP and FIT. They both represents Lucy's perspective, but alternate between her perceptions and her thoughts. The use of colloquial expressions such as *running full tilt* and *nipped in*, along with the parallelism of the sequenced actions (*to smooth a cover, to straighten a chair, to pause a moment* suggests a character-oriented point of view in (1), which features Lily's RP. The opening verb of (2), *feel*, which generally introduces PN, is used here as a synonym for *think*, something Woolf does often in both *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway*. (2), in fact, does not represent the character's feelings: instead, it portrays Lily's articulated thoughts in FIT, as suggested by the parallelisms (*how clean, how bright..*), by the final exclamation (*she must fly!*) and by the numerous evaluative attributes with which Lucy

proudly takes satisfaction from her own work *beautiful, new, clean, bright*. (3) distances then the reader slightly from Lucy's mind, describing her behaviour (*she appraised each*) and her perceptions (*heard a roar of voices*). This last part of (3) introduces the reader to her thoughts, represented again in (4). These are marked by the strong modal and the exclamation in *she must fly!*.

The new paragraph interrupts suddenly the representation of Lucy's consciousness to present Agnes' FIS, clearly identifiable from the lack of quotation marks and the following parenthetical *Agnes said*. It is interesting to notice how the deictic verb *coming in* expresses a spatial directionality that could still indicate Lucy as a possible focaliser. With the rhetorical question and the repetition of *did it matter* in (6), the reader suddenly finds him/herself within a character's mind. While the proximity of (5) initially seems to point to Agnes as the source of the FIT, the interpretation of (6) only becomes clear after reaching (7). Here the point of view shifts again, presenting now Mrs. Walker's reflections, of which the reader becomes aware almost *in medias res*, thrown in the middle of her thoughts. The long detailed list of sequenced objects and dishes emphasises the stress perceived by the character, whose articulated thoughts, interspersed with RP, are signalled also by deictic elements and by a few colloquialisms (*this hour of the night*, *on top of her*, *it made no difference*). The FIT continues in (9), where a reinforced repetition of *not a scrap of difference* concludes the flow of her thoughts. It is interesting to notice that nothing would formally prevent readers from interpreting Mrs. Walker's words as utterances rather than thoughts, perhaps muttered to herself by the character as to show her impatience, and this is true for (6) as well. It remains to be understood whether passages with such open interpretations represent in fact a challenge for readers' processing of texts, or whether they would simply accept their first intuitive mental representation of the fictional world.

Ambiguity in the interpretation of perspectives can be found also from (12) to the end of (14). After the initial instance of Lucy's FIS in (10) (see the past progressive *were*

going and the adverb *already*, expressing the character surprise and urgency), another long sentence presents someone else's perception of the fictional scene. It is only after reaching (15) that the origin of this consciousness is disclosed as Mrs. Walker's (once again it is almost impossible to determine whether these are words (FIS) or thoughts (FIT)). Mrs. Dalloway's quoted message in (13), then, makes this sentence particularly confusing: this difficulty emerges not only because of the quotation marks used to quote the message, which are generally a signal of DS, but also because these words are filtered through Mrs. Walker's mind. The message could express therefore Mrs. Walker's understanding of it rather than the originally uttered version.

Mrs. Walker's perspective is maintained until (17), where the represented consciousness suddenly changes again. Woolf uses the opening connective to trigger the shift into Lucy's FIS, as signalled by the past tense, the third person and – more explicitly – by the reporting clause. It is also possible, however, that (17) is instead embedded within Mrs. Walker's point of view, and that Lucy's utterance exists as part of her perceptions. It is interesting to notice how in both (16) and (17) the connectives *for* and *but* play an important role in triggering the shifts between modes – (16) – and between perspectives – (17) (Ehrlich, 1990; Sotirova, 2011; Leaska, 1970). This same strategy is repeated by Woolf in the following sentence, where the viewpoint moves back to Mrs. Walker's, introducing her FIT/FIS in (18) (*But it was the salmon*). This appears to mutate into a less verbalised mode of consciousness presentation in (19) and onwards, which preserves her point of view (notice the colloquialism *round and round* and the parallelism *pulled in.. pulled out*), but represents her perceptions rather than her articulated thoughts. So do (20) and (21), where her consciousness is expressed through deixis (*there came*) and syntactic fragmentation. Notable is also the lack of verbs in clauses (21) and (22), which emphasises the 'orality' of Woolf's use of these techniques, the simultaneity of events surrounding the characters. The final sentence (23)-(25) reintroduces then Lucy's speech in FIS (notice that only the past tense distinguish it from FDS), but once

more, considering the previous sentences and the prominence of Mrs. Walker's point of view, it is not impossible to consider Lucy's speech as embedded *within* Mrs. Walker's perspective.

Woolf creates in this extract an extremely complex and dynamic scene, which allows for a representation of the fictional environment through the feelings and impressions of the characters involved, whose states and thoughts intertwine and alternate continuously. The alternation of FIS, FIT and RP in particular, and the consequent 'broken' syntax of Woolf's long sentences, enables the reader to perceive not only the several minds and perspectives present in the scene almost simultaneously, but to almost physically visualise the surrounding environment, and to do so through the filter of Lucy's and Mrs. Walker's eyes on the complex and stressful preparations for Clarissa's party, which highlight a constellation of little details, surrounding objects, familiar gestures and comments that really put the reader at the centre of the action. The potential interpretative difficulty here depends thus not only on the alteration of modes and perspectives, but also on the speed at which these shifts are presented to the readers.

Extract 5

The following extract is taken again from *Mrs Dalloway*'s party scene, but it focuses this time on the dynamics of the meeting between several characters. This fictional space, like a ballroom, enables Woolf to represent the scene from different points of view. The first part of the extract portrays the very brief meeting between Ellie Henderson, but soon Richard's attention is driven to another character, Peter Walsh, who first becomes the object of Richard's thoughts, only to become the target of Clarissa's considerations, and ultimately becoming the focaliser himself. Richard and Peter exchange is particularly interesting, as the characters observe and examine each other, but most of what they perceive goes beyond the few words that they actually utter. The absence of referents increases the speed with which the observation point shifts, and

this makes the identification of viewpoints and especially of shifts between modes of consciousness representation challenging.

> (1) So, with her weak eyesight, Ellie Henderson craned rather forward, (2) and it wasn't so much she who minded not having any one to talk to (3) (she hardly knew anybody there), (4) for she felt that they were all such interesting people to watch; (5) politicians presumably; Richard Dalloway's friends; (6) **but it was Richard himself who felt that he could not let the poor creature go on standing there all the evening by herself**.
> (7) 'Well, Ellie, and how's the world treating you?' (8) he said in his genial way, (9) and Ellie Henderson, getting nervous and flushing and feeling that it was extraordinarily nice of him to come and talk to her, (10) said that many people really felt the heat more than the cold.
> (11) 'Yes, they do,' said Richard Dalloway. 'Yes.'
> (12) **But what more did one say?**
> (13) 'Hullo, Richard,' (14) said somebody, taking him by the elbow, (15) and, good Lord, there was old Peter, old Peter Walsh. (16) He was delighted to see him – (17) **ever so pleased to see him! He hadn't changed a bit**. (18) And off they went together walking right across the room, giving each other little pats, (19) as if they hadn't met for a long time, Ellie Henderson thought, (20) watching them go, certain she knew that man's face.
> (21) **A tall man, middle aged, rather fine eyes, dark, wearing spectacles, with a look of John Burrows. Edith would be sure to know.**
> (22) **The curtain with its flight of birds of Paradise blew out again.** (23) And Clarissa saw – she saw Ralph Lyon beat it back, and go on talking. (24) **So it wasn't a failure after all! it was going to be all right now – her party. It had begun. It had started. But it was still touch and go. She must stand there for the present. People seemed to come in a rush**.
>
> (Woolf, 1925, p. 123), my emphasis

The extract opens with a series of shifts between perspectives and between modes that gives an immediate dynamicity to the scene: the RP in (1) describes Ellie Henderson from an observational point of view that is clearly embedded into another character's perspective (note the initial adverb *So* and the stress on the personal pronoun *her* in *her weak eyesight*, as to convey a familiarity with the character), yet to disclose the identity of the observer (Richard) the reader needs to reach the end of the paragraph. (2) moves in fact the focus closer to Ellie Henderson's mind, whose internal state is represented through PN. Here, as well as in (3) and (4), her perspective is conveyed through the narrative especially by means of verbs of perception and feeling (*mind*, *know*, *feel*) and evaluative adverbs (*rather*, *hardly*, *such*). Ellie's consciousness becomes gradually more

central through the paragraph, first in (3), where Woolf allows the reader to access more concrete feelings of the character through the parenthetical – which, although denoting a mental state (*knew*) is formally and semantically close to FIT – and then in (4), which reconnects to (2) through the conjunction *for*, where her internal state (she felt) binds with her perceptions (watch). Woolf introduces then in (5) her articulated thoughts: this is suggested by the brevity of the phrases, interrupted by semicolons which reproduces the pauses typical of orality.

The connective *but* and the reflexive pronoun *himself* in (6) mark an abrupt shift to Richard's perspective, whose PN is signalled by the verb *felt* and the modal *could*. This shift, however, also allows the reader to understand the opening clauses in (1) as being potentially narrated from Richard's point of view – notice in particular the relation between Ellie's representation in (1) (*weak eyesight*, *craned rather forward*) and Richard's description of Ellie as a *poor creature* in (6). Interestingly, (6) also works as a link between the two characters' consciousnesses, as it connects Richard's impressions of Ellie to her own sensations expressed in (2) and (3) (she feels 'poor' as she does not have anyone to talk to). This shows again Woolf's attempt to represent the mute unattainable connection between human beings, whose actions are intrinsically motivated by feelings and expectations. These are in fact the trigger for Richard's DS in (7), whose attempt to relieve the girl from her solitude succeeds, as (8) and (9) suggest. Ellie's psychological point of view substitutes in fact Richard's immediately after the speech, drawing closer to Ellie by means of the modifier *in his genial way* and anticipating the representation of Ellie's feelings through PN in (9), as signalled by the emphasis on the sequence of mental verbs in *getting nervous and flushing and feeling*. Yet Richard's answer in (11) seems to draw the reader closer to him again through the repetition of *Yes*, and this might affect the interpretation of the following sentence, which is nonetheless potentially challenging to interpret. (12) presents in fact a verbalised thought through FIT *But what more did one say?*, and it is formally

impossible to determine which of the two characters is articulating it. The conversational cues do not help much, since the conversation is in itself extremely minimal, and appears equally likely for both to be articulating such a thought, to the point that once again it is even possible to conceive it as belonging to both characters.

From (12) to (17) the reader's attention is taken suddenly away from Ellie, focusing instead on Richard and his old friend, Peter Walsh. Woolf constructs once more a dynamism that builds on the shifts between modes of *free indirect style*, and where the distinction between characters' is feeble: the thoughts presented in (15) through FIT and (16), presenting Richard's PN or his FIS, build up to the utterance in (17) (FIS), and yet to a close reading it is not clear who is thinking or speaking, almost connecting again the two voices while they exchange greetings and words of surprise at the unexpected encounter.

In (18) the viewpoint on the scene shifts again, distancing from the characters in what initially appears to be a narratorial intervention. It becomes clear in (19), however, that the observer is in fact Ellie. A subtle shift to FIT, linked to the previous clause by the conjunction *as if*, confirms that (18) was indeed her RP. While her thoughts are represented through FIT in (19) – as confirmed by the attributive parenthetical in the second half of (19) – (20) continues presenting the scene through Ellie's perceptions. Woolf carries on alternating thoughts and perceptions, presenting to the reader again Ellie's thought in (21), this time in the form of IM.

For the third time in this short extract the final paragraph interrupts the ongoing viewpoint abruptly. This shift is likely to challenge readers, not only because it features a different technique of consciousness presentation, but because it breaks the narration completely, suddenly 'jumping' inside Clarissa's mind to offer a totally new and unexpected perspective on the party. (22) is initially almost impossible to locate within the narrative: no reference connects it to the previous text, and yet the final *again* suggest a character oriented perspective. The new focaliser is disclosed in (23), where

the conjunction *and* connects (22) – now identifiable as RP – with the new observer, Clarissa. The representation of her perceptions creates once again an opening for a final instance of Clarissa's FIT (note that it could also be interpreted as FIS) in (24), showing all the typical markers of this technique: the initial exclamation, the deictic references (*now, there, come*), the parallelisms (*It had begun. It had started. But it was still touch and go*) and the ensemble of short clauses and sentences that create a syntactic fragmentation, to show the simultaneity and complexity of human mental processes.

Alongside instances of speech and thoughts that are difficult to attribute – in particular (12) and (17) – Woolf's juxtaposition of techniques of consciousness presentation is extremely dense in this extract, continuously moving from the more descriptive yet still character oriented RP and PN, to thoughts in FIT and speech in FIS. The first paragraph alone, interrupted by no full stops, contains five different modes, and so does the last one, though it features more sentences. These numerous shifts require the reader to pay particular attention to details (in particular pronouns and proper names), and occasionally to reread sentences after a later cue discloses a previously hidden perspective – see (1) and (6), or (22) and (23).

Extract 6

Clarissa's party is an important event in the development of *Mrs Dalloway*, and it frames numerous scenes in which several characters are presented, through their own states, perceptions and thoughts, and/or through the eyes of other characters. The proximity of numerous characters in a small fictional environment, each of whom perceives the surroundings differently and relates to others, makes the party an ideal setting for a number of shifts, both between different techniques of *free indirect style* and between characters' points of view. In the following extract it is Clarissa's viewpoint that dominates most of the narrative. Different facets of her consciousness are juxtaposed as she walks around the room and greets her guests, in a sequence of several juxtaposed

modes of *free indirect style*. Only the last paragraphs feature a shift to a different character's viewpoint, which intertwines with Clarissa's consciousness and makes it difficult for the reader to separate the two.

> (1) 'Dear Clarissa!' exclaimed Mrs. Hilbery. (2) She looked to-night, she said, so like her mother as she first saw her walking in a garden in a grey hat.
> (3) And really Clarissa's eyes filled with tears. (4) **Her mother, walking in a garden!** (5) But alas, she must go.
> (6) **For there was Professor Brierly, who lectured on Milton, talking to little Jim Hutton** (7) (who was unable even for a party like this to compass both tie and waistcoat or make his hair lie flat), (8) and even at this distance they were quarrelling, she could see. (9) **For Professor Brierly was a very queer fish.** With all those degrees, honours, lectureships between him and the scribblers he suspected instantly an atmosphere not favourable to his queer compound; his prodigious learning and timidity; his wintry charm without cordiality; his innocence blent with snobbery; he quivered if made conscious by a lady's unkempt hair, a youth's boots, of an underworld, very creditable doubtless, of rebels, of ardent young people; of would-be geniuses, and intimated with a little toss of the head, with a sniff – Humph! – the value of moderation; of some slight training in the classics in order to appreciate Milton. (10) **Professor Brierly** (11) (**Clarissa could see**) (12) **wasn't hitting it off with little Jim Hutton** (13) (**who wore red socks, his black being at the laundry**) (14) **about Milton.** (15) She interrupted.
> (16) She said she loved Bach. (17) So did Hutton. (18) **That was the bond between them**, (19) and Hutton (20) (a very bad poet) (21) always felt that Mrs. Dalloway was far the best of the great ladies who took an interest in art. (22) It was odd how strict she was. About music she was purely impersonal. She was rather a prig. But how charming to look at! She made her house so nice if it weren't for her Professors.
> (23) Clarissa had half a mind to snatch him off and set him down at the piano in the back room. (24) For he played divinely.
>
> (Woolf, 1925, p. 127), my emphasis

Despite the simplicity of the scene itself – Clarissa utters few sentences with two of her guests while observing and (presumably) walking around the room – a considerable amount of mental processes are portrayed in this extract, and they are often represented through an alternation of perceptions and thoughts. Parentheticals play an important role in this process, allowing Woolf to insert thoughts in the middle of the description of a scene and vice versa, and allowing for an incredibly realistic portrayal of the complex interactions between people and of their mental processes.

After the DS in (1), Mrs. Hilbery's utterance is conveyed through FIS, as signalled by the temporal deictic adverb *to-night* and the modifier *so like her mother*, along with the use of the third person pronoun and the past tense. Interestingly, while FIS typically connects the reader to the character whose voice is represented, it is not clear here whether (2) does so, or whether it instead draws the observational point of view away from Mrs. Hilbery, being embedded instead in Clarissa's perspective. This ambiguity also affects the RP in (3) – marked by the intensifier *really* – where it is difficult to understand whether the perception of Clarissa's eyes filling with tears is represented from an internal vantage point (Clarissa), or an external one (Mrs. Hilbery). The conjunction *and* in (3) plays an important role in making the observation point ambiguous: on the one hand, it connects this sentence with the previous one, suggesting that Mrs. Hilbery might be the one observing Clarissa's reaction. On the other hand, however, it is very typical of Woolf to use the conjunction *and* at the beginning of a sentence especially to mark a viewpoint shift (Sotirova, 2004; Ikeo, 2014). It is in (4) that the reader is presented undoubtedly with Clarissa's voice: her FIS (presumably an utterance, but formally equally identifiable as a thought) repeats part of Mrs. Hilbery's sentence, conveying through the exclamation her reaction of surprise (or amusement?). Once again the conjunction *but* in (5) signals a shift, this time into Clarissa thoughts. From (6) to (16) the readers accesses the fictional world exclusively through Clarissa's mind and eyes, but it is the juxtaposition of different techniques of *free indirect style* that complicate this passage. The initial RP in (6) – marked by the initial *for* and by the evaluative *little Jim Hutton* – is suddenly interrupted by Clarissa verbalised thoughts in (7), this time abruptly interrupting by means of a parenthetical. The same alternation (*between... and...*) is repeated in sentences (8) and (9), this time without the use of a parenthetical, but through the connective *for*. While verbalised thoughts, especially when realised through FIT or IM, are typically represented by Woolf using short sentences that mirror the fragmented nature of mental processes, (9) develops instead into a very long sentence. Despite the verbosity atypical of FIT, the richness of colloquial expressions, evaluative adverbs and

adjectives (*queer fish, queer compound, wintry charm, prodigious learning, etc.*), the exclamation *Humph!*, the lack of a reference to the speaking self and the typical use of past tense to refer to the fictional present demarcate (9) undoubtedly as Clarissa's articulated thoughts.

Woolf's game of quick shifts between modes of consciousness presentation features again from (10) to (14), within one sentence, where Clarissa's FIT is interrupted twice by parentheticals reporting her own perceptions. This 'broken syntax' highlights the 'cinematic' effect of Woolf's strategy on a scene that does not feature any concrete action, enhancing the centrality of mental processes. Clarissa's interruption of the conversation between Jim Hutton and Professor Brierly is also an interruption to the flow of her own thoughts, which suddenly 'reactivates' the temporal progression of the narration. The new paragraph introduces also a departure from Clarissa's mind: the exchange between Clarissa and Jim Hutton opens with IS in (16), and this does not seem to be embedded within a particular character's perspective until Hutton's reply, in (17), which features again FIS. The following sentence then clearly represents a character's thought in FIT (see the past tense and the third person plural pronoun), and the initial pronoun *that* connects it with the content of (16) and (17), retrospectively binding it to the same point of view. The challenge for the reader here is to understand *whose* perspective is being presented in (18): this thought (or utterance) could be easily attributed to either Clarissa or Jim Hutton. Moreover, this ambiguity is not resolved with the immediately following sentences: the broken sentence in (19) and (21) seems to represent Jim Hutton's viewpoint through PN, but the parenthetical in (20) contrasts with it by featuring abruptly Clarissa's FIT (*a very bad poet*). Once more the interruption gives dynamicity to the scene, intertwining the two perspectives and the two consciousnesses and creating a bond between the characters. The juxtaposition of modes continues, and if (22) presents Jim Hutton's thoughts through FIT – see the colloquialism (*it was odd, rather a prig*), the tense/pronoun shifts, the exclamation, the mocking (*her Professors*) –

(23) 'jumps' back to Clarissa's RP (*snatch him off*) and finally to her FIT in the final sentence, introducing this last shift once again with the connective *for*.

Extract 7

The next extract, from *Mrs Dalloway*, follows directly from the previous one. Similarly to the extract analysed above, Clarissa's mental processes are prominent, and so are the shifts between FIT and RP, often realised through the use of parentheticals. The middle part of the extract is particularly interesting in terms of difficulty, as it blends the perspective of the observer, Clarissa, with knowledge that appears to belong to the observed character, Miss Parry, creating again a knot of information and viewpoints that is not easy to untie.

Clarissa's has just met two of her guests, Nancy Blow and Lord Gayton:

(1) 'I had meant to have dancing,' said Clarissa.
(2) **For the young people could not talk. And why should they?** (3) Shout, embrace, swing, be up at dawn; carry sugar to ponies; kiss and caress the snouts of adorable chows; and then all tingling and streaming, plunge and swim. (4) But the enormous resources of the English language, the power it bestows, after all, of communicating feelings (5) **(at their age, she and Peter would have been arguing all the evening)**, (6) was not for them. (7) They would solidify young. They would be good beyond measure to the people on the estate, but alone, perhaps, rather dull.
(8) 'What a pity!' she said. 'I had hoped to have dancing.' (9) **It was so extraordinarily nice of them to have come!** (10) But talk of dancing! The rooms were packed.
(11) There was old Aunt Helena in her shawl. (12) Alas, she must leave them – Lord Gayton and Nancy Blow. (13) There was old Miss Parry, her aunt.
(14) For Miss Helena Parry was not dead: Miss Parry was alive. (15) She was past eighty. She ascended staircases slowly with a stick. She was placed in a chair (16) (Richard had seen to it). (17) People who had known Burma in the seventies were always led up to her.
(18) **Where had Peter got to?** They used to be such friends. (19) **For at the mention of India, or even Ceylon, her eyes (20) (only one was glass) slowly deepened, became blue, beheld, not human beings** – (21) she had no tender memories, no proud illusions about Viceroys, Generals, Mutinies – (22) it was orchids she saw, and mountain passes and herself carried on the backs of coolies in the sixties over solitary peaks; or descending to uproot orchids (23) **(startling blossoms, never beheld before)** (24) which she painted in water-colour; (25) an indomitable Englishwoman, fretful if disturbed by the War, say, which dropped a bomb at her very door, from her deep meditation over orchids and her

> own figure journeying in the 'sixties in India – (26) but here was Peter.
> (27) 'Come and talk to Aunt Helena about Burma,' said Clarissa. (28) And yet he had not had a word with her all the evening!
> (29) 'We will talk later,' said Clarissa, leading him up to Aunt Helena, in her white shawl, with her stick. (30) 'Peter Walsh,' said Clarissa.
> (31) **That meant nothing.** (32) Clarissa had asked her. It was tiring; it was noisy; but Clarissa had asked her. So she had come. It was a pity that they lived in London – Richard and Clarissa. (33) If only for Clarissa's health it would have been better to live in the country. But Clarissa had always been fond of society.
>
> (Woolf, 1925, p. 129), my emphasis

After Clarissa's DS to Lord Gayton and Nancy Blow in (1), the reader's attention is drawn to her inner processes: from (2) to (7) her verbalised thoughts are in fact presented in a long instance of FIT. The identification of her viewpoint, however, is not immediate, as it is only in the parenthetical (5) – a few lines later – that the more explicit reference *she and Peter* is made in the text, which links the articulated thoughts to her character, mentioned at the beginning of the extract. Within one single viewpoint and using one single mode of *free indirect style*, FIT, Woolf still manages to complicate this first paragraph not only by means of incomplete sentences – (3) in particular features a sequence of subject-less verbs – and interruptions – the parenthetical (5) splits (4) and (6) – but also by intertwining several 'branches' of Clarissa's thoughts (being young/the power of the English language/memories of her past with Peter).

Well immersed into Clarissa's point of view, the reader might initially interpret (8) as Clarissa's speech. (9) and (10) however, express through *free indirect style* a reaction to the speech (see the evaluative *extraordinarily nice*, the exclamation) that calls for a reassessment of (8) as Nancy Blow's utterance. It is also important to point out how Woolf plays again in (9) and (10) with the feeble boundary between modes of speech and thought presentation: while (9) is plausibly representing Clarissa's verbal reply to Nancy, (10) seems more likely to express her articulated thoughts, and again the potential cue for this shift is the connective *But*.

The new paragraph draws from the last part of the first paragraph – *The rooms were packed* – to introduce Clarissa's RP, whose attention is suddenly directed to her aunt Helena. As in the previous extract, Woolf alternates here Clarissa's perceptions in (11) and (13) with her FIT in (12) (though some readers might as well interpret the first part of (12) as speech).

It is the paragraph beginning with (14) that represents the most demanding section of this extract. While Clarissa's perspective still dominates most of the paragraph (through RP and FIT), Woolf creates here a blend between her viewpoint and Aunt Helena Perry's psyche. The RP in (14) and (15) represents Clarissa's perceptions, and yet are very close to articulated thoughts – note once more the use of the connective *for* opening the paragraph, and the parallel structures *She was/She ascended/She was*. This ambiguity continues until (19), where the connective *for* marks a new shift (Ikeo, 2014, see). Within a long and complex sentence, Clarissa's thinking not only becomes too complex and elaborate to represent mentally articulated thoughts, becoming this time closer to PN, but it gradually adds pieces of memories and insights to Mrs Parry's mind that could no longer possibly belong to her. From Clarissa's PN/RP in (19) and (20), the parenthetical (21) allows the reader to access Mrs Parry's viewpoint, representing her memories and her visions through what could equally understood as PN or FIT up to (23) – note the abundance of evaluative adjectives, the sequencing through the connectives *and/or/and*, and the parenthetical, featuring again an incomplete sentence that add Mrs Parry's comment on the narrated memory. Yet without a signal, and syntactically linked to (22), (24) takes distance again from her and moves the psychological point of view back to Clarissa's. This shift becomes more clear in (25), where the expression *indomitable Englishwoman* and the interjection *say* clearly demarcate her FIT, as well as the past tense *was* and the spatial deictic adverb *here* at the end of the sentence, where her attention is drawn to Peter.

Following the DS in (27), another ambiguous instance of FIT can be observed in (28): the sentence *And yet he had not had a word with her all the evening!* can in fact not only be understood either as a thought or as an utterance, but according to how it is understood it may be attributed to either of the two characters involved in the scene, Clarissa and Peter. If interpreted as a thought, (29) it could represent either characters', or even a shared experience between them (Cui, 2015), and this would see Clarissa's utterance in (29) as deriving from their complicity and mutual understanding, rather than from what is effectively being said. On the other hand, (28) could represent Peter's FIS, to which Clarissa simply replies in (29).

The last paragraph marks another shift between perspectives, this time moving the viewpoint back to Aunt Helena's. The FIT in (31) is initially ambiguous, as it links to Clarissa's previous sentence and to Peter's potential annoyance for having ignored him. However, the pronoun *her* in (32) reveals that the character thinking is instead Aunt Helena. Her FIT is signalled by the past tense and the third person pronoun, the short parallel clauses (it was trying; it was noisy) and the repetition of (Clarissa had asked her), which emphasises the quality of this technique.

Extract 8

In the last extract, again from *Mrs Dalloway*'s party scene, speech plays an important role along mental processes. The alternation of FIT, FIS and DS complicates the conversation between Sally and Peter, which is constantly interrupted by their thoughts and memories, making it difficult to interpret where the characters are speaking and where they are thinking. This difficulty is particularly prominent from sentence (11) onwards, where the DS disappears making space for a long paragraph, dense of shifts between the characters' voices and their thoughts.

> (1) 'Have you written?' she asked him, (2) spreading her hand, her firm and shapely hand, on her knee (3) in a way he recalled.

(4) 'Not a word!' said Peter Walsh, and she laughed.
(5) She was still attractive, still a personage, Sally Seton. But who was this Rosseter? He wore two camellias on his wedding day – (6) **that was all Peter knew of him.** (7) **'They have myriads of servants, miles of conservatories,' Clarissa wrote; something like that.** (8) Sally owned it with a shout of laughter.
(9) 'Yes, I have ten thousand a year' – (10) whether before the tax was paid or after, she couldn't remember, (11) for her husband, (12) 'whom you must meet,' she said, 'whom you would like,' she said, (13) did all that for her.
(14) **And Sally used to be in rags and tatters. She had pawned her grandmother's ring which Marie Antoinette had given her great- grandfather to come to Bourton.** (15) Oh yes, Sally remembered; (16) she had it still, a ruby ring which Marie Antoinette had given her great-grandfather. She never had a penny to her name in those days, and going to Bourton always meant some frightful pinch. (17) But going to Bourton had meant so much to her – had kept her sane, she believed, so unhappy had she been at home. (18) But that was all a thing of the past – all over now, she said. (19) And Mr. Parry was dead; and Miss Parry was still alive. (20) Never had he had such a shock in his life! said Peter. (21) He had been quite certain she was dead. (22) And the marriage had been, Sally supposed, a success? And that very handsome, very self- possessed young woman was Elizabeth, over there, by the curtains, in red.
(23) (She was like a poplar, she was like a river, she was like a hyacinth, Willie Titcomb was thinking. (24) **Oh how much nicer to be in the country and do what she liked!** (25) **She could hear her poor dog howling, Elizabeth was certain.)** (26) **She was not a bit like Clarissa, Peter Walsh said**.

(Woolf, 1925, p. 136), my emphasis

After Sally's DS in (1), Woolf brings the reader close to Peter's perspective, presenting his RP in (2) and (3). This is signalled by the repetition of *her hand* with the addition of the descriptives *firm, shapely*, and the content of (3), which emphasises Peters's familiarity with Sally, stressing on his knowledge rather than letting the reader know how her gesture actually is.

As encountered several times across the other extracts, it is often by means of RP or PN that Woolf 'opens the way' to a character's speech/articulated thoughts. After the DS in (4), the reader is in fact presented with Peter's FIT, marked by the past tense, by the repetition of *still*, which emphasises again the characters' past connection, and by the colloquial rhetorical question *who was this Rosseter?*, where the pronoun *this* used in a colloquial way stresses Peter's critical attitude towards Sally's husband. From Peter's

articulated thoughts, (6) shifts briefly to his PN (marked by the verb *knew*), just before shifting again, and rather abruptly, to Clarissa's reported message in (7). Her words are part of Peter's FIS, but this becomes clear only in (8), where Sally's reaction provides an insight to the previous discourse. This fragmentation, and the sudden presence of quoted discourse within Peter's unmarked FIS, are very likely to challenge the readers' understanding – at least on first reading.

The new paragraph builds on Sally's reaction, introducing her DS in (9). This is however interrupted by her FIS in the parenthetical (10) and (11), and then again in (13). Rather than conveying empathy for Sally, Woolf's use of FIS here seems to represent Peter's perceptions of her words: even if the speech represented is uttered by Sally, the part of speech directly reported are either answers to Peter's previous utterance (9) or they address him directly (***you*** *must meet*, ***you*** *would like*). This finds further support in (14) – where once again Sally's FIS is represented, and yet it lacks its typical empathetic features – and in (15)-(16), where the attributing parentheticals *she remembered* and *she believed* seem to emphasise Sally's teller role as observed from Peter's viewpoint, rather than conveying her emotional involvement. It is the connective *But* in (17) that creates a deeper connection to her character, whose FIS in acquires a more empathetic tone in (17) and (18) (*had meant so much to her/had kept her sane/all over now*), and in (19), through the two parallel sentences *And Mr. Parry was dead; and Miss Parry was still alive*.

Peter's FIS however soon replaces Sally's with the exclamation in (20) and its continuation in (21), and is again substituted by hers in (22). This alternation, with no line breaks and no quotation marks, as well as the short incisive sentences, fasten the scene and the reading process, giving the reader the impression that speakers almost overlap themselves while taking conversational turns. This highlights Virginia Woolf's use of *free indirect style* as a technique to imitate oral conversations (Adamson, 1995),

and it is an example of her ability to render complex dynamics through fragmentation, even – as in this paragraph – when using one single technique of speech presentation.

The initial pronoun *she* in the parenthetical opening the new paragraph links to the previous reference to *Elisabeth* in (22), misleading the reader. It pivots in fact a sudden change to a new viewpoint, Willie Titcomb's. His FIT, clearly expressing romantic feelings, clashes with Peter's and Sally's attitude, initially causing a potential ambiguity for readers, who are suddenly introduced to a completely new character. Yet already in (23) we find a second shift: this time Woolf uses the object of Willie Titcomb's attention, Elisabeth, to change the psychological point of view and transform her into the observer. Elisabeth FIT in (24) is followed by her RP in (25), but the end of the parenthetical marks also the end of her viewpoint. The parentheses isolate these two shifts as to narrate an episode within the narrative, where the observed character (Elisabeth) acts both as a an object of thought and as a focaliser, only to shift then once again to Peter and Sally's conversation in (26), where one last instance of FIS, attributed to Peter, concludes the extract.

3.3.2 Conclusions

While it is difficult, if not impossible, to attribute to one single specific linguistic feature the cause of a potential interpretative difficulty, it is my belief that in these two novels the several aspects contributing to this effect are indeed dependant on Woolf's use of several techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation.

The close analysis of eight extracts from *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway* shows how Woolf's extensive use of these techniques might be problematic for the reader on at least two levels. On the one hand, because of the constant focus on characters and their feelings, the plot does not follow a progression of events typical of traditional narratives. Woolf de-constructs the time of the narrative (Matz, 2008), emphasising

the representation of experiences as opposed to that of actions. This is strengthened by the apparent disappearance of the narrator, which instead presents almost for the entirety of the two novels a character's psychological point of view, conveyed through the character's language and expressions.

On the other hand, these extracts are especially representative of what I believe to be the most difficult aspect of the two novels considered in the present thesis: her use of techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation. Woolf softens and often removes the boundaries between perspectives (Sotirova, 2006; Rundquist, 2015; Cui, 2017); such juxtaposition, along with the syntactical inconsistencies resulting from missing references, ellipsis, and colloquialisms, represent a potential difficulty for readers, which are not always enabled to render one specific interpretation of the represented fictional world, and thus to understand whose voice/thoughts or perceptions are being presented in the narrative. Crucially, her use of these techniques poses a challenge for readers not only in terms of *whose* perspective is represented, but also – and maybe even more prominently – in terms of *what* facet of the characters' perspective is being presented. The shifts between the different techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation result in fact in syntactic discontinuities that are a challenge for readers.

Chapter 4

Readers' response to Woolf's use of *free indirect style*

4.1 Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapters, modernist literature is typically qualified by critics as obscure and complex in comparison to realist prose and poetry. This is also true for Virginia Woolf's work, whose writings are considered challenging by scholars as well as by actual readers. Her departure from the traditional forms of narrative is visible in particular through the fragmentation that results from her use of experimental techniques for the presentation of speech, thoughts and consciousness.

By using these techniques Woolf plays with perspectives and points of view, almost fusing together characters' thoughts and voices, while juxtaposing and switching abruptly between various techniques of consciousness presentation. This creates a dynamic narrative experience where the reader has access to multiple facets of the characters' minds. Her writing is comparable to a 'camera-like' motion (Anderst, 2011; Bozzi, 2015), where the observation point suddenly and quickly shifts from one position to

another, inside and outside characters, offering insights into the various minds while allowing at the same time an outer perspective on the represented fictional world.

What I argue here, is that the *difficulty* perceived by critics and readers of Woolf, particularly in relation to her novels *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway*, very much depends on the presence of these techniques, which make it difficult for readers to understand 1) whose perspective is presented, and 2) whether characters are speaking or thinking. Sound empirical evidence is necessary to confirm such a hypothesis, and the current chapter aims to provide it.

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, Woolf's texts have been used by several scholars to explore questions about fictional voices and theorise the role techniques of speech and thought presentation, including *free indirect style*, play in the representation of narrative perspective and focalisation (Brooke et al., 2016; Miall, 1989; Van Peer et al., 2007a; Wilson, 1981; Zunshine et al., 2003; Zyngier et al., 2007). Only a few studies, however, investigated readers' attribution of perspectives within her novels empirically (Cui, 2017; Sotirova, 2007, 2016a). Even though these did not focus specifically on difficulty, their results suggest that shifts between perspectives and modes are indeed challenging for readers, and they do so by showing that readers often disagreed when attributing points of view, and therefore understood the same text in several ways. The current research builds on these results to investigate readers' responses to Woolf's experimental use of *free indirect style*, IM and FDS, in an attempt to provide a more systematic investigation than previous studies, and to provide statistical evidence to validate existing claims. It will focus on the ambiguous shifts between characters' perspectives and between different modes of consciousness presentation, to understand whether actual readers struggle with interpreting whose voice, thoughts or consciousness are presented in her narratives, and will provide foundations for the investigation of the online processing of these texts, presented in Chapter 5.

4.2 Study I

4.2.1 Objectives

In order to provide further evidence for the claim that Woolf's writing is indeed challenging for readers – in particular her two novels *To The Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway* – the current study investigates through a questionnaire how readers attribute viewpoints in selected extracts from the two novels. These extracts feature techniques of speech and thought presentation which might make the identification of perspectives and voices challenging. By comparing the original texts with modified versions of the same texts where the ambiguities related to the use of such techniques have been altered or removed, it should be possible to observe whether readers' responses are susceptible to such changes, and thus to such techniques. If the assumption is correct – i.e. if original texts are more difficult to understand than modified ones – the first should feature a wider variety of viewpoints perceived by readers – thus a greater disagreement – in comparison to modified texts, where thoughts and perceptions should be more easily attributable to one character or another due to the removal of potential ambiguous features and the addition of attributing clauses.

At the same time, the present study aims to investigate 1) whether different techniques of *free indirect style* are perceived as more or less challenging 2) whether readers' literary background and reading habits affect their interpretation of the texts or the level of difficulty they perceive.

4.2.2 Methodological considerations

Existing studies examining readers' attribution of narrative perspective share some limitations, which the present study aims to partly overcome. These concern the choice of texts, the way these were presented to participants, and the methods.

Some of the studies mentioned in the previous chapters, for instance, provided participants with texts from several different authors. This is problematic, in my opinion, not only because of the broader differences in 'style' between authors, but specifically because the ways in which they made use of techniques of consciousness presentation can be very different, with different linguistic characteristics, which can achieve potentially different effects. Woolf is surely not the only author having used *free indirect style*; Jane Austen, for example, did too, and yet it is very rare that an actual reader would find her writing challenging or confusing. Even authors that are closer to Virginia Woolf's use of these techniques, such as Katherine Mansfield, are not typically considered equally difficult. While the investigation of extracts by a single author might be less generalisable, this would also provide further insights into *why* her style in particular poses a challenge for readers.

Another concern in relation to existing studies is that some of these provided participants with texts that were already subdivided into segments or sentences, sometimes even numbered ones. It seems to me that this might be particularly problematic, in particular within the context of *free indirect style*. As seen in Chapter 3, it is exactly the lack of syntactic boundaries and the 'fusion' of thoughts and voices that often creates an interpretative difficulty, and it is not infrequent, especially within Woolf novels, to find parentheticals suddenly breaking one sentence to present a different thought or perception, only to be completed several lines later. It seems to me that a division – especially when sentences are numbered – would mislead readers, not only by suggesting that the events represented in the narrative happen in sequence – when often this is not the case – but also preventing them from seeing the text as a complex whole, where the jumps between viewpoints can affect one single word as well as a whole paragraph. I decided therefore to provide texts in their original form, with the original paragraphing and with no indication of sentences or segments for attribution, to allow participants to attribute

perspectives freely and to do so by assigning them to sections of text as long or as short as they felt.

A third factor that I believe might be crucial in the attempt to recreate a 'natural' reading experience in an experimental setting concerns the reader's knowledge of essential co-textual information. To my knowledge, none of the studies analysing readers' responses to narrative texts provided participants with any sort of introductory information about the narrative texts they were about to read. As argued by Emmott (1997), one great difference between reading a short text created *ad hoc* and an original piece of literature, is that the information about the fictional world and about the characters' way of thinking and expressing themselves is built gradually along the reading process, and even if not all information is retained, it seems reasonable to assume that a reader would at least roughly know what happened and which characters are at play, and what they are like or how they feel. Because it would have been impossible to have a sufficient number of participants read two entire novels, I decided to provide them with a few introductory sentences which would give them some context about the story and some essential information about the characters, making their reading experience come closer to a natural one.

A further worry was that if readers were immediately asked to signal perspectives and voices, they would not read the extracts normally, focusing instead strictly on their task. I felt that such a task would make the reading process less natural and would affect the difficulty ratings. It was therefore decided to ask participants to read the text once with no other task required of them, while the perspectives and voices attribution task was applied to a second reading of each extract, with larger spacing to facilitate comments and notes.

Lastly, as mentioned in Section 2.2, several studies have demonstrated that personal factors such as educational level or experience with literary analysis might influence the way readers react to texts (Hakemulder and Koopman, 2010; Levorato and Neme-

sio, 2005), while other studies seemed to contradict this result, showing no effect of educational background or literary experience (Van Peer, 1986). It was decided to ask participants about their education, reading habits, experience with modernist literature and with Woolf's writings, and to include these results as random factors in the statistical models (of both Study I and Study II), to test and verify the magnitude of such effects.

4.2.3 Materials

In order to evaluate whether difficulty in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* arises from the way in which perspectives are presented, specifically in relation to the use of *free indirect style*, eight extracts were selected (five from *Mrs Dalloway* and three from *To the Lighthouse*) that contained instances of various techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation (an analysis of the eight extracts and of the features that make them potentially difficult is presented in Chapter 3). If the presence of these techniques makes the identification of perspective and voices challenging, the removal of ambiguous features should allow readers to identify these with greater ease. For each extract, a modified version was therefore created, where the hypothesised difficulties arising from the use of different modes of consciousness presentation and from the conflation of different perspectives were removed or altered. Examples of the original and modified versions are presented in Table 4.1.

Every attempt was made to preserve as much of the original language as possible in the modified extracts. The alterations to the original texts concerned the various forms and features of *free indirect style*, and were aimed at removing the potential ambiguities that might impact perspective attribution, by rendering the text in such a way as to clearly distinguish narratorial voice from character's voice and thoughts, as well as one character's voice or thoughts from another, and thought from speech. FIS and FIT were transformed respectively into DS and DT by replacing third person

Table 4.1 Examples of original and modified texts from the questionnaires.

Examples		
FIS mode	**Original**	**Modified Version**
Free Indirect Speech	Was anybody looking after her? he said. Had she everything she wanted? (Woolf, 1927, p. 113)	'Is anybody looking after you?' he said. 'Do you have everything you want?'
Free Indirect Thought	'Oh, thanks, everything,' said Lily Briscoe nervously. No; she could not do it. (Woolf, 1927, p. 113)	'Oh, thanks, everything' said Lily Briscoe nervously. *No; I cannot do it,* she thought.
Represented Perception	Mrs. Ramsay, Lily felt, as she talked about the skins of vegetables, exalted that, worshipped that; held her hands over it to warm them, to protect it, and yet, having brought it all about, somehow laughed, led her victims, Lily felt, to the altar. (Woolf, 1927, p. 73)	Lily felt that Mrs. Ramsay, as she talked about the skins of vegetables, exalted that, worshipped that; held her hands over it to warm them, to protect it, and yet, having brought it all about, somehow laughed, led her victims to the altar.
Consonant Psycho-narration	[...] and Lily contrasted that abundance with her own poverty of spirit, and supposed that it was partly that belief [...] in this strange, this terrifying thing, which made Paul Rayley, the centre of it, all of a tremor, yet abstract, absorbed, silent. Woolf (1927, p. 72)	Lily contrasted that abundance with her own poverty of spirit, and supposed that it was partly that belief in this strange, this terrifying thing, which made Paul Rayley, the centre of it, all of a tremor, yet abstract, absorbed, silent.

pronouns with first person pronouns, as well as by modifying deictic reference and verb tense to match the direct discourse, and by adding attributing clauses when strictly necessary. Thoughts were italicised, to distinguish them from speech, which was instead rendered with quotation marks. Since RP and PN are not used to express verbalised thoughts, but instead convey character subjectivity through the representations of experiences or feelings, a decision was made to turn both into narratorial discourse with no psychological viewpoint. This was achieved by removing, where possible, words and expressions that were idiomatic, empathetic to a character or expressive of their point of view. This choice allowed for a consistent and explicit treatment of perspectives in the modified extracts. It is important to consider that both RP and PN are seen by some scholars as closer to narratorial representations (Leech and Short, 1981; Semino et al., 1997), which only report the character's perspective, but do not represent it. Altering them to match a more neutral form of narration seemed a reasonable and less invasive choice, in comparison to the possibility of rendering RP and PN as a character's thoughts. This would have meant changing much more of the original text, compared to the minor changes needed to convert these into narratorial statements. An overview of the variation guidelines adopted for the modification of original extracts is shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Guidelines of the modifications from original to modified extracts in Study I.

	Modifications
Free Indirect Speech *Free Indirect Thought* ↓ *Direct Speech* *Direct Thought*	• past tense turned into present tense • 3rd person (speaker) turned into 1st person • 3rd person (addressee) turned into 2nd person • Addition of quotation marks • Italics (Free Indirect thought only)
Represented Perception *Consonant Psycho-narration* ↓ *Narration* or *ID*	• Subordination (felt/knew that) [if necessary] • Removal/alteration of proximal deictic items • Removal of expressive language [where possible]

The distinction and the identification of the different forms of *free indirect style* was crucial for creating the stimuli, as the modifications were different for the different types of *free indirect style*. In some cases, it was impossible to modify the original sentence while preserving its entire meaning at the same time; such instances, although included in the two versions of the text presented to readers, were not considered in the analysis of either of the two versions of the extract.

4.2.4 Participants

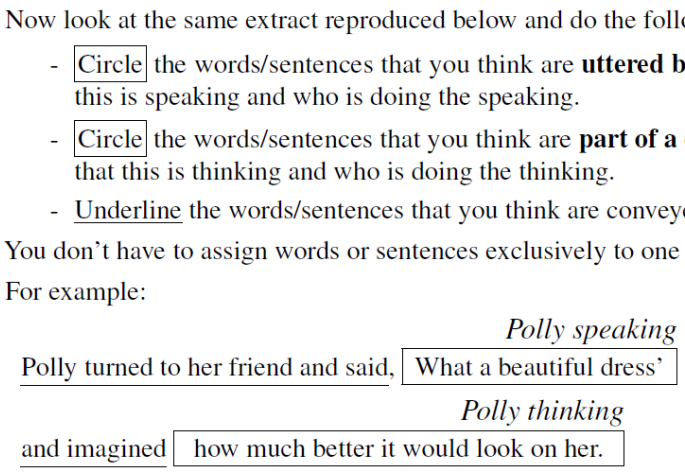
Fifty-two participants took part in the study (14 males, 38 females), all of whom were native speakers of English. Their average age was 37.8 years (with a median of 29). Twenty-eight participants (53.8%) were university students, ten (19.2%) were lecturers and teachers, either currently working or retired. The rest of the participants were members of local reading groups. Participants had different levels of education: nine (17.3%) had completed high school, twenty-four (46.2%) had or were completing a Bachelor's degree, six (11.5%) a Master's degree and thirteen (25%) a PhD degree. Fifty-one participants (98.1%) declared that they read for pleasure, with an average of 34 books per year. Nineteen participants (36.5%) had previous experience with modernist literature, and some of them had already read Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (14 = 26.9%), *Mrs Dalloway* (8 = 15.4%) or other works by Virginia Woolf (10 = 19.2%). All participation was voluntary.

4.2.5 Procedure

The questionnaire asked participants to identify and attribute perspectives and assess the difficulty of the extracts (see Figures 4.4 and 4.5 for the results). Four versions of the questionnaire were designed, each containing four distinct extracts: two original ones and two modified ones. Participants never saw the original and the modified version

of the same extract. The questionnaires were initially provided as in printed form, but in order to reach more participant a second electronic version (in doc format) was created, with identical content. Participants who completed the electronic versions could comment in the text using their preferred word processor, but they could not modify the document. Overall 29 participants completed a paper questionnaire and 23 a digital one.

Each participant completed one questionnaire, reading four different extracts, two original and two modified ones. For each extract, participants were asked to read it once, then to turn the page (or slide down to the next page for the electronic versions) and to summarise the extract without looking back at the text. They were also asked to answer an open question about the content of the extract – aimed at verifying their comprehension of the text – and a second open question assessing whether they found the extract challenging and, if so, why. On the next page, participants were presented with the same extract, double-spaced: they had to re-read the extract and to signal whose perspectives they identified, specifying whether they thought that the expression of the characters' consciousnesses in the story was in the form of verbalised speech or whether they thought it conveyed characters' thoughts. They were instructed and provided with an example (see Figure 4.1)


Now look at the same extract reproduced below and do the following:

- Circle the words/sentences that you think are **uttered by the characters**. Indicate that this is speaking and who is doing the speaking.
- Circle the words/sentences that you think are **part of a character's thoughts**. Indicate that this is thinking and who is doing the thinking.
- Underline the words/sentences that you think are conveyed by the **narrator**.

You don't have to assign words or sentences exclusively to one character/the narrator.

For example:

Polly speaking

Polly turned to her friend and said, What a beautiful dress'

Polly thinking

and imagined how much better it would look on her.

Fig. 4.1 Second reading instructions.

Participants were not told where to place boundaries in the text when making their attributions (e.g. sentence boundaries). They were free to attribute perspectives and voices to individual words, clauses, single and multiple sentences or even entire paragraphs. This allowed for complete freedom to divide the extracts according to their own interpretation of the texts. In order to resemble as much as possible naturally occurring reading in which readers have already some understanding of the characters and the scene, a brief summary of a few sentences was provided before each extract. As the example below demonstrates, the summaries introduced the main characters and set the scene. They were intended to ensure that participants had enough information to understand the situation depicted in the extract.

> The Ramsays (Mrs. Ramsay, Mr. Ramsay and their daughter Minta), Lily Briscoe, Paul Riley, William Bakes and Charles Tansley are sitting at the table. The dinner has started and the 'Bœuf en Daube' is served.

Fig. 4.2 Example of contextual summary presented to readers before first reading.

Participants were asked to go through the questionnaire page by page, and told not to look back to previous pages after completing each section. After completing the questionnaire, they returned it to the researcher together with a signed consent form. If a reader only filled part of the questionnaire, the completed sections were still included in the analysis. The existence of four questionnaires and the possibility of readers not filling the entire questionnaire resulted in an unequal number of participants reading each extract.

4.2.6 Analysis

Processing of the data was done by the author in two stages: first, responses for each extract in each condition (modified/unmodified) were collated. I will consider how this was done with regard to the following sentence, from one of the extracts analysed in the previous Chapter:

> 'Oh yes, Sally remembered; she had it still, a ruby ring which Marie Antoinette had given her great-grandfather' (Woolf, 1925).

Taking this example, let's consider the way in which three random participants divided the text while attributing voices and viewpoints. As can be observed in Table 4.3, Participant A divided the sentence above into five segments according to his/her understanding of viewpoints, while Participant B attributed the whole sentence to one single perspective, and Participant C divided it into three segments. For instance, Participant A grouped *Sally remembered;* separately from the following text, while Participant C grouped together *Sally remembered; she had it still*. In this case *Sally remembered;* and *she had it still*, were counted as separate segments in our analysis. In this way, the smallest segment would be accounted for, as demonstrated in Table 4.4, where the resulting collated divisions for the sentence are presented.

Table 4.3 Example of different attributions by three representative participants (A, B and C).

Part A	*Sally speaking*	*Narrator*	*Sally speaking*	*Narrator*	*Sally speaking*
	Oh yes,	Sally remembered;	she had it still, a ruby ring which Marie Antoinette had given her great-grandfather.	She never had a penny to her name in those days,	and going to Bourton always meant some frightful pinch.
Part B	*Sally thinking*				
	Oh yes, Sally remembered; she had it still, a ruby ring which Marie Antoinette had given her great-grandfather. She never had a penny to her name in those days and going to Bourton always meant some frightful pinch.				
Part C	*Sally thinking*	*Narrator*	*Sally thinking*		
	Oh yes,	Sally remembered; she had it still,	a ruby ring which Marie Antoinette had given her great-grandfather. She never had a penny to her name in those days and going to Bourton always meant some frightful pinch.		

The second stage of the analysis looked at the attributions participants made for the various segments. As can be seen in Table 4.4, because Participant B only made one attribution, the perspective 'Sally thinking' is applied across all segments. For each segment, it is possible then to see how many different attributions have been made by all readers, which is shown at the bottom of Table 4.4. Crucially, this strategy allowed me to take into account all of the possible attributions to the smallest unit of text. After taking into account the responses of all participants, the maximum number of segments for each extract was applied to its respective original/modified version – depending on which of the two had more segments. The number of attributions was therefore observable for each segment in both the original and the modified text, allowing for a detailed comparison.

Table 4.4 Example of text subdivision in units basing on the collated attributions (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 and A6) for a single sentence by three representative participants (A, B and C).

	A1	**A2**	**A3**	**A4**	**A5**	**A6**
	Oh yes,	Sally remembered;	she had it still,	a ruby ring which Marie Antoinette had given her great-grandfather.	She never had a penny to her name in those days	and going to Bourton always meant some frightful pinch.
Part A	*Sally speaking*	*Narrator*	*Sally speaking*	*Sally speaking*	*Narrator*	*Sally speaking*
Part B	*Sally thinking*	*Sally thinking*	*Sally thinking*	*Sally thinking*	*Sally thinking*	*Sally thinking*
Part C	*Sally thinking*	*Narrator*	*Narrator*	*Sally thinking*	*Sally thinking*	*Sally thinking*
Persp. Count	**2**	**2**	**3**	**2**	**2**	**2**

4.3 Results

4.3.1 Difficulty

For each extract, readers evaluated the perceived difficulty by answering the following question: 'do you think this extract is difficult or challenging? If so, what do you think makes it difficult?'. Answers were converted into a 3-points difficulty scale (1/low, 2/medium, 3/high). For instance, if participants explicitly stated that the extract was difficult – describing with attributes such as 'very hard', 'challenging' or 'difficult' – their rating was assigned a 3. If they stated that the extract was relatively clear but explicitly mentioned some features as being challenging or difficult, their difficulty rating was considered to be a 2. If they stated that they understood the extract without problems, and did not signal any specific difficulties, their difficulty rating was assigned a 1. Figures 4.3 shows the distribution of low, medium and high difficulty ratings and their average value in original vs. modified extracts.

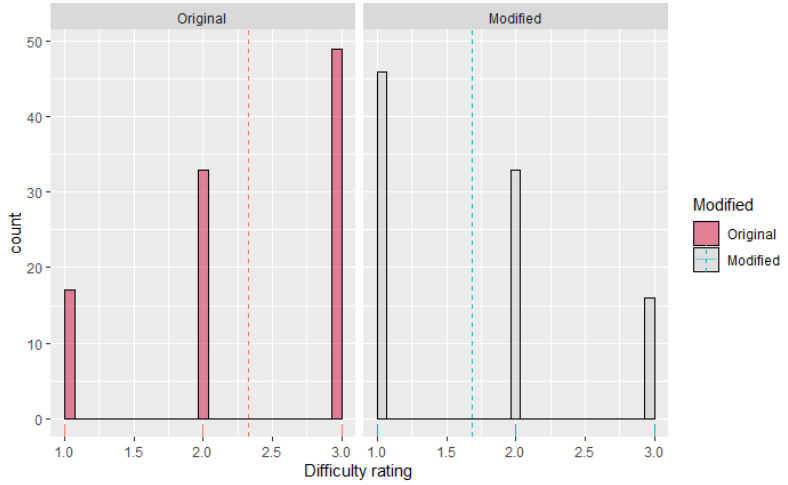


Fig. 4.3 Difficulty ratings distribution in original vs. modified extracts.

A paired *t*-test of the aggregated values per extract was carried out in R (R Development Core Team and Team, 2017) and revealed that the presence of *free indirect style* increased the subjectively experienced difficulty by about 0.63 points on a 3-point-scale,

and that this difference was very significant ($t(7) = 5.62$, $p < .001$);[1] the degrees of freedom are estimates based on the Satterthwaite method.[2] Cohen's effect size value ($d = .91$) suggests a high significance. When comparing individual extracts, the difference in difficulty ratings between original and modified ones was also significant, for all passages (see Figure 4.4).

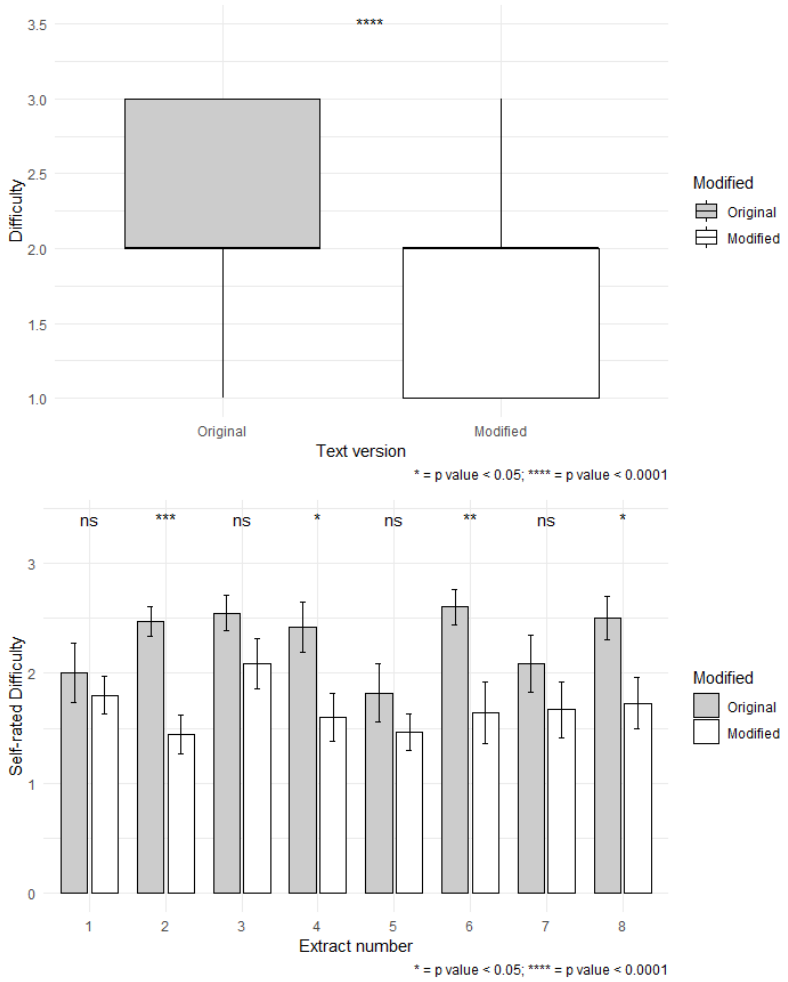


Fig. 4.4 Average difficulty ratings for original vs. modified extracts.

A linear mixed model that took into account random factors (i.e. the difference between participants, between the various extracts, the readers' experience with modernism and their reading habits) confirmed that the difference between difficulty ratings

[1] The t-value measures the size of the difference relative to the variation in a sample.

[2] Statisticians use the terms 'degrees of freedom' to describe the number of values in the final calculation of a statistic that are free to vary. For more see Walker (1940).

in original vs. modified extract was significant, and that it depended on the modifications (see Figure C.2 in Appendix C).

4.3.2 Number of perspectives

Readers had to signal whose 'voice', 'thought' or 'perspective' they identified in the extracts. A paired *t*-test was carried out and revealed that the number of perspectives and modes of representation identified in the original extracts were significantly higher in comparison to modified extract, both in general and for individual extracts (See Figure 4.5) In fact, the presence of *free indirect style* increased the number of different perspectives and modes identified by about 37%, which was a significant difference ($t(7) = 7.75$, $p < .001$). Cohen's effect size value ($d = .98$) suggested a high significance.

A linear mixed model accounting for random factors (i.e. the difference between participants, the individual extracts, the readers' experience with modernism and their reading habits) confirmed that the difference between the number of perspective and voices identified in original vs. modified extracts was significant, and that it depended on the modifications (see Figure C.3 in Appendix C).

Crucially, the difficulty rating and the number of perspectives identified correlated (R = 0.38), indicating that an increase in perceived difficulty corresponded to a greater disagreement among readers in the way they interpreted the extracts (see Figure 4.6).

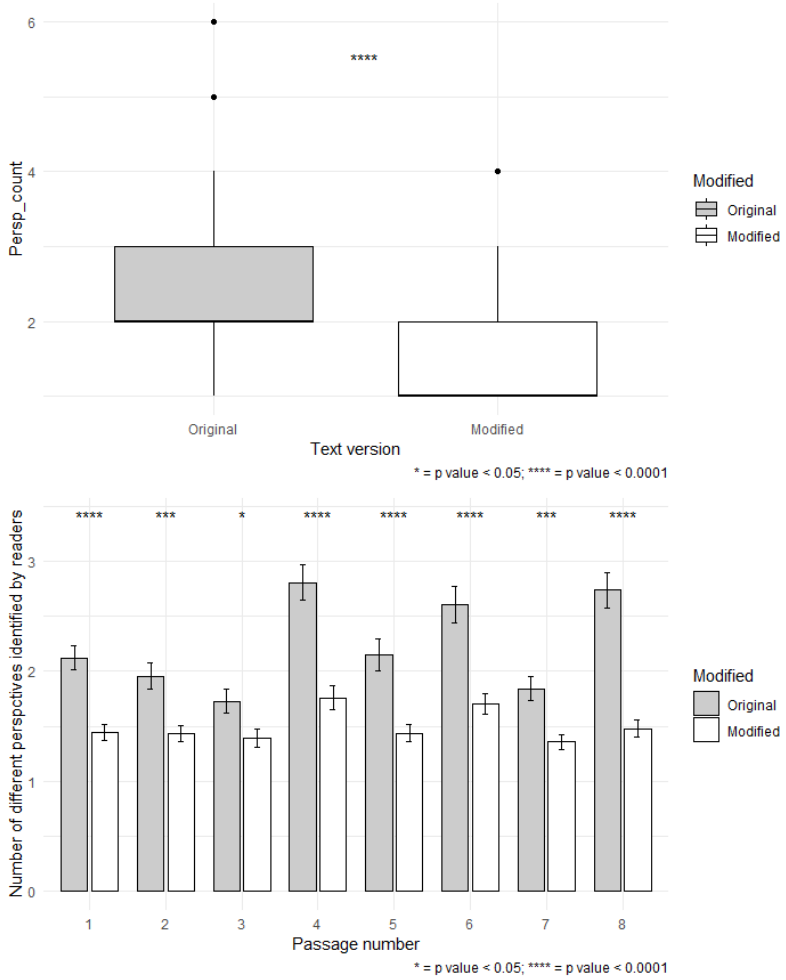


Fig. 4.5 Number of different perspectives and modes of representation identified by readers in original vs. modified extracts.

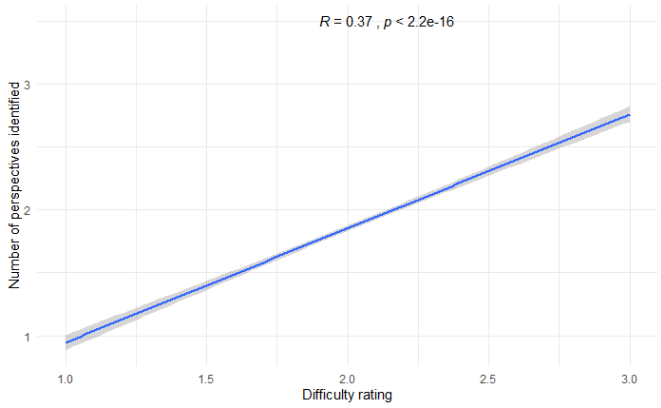


Fig. 4.6 Correlation between perceived difficulty and number of perspectives identified.

The analyses of the eight extracts presented in Section 3.3, allowed for a comparison of the instances identified as interpretatively ambiguous – i.e. where it appeared to be impossible to determine with certainty whose viewpoint was presented and/or whether the text represented utterances, speech, thoughts or perceptions – with segments of texts that appeared to be difficult for actual readers, namely those where participants identified more perspectives. Ninety-five segments from the eight original extracts were identified as ambiguous in the stylistic analysis (ca. 22%): while in general these matched segments for which readers had identified more than two viewpoints, they included only 15 of the 45 segments of original extracts for which readers attributed the highest number or perspectives (four or more). Figures C.8-C.15 in Appendix 3 show the ambiguous sections of the original extracts identified in the stylistic analysis compared to the number of perspectives identified by readers in original and modified extracts of Study I.

4.3.3 Individual factors

When completing the questionnaire, readers were asked to provide some personal information and some details about their reading habits, including how much they typically read and what, whether they had experience with modernist literature, and whether they had previously read either or both *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*. Table 4.5 shows the average values for these measures across participants.

An analysis of variance of the individual factors reported above showed that none of these influenced the difficulty ratings nor the number of perspectives identified. There was no difference in ratings between participants with different educational levels or reading habits, and ratings were not different between readers with or without experience with modernist literature or with Virginia Woolf's novels.

Table 4.5 Participants' information.

Age	Min. 18	Median 29	Mean 38	Max. 78
Books read in one year	Min. 2	Median 20	Mean 34	Max. 400
Reads for pleasure	Yes 49 (96%)	No 2 (4%)		
Time spent reading in general (hours a day)	Min. 0.5	Median 2.5	Mean 2.6	Max. 6.5
Time spent reading novels (hours a day)	Min. 0	Median 0.83	Mean 1	Max. 5
Has experience with modernist literature	Yes 19 (39%)	No 30 (61%)		
Has read *To the Lighthouse*	Yes 14 (27%)	No 37 (73%)		
Has read *Mrs Dalloway*	Yes 8 (16%)	No 43 (84%)		
Has read other works by Virginia Woolf	Yes 10 (20%)	No 41 (80%)		
Education	Secondary Education 9 (18%)	BA 24 (47%)	MA 6 (12%)	PhD 12 (24%)

4.3.4 Differences between techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation

Having analysed the eight extracts from *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway* (see Chapter 3.3) and identified the techniques used by Woolf in the texts, it was possible

to compare not only the original and the modified versions of the texts, but also to investigate whether different techniques resulted in more or less challenging experiences for readers – i.e. whether the number of perspectives identified by readers in original texts correlated with the use of specific techniques. It is important to keep in mind that the eight original extracts (and Woolf's two novels in general) do not feature a balanced proportion of techniques: 42% of the text (by word) features FIT, PN accounts for 23% of the text, FIS 15% and the remaining four techniques – RP, IM, N and DS, less than 8% each (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6 Proportion of speech/thought/consciousness presentation techniques in the eight original extracts.

	Count (by segment)	**Proportion (%)**	**Count (by word)**	**Proportion (%)**
FIT	143	35 %	1241	42 %
PN	89	22 %	688	23 %
FIS	62	15 %	456	15 %
N	62	15 %	246	8 %
RP	24	6 %	192	7 %
DS	22	5 %	95	3 %
IM	4	1 %	29	1 %

It was possible therefore to compare the number of perspectives identified by readers in original vs. modified extracts for each individual technique of speech, thought and consciousness presentation used by Woolf in the eight extracts. Results of paired *t*-tests showed that the number of attributions in original extracts were significantly higher for all the techniques that fall under the umbrella term *free indirect style* in comparison to modified ones,[3] while there was no difference for DS and IM (see Figure 4.7).

[3]In order to compute the comparison, the altered sections of the modified extracts – i.e. those featuring FIS, FIT, RP, PN, and IM – were referred to with the same labels, even if the technique, once altered, was obviously no longer such.

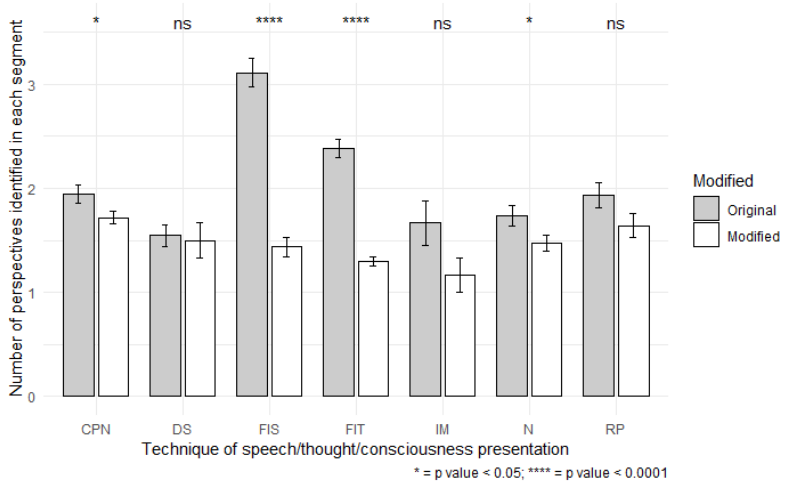


Fig. 4.7 Number of perspectives identified by Mode in Original and Modified extracts.

In particular, and in line with expectations, this difference was particularly prominent for segments of the extracts featuring FIS and FIT.

4.4 Discussion

The present study investigated how the presence of experimental techniques of consciousness presentation, in particular *free indirect style*, affects the perception of difficulty and the interpretation of perspectives in extracts from Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway*. This aimed to understand whether the impression that her novels are difficult – an opinion shared by actual readers as well as by literary scholars – depends, as assumed, on the use of such techniques and on the presence of the unsignalled shifts between viewpoints and of shifts between modes of consciousness presentation.

Previous studies investigating readers' responses to shifts in perspectives support the view that *free indirect style* poses a challenge for readers, and that this is typically related to the difficulty in identifying which character is speaking or thinking (Bray, 2007; Sotirova, 2006; Cui, 2017; Sotirova, 2016b). None of these however investigated whether there is a difference in how readers interpret the various techniques that fall under

this umbrella term, or whether a specific one is interpretively more challenging than the others.[4] Moreover, by looking at *free indirect style* in general, none of these focused specifically on the peculiar features that distinguish the use different authors make of such techniques. Finally, none of these made use of statistical tools to provide sound empirical evidence. The present study tried to fill this gap and to provides quantitative evidence showing whether perceived difficulties in Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway* are caused by the effects of her use of speech, thought and consciousness presentation techniques.

In the current study, responses to original and modified extracts where the potential ambiguities relating to the attribution of perspectives were altered or eliminated were analysed. Each participant had to rate four extracts in terms of difficulty and to signal whose perspective they thought was represented in the text, i.e. which character/s they thought was thinking, speaking or narrating the extract. Results of the study showed that the presence of *free indirect style* increased the number of perspectives identified significantly, for all of the extracts, as well as the self-reported perception of difficulty. These results are in line with our assumptions: they suggest that *free indirect style* poses a challenge for readers and that the reason for this can be attributed to the lack of clear boundaries between characters' speech, characters' thought and narration that arises from this technique, making it difficult to identify *who* is thinking/speaking and *whether* the identified character is thinking *or* speaking. This lays the ground for further investigations on *how* the various categories of *free indirect style* influence readers' processing of literary texts. An attempt in this direction is presented in Chapter 5.

Somewhat surprisingly, and in contrast with some earlier studies, the results obtained with the questionnaire suggest that there is no correlation between participants' interpretation of the extracts and their educational level, their reading habits or their previous

[4] Semino et al. (1997) identified ambiguous instances of speech and thought presentation techniques, but did not test their model on real readers.

experience (or lack thereof) with modernist literature, their age or their gender, and that this is true also for the level of difficulty perceived.

Interestingly, results brought some new insights into the difference between the various techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation: for all the segments of text featuring techniques encompassed under the umbrella term *free indirect style* readers identified significantly more viewpoints/voices than for the modified versions. In particular, while this significance was small for PN and RP ($p < 0.5$), FIS and FIT featured a very high significance ($p < 0.001$).There was a small but significant difference also for N, but it is important to keep in mind that often readers did not separate attributing parentheticals (he said/she said) from their relative utterances/thoughts, resulting in multiple perspectives being attributed to instances that can be classified as pure narration. Interestingly, for IM – which does not feature the 'mixture of direct and indirect' characteristics typical of *free indirect style* – there was no difference between original and modified passages. Also in this case, however, it must be observed that the number of such instances is very low when compared to other techniques, and that maybe different extracts featuring a more prominent use of IM would produce different results. In general, the results of this study seem to suggest that it is in particular the presence of FIS and FIT that causes difficulties in the interpretation of Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway*.

Some issues with the present study also need to be kept in mind: when choosing the extracts, it was decided to restrict the choice to those that would not exceed a few paragraphs in length and yet make sense by themselves, and that did not contain particularly difficult vocabulary. It is still possible that the lack of context increased the difficulty for readers, nonetheless, this should not influence the overall pattern of results, as it is true for both original and modified extracts. Finally, despite our effort to minimize changes as much as possible, any modification inevitably changed the original texts, slightly altering their syntax and therefore potentially their reception. To limit

the impact of this phenomenon, every word or sentence that was added to the modified versions to make the identification of perspectives easier – for example the conjunction *that* or the inquit *he/she said* – was excluded from the analysis.

Chapter 5

An eye tracking approach to Virginia Woolf's use of *free indirect style*

5.1 Introduction

The emergence of empirical approaches within stylistics has increased interest in how literary texts are processed by readers. Techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation represent an area ripe for empirical investigation in this respect, especially when these cause interpretative ambiguities. As discussed in Chapter 2, previous studies have focused on how point of view is identified during reading, and a few recent studies have investigated how readers respond to *free indirect style* using questionnaires or by measuring reading times. Despite providing qualitative evidence in support of theoretical claims about the difficulty posed by techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation, as well as insights into the possible effects of these techniques – in particular those encompassed under the umbrella term *free indirect style* – there is no evidence as to *how* readers process them. Building on previous findings and on the results obtained in the study described in Chapter 4, the present study aims to fill this gap, analysing eye

movements during the reading of authentic literary texts that are considered challenging because of the use of narrative techniques of consciousness presentation.

The use of eye tracking has consistently gained interest in the last twenty years, as can be seen from the increasing number of studies making use of eye tracking methods (see for example Siyanova-Chanturia et al. (2011); Conklin and Pellicer-Sánchez (2016); Godfroid et al. (2013); Koops van 't Jagt et al. (2014); Mahlberg (2014)). Eye movements studies are widely used to investigate cognitive processing during visual search, scene perception and reading. However, very few scholars have applied it specifically to narratives. Until now, researchers have mostly used artificial texts instead of authentic pieces of literature, which may not achieve the same effects on readers. The few studies that used authentic literary texts for eye tracking experiments have focused on poetry (Koops van 't Jagt et al., 2014), since its formal properties are typically more suitable to be adapted to an eye tracking study. Poems are usually shorter than prose and in verses, thus fitting one screen more naturally, and their formal features are more concentrated and generally easier to locate, allowing for easier manipulations of the text.

Even though the information recorded with eye tracking methods is quite comprehensive, the possibilities they offer are still limited. Eye movement patterns have been considered as a mirror to look 'into the mind of the subject' (Rayner, 1978). However, in essence, eye tracking relies on two assumptions: 1) that the targets of fixations represent what is being considered, and 2) that fixation times reflect the processing effort of the subject. This requires that the items used in the experiments (typically words or sentences) should allow for the observation of reading behaviour in response to the investigated features only, which is typically then compared to a controlled item where the same feature is removed or altered. Items should therefore be as free as possible of elements that could cause unwanted 'noise', i.e. unintentionally triggering unaccountable alterations in the reading behaviour (for example a very rare or long word would normally attract the reader's attention and require more processing effort).

To achieve this, in most eye tracking experiments in psycholinguistics the texts used as items are generated *ad hoc* by the researchers, so that factors influencing reading behaviour can be controlled.

When choosing to use authentic literary texts, it is almost impossible to isolate one specific feature for investigation, and it is therefore very complex to determine what causes a specific behaviour. Literary reading is a complex process, that involves language processing and understanding, but also very complicated and abstract mental representations, aesthetic responses and the trigger of feelings such as empathy and pleasure (Kidd and Castano, 2013, 2019; Koopman and Hakemulder, 2015), that develop during reading and often require long term information storage (Emmott, 1997). The practical need to minimize the amount of text presented to the reader during an eye tracking experiment, and sometime to modify it, allowing for the observation of readers' reaction to specific features without compromising the textual material – and crucially its 'literariness' – is still the major challenge for the current and future application of eye tracking within literary studies.

5.2 Eye movements and reading behaviour

5.2.1 Reading time measures

The observation of eye movements to investigate reading is well established in psychology and psycholinguistics. Eye tracking technology provides a rich moment-to-moment record of eye movements that enables an understanding of how features such as word choice, syntactic structures and other identifiable patterns affect the online (unconscious) processing in actual readers. Eye tracking assumes an 'eye-mind equivalence', meaning that what is being looked at is thought to be what is being processed at any given time (Pickering et al., 2004). The observation of eye movements indicates therefore what is

being paid attention to, and how much cognitive effort is being expended to process the input.

Reading involves a series of eye-movements, brief pauses, as well as rereadings of previously read parts of a text. While reading, the eyes 'jump' continuously: each little 'jump' or movement is called *saccade*. Each saccade has a mean size of 7-9 letter space (Rayner, 1978), and during silent reading a typical 2° saccade takes around 30 ms. Between one saccade and the next, there are short spans where the eyes remain relatively still on a single target: these are called *fixations*. Fixations during silent reading average 200-250 ms. The eyes, however, do not relentlessly go forward: for different reasons – e.g. processing difficulties, overshootings,[1] ambiguities, distraction – readers also move their eyes back in a text, either along the same line or to previous lines. This particular kind of saccade, which on average comprises the 10-15% of the total saccades count (Rayner, 1978), is called a *regression*. In reading, not all words are directly fixated, which is referred to as *skipping*. Readers only directly fixate about 70% of the words in a text and skip the other 30% (Schotter et al. (2012) and Rayner (2009) for a comprehensive overview of the factors that lead to skipping).

It is generally believed that information is only acquired during fixations (Rayner, 1978, 2009; Conklin and Pellicer-Sánchez, 2016). Every time the eyes stop, the brain collects information and processes it, building up, piece by piece, a general sense of what is being seen. Eye tracking methods have a number of advantages over other traditional techniques typically used to measure readers' behaviour and reaction times: because eye movements occur spontaneously and are generally not controllable, eye tracking methods allow for much more natural experiments, where participants do not have to complete tasks other than reading on the screen. Moreover, it allows a very rich moment-to-moment analysis, that shows not only reading times but also reading behaviours and strategies adopted by readers when faced with specific texts or features.

[1] The eye 'overshoots' when it travels beyond its target position and then quickly adjusts, returning in the opposite direction.

Eye tracking data for reading experiments are typically reported in terms of fixation counts and fixation durations for the words/sections of the text under investigation – called interest areas (IAs). Data are generally categorised into early and late measures: early measures (e.g. skipping, first fixation duration, first pass dwell time) relate to the initial stages of processing – for example word recognition – whereas late measures (e.g. dwell time, fixation count) reflect more effortful and/or conscious processing and include the revisits that result from processing difficulties (Clifton et al., 2007; Conklin et al., 2018).[2] Table 5.1 summarises the eye tracking measures that will be considered in this study.

[2]Rayner (1978, 2009) gives a comprehensive summary of the movements we are able to observe during eye tracking studies and of their possible interpretations.

Table 5.1 A description of the eye tracking measures analysed in the present study.

Raw measures	**Description**
Skipping	Binary measure indicating whether or not an IA is skipped (not fixated). (Skipping generally occurs when words are very predictable or very short.)
Fixation count	Total number of times the eye falls in the interest area. (Opposite to skipping, fixations generally increase when words are very rare or very long.)
Dwell time	The sum of the duration across all fixations that fall in the current IA.
Regression out count	Number of times the IA is exited to the left (in English), typically to re-read previous parts of the text.
Regression path duration	The summed fixation duration from when the current IA is first fixated until the eyes leave that IA in a forward direction.
Derived measures	
Skipping rate	The skipping rate per extract, calculated as the mean of the sum of the total number of skippings per extract for each participant, divided by the number of items (words) in each extract.
Fixation rate	The fixations rate per extract, calculated as the mean of the sum of the total number of fixations per extract for each participant, divided by the number of items (words) in each extract.
Regression probability	Calculated as the percent of regressions made during the reading of an extract divided by the number of fixations made in that extract.
Average fixation duration	The mean of all the fixation durations on a word
Total reading time	The time needed to read the whole extract

5.2.2 Eye movements in response to difficult texts

Eye tracking research has demonstrated that a number of factors can lead to slower – one might say 'more effortful' – processing. Readers tend for example to make more and longer fixations on long words in comparison to short words (Joseph et al., 2009; Rayner et al., 2004; Slattery and Yates, 2018) and to less frequent words rather than

more frequent ones (Joseph et al., 2013; Rayner and Duffy, 1986; Rayner et al., 2004). Eye tracking technology has also been used to explore the processing of both lexical and syntactic ambiguity: in terms of lexical ambiguity, existing theories have focused on early measures, showing that the increased processing effort is often reflected in an increase of gaze duration and first fixation duration (Binder and Morris, 1995; Dopkins et al., 1992).[3] Other studies have investigated syntactic ambiguities, examining the processing of specific structures such as garden path sentences (Clifton et al., 2016; Pickering and Traxler, 1998), subject/object relative clauses (Carreiras et al., 2010; Mak et al., 2008; Spivey-Knowlton et al., 1993; Traxler et al., 2002), reduced relative clauses (Staub, 2010; Staub et al., 2018) or anaphoric ambiguity (Kehler, 2000; Kertz et al., 2006; Koornneef et al., 2006). These have demonstrated that, in general, the effect of syntactic ambiguity is observed in late eye tracking measures. Syntactic ambiguities do not typically have an effect on first fixation duration or single fixation duration, which are more susceptible to word length and frequency, but rather tend to trigger an increase in the number of fixations and consequently impact the dwell time (the sum of the duration of all fixation on an IA). Effects of syntactic ambiguity on eye movements are also visible in the regions surrounding the IA itself: readers are likely to make more regressions and to reinspect earlier portions of the text in order to find the information necessary to resolve ambiguities, and to reread unclear portions of text.

Notably, most research on ambiguity has used very short texts – mostly single sentences – that were created specifically to investigate how readers respond to specific words or syntactic structures. While this allowed for an examination of particular linguistic features as the locus of increased processing effort, it is of limited value for literary studies, as it inevitably overlooks reading strategies that are involved in the reading of (longer) authentic texts, where contextual and co-textual information play a crucial role. The investigation of authentic pieces of literature allows for an examination

[3]These results have not been fully conclusive: see for example Rayner and Duffy (1986); Binder and Morris (2011).

of literary reading in much more natural circumstances, potentially increasing the ecological validity of the research – the extent to which the processes under investigation occur under 'normal' conditions (Zwaan, 1993). This is in fact one of the main concerns in psycholinguistic studies, where the artificial nature of the items used – which might be essential to observe some patterns – sometimes makes these sound very unnatural and distant from textual material that people experience in their everyday life. To my knowledge, very few existing studies have used eye tracking with authentic literary texts, and none of them did so to examine readers' processing of specific narrative techniques that cause ambiguous interpretations or difficulties in understanding.

5.2.3 Potential effects of *literariness* on eye movements

Although not focusing strictly on complexity or ambiguity, some recent studies have examined readers' eye movements while reading authentic literary texts. Koops van 't Jagt et al. (2014), for example, compared the reading of poetic verses with enjambments – prospective vs. retrospective[4] – with the reading of verses without enjambment and the reading of the same verses turned into prose, showing that different literary forms (poetry vs. prose) trigger distinct reading behaviours. Original poetic fragments that contained enjambment were read faster at the line break than fragments without enjambment or prose. They also found that retrospective (incomplete) enjambments elicited longer total reading time at the break, indicating that a potential syntactic ambiguity leads to increased processing effort. The technology used in their study is, however, not one typically used for reading experiments, and raises questions towards the precision of the data presented. Eye movements were recorded using a Tobii T120 eye tracker sampling at 120 Hz, which is rather low frequency considering that it has been argued

[4]In the case of a prospective enjambment, the first line is syntactically incomplete, and the enjambment is already visible and recognizable at the end of the first line. In the case of a retrospective enjambment, the first line appears to be a syntactically complete sentence, but once the next line is read it becomes clear that this can be integrated with the previous one, changing its initial meaning.

that sampling frequency for reading studies should be higher than 300 Hz (Kenneth et al., 2010).

Cop et al. (2015, 2017b,a) also analysed eye movements to an authentic literary text, and managed – admirably – to have their participants read an entire novel by Agatha Christie in three experimental sessions. Although they focused specifically on the differences between monolingual readers and bilingual ones, and on how noun reading by bilinguals is influenced by orthographic similarity with their translation equivalents in another language, their results are informative for the present research as they provide – for the first time – insight into eye movement patterns for a complete and long authentic text (see Table 5.4 for more details).[5]

Literariness has been discussed by numerous scholars, who often claim that literary texts achieve certain effects on readers, which are not triggered by non-literary texts (Miall, 2011, 2015; Miall and Kuiken, 1998; Zyngier et al., 2007, among others). Literary texts are thought to evoke strong feelings in the readers and to 'capture' their attention, 'detaching' them from reality. These effects are often attributed to two characteristic features of literary texts: *foregrounding* (Hakemulder, 2004; Leech, 2014; Van Peer et al., 2007a; Zyngier et al., 2007, and others) – i.e. the practice of making something stand out from the surrounding text – and *absorption* (Kuijpers et al., 2014; Stockwell, 2019; Troscianko, 2012, and others) – i.e. a temporary loss of attention to and detachment from the 'real' world caused by a deep immersion in the fictional storyworld (the narrative and its mental representation).[6]

[5]They showed for instance that readers of Christie's novel had a higher skipping rate in comparison to sentence reading, as well as a higher regression rate.

[6]Kuijpers et al. (2017) recently theorised a new taxonomy of the term absorption, which sees on one side *storyworld absorption* – i.e. the traditional conception of the term, described above – and on the other *artifact absorption*, which describes an almost opposite behaviour – one of contemplation and focus on the linguistic devices that contribute to the aesthetic quality of the text. Kuijpers et al. relate the latter to foregrounding features, which challenge the reader, who enters this state by 'exercising skill in the face of a challenge'.

The use of linguistic strategies such as repetitions, parallelisms, rhetorical figures, metaphors, rhymes, etc. is often referred to in relation to *foregrounding*, which has been shown to influence the degree of appreciation of a text through its deviance from the 'normal' use of language (Green et al., 2004; Van Peer et al., 2007a). When a specific foregrounding technique introduces *deviance*, this is assumed to require more effort on the readers' part to be integrated in the narrative/poetic discourse, and its aesthetic qualities thought to stimulate appreciation and intense engagement. Reading behaviour should reflect this, thus featuring longer reading times in general for texts featuring foregrounding, along with more fixations and more regressions for the deviant/aesthetically salient sections of the text.[7]

On the other hand, if the literary text is *absorbing*, it is possible that the absorption itself – as a state in which the reader is immersed in the so called 'storyworld' – would prevail over deviant uses of the language, making the reader less aware of linguistic elements such as unfamiliar words and/or complex syntactic constructions. Thus, one might predict the opposite effect on reading behaviour, with fewer and shorter fixations as a consequence of increased reading speed, and less attention to linguistic details (i.e. fewer regressions and rereading).

5.2.4 Eye tracking difficulty in Woolf's novels: what to expect

The potential difficulties arising from Woolf's use of techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation, in particular her experimental use of *free indirect style*, are assumed to affect the overall understanding of the text and its interpretation, particularly in relation to the attribution of point of view. As discussed in previous chapters, *free indirect style*, IM and FDS are characterised by a scarcity of clear referents and no quotation marks to indicate where characters are speaking and thinking. Moreover, due to the juxtaposition of several techniques of speech and thought presentation, readers are often

[7] This would also apply to artefact absorption.

faced with a fragmented syntax and are not always (or not immediately) in possession of enough information to be able to construct one single and clear representation of the fictional world. This can result in ambiguous interpretation of viewpoints, and therefore in difficulty in interpreting the plot.

This, in practice, makes late measures from eye tracking the most informative to explore. On the one hand, if the fragmented syntax works as an element of deviance (it could be considered an element of *foregrounding* in Woolf's narrative), these difficulties are likely to be reflected in an increased number of regressions and re-fixations, which would help the reader re-evaluate the co-textual and syntactic information. This also means overall longer reading times for the extracts, and potentially longer dwell times, also due to the lack of punctuation and quotation marks typical of *free indirect style*, which might lead to interpretative difficulty (Hill and Murray, 2000; Grindlay, 2002).

On the other hand, it is also possible that readers, if absorbed, would move onward in the text despite unclear sentences or interpretations, hoping to find a clue later in the text that would help them resolve the ambiguity. This behaviour is in line with the 'good-enough' processing model proposed by Ferreira et al. (2002), which suggests that readers do not always engage in full detailed processing of linguistic input. Instead, there is a tendency to develop superficial representations of it, especially when confronted with some difficulty, and even if a syntactic reanalysis takes place, the incorrect interpretations may persist. Readers may construct a meaningful representation of the narrative, even with imprecise information, accepting and following their initial interpretation or leaving ambiguity unresolved. If this is the case, *free indirect style*, IM and FDS would not require greater processing effort, and may in fact induce reduced processing effort.

Lastly, it is important to keep in mind that one of the effects of the use of techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation is to resemble 'orality' (Adamson, 1995). The lack of punctuation and quotation marks typical of *free indirect style* that on the one hand might lead to interpretative difficulty, could on the other hand increase the

reading speed. Removing formal pauses might in fact emphasise the 'orality' of *free indirect style*, IM and FDS, allowing for a faster alternation of thoughts, speech and perceptions.

In sum, if *free indirect style*, IM and FDS are perceived by readers as deviant, we expect more and longer fixations and regressions, and longer dwell times. If on the other hand, the *free indirect style* leads to absorption, or if its 'orality' plays a role in speeding up the reading, we expect fewer and shorter fixations and regressions, and shorter dwell times. Lastly, if the readers don't resolve the ambiguities, as suggested by the 'good enough' model, we might also see similar patterns when extracts are ambiguous as well as when they are not, or reduced processing effort if processing is just good enough.

5.3 Study II

5.3.1 Materials

In order to be able to compare eye movements with the results obtained in Study I, the same eight extracts were used (five from *Mrs Dalloway* and three from *To the Lighthouse*,[8]) which contained shifts between characters' perspectives as well as between several techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation. For each extract, a modified version was created, where the hypothesised difficulties were removed or altered to indicate more distinctly the shifts between the different modes of consciousness presentation and to signal more clearly whose perspectives were being presented. The alterations to the various techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation in the original texts were very similar to those used in Study I (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2 in Chapter 4), and involved the alteration of personal pronouns, spatial and deictic items and verb tenses oriented to the character and the removal of markers of the characters'

[8] see 3.3 for an analysis of the texts.

expressivity such as exclamation marks and idiomatic expressions (original and modified extracts used in Study I and II can be found in Appendix A). Because of the limited text formats supported by the software used to create the eye tracking experiment, italics could not be used to indicate thoughts. Instead, quotation marks were used, and attributing clauses were added accordingly, to help distinguish between speech and thoughts.

The extracts were presented in a rectangular section at the centre of a 24" screen – 250 pixels from both sides and 150 from the top and bottom – with a resolution of 1152x864 and a 19:4 display mode, with Times New Roman font, size 19, and triple line spacing. The choice of a serif font was motivated by the attempt to recreate a 'book-like' layout and to make the reading as natural and comfortable as possible (original paragraph formatting was maintained). On average, each screen contained 68 words, distributed over a maximum of seven lines, and the average number of word per extract was 366 for original texts and 371 for modified ones. Details of the texts are presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Descriptive parameters of the eight original extracts.

Descriptive Parameters	**Extract 1**	**Extract 2**	**Extract 3**	**Extract 4**	**Extract 5**	**Extract 6**	**Extract 7**	**Extract 8**
Number of words	435	291	464	383	297	319	427	331
Number of sentences	28	26	21	10	20	22	35	26
Avg. words per sentence	15.5	11.3	22.7	35.5	14.8	14.6	12.2	12.8
Avg. word length (characters)	4.4 (for content words: 5.7)	4.4 (for content words: 5.8)	4.9 (for content words: 6.5)	4.5 (for content words: 5.7)	4.2 (for content words: 5.2)	4.5 (for content words: 5.8)	4.4 (for content words: 5.6)	4.2 (for content words: 5.4)
Avg. words. per screen	72.8	69.3	67.1	69.4	71.6	65.9	61.8	68.2

While word length was in line with Agatha Christie's novel used by Cop et al. (2015) – 4.18 – sentence length in Woolf's novels was consistently higher: Agatha Christie's novel featured an average of 10.73 words per sentence while the eight extracts from Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway* had on average 17.42 words per sentence.

5.3.2 Participants

Sixty-one native speakers of English (75.4% female and 24.6% male) participated in the study, either for course credit or monetary compensation. Most of the participants were students from several faculties at the University of Nottingham (93.4%, of which 72.1% undergraduate students and 21.3% postgraduate students), while the remaining four participants were not students, they held at least a BA degree. A little over half of the participants said that they had encountered Virginia Woolf's writings previously (54.0%), either in the course of their studies or due to their personal interest. Finally, some of the participants had read *To the Lighthouse* and/or *Mrs Dalloway* (16.4%) (more details of about participants are presented in Section 5.4.1).

5.3.3 Procedure

The study was approved by a university ethics committee and participants signed an informed consent form before beginning the experiment. Prior to the experiment, a Miles test was performed to determine eye dominance and select the appropriate eye to be recorded during the experiment (Miles, 1930). The participants were asked to complete a survey about their education, reading habits and knowledge of modernist literature.

Participants were then instructed to sit and put their chin on a chin-rest that was approximately 60 cm in front of an EyeLink 1000 Plus system, having a sampling rate of 1000 Hz (SR Research Ltd., 2016). After checking that they felt comfortable, they

were told that they would be presented with a few extracts of literary text, and they should read each extract as they would normally read a book in a familiar environment. Participants were also told that there would be some comprehension questions at the very end of the experiment to prompt them to read for comprehension and to discourage skimming. After each extract, participants had to answer two questions: one rating respectively how much they liked the extract and the other how challenging they found it on a one-to-five scale. They were asked to provide a short explanation for their answers. At the beginning of the experiment a participant's gaze was calibrated and validated using a 9-point grid, with a maximum gaze error of 1 degree and an average gaze error of 0.5 degree. The participant was allowed to have a break half the way through the experiment. Calibration was repeated after the break and re-calibration was performed as necessary.

5.4 Analysis

The ratings provided by readers in relation to the perceived difficulty and appreciation of each extract were analysed to see whether these were affected by the modifications, i.e. by the simplification/alteration of ambiguous techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation. The following eye movement measures were analysed, most of which are assumed to reflect late processing effort and thus reflect reading difficulties (see Table 5.1 for a description): *Fixation count*, *Fixation rate*, *Skipping*, *Regression out count*, *Regression rate*, *Regression path duration*, *Dwell time*, *Average fixation duration* and *Total reading time*. IAs corresponded to individual words.

Data were cleaned in two phases: an initial manual cleaning was performed to correct occasional vertical drift; secondly, a 'Four-stage Fixation Cleaning' was performed, by which very short fixations were merged with neighbouring fixations within a specified distance (first stage = fixations below 40ms and within 0.5 degrees; second stage =

40ms and within 1.25 degrees), then any instances of three consecutive fixations below 140ms were merged into one fixation. Finally, any remaining fixations below 80ms or longer than 800ms were removed, as these are assumed to represent, respectively, minor location errors rather than true fixations, and momentary losses of concentration. These cleaning processes resulted in the removal of 2.45% of the data gathered. Continuous eye tracking measures were log-transformed and fitted in separate linear mixed models, while count (fixation count, regression count) and binary measures (rates) were fitted into generalised linear mixed-effects models, both using the lme4 and lmertest packages (Bates et al., 2015; Kuznetsova et al., 2017) of R (R Development Core Team and Team, 2017). The final models for eye tracking measures contained the fixed factors *Modified* (original extracts vs. modified ones), *Word Length*, *Trial* (extract order of appearance to the participant), *Page* (each text was made of between 4 and 7 screens, simulating pages) and *Position in line* (the word distance from margins in each line, where 1 indicated last word on either sides of the line), *Text* (as a unique identifier for each extract) and *Participant* were added to the model as random factors. Initially also *Word frequency* was included as fixed factor, but because it strongly correlated with *Word length*, only the latter was kept as it had a higher impact on model fit. Information about the participants (e.g. education, amount of reading, and familiarity with modernist literature) was used for the analysis of difficulty and appreciation ratings, but it was excluded from the analysis of eye movements as it did not improve the models' fit. Visual inspection of residual plots did not reveal any obvious deviations from homoscedasticity or normality. *Post hoc t*-tests were then computed for individual extracts and for individual techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation, to investigate whether these differed from one another.

5.4.1 Population info questionnaire

Before starting the eye tracking experiment, participants were asked to complete a short questionnaire. This contained general questions (eg. age, education) along with questions aimed to assess their reading habits and their literary expertise, such as whether they had encountered *To the Lighthouse* and/or *Mr Dalloway* before, whether they had any experience with modernism in general, how much time they spent reading, whether they enjoyed reading fiction and whether they usually empathise with characters or get immersed in the narrative. Results are shown in Table 5.3.

Reading expertise, immersion and experience have sometimes been shown to affect literary reading (Dixon et al., 1993) but there is no evidence as to whether and how these influence online processing. Results of correlation tests (for continuous variables) and *t*-tests (for categorical variables) showed that several measures were affected by these factors: readers who had experience with modernist literature featured shorter *Average Fixation Duration* ($p < 0.001$) in comparison to those who did not, less *Fixations* ($p < 0.01$), shorter *Dwell Time* ($p < 0.001$) and *Regression Path Duration* ($p < 0.05$), smaller probability of making a *Regressions* ($p < 0.01$) and shorter *Total Reading Time*. Readers who indicated that they were empathetic with characters featured longer *Average Fixation Duration* ($p < 0.001$), shorter *Regression Path Duration* ($p < 0.001$), longer *Dwell Time* ($p < 0.5$), less *Regressions* ($p < 0.5$), a higher Skipping Probability ($p < 0.01$). Those who reported feeling *immersed* while reading fiction featured longer *Average Fixation Duration* ($p < 0.001$), longer *Dwell Time* ($p < 0.5$), less *Regressions* ($p < 0.01$) and shorter *Total Reading Time*.[9] Overall time spent reading as reported by participant did not affect any eye tracking measure.

[9] Although these results depict a clear influence of *Immersion* and *Empathy*, it must be kept in mind that only a very small percentage of participants declared to feel no empathy and no immersion. These results should therefore be considered as indicative rather than conclusive.

Table 5.3 Participants' information.

Age	Min. 17	Median 19	Mean 20.3	Max. 39
Books read in one year	Min. 0	Median 10	Mean 17	Max. 100
Reads for pleasure	Yes 59 (96.7%)	No 2 (3.3%)		
Time spent reading in general (hours a day)	Min. 0.15	Median 1.5	Mean 1.7	Max. 8
Feels immersed when reading	Yes 54 (89%)	No 7 (11%)		
Feels empathy for fictional characters	Yes 55 (90%)	No 6 (10%)		
Reading Enjoyment (7-point scale)	Min. 1	Median 4	Mean 4.75	Max. 6
Has experience with modernist literature	Yes 35 (57%)	No 26 (43%)		
Has read *Mrs Dalloway* and/or *To the Lighthouse*	Completed at least one 10 (16%)	None read 47 (77%)	Started but not finished 4 (7%)	
Has read other works by Virginia Woolf	Yes 10 (20%)	No 41 (80%)		
Profession	Student 57 (93%)	Other 4 (7%)		
Education	Secondary Education 3 (5%)	BA 44 (72%)	MA 11 (18%)	PhD 3 (5%)

5.4.2 Difficulty and appreciation ratings

A linear mixed model of the difficulty and appreciation ratings provided by participants after reading each extract from *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway* – aggregated by *Text* and *Participant* – was fitted with *Modified* and *Trial* as fixed factors, and *Participant*, *Experience with Woolf's To the Lighthouse/Mrs Dalloway*, *Number of books read in a year*, *Level of education* and *Text* as random factors.

These indicated that original extracts were perceived as significantly more difficult in comparison to modified extracts (β = -0.10, SE = 0.03, z = -3.35, p = 0.001). However, when looking at the eight extracts individually, t-tests revealed that the difficulty ratings were significantly different for extracts 1 ($p < 0.001$), 5 ($p < 0.5$) and 8 ($p < 0.01$) only. However, extract 7 ($p < 0.5$) featured higher difficulty ratings for the modified version in comparison to the original one (see Figures 5.1 and 5.2). No difference was found for extracts 2, 3, 4 and 6.

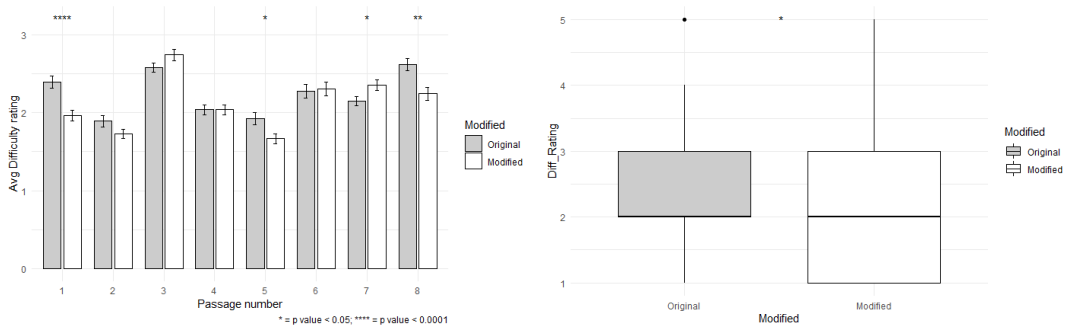


Fig. 5.1 Comparison of Difficulty ratings on a one-to-five scale for Original vs. Modified extracts, aggregated on the left and individual ones on the right.

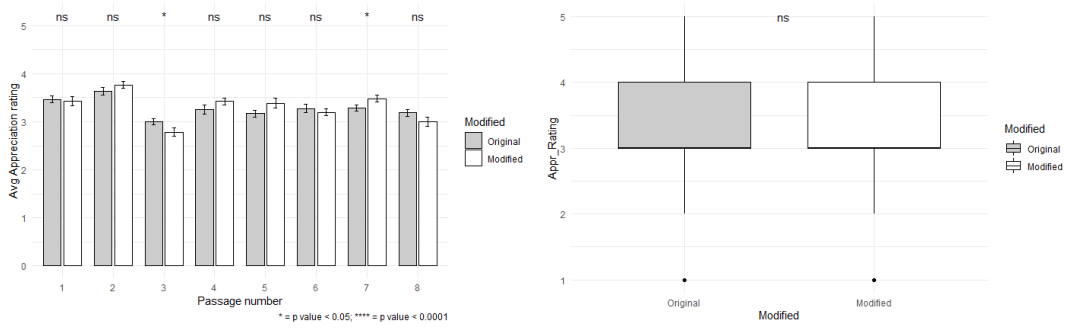


Fig. 5.2 Comparison of Appreciation ratings on a one-to-five scale for Original vs. Modified extracts, aggregated on the left and individual ones on the right.

For appreciation ratings, no difference was found between original and modified extracts with a linear mixed model, nor when running individual t-tests. A Pearson's correlation test showed that appreciation and difficulty ratings featured a medium negative correlation (R = -0.44), meaning that, in general, the more difficult the extract was considered by readers, the less it was appreciated (see Appendix C).

5.4.3 Eye tracking measures

First I examined how eye movement patterns for reading Virginia Woolf lined up with reading patterns in the psycholinguistic literature more broadly. As shown in Table 5.4, the average values for the eye tracking measures per word for the original extracts (aggregated) and for the modified ones (also aggregated) were mainly in line with previous findings.

Table 5.4 Mean values for the present study in comparison with values reported by Rayner (2009) and Cop et al. (2015), based respectively on sentence reading research and on the reading of an entire novel by Agatha Christie.

Measure	**Sentence Reading** (Rayner, 2009)	**Literary Text, monolinguals** (Cop et al., 2015)	**Literary Text** (Woolf's original extracts)	**Literary Text** (Woolf's modified extracts)
Skipping %	-	41%	61%	59%
content words	15%	34%	55%	53%
function words	65%	49%	73%	73%
Fixation %	75 - 118%	72%	80%	79%
content words	85%	-	100%	98%
function words	35%	-	57%	56%
Dwell Time	-	-	326 ms	325 ms
Fixation Duration	225 - 250 ms	216 ms	239 ms	238 ms
Regression %	10 - 15%	24.2%	10.06%	10.9%
Regression Path Duration	-	-	450.6 ms	434.8 ms
Total reading time (per extract)	-	-	71 s (12.3 s per screen)	70 s (12.3 s per screen)
Fixation count (per extract)	-	-	291	287

Fixation durations were slightly higher than those reported by Cop et al. (2015) for the reading of Agatha Christie's novel, but were still in line with Rayner's (2009) reported values for sentence reading. While the percentage of regressions was also in line with Rayner, it was considerably lower than the regression rate reported by Cop et.

al for the reading of Christie's novel. This is surprising, since Agatha Christie's novels do not typically pose a challenge for readers in terms of comprehension. Interestingly, the percentage of fixations – particularly for content words – was considerably higher for Woolf's texts in comparison to the values established when reading 'constructed' experimental sentences (Rayner, 2009) and when reading Agatha Christe's novel (Cop et al., 2015). Skipping percentage was also considerably higher for Woolf's texts – for both content and function words and in both the original and in the modified versions of the extracts – in comparison to the values reported by both Rayner and Cop et. al, with around 54% content words skipped in Woolf against respectively 15% and 34%. This, combined with the high fixation percentage, indicates that fixations were concentrated on 40% of the text, and therefore that often multiple fixations per word occurred. What these comparisons indicate, in sum, is that readers skipped a considerable part of Woolf's extracts, and that they needed more (and slightly longer) fixations to process the texts. While a high skipping rate might typically suggests that readers were not very attentive, it might also indicate that they indeed found the extract challenging and opted for a reading 'mode' closer to *skimming*, i.e. a reading 'mode' that can efficiently create an overview of a text under time pressure (Duggan and Payne, 2009; Strukelj and Niehorster, 2018), where readers try to understand the most important elements of a text by skipping over less 'important' sections of text, although, in this case, there was no time pressure. These results are also largely in line with the 'good enough' interpretation theory (Ferreira et al., 2009, 2002), which assumes that readers do not necessarily engage in full detailed processing of linguistic input. If so, readers might tend to generate superficial representations of the textual material when confronted with some difficulty, often accepting inaccurate interpretations if these are somewhat consistent with the plausibility of events in the fictional world. This behaviour too would be plausibly reflected in an increased probability of skipping, with several fixations on few words.

Modified vs. Original extracts

Next I looked at how reading behaviour differed between the original and the modified extracts, comparing the grouped values of the eight original extracts on the one side and the eight modified ones on the other. Linear mixed models for most measures featured highly significant effects of *Word length*, *Position in line*, *Page* and *Trial*. In general, long words elicited more fixations and regressions, longer fixations and less skipping than short words. The position of the word on the line (with values from 1 to a maximum of 8 indicating the proximity (1) or distance (1+) of the word to the right and left margins) had similar effects, with increased distance from the margins eliciting longer fixations, more fixations and regressions and a higher probability of making fixations. *Page number* had a significant effect on most measures, with later pages featuring an increased number of fixations and regressions, longer durations for both, and less skipping. Lastly, the same effects were observed for the order in which participants read the eight extracts, with extracts read first featuring longer and more fixations and regressions, and less skipping (see Appendix C for more details).

Skipping Rate Results of a linear mixed model comparing the skipping rate per extract for each participant showed significant effects of modifications on skipping rate (β = -1.89, SE = 0.65, z = -2.90, $p < 0.01$), with original extracts featuring a higher skipping rate than modified ones. Paired t-tests for individual extracts showed however that this difference was not consistent for all extracts, and that only extracts 3 and 8 featured a significantly higher skipping rate for the original version in comparison to the modified one, while the other extracts featured no statistical difference (see Figure C.24).

Dwell Time and Average Fixation Duration The linear mixed models showed no significant effects of modifications on dwell time or on average fixation duration in

general. Interestingly, when looking at individual extracts, it appeared that the average dwell time for extracts 2 ($p < 0.01$), 6 ($p < 0.05$) and 7 ($p < 0.05$) was significantly longer for original extracts in comparison to their modified counterparts, while extract 5 featured shorter dwell time for the original version in comparison to the modified one ($p = 0.01$). The average fixation duration for extracts 1 ($p < 0.0001$), 2 ($p < 0.0001$), 3 ($p < 0.01$) and 4 ($p < 0.05$) was significantly higher for original extracts in comparison to ther modified counterparts, whereas the opposite was true for extracts 5 ($p < 0.0001$), 6 ($p < 0.0001$) and 8 ($p < 0.001$) (see Figures C.17 and C.18).

Fixation Count and Fixation Rate Results of the generalised linear mixed model showed that in general the modifications had a significant effect on the number of fixations per word (β = -0.02, SE = 0.01, z = -3.26, p = 0.001), with original extracts featuring more fixations per word. *T*-tests for individual extracts showed that this difference was significant for extracts 2 ($p < 0.001$) and 6 ($p < 0.0001$) – where the original extracts featured more fixations per word than the modified ones – and for extract 3 ($p < 0.01$), where instead the modified version presented a significantly higher number of fixations than the original one. *Fixation rate* per extract also appeared to be affected by the modifications, with a significantly higher rate for original extracts in comparison to modified ones (β = -2.21, SE = 0.73, z = -3.01, p = 0.003). *T*-tests for individual extracts showed that this difference was significant for extract 6 only ($p < 0.0001$) (see Figures C.19 and C.20).

Regressions Count, Regression Rate and Regression Path Duration Results of the linear mixed model showed no significant effects of modifications on the number of regressions per word, on the regression rate or on regression path duration. When looking into individual extracts, it appeared however that the original versions of extracts 4 ($p < 0.05$) and 6 ($p < 0.05$) featured more regressions than the modified ones, whereas extract 8 featured significantly less regressions ($p < 0.0001$) (see Figures C.21 and C.22).

Total reading time Results of the linear mixed model showed significant effects of modifications on the total reading time of the original extracts, indicating that in general readers needed more time to read these in comparison to the modified ones (β = -0.02, SE = 0, z = -4.42, $p < 0.001$). When looking at individual extracts, it appeared however that this difference was significant only for extract 2 ($p < 0.01$) and 6 ($p < 0.05$) (see Figure C.23).

What these results illustrate, in sum, is that when considering all original extracts together and comparing these to all the modified extracts, by word, only *Fixation Count*, *Skipping Rate* and *Total Reading Time* were affected by the modifications, and that this effect was in line with the behaviour predicted by existing literature on the processing of difficult sentences, with more *Fixations*, more *Skipping* and longer *Total Reading Times* for original extracts in comparison to modified ones. These linear models accounted for a number of random factors that might influence reader's behaviour, namely the individual difference between extracts and participants, the length of the words, their position on the line, the page/scree these appeared in and the sequence in which the extracts were presented to the readers. Individual *t*-tests for each measure determined, however, that most of the time these differences were not consistent across all extracts, and that instead they affected only some of the extracts. Interestingly, *Average Fixation Duration*, for which the linear models found no effect of the modifications when looking at all extracts together, appeared to be significantly different for most extracts when looking at these individually. The reason for the first result lies in the fact that while extracts 1, 2, 3 and 4 featured significantly longer fixations durations for the original extracts in comparison to the modified ones, extracts 5, 6 and 8 showed the opposite trend, with modified extracts featuring longer fixations than original ones.

5.4.4 Difficult IAs

The same eye tracking measures were then analysed for a reduced version of the dataset containing only 'difficult' items. These were selected according to the results of Study I, from which were chosen all the words belonging to segments for which readers encountered more difficulties in the identification of viewpoints – i.e. where the number of perspectives identified was equal or higher than 4 (min = 0, max = 6). This resulted in the creation of a dataset that accounted for 12.5% of the full dataset.

In line with the analysis of the full dataset, the fixed factors *Word length*, *Position in line*, *Page* and *Trial* had strong effects on most measures, in particular *Word length*: longer words significantly increased the number of regressions and the number and the duration of fixations, and decreased the probability of skipping ($ps < 0.0001$) (see C for more details).

The results of linear mixed models and generalised linear mixed models for eye tracking measures found, however, no effect of modifications on the selected IAs for *Dwell Times*, *Average Fixation Duration*, *Regression Out Count*, *Fixation Count* or *Regressio Path Duration*. Modifications had a significant effect only on *Skipping Probability*[10] (β = -0.12, SE = 0.02, z = -6.16, $p < 0.001$), showing that the 'difficult' segments in the original extracts had a higher probability of being skipped in comparison to their modified counterparts.[11]

In line with the results obtained analysing the full dataset, when comparing individual extracts[12] it appeared that the effect of the modifications was not consistent across extracts or across measures, and that in general the difference between modified and original extracts was smaller for this reduced dataset in comparison to the full one.

[10] Skipping was accounted for here as a binary measure indicating whether the IA was skipped (1) or not (0).

[11] *Fixation Rate*, *Skipping Rate* and *Regression Rate* could not be calculated as they are relative to the total number of words in the extracts.

[12] Note that extract 3 is absent from the analysis because it did not contain any segment for which readers identified four or more viewpoints in Study I.

This indicates in substance that the IAs selected – i.e. those for which participants of Study I identified 4 or more viewpoints – did not directly elicit the behaviour expected by readers faced with comprehension difficulties. In particular, in this case as well as for the full dataset, it is very surprising that original extracts (and difficult IAs) did not differ from modified ones in terms of regressions. An overview of the measures obtained from the full dataset and from the one containing only difficult IAs is reported in Table 5.5 and 5.6.

Table 5.5 Mean values by text for full dataset and reduced dataset with ambiguous items only (part A).

		Full dataset			***Difficult IAs dataset***		
Measure	**Text**	**Original**	**Modified**	***p.signif***	**Original**	**Modified**	***p.signif***
	1	321	327	ns	305	299	ns
	2	**340**	326	**	385	386	ns
	3	343	343	ns	-	-	-
Dwell	**4**	322	328	ns	320	319	ns
Time	**5**	315	**328**	**	299	**326**	*
	6	**362**	352	*	325	313	ns
	7	**337**	327	*	331	296	ns
	8	332	331	ns	329	338	ns
	1	0.75	0.77	ns	0.67	0.69	ns
	2	**0.84**	0.79	***	0.86	0.93	ns
	3	0.82	**0.86**	**	-	-	-
Fixation	**4**	0.79	0.79	ns	0.76	0.75	ns
Count	**5**	0.72	0.71	ns	0.58	0.52	ns
	6	**0.92**	0.81	****	0.77	0.76	ns
	7	0.83	0.81	ns	0.73	0.70	ns
	8	0.77	0.76	ns	0.77	0.79	ns
	1	**246**	237	****	**240**	230	**
	2	**245**	232	****	**233**	230	*
	3	**243**	239	**	-	-	-
Avg.	**4**	**242**	238	*	247	240	ns
Fix Dur.	**5**	235	**247**	****	238	**257**	**
	6	241	**248**	****	238	242	ns
	7	237	239	ns	238	229	ns
	8	234	**240**	***	237	241	ns

* = p value < 0.05; **** = p value < 0.0001

Table 5.6 Mean values by text for full dataset and reduced dataset with ambiguous items only (part B).

		Full dataset			*Difficult IAs dataset*		
Measure	**Text**	**Original**	**Modified**	***p.signif***	**Original**	**Modified**	***p.signif***
	1	0.083	0.085	ns	0.077	0.066	ns
	2	0.086	0.083	ns	0.054	0.078	ns
	3	0.079	0.086	ns	-	-	-
Reg.	**4**	**0.084**	0.076	*	0.066	0.060	ns
Count	**5**	0.066	0.070	ns	0.060	0.049	ns
	6	**0.097**	0.087	*	0.089	0.090	ns
	7	0.095	0.096	ns	0.116	0.083	ns
	8	0.077	**0.099**	****	0.079	0.092	ns
	1	0.62	0.61	ns	0.64	0.64	ns
	2	**0.65**	0.63	***	**0.78**	0.62	****
	3	**0.67**	0.57	****	-	-	-
Skipping	**4**	0.63	0.62	ns	0.68	0.67	ns
	5	0.64	**0.69**	****	0.76	**0.80**	**
	6	0.59	**0.61**	***	0.59	0.58	ns
	7	0.60	**0.61**	**	0.61	**0.72**	**
	8	**0.68**	0.65	****	**0.64**	0.60	*
	1	431	435	ns	360	356	ns
	2	496	445	*	445	414	ns
	3	511	435	****	-	-	-
Reg.	**4**	457	450	ns	457	506	ns
Path.							
Duration	**5**	436	458	ns	442	455	ns
	6	481	469	ns	465	451	ns
	7	455	445	ns	450	671	*
	8	477	454	ns	394	399	ns

* = p value < 0.05; **** = p value < 0.0001

5.4.5 Differences among extracts and modes

The results reported above show that although all modified extracts underwent the same modifications, readers' behaviour changed depending on the extract they read. Some extracts featured for instance longer and more fixations for the original extracts in comparison to the modified ones – in line with assumptions – while other extracts showed opposite results. If, as I believe, Woolf's style is in general very similar in the

eight extracts selected, this discrepancy could find its roots in the use and the distribution of the different techniques of consciousness presentation in the different extracts.

Having tagged the texts according to the several techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation, it was possible to determine whether the modifications affected eye tracking measures on IAs featuring specific techniques.

T-tests were computed to compare original and modified extracts aggregated by technique. These show that there are indeed differences among the various techniques of speech and thought presentation used by Woolf in the two novels, which in some cases elicit opposite behaviours. Table 5.7 reports mean values for eye tracking measures of original and modified extracts divided by technique, and the significance of *t*-tests.

Table 5.7 Mean IA values for the different techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation, and *p*-values of paired *t*-tests comparing original and modified extracts.

ET_measure	Mode	Original *mean*	Modified *mean*	*p.signif*
Dwell Time	*PN*	334	333	ns
	DS	329	327	ns
	FIS	328	324	ns
	FIT	337	339	ns
	IM	**354**	320	***
	RP	326	320	ns
Fixation Count	*PN*	0.80	0.81	ns
	DS	0.85	0.83	ns
	FIS	**0.76**	0.73	*
	FIT	0.81	0.80	ns
	IM	**0.85**	0.76	**
	RP	**0.81**	0.76	***
Average Fixation Duration	*PN*	**242**	240	*
	DS	231	231	ns
	FIS	238	235	ns
	FIT	242	242	ns
	IM	249	242	ns
	RP	238	239	ns
Regression Count	*PN*	0.077	**0.087**	**
	DS	0.085	0.098	ns
	FIS	0.077	0.084	ns
	FIT	0.088	0.088	ns
	IM	0.085	0.073	ns
	RP	0.084	0.076	*
Skipping Probability	*PN*	**0.63**	0.59	****
	DS	0.67	**0.72**	****
	FIS	**0.68**	0.65	****
	FIT	**0.62**	0.61	***
	IM	0.64	0.66	ns
	RP	0.61	**0.63**	*
Regression Path Duration	*PN*	462	443	ns
	DS	417	410	ns
	FIS	472	443	ns
	FIT	478	459	ns
	IM	415	389	ns
	RP	436	467	ns

* = p value < 0.05; **** = p value < 0.0001

As can be seen from the table above, the presence of FIS, IM and RP in original extracts increased *Fixation Count*, indicating increased effort in late processing typically related to comprehension mechanisms that were not visible in modified extracts. IM also elicited longer *Dwell Time*, indicating that readers typically required more time to process words belonging to this technique in original extracts, and that the addition of quotation marks simplified the texts' understanding. The presence of PN in original extracts elicited instead longer fixations, which are normally related to word length and frequency. Since words did not differ between the two versions, this value is rather difficult to explain. PN also contributed to higher skipping probability in original extracts in comparison to modified versions. While, somewhat surprisingly, the modifications on individual techniques had no effect on *Regression Count*, they all appeared to affect the probability of skipping: PN, FIS and FIT showed a high probability of *Skipping*, often related to high complexities or lack of attention, while DS and RP were skipped more frequently in the modified versions.

5.4.6 Contrasting results: extract 2 vs. extract 5

While analysing eye tracking measure for individual extracts, two extracts appeared to show consistently opposite trends for most measures: extract 2 and extract 5. These were analysed more closely to examine the features that might cause such discrepancy.

Although the difference between its original and modified version was not always statistically significant, extract 2 featured results that were consistent with the assumption that perspective attribution might cause interpretative problems for readers. All measures reported higher values for the original version in comparison to the modified one, with statistically significant differences for *Dwell Time*, *Fixation Count*, *Average Fixation Duration* and *Skipping*. On the other hand, results for extract 5 tended to have the opposite outcome, with significantly more *Skipping* for the modified version,

shorter *Average Fixation Duration* and shorter *Dwell times*, as well as lower (though not statistically significant) mean values for all other measures.

As mentioned above, one possible reason for this contrast is the distribution of techniques within the two extracts. This is reported in Figure 5.3.

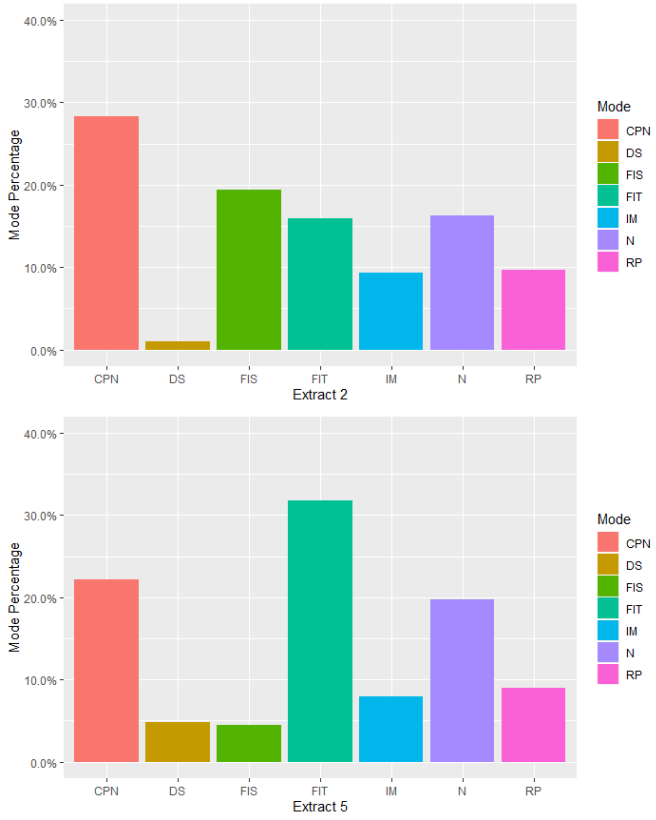


Fig. 5.3 Distribution of techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation in extracts 2 and 5.

It can be seen from the figure above that the two extracts are characterised by a slightly different distribution of techniques: in particular, while 19% of extract 2 features FIS, this is less that 4.5% in extract 5, which is instead dominated by FIT, with 32%, against 16% in extract 2. PN accounts for 28% of extract 2, against 22% of extract 5. In order to see how this affects single IAs in practice, heatmaps were produced, showing how these percentages were distributed by item.

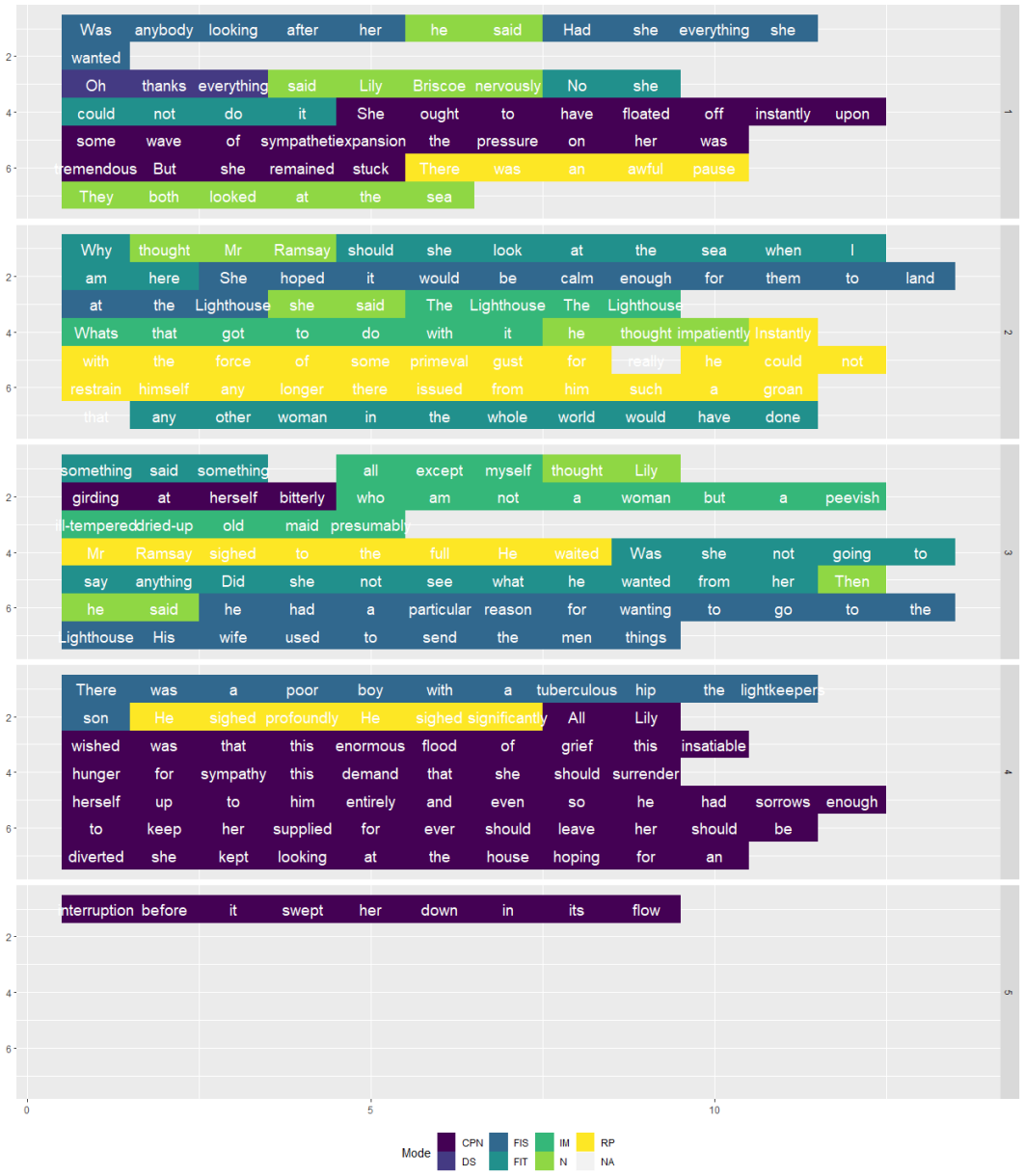


Fig. 5.4 Distribution of techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation in extract 2.

It was then possible to compare the extracts in their original version against their modified versions, with colours indicating the value of the investigated measure per item, and to see whether the presence of one technique or another would affect eye tracking measures.[13]

[13] Although this is an intuitive method rather than a statistically sophisticated one, it allowed for a close look at the texts, and for a more qualitative and thorough investigation of reading behaviour.

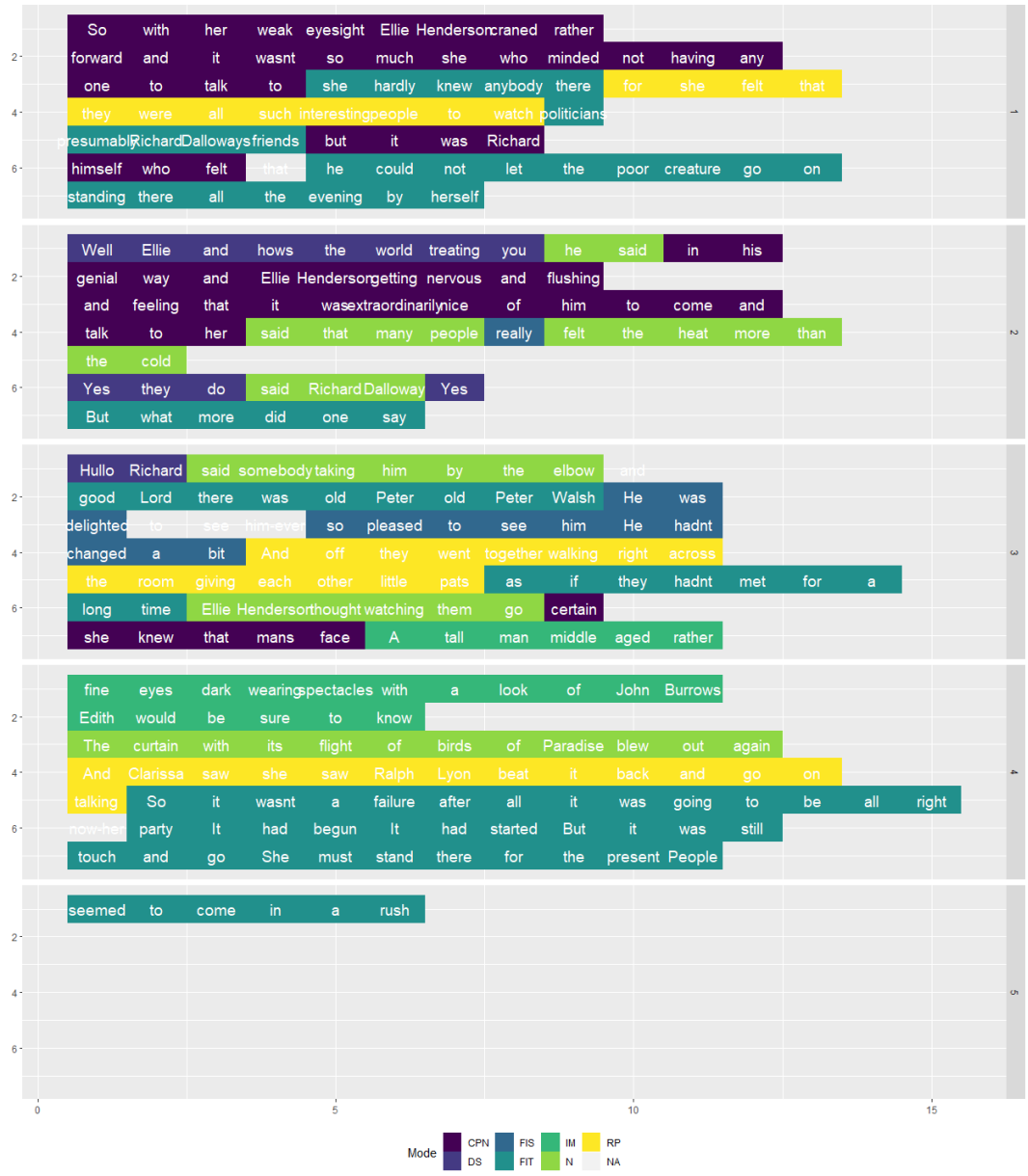


Fig. 5.5 Distribution of techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation in extract 5.

After careful observation of the heatmaps produced for all the investigated measures, it appeared that for most measures it was hard to visually detect any difference, both between the two versions of each extract and between extracts 2 and 5. One measure, however, appeared to be particularly interesting and potentially informative: *Average Fixation Duration*. Figures 5.6 and 5.7 represent the heatmaps for Average Fixation

Durations in extracts 2 and 5 (original version on the left and modified on the right), where lighter colours indicate longer fixation duration.

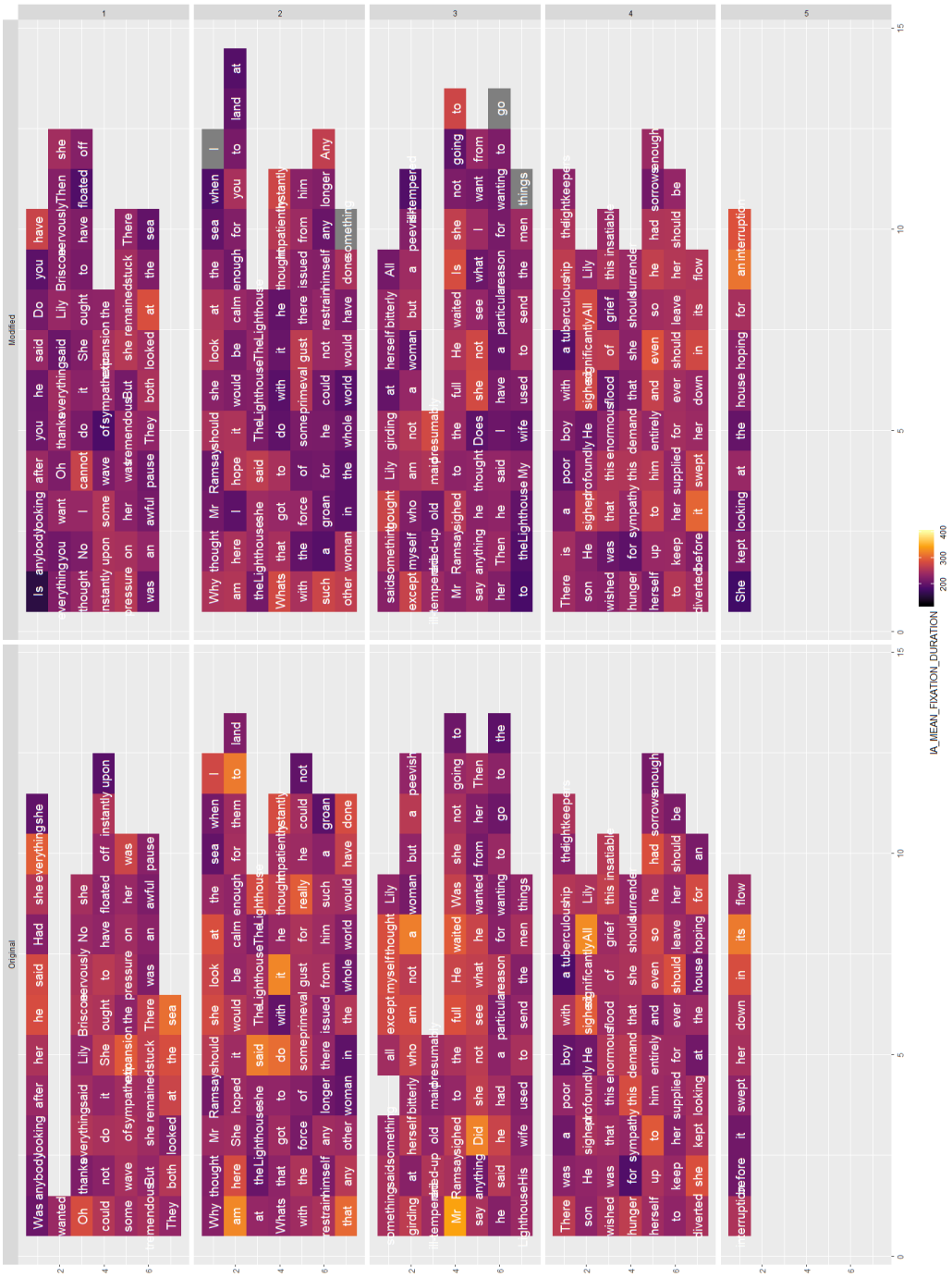


Fig. 5.6 Average Fixation Duration in extract 2, with original version on the left and modified on the right.

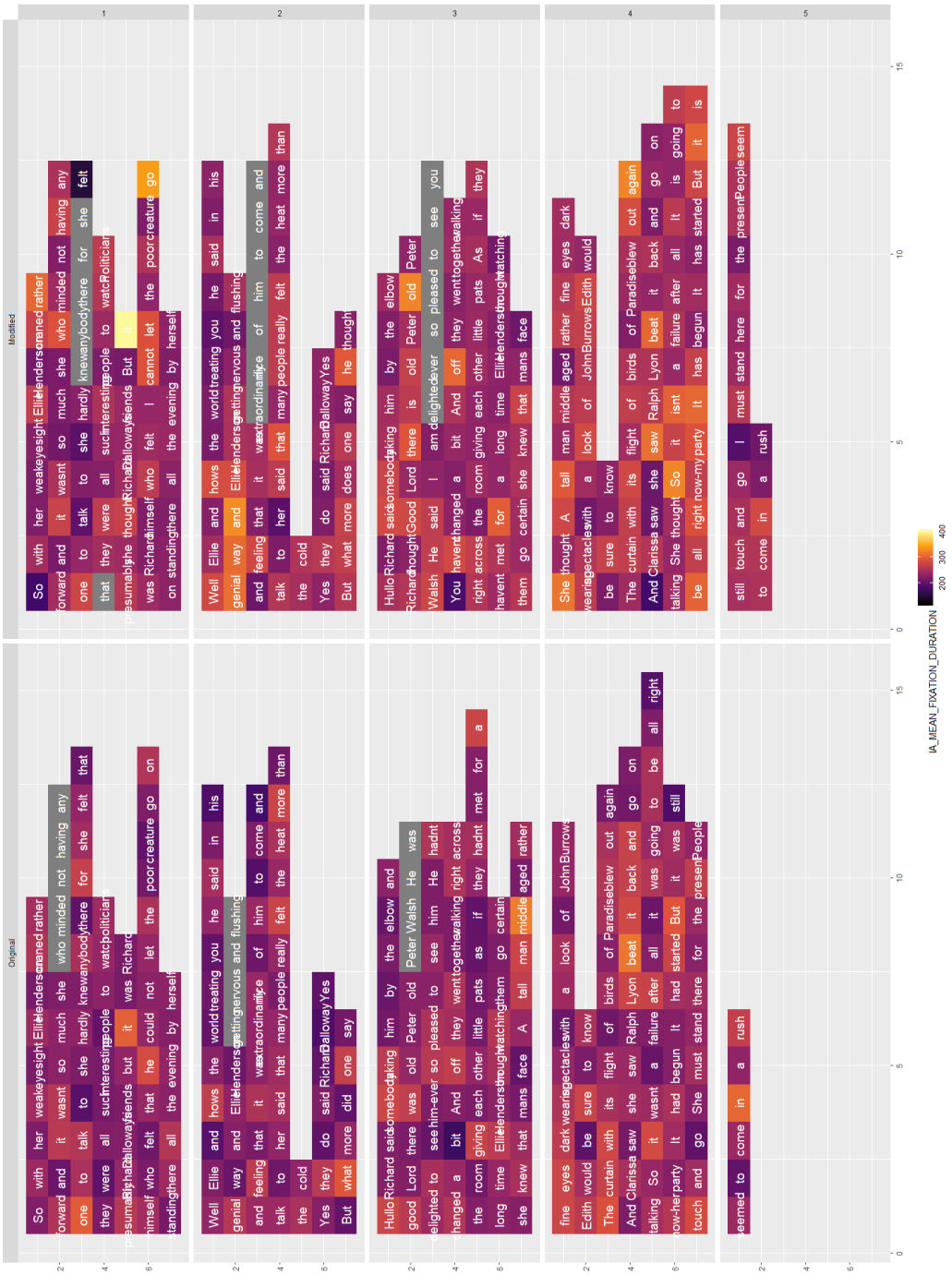


Fig. 5.7 Average Fixation Duration in extract 5, with original version on the left and modified on the right.

A few interesting observations can be made when looking at the heatmaps: 1) overall, extract 2 features longer *Average Fixation Duration* in comparison to extract 5, 2) long fixations do not seem to be concentrated on IAs featuring any particular technique of

speech, thought and consciousness presentation, but rather to be distributed along the whole extract, and 3) in contrast with typical reading behaviour, the longest fixations fall on short and very common words, and this is also true for extract 5. In relation to this last point, when looking closer at the heatmap it appears that longer fixations fall in particular on personal pronouns, verbs (especially in the past tense), modals and evaluatives, but also conjunctions, articles and prepositions. This can be also observed in Table 5.8, which shows the ten words with the longest *Average Fixation Duration* in extracts 2 and 5, in both the original and the modified version.[14]

Table 5.8 IAs with the longest *Average Fixation Duration* for extracts 2 and 5, in decreasing order.

Original Extract 2			**Original Extract 5**		
IA	**Mode**	**Fix. Dur.**	**IA**	**Mode**	**Fix. Dur.**
Mr	N	342	*middle*	IM	316
All	PN	325	*beat*	RP	312
am	FIT	323	*in*	FIT	302
it	IM	322	*it*	PN	297
Did	FIT	319	*one*	PN	294
a	IM	317	*what*	FIT	290
said	N	316	*But*	FIT	289
its	PN	314	*The*	N	286
to	FIS	314	*he*	FIT	280
sea	N	307	*touch*	FIT	280
Modified Extract 2			**Modified Extract 5**		
an	PN*	310	*it*	PN*	396
it	PN*	300	*go*	FIT*	339
even	PN*	287	*and*	PN*	326
interruption	PN*	287	*So*	FIT*	322
at	N*	284	*old*	FIT*	321
Is	FIT*	282	*again*	N*	321
she	FIT*	280	*saw*	RP*	307
All	PN*	278	*genial*	PN*	307
Whats	IM*	278	*way*	PN*	304
presumably	IM*	278	*beat*	RP*	302

[14]The column Mode reported for the modified IAs indicate the Mode of the respective unmodified IAs in the original version.

These data are very surprising, not only because the words listed above are mostly short and common – contradicting existing eye tracking studies on sentence reading that show how such words typically elicit short fixations – but also because many of them are function words. These generally contribute to the syntax rather than to the *meaning* of sentences, and are often skipped (Rayner, 1998; Brysbaert and Vitu, 1998). Interestingly, and again unexpectedly, this is true also for the modified versions of the two extracts, with the exception of the longer words *interruption* and *presumably*, and the slightly less frequent word *genial*. This might indicate that modifications had a limited effect on readers – or that they were not very sensitive to them. In both versions they had to rely heavily on words that allowed them to understand the complex syntax of the extracts, indicating that the comprehension difficulty perceived by readers of the two novels might be related to the general – and 'good-enough' – understanding of the narrative, rather than to the identification of viewpoints.

5.5 Discussion

The present study investigated how the presence of experimental techniques of consciousness presentation, in particular *free indirect style*, affects the processing of eight extracts from Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway* containing shifts between viewpoints and between modes of consciousness presentation that make the interpretation of these novels difficult. This aimed to examine how readers deal with literary texts that are considered difficult to understand, by analysing eye movements that are assumed to reflect comprehension difficulties: *Fixation Count*, *Dwell Time*, *Average Fixation Duration*, *Regression Count*, *Regression Path Duration*, *Skipping* and *Total Reading Time*. Such difficulties often result from syntactic ambiguities such as those characterising Woolf's experimental use of these techniques, and they have been proven to affect the eye tracking measures listed above, typically increasing the number

of fixations and their duration, the number of regressions, the time needed to process previously read parts of the texts after making a regression, the probability of skipping, and increasing total reading times.

During the experiment, readers were asked to rate each extract for difficulty and for appreciation on a one-to-five scale. In line with Study I, readers rated the original extracts from *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway* as more difficult than their modified counterparts, in which the potentially ambiguous features of Woolf's speech, thought and consciousness presentation were altered, to allow an easier interpretation and understanding of the texts. Such perception of 'difficulty' on the readers' part did not appear to influence their appreciation of the texts. It is interesting to point out that although the difference in difficulty ratings for the original and modified extracts was significant, this difference was consistently smaller than the one obtained in our previous study. This may be due to the different population that took part in the two studies. In particular, it could be relevant that in the previous study almost 50% of the participants had read either *To the Lighthouse* or *Mrs Dalloway* (or both), while this was true for only about 16% of the participants in the present study. It may be the case that greater familiarity with Woolf's novels and her writing techniques leads to greater awareness of the texts' complexity. Alternatively, this might also relate to the different methods used in the two experiments. Participants of Study I were asked to rate extracts for difficulty after the first reading, to avoid being biased by the perspective attribution task, which they were asked to do after the second reading of the same text. Nonetheless, because this procedure was repeated for all the four extracts, it is possible that, after the first extract, participants were indirectly made more aware of the texts' complexity. Participants of Study II were not asked to attribute perspectives, and thus not made aware of the potential role of perspective attribution in relation to the perceived difficulty.

In terms of eye tracking measures, results were only partly in line with expectations, featuring a significant increase in *Fixation Count* (and *Fixation Rate*), *Skipping* (and

Skipping Rate) and *Total Reading Time* for original extracts in comparison to modified ones. On the other hand, there was no main effect of the modifications on *Average Fixation Duration* or *Dwell Time*, neither, rather surprisingly for regressions. *Regression Count* and *Regression Path Duration*, which are typically thought to increase when texts are syntactically complex and/or difficult to understand, did not differ between original and modified extracts. Results are summarised in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9 Effect of modifications on the investigated measure by extract.

Extract	Fix. Dur.		Dwell Time		Fix. Count		Reg. Count		Reg. Path		Skip.		Total RT	
	Or	*Mo*	*Or*	*Mo*	*Or*	*Mo*	*Or*	*Mo*	*Or*	*Mo*	*Or*	*Mo*	*Or*	*Mo*
1	+	-	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
2	+	-	+	-	+	-	ns	ns	ns	ns	+	-	+	-
3	+	-	ns	ns	-	+	ns	ns	ns	ns	+	-	ns	ns
4	+	-	ns	ns	ns	ns	+	-	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
5	-	+	-	+	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	-	+	ns	ns
6	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	ns	ns	-	+	ns	ns
7	ns	ns	+	-	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	-	+	ns	ns
8	-	+	ns	ns	ns	ns	-	+	ns	ns	+	-	+	-

This seems odd at first, but there are a few possible explanations for this behaviour. While on the one hand the insertion of reporting clauses, subordination, pronouns and quotation marks in the modified versions should make the interpretation of perspectives easier; on the other hand, it also increased the amount of elements to be processed during reading, and reduced the possibility for readers to accept a 'good enough' interpretation. For example, when faced with an instance of FIT or FIS that could potentially be attributed to more than one character, the absence of a reporting clause and quotation marks would allow readers to simply accept their initial interpretation (or not make

one at all), while the presence of a pronoun or deictic element pointing to one specific character – maybe unexpectedly – could push them to re-examine and re-evaluate the text. That a 'good enough' strategy could be more easily applied to original extracts is also supported by the significantly higher skipping rate. It must not be forgotten that despite the increased *Skipping Rate*, the number and proportion of fixations in the original texts was also higher. These results, together with the significantly longer *Total Reading Time* for original extracts in comparison with their modified counterparts, seems to suggest that original extracts took more effort to be read in general.

Even more surprisingly, when analysing the IAs that were identified as difficult from Study I – i.e. those for which readers identified four or more viewpoints – the effect of modification appeared to be far from consistent. Only a few extracts featured a significant difference between original and modified versions, and in some cases the modifications appeared to affect reading behaviour in contrast with expectations ('difficult' IAs of extract 5 featured longer fixations and dwell times in the modified versions than in the original ones).

To understand what may cause these different behaviours, I examined how eye movements were affected by the modifications for single modes of speech, thought and consciousness presentation. These are summarised in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10 Summary of the effect of modifications on single techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation.

Mode	Fix. Dur.		Dwell Time		Fix. Count		Reg. Count		Reg. Path		Skip.	
	Or	***Mo***	***Or***	***Mo***	***Or***	***Mo***	***Or***	***Mo***	***Or***	***Mo***	***Or***	***Mo***
PN	+	-	ns	ns	ns	ns	-	+	ns	ns	+	-
DS	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	-	+
FIS	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	-	+	ns	ns	+	-
FIT	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	+	-
IM	+	-	+	-	+	-	ns	ns	ns	ns	+	-
RP	ns	ns	ns	ns	+	-	+	-	ns	ns	-	+

While the greatest effect for categories of *free indirect style* could be seen almost exclusively in *Skipping Probability*, only IM seemed to be consistently in line with predictions based on previous studies testing the processing of syntactically ambiguous sentences. What characterises IM is a shift from third person to first person and an accompanying shift from past to present. This creates a significant discontinuity in the narrative fabric, which might justify the accentuated processing effort, as opposed to FIS and FIT, where pronouns and tense are aligned with narration. This continuity may lead readers to assimilate those sections as just part of the narrative.

The discussion thus far has focused on how modifications affected the reading behaviour in general, comparing original extracts to modified ones. I then explored how modifications affected each extract individually: in most cases, the original versions of extracts 1, 2, 3 and 4 showed a tendency to elicit the behaviours expected by previous research on difficulty, in comparison to their respective modified versions – i.e. longer fixation durations and dwell times, more fixations, more skipping and more regressions – while extracts 5, 6, 7 and 8 did not (see Appendix C for more details). This contrast was particularly prominent for extracts 2 and 5, which appeared to elicit consistently opposite

reading behaviours, with extract 2 featuring longer *Dwell Time*, more and longer *Fixation Duration*, and a higher probability of *Skipping* in the original versions in comparison to the modified ones, and extract 5 featuring shorter *Dwell Time*, shorter *Fixation Duration* and lower probability of *Skipping*. This required a qualitative investigation of the two extracts, to see whether the different modes of *free indirect style* elicited different responses, or what else might have caused this discrepancy.

A first hypothesis was that the two extracts might have different proportions and/or distribution of categories of speech, thought and consciousness presentation, and therefore that they might be affected differently by the modifications. When looking at the proportion of modes within the two extracts, it appeared that the most important differences concerned the presence of FIT, accounting for 32% of extract 5 and 16% of extract 2, and FIS, accounting for 19% of extract 2 and only 4.5% of extract 5. However, since the modifications did not appear to affect *Average Fixation Duration* for instances featuring FIS or FIT in particular (see Table 5.7), it was not possible to relate the opposite responses to these differences. The distribution of these techniques within the two passages was then analysed: both extracts featured an alternation of modes along the whole passage, with the only exception of the last paragraph of extract 2, which featured mostly PN.

In order to visually examine the two extracts word-by-word, I produced heatmaps showing the average values on IAs for all investigated measures. The only one for which it was possible to visually detect a difference was *Average Fixation Duration*. Extract 5 featured shorter fixations in general, and through a visual inspection of the heatmap it was possible to detect that the last page/screen of the modified version elicited longer average fixation durations in comparison to the original one. On the contrary, the original version of extract 2 featured consistently longer fixations for the original version in comparison to the modified one. When examining which words elicited the longest fixations in both extracts, it appeared that these were mostly personal pronouns, verbs

(especially in the past tense), modals and evaluatives, but also conjunctions, articles and prepositions, and that this was the case for both extracts and both versions. This is rather surprising, since previous studies have shown that long and uncommon words tend to elicit longer fixations (Rayner and Duffy, 1986; Joseph et al., 2009; Rayner et al., 2011), whereas most of these words are short and very common, and include function words that are typically skipped. Moreover, neither frequency nor word length differed between the two extracts. Interestingly, when checking all the extracts together, it appeared that the forty words with the longest *Average Fixation Duration* for both original and modified extracts were in line with results from extracts 2 and 5 (see Tables C.1 and C.2). What has to be kept in mind, crucially, is the relation between such words and the techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation used by Woolf, in particular those encompassed under the umbrella term *free indirect style*. The use of pronouns, conjunctions, modals, evaluatives and verbs in the past tense is in fact a crucial part of what characterises *free indirect style* formally. The increased processing effort on such words might suggest therefore that the use of these techniques has indeed an effect on reading behaviour, and indicate that *Average Fixation Duration* might be related to later comprehension processes as well as to early ones.

What is not clear in the analysis up to this point is why modifications affected only certain extracts and certain measures. It has to be kept in mind that rather than *ad hoc* sentences, the extracts used here are pieces of actual narratives. Although Woolf's use of consciousness presentation techniques is comparable in the eight extracts, the fictional scenes represented in the narrative differ. What might distinguish extract 2 from extract 5 is then the structure of the content, which also relates to the number of shifts between techniques of consciousness presentation, and those between perspectives. While the first extract involves exclusively two characters and deals entirely with their thoughts, their feelings and their impressions – with substantially no actions – extract 5 is certainly more dynamic. It too involves thoughts, feelings and perceptions, but these

are distributed within a frame of actions: Ellie Henderson and Richard meet at the party, their respective thoughts are presented; then Peter makes his entrance and their exchange obfuscates Ellie shortly, whose perspective is then reintroduced before the appearance of yet another character, Clarissa. Extract 2 features numerous shifts between modes of *free indirect style*, but the viewpoints presented are only two: Mr Ramsay's and Lily's. What might represent an important factor is also that the two characters are interacting, and the impression of losing the boundaries between the two consciousness is central in this extract, as is the sense of each character responding to the thoughts and feelings of the other even where there is no explicit communication. This sense of dialogue is absent in Extract 5. While also shifting between thoughts, speech and perceptions, this features shifts between several characters' viewpoints, who are mostly disconnected from each other, present in the same environment and yet having parallel experiences. The main characters are independent of each other, and, with the exception of one instance of DS, there is no communication between them. While it would seem intuitively logical that more perspectives would pose a greater challenge for readers, it might as well be that the sequence of events and the independence of the characters represented somehow helps the reading process, allowing readers to construct with more ease a meaningful representation of the narrative. This would explain why extract 2, where nothing really 'happens' and the main body of the narrative is constituted of the characters' represented thoughts and intertwined feelings, might be more difficult to interpret.

These results are interesting for several reasons: first, they raise questions about how readers treat 'difficulty' and the conditions under which they might accept a 'good enough' interpretation. Previous studies examined single sentences or very short discourses (e.g. stand-alone three sentence discourses) and generally asked readers comprehension questions throughout the experiments. It is reasonable to assume that such a paradigm would discourage adopting a 'good enough' interpretation, as participants know they will be immediately tested on their comprehension and/or interpretation of

the sentence. In Study II, participants were told that there would be a few questions after the end of the experiment, and these only asked them to provide ratings for difficulty and appreciation. Thus, the task did not require them to resolve any ambiguities present in the extracts, or reflect on the role of voices, thoughts and viewpoints (as happened instead in Study I). The high skipping rates are in line with this assumption, and would suggest that readers tended to skim the text, indicating that they might not have paid much attention.

Second, these results raise questions about the actual effects of techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation, as well as of the effect of *literariness*. Complex writing techniques such as those used by Woolf in the two novels disrupt the 'normal' development of the narrative, increasing not only the difficulty of the text through constant syntactic disruptions, but also falling under what is typically understood as foregrounding. This is supposed to attract the attention of the reader, with its deviance and/or its aesthetic value (Hakemulder, 2004; Miall, 2015). However, the eye movement patterns for the eight extracts do not consistently support this hypothesis. In particular, and most surprisingly, we do not see an effect of the modifications on *Regression Count* when comparing the two versions of the extracts, nor on *Regression Path Duration*. Even if some eye tracking measures were affected by modifications in certain extracts, the modifications appeared to affect some of them in the opposite direction, with increased values for modified versions that are in line with reading difficulty. Furthermore, there is a relatively low regression rate in the texts in general (both the original and modified versions) compared to the study by Cop et al. (2015) that looked at reading patterns for an arguably less 'difficult' text: an Agatha Christie novel. This might be attributable to the phenomenon of absorption, by which readers 'lose' the focus on the linguistic features and devices used in the narrative in favour of more 'avid' reading where the reader's attention is captured by the narrative storyworld, or again highlight a lack of attention and the tendency for readers to 'skim'. It must also be considered that the mild effect

of modifications in general might also be attributable to the modifications themselves. While trying to preserve the *literariness* of Woolf's novels, the modifications applied to make the interpretation and understanding of the text easier were, in a sense, 'minimal'. The addition of quotation marks, the alteration of some verb tenses, pronouns and deictic markers might affect the reading experience of a reader used to Woolf's style, but it remains uncertain whether a non-trained audience experiences the same. More than 80% of the participants of Study II had no experience with Woolf's writing, and none of them, when asked to rate extracts for difficulty and to provide a justification for their answer, mentioned the difference in style between any modified or original extract.

Lastly, and crucially, it was impossible to find a correspondence between the results of Study I and Study II. The examination of individual words belonging to segments of original extracts, for which readers identified four or more viewpoints in Study I, did not reflect the expected processing difficulty. The differences between modified and original extracts were more significant in the analysis of the full dataset in comparison to the reduced dataset that only included 'difficult IAs'. This is extremely important, not only because it raises questions about which exact aspects of Woolf's writing are difficult for actual readers, but also because it highlights the necessity of more evidence about the processing of literary texts, in particular modernist fiction.

These results are partly in line with expectations about the difficulty raised by the use of consciousness presentation techniques in Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway*. The contradictory results obtained for some extracts and several measures raise questions as to which other features might have affected the reading of these novels, and whether the assumption on which these expectations are based should be reconsidered. It also calls into question the current possibilities eye tracking methods offer for such an analysis, and therefore highlights the need for further research investigating eye movement behaviour in long and authentic narrative texts.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

This project was motivated by a desire to understand the mechanisms involved in the processing of difficult narratives, applying eye tracking methods to analyse the locus of the challenge for actual readers. Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway* were used for this purpose as a case study: these two novels feature an experimental use of speech, thought and consciousness presentation techniques that are considered challenging by literary critics as well as by actual readers.

The next sections summarise the significance of the findings and outlines future research prospects that seem particularly worth pursuing in light of the results obtained in this research project.

6.1 Summary and significance of the findings

This thesis aimed at examining the processes that are involved in the comprehension of Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway* that are considered difficult for readers. To achieve this a stylistics analysis was combined with evidence from reader response data and eye tracking data.

A few stylistic studies have approached techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation empirically, looking in particular at perspective shifts. These suggested that such techniques tend to place high demands on readers, which are reflected in either longer processing time or the reports of perceived difficulty in determining the attribution of viewpoints (Sotirova, 2016b; Cui, 2015). These studies used qualitative surveys to support existing claims about the correlation between perceived difficulty and perspective shifts, but provided no statistical evidence to support them, or to show how the experimental techniques used by Woolf affect readers' processing. The present research aimed to validate these studies through a novel interdisciplinary approach, using a more precise and data-driven method to test *whether* readers actually perceive such difficulty, and use these results to lay a solid foundation for an eye tracking study examining *how* readers process such texts.

First, Chapters 1 and 2 aimed at highlighting the possible sources of the difficulty perceived by readers and critics in *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway*, reviewing existing literature on Woolf and on techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation, and taking into account existing empirical approaches to literary texts. Potential difficulties were identified in the experimental use of such techniques and in the syntactic disruption they involve, which allow Woolf to play with shifts between characters' perspectives and between facets of consciousness.

After a careful analysis of the two novels, eight extracts were selected, which were representative of Woolf's use of techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation, and of the challenges they might pose for readers (see Chapter 3). These contain several shifts between viewpoints, as well as numerous shifts between thoughts, voices, perceptions and feelings that are difficult to interpret, either because it is not clear *whose* point of view is conveyed, or because it is not clear whether the perspectivised discourse represents articulated thoughts or utterances, feelings or perceptions. Study I (see Chapter 4) aimed then to verify empirically whether the shifts between perspectives

and between modes that characterise these extracts are challenging for actual readers in general. Readers found original extracts significantly more challenging than their modified counterparts, in which the challenging techniques were altered to remove ambiguities. When asked to identify whose perspective was represented, and whether the perspectivised discourse represented speech, thought or perceptions, readers showed a higher disagreement for original extracts, and identified significantly fewer perspectives in modified extracts, indicating that original extracts were indeed more difficult to understand/interpret.

Once this was established, it was possible to investigate whether and how such difficulties affect reading behaviour. Very few studies have examined the eye movement of readers faced with authentic literary texts. These have investigated how specific literary devices affect the reading of poems (Koops van 't Jagt et al., 2014), or how the reading behaviour of a novel differs between monolingual and bilingual readers (Cop et al., 2015). While providing important insights into eye movement behaviour in relation to literary reading, these did not focus on challenging narratives. Studies examining the processing of difficult texts exist, but they have focused mostly on lexical and syntactic ambiguities. These have typically used texts created *ad hoc* for their experiments, normally decontextualised single sentences which aim to examine the measures produced in response to one or several individual words.

Study II aimed to shed new light onto the processing mechanisms that are at play when actual readers are dealing with authentic literary texts that are challenging, and whether their eye movement behaviour reflects these difficulties, by comparing original extracts to modified ones where the difficulties are removed. Results were only partly in line with expectations: similarly to Study I, readers found the original extracts more difficult than their modified counterparts. While there was no effect of modification on the appreciation of the extracts, there was a correlation between this and the perceived difficulty, showing that the harder readers found the extract, the less they appreciated it

(see Figure C.16). Results of linear (or generalised) mixed models showed an effect of modifications on reading behaviour, with higher probability of *Skipping*, more *Fixations* and longer *Total Reading Time* for original passages in comparison to modified ones (see Figures C.18-C.24).

These results seem to indicate that, at least to a certain degree, readers required more processing effort for the reading of original extracts in comparison to modified ones. However, somewhat surprisingly, there was no effect of modifications on either *Regression Count* or *Regression Path Duration*. This is largely in contrast with existing studies based on sentence reading, which found a correlation between comprehension difficulties and regressions (Rayner, 1998). Interestingly, when looking at individual extracts, results appeared to be far from consistent: while some original extracts, when compared with their modified version, featured results in line with expectations based on previous literature on the processing of difficult texts (typically extracts 1, 2, 3 and 4), others showed opposite effect of modifications, suggesting that readers found the modified versions more challenging than the original ones. This did not appear to correlate with the prominence or distribution of different techniques of consciousness presentation in the different extracts.

Two extracts in particular featured consistently opposite results for most measures: extracts 2 and 5. A closer look at individual words in the two extracts revealed no clear pattern indicating why modifications had opposite effects on certain eye tracking measures. It showed, however, that both extracts (and both versions) elicited particularly long fixation durations on words such as personal pronouns, verbs, modals and evaluatives, but also conjunctions, articles and prepositions. Many of these are function words, which are typically skipped during normal reading, and mostly needed to make sense of the syntactic unity of the text. The fact that in all extracts such words featured consistently long fixations (see Tables C.1 and C.2) indicates that readers had to rely heavily on words that allowed them to comprehend the complex and often fragmented

syntax of the extracts, both for original and modified versions. This might suggest that readers were not very sensitive to the modifications, and/or that these did not simplify the syntax of the original extracts enough to make them easier to understand. At the same time, I felt the need to preserve the 'literariness' of the texts as much as possible even in their modified versions.[1] Long fixations on function words, combined with the overall high skipping rate and low regression rate for all extracts in both versions also seems to support the idea that readers were satisfied with a 'good-enough' understanding of the narrative, rather than putting an increased effort in the attempt to resolve ambiguities related to the identification of ambiguous viewpoints.

A possible explanation for the different behaviours between extracts 2 and 5 might be related to the way in which Woolf represents characters and their consciousness, and how these are related to each other. Extract 2 focuses entirely on the connection between two characters, on their feelings and on the reciprocal discomfort, caused by the other's expectations. Yet their dialogical interaction (Cui, 2016; Sotirova, 2005) is mostly unuttered, and the whole scene does not involve any actions. These characteristics correspond exactly to those pointed out by readers commenting on the difficulty of *To the Lighthouse* on the popular platform *Goodreads* (see Section 3.1). Extract 5, on the other hand, represents characters who cross paths but do not establish any connection, experiencing the 'loneliness' highlighted by Scheck (2011) and Hawthorn (1975). Additionally, extract 5 represents a dynamic scene, with temporal and spatial developments that might contribute to making it easier for readers to understand.

Equally surprisingly, when analysing eye tracking measures for the 'difficult IAs' of all original extracts[2] – i.e. IAs that were identified as difficult in Study I because of the high number of perspectives identified by participants – in comparison to the corresponding IAs in the modified versions of the extracts, it appeared that the effect of

[1] In this respect, the fact that participants of Study II did not appreciate original extracts more than modified ones raises questions as to the degree to which readers are conscious of linguistic variation and style when reading narrative texts.

[2] IAs (Interest Areas) in Study II corresponds to individual words.

modifications was still inconsistent, and overall less powerful than in the analysis of the full dataset.

These results are particularly important, I believe, because they call into question two fundamental assumptions on which the present research is based: 1) that the difficulty reported by readers in relation to *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway* depends on ambiguous shifts between perspectives and modes of consciousness presentation, and 2) that comprehension difficulties are reflected in longer and more fixations, more regressions and longer reading times. If both assumptions are true, it must be postulated that 1) even if eye tracking methods allow for the recording of 'natural' reading processes, the experimental conditions are still not the typical natural environment of literary reading,[3] and thus it might not reflect the behaviour of actual readers, 2) that the lack of content questions, and the fact that the novels were not read in their entirety might have influenced readers, who might have opted for a superficial/non-attentive reading, or 3) that the modifications did not make the original extracts necessarily easier, and that readers found both versions of the extracts challenging (this is not fully supported by the data, since original extracts featured higher *Total Reading Times*, *Skipping Rate* and *Fixation Count* than modified ones).

If these assumptions are not true, then it must be hypothesised that the difficulty of these extracts does not necessarily depend on the ambiguous interpretation of perspectives, voices or thoughts, but rather on their syntactic discontinuity/fragmentation, or on their content (i.e. more vs. less action, intertwining of perspectives in dialogue vs. juxtaposing perspectives that are not connected to each other), or consider that not all online processes can be seen through an examination of eye movements.

It must be taken into consideration that no research has examined eye movements in response to authentic literary texts to understand how readers process challenging

[3]However, at present, reading novels on digital devices, including computers, is very common, especially among young people (Mangen et al., 2013). Ongoing research is trying to establish whether and how different reading supports affect the reading of literary texts.

narratives, and there is no evidence as to whether the processes at play when dealing with complex narratives are visible directly on IAs that are considered difficult (upon reflection). It might be the case that – hypothesising that participants did not accept a 'good-enough' interpretation – broader comprehension processes do not affect measures directly on the 'difficult IA'. It is in fact possible that a substantial difference exists between online and offline processing, and specifically between what is 'recognised' as difficult and what is processed as such. This might explain the difference between the difficulty ratings of Study I and Study II. Study I required readers to focus on the extracts in order to interpret them, necessarily favouring an acknowledgement on the readers' part of the extracts' difficulties in relation to viewpoints and perspective shifts. While results of Study I support existing theoretical claims about the complex nature of consciousness presentation techniques and about the interpretative difficulty they may pose, both the participants of Study I and the scholars sustaining this assumption were experiencing a different 'reading mode' than the one experienced by participants of Study II, which might be closer to that experienced by actual readers. When not asked to ponder on the extracts' interpretation, but simply to read the texts for comprehension, readers might not stop to wonder whether their immediate interpretation is correct, but instead read further unless faced with contradictory information.

6.2 Future research prospects

This thesis has taken a step towards a truly interdisciplinary and empirical approach to literary texts, providing unprecedented data that will offer a foundation, I hope, for numerous future investigations. The quest for an answer to the main research questions – *do actual readers find Woolf's 'To the Lighthouse' and 'Mrs Dalloway' difficult? If so, is it because of the constant shifts between characters' perspectives, voices and thoughts?* – has shown that many more need to be answered before reaching an understanding

of reading behaviour. While both questions might still get 'yes' for an answer, there is a fundamental need to understand *how* features that are consciously recognised as complex affect the reading process of literary texts.

Being characterised by an interdisciplinary approach, the present thesis speaks to psycholinguistics, narratology, stylistics and literary critique, and it opens numerous questions that will hopefully inspire further research in each of these areas. The results obtained in this thesis have been limited by two major obstacles for this research. Firstly, the lack of eye tracking studies focusing on texts that are literary, longer than a paragraph and considered difficult, with which to compare the data obtained. Secondly the complexity in identifying and testing a single aspect of Woolf's writing that plays a crucial role in making her writing challenging, while controlling other factors that are inevitably at play while reading a complex literary text.

The understanding of reading processes requires therefore in the first place further evidence from eye tracking studies, which must explore in more detail the relation between eye movements and readers' processing of longer texts, in particular literary ones, and between eye movement and difficulty. Applying eye tracking methods to Virignia Woolf's novels was a big step from the ad hoc sentences used in most eye tracking studies up to now, and it is possible that several middle steps will need to be taken within psycholinguistics – in particular by researchers analysing eye movements – before reaching an understanding of how readers process Woolf. It might be necessary to focus on shorter and/or easier narrative texts to understand whether literary reading behaviour has any specificities, and *which* as well as *how* single formal features affect the reading behaviour *within* a larger text. Shorter texts would enhance control, clarify the range of potential variables involved and consequently sharpen hypotheses as to what might happen in more complex texts such as Woolf's. This would ultimately stimulate a rethinking of existing research in light of new data.

In order to achieve this, however, I believe it is essential that some steps are taken within literary criticism and narratology; existing critique as well as readers' opinions retrieved from online platforms such as *Goordeads* suggest that readers perceive Woolf's novels as difficult, and that part of this perception might find an explanation in perspective shifts and in the juxtaposition of several techniques of speech, thought and consciousness presentation. However, of the literary criticism suggesting this, only a few have focused specifically on the challenges Woolf's novels pose to the reader. Instead these concentrated on her way of representing the human mind through perspectives as part of the modernist movement, with all the 'revolutionary' changes this brought not only in terms of style, but also of the ideas and objects of the artists' interest. A larger body of literary critique focusing on difficulty as part of the experience of reading Woolf would provide additional value to readers' opinions retrieved from online platforms, supporting it and enlarging the spectrum of features considered potentially challenging, making them easier to investigate empirically. Literary critique could also address a research area that this thesis has addressed only cursorily, namely the relation between authorial intention and difficulty (see 3.2). Although difficulty is primarily a response phenomenon, attributions of intentionality are often made by common readers as well as by critics, and cannot be ignored. The study of authorial variants could shed light on this nexus, in particular through the analysis of poets' self-reflective comments on their writing, which could point to the possibility that difficulty can be either intentional or unintentional (see for example Sotirova (2014), who examined Woolf's manuscripts and the stylistic changes occurring in them).

Finally, in order to investigate one aspect that might be challenging for readers, it is essential to be aware of the other aspects that might have a similar or parallel effect. This, I believe, has been the case with Woolf's texts: the syntactic fragmentation that results from the use of these techniques might have had a stronger effect on the readers' perception of difficulty than that posed by the identification of ambiguous perspectives,

or the apparent 'lack of plot' resulting from the long introspective paragraphs where no actions seem to take place. Similarly to what Castiglione (2019) proposes for poetry in his book, I believe it is essential therefore that narratology, stylistics and cognitive sciences join forces in an effort to develop an interdisciplinary model taking into account *all* the potential difficulties a narrative text could pose. This would mean identifying all aspects – lexical, grammatical, syntactical, pragmatical – that could represent a challenge for readers, cataloguing every strategy used and the effects that these might have. Such a model would provide an essential guide as well as a solid starting point for empirical investigations of difficulty in narrative. If translated into a set of computationally identifiable variables, this would allow for even more complex and precise analyses of texts as well as of readers' responses.

The scope for further research on difficult literary texts is vast, stimulating and challenging, and it calls for an interdisciplinary approach that will necessarily be beyond the expertise and efforts of any single researcher. If accomplished, it will shed light on the mechanisms behind reading in general, and potentially explain whether and how *literariness* affects it.

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Appendix A

Modified extracts from *TTL* and *MD* used in study 1 and 2

A.1 Modified Extract 1

A.1.1 Introduction to the passage

The Ramsays (Mrs Ramsay, Mr Ramsay and their daughter Minta), Lily Briscoe, Paul Riley, William Bakes and Charles Tansley are sitting at the table. The dinner has started and the 'Bœuf en Daube' is served.

A.1.2 Study 1

'It is a triumph,' said Mr. Bankes, laying his knife down for a moment. He had eaten attentively. *It is rich; it is tender. It is perfectly cooked*, he thought. 'How do you manage these things in the depths of the country?' he asked her. *She is a wonderful woman*, he thought. All his love, all his reverence had returned. And she knew it.

'It is a French recipe of my grandmother's,' said Mrs. Ramsay, speaking with a ring of great pleasure in her voice. 'Of course it is French. What passes for cookery in England is an

abomination'. They all agreed. She continued 'It is putting cabbages in water. It is roasting meat till it is like leather. It is cutting off the delicious skins of vegetables'. 'In which', said Mr. Bankes, 'all the virtue of the vegetable is contained'. 'And the waste' said Mrs. Ramsay. 'A whole French family could live on what an English cook throws away'. Spurred on by her sense that William's affection had come back to her, and that everything was all right again, and that her suspense was over, and that she was free both to triumph and to mock, she laughed, she gesticulated. *How childlike, how absurd she is, sitting up there with all her beauty opened again in her, talking about the skins of vegetables* thought Lily. *There is something frightening about her. She is irresistible. Always she gets her own way in the end. Now she has brought this off – Paul and Minta, one might suppose, are engaged. Mr. Bankes is dining here. She puts a spell on us all, by wishing, so simply, so directly.* Lily contrasted that abundance with her own poverty of spirit, and supposed that it was partly that belief in this strange, this terrifying thing, which made Paul Rayley, the centre of it, all of a tremor, yet abstract, absorbed, silent. *For her face is all lit up – without looking young, she looks radiant*, she thought. Lily felt that Mrs. Ramsay, as she talked about the skins of vegetables, exalted that, worshipped that; held her hands over it to warm them, to protect it, and yet, having brought it all about, somehow laughed, led her victims to the altar. It came over her too at that moment – the emotion, the vibration of love. *How inconspicuous I feel myself by Paul's side!* she thought. *He, glowing, burning; me, aloof, satirical; he, bound for adventure; me, moored to the shore; he, launched, incautious; me solitary, left out – and, ready to implore a share, if it were disaster, in his disaster*.

She said shyly 'When did Minta lose her brooch?'

A.1.3 Study 2

'It is a triumph,' said Mr. Bankes, laying his knife down for a moment. He had eaten attentively. It is rich; it is tender. It is perfectly cooked, he thought. 'How do you manage these things in the depths of the country?' he asked her. She is a wonderful woman, he thought. All his love, all his reverence had returned. And she knew it.

'It is a French recipe of my grandmother's,' said Mrs. Ramsay, speaking with a ring of great

pleasure in her voice. ‘Of course it is French. What passes for cookery in England is an abomination’. They all agreed. She continued ‘It is putting cabbages in water. It is roasting meat till it is like leather. It is cutting off the delicious skins of vegetables’. ‘In which’, said Mr. Bankes, ‘all the virtue of the vegetable is contained’. ‘And the waste’ said Mrs. Ramsay. ‘A whole French family could live on what an English cook throws away’. Spurred on by her sense that William’s affection had come back to her, and that everything was all right again, and that her suspense was over, and that she was free both to triumph and to mock, she laughed, she gesticulated. How childlike, how absurd she is, sitting up there with all her beauty opened again in her, talking about the skins of vegetables thought Lily. There is something frightening about her. She is irresistible. Always she gets her own way in the end. Now she has brought this off – Paul and Minta, one might suppose, are engaged. Mr. Bankes is dining here. She puts a spell on us all, by wishing, so simply, so directly. Lily contrasted that abundance with her own poverty of spirit, and supposed that it was partly that belief in this strange, this terrifying thing, which made Paul Rayley, the centre of it, all of a tremor, yet abstract, absorbed, silent. ‘For her face is all lit up – without looking young, she looks radiant’, she thought. Lily felt that Mrs. Ramsay, as she talked about the skins of vegetables, exalted that, worshipped that; held her hands over it to warm them, to protect it, and yet, having brought it all about, somehow laughed, led her victims to the altar. It came over her too at that moment – the emotion, the vibration of love. ‘How inconspicuous I feel myself by Paul’s side!’ she thought. ‘He, glowing, burning; me, aloof, satirical; he, bound for adventure; me, moored to the shore; he, launched, incautious; me solitary, left out – and, ready to implore a share, if it were disaster, in his disaster.’

She said shyly ‘When did Minta lose her brooch?’

A.2 Modified Extract 2

A.2.1 Introduction to the passage

The Ramsays and Lily Briscoe, an acquaintance, are back to the house on the Isle of Skye after ten years. Mr Ramsay and his son and daughter are going to the lighthouse. While his kids get ready, he observes Lily. His wife is dead and he is looking for sympathy.

A.2.2 Study 1

'Is anybody looking after you?' he said. 'Do you have everything you want?'

'Oh, thanks, everything' said Lily Briscoe nervously. She thought *No; I cannot do it*. She ought to have floated off instantly upon some wave of sympathetic expansion: the pressure on her was tremendous. But she remained stuck. There was an awful pause. They both looked at the sea. *Why*, thought Mr. Ramsay, *should she look at the sea when I am here?* 'I hope it would be calm enough for you to land at the Lighthouse', she said. *The Lighthouse! The Lighthouse! What's that got to do with it?* he thought impatiently. Instantly, with the force of some primeval gust, there issued from him such a groan, for he could not restrain himself any longer. *Any other woman in the whole world would have done something, said something. I know it. All except myself*, she thought, girding at herself bitterly, *who am not a woman, but a peevish, ill-tempered, dried-up old maid presumably*.

Mr. Ramsay sighed to the full. He waited. *Is she not going to say anything? Does she not see what I want from her?* He thought. Then he said 'I have a particular reason for wanting to go to the Lighthouse. My wife used to send the men things. There is a poor boy with a tuberculous hip, the lightkeeper's son'. He sighed profoundly. He sighed significantly. All Lily wished was that this enormous flood of grief, this insatiable hunger for sympathy, this demand that she should surrender herself up to him entirely, and even so he had sorrows enough to keep her supplied for ever, should leave her, should be diverted before it swept her down in its flow. She kept looking at the house, hoping for an interruption.

A.2.3 Study 2

'Is anybody looking after you?' he said. 'Do you have everything you want?'

'Oh, thanks, everything' said Lily Briscoe nervously. She thought No; I cannot do it. She ought to have floated off instantly upon some wave of sympathetic expansion: the pressure on her was tremendous. But she remained stuck. There was an awful pause. They both looked at the sea. Why, thought Mr. Ramsay, should she look at the sea when I am here? 'I hope it would be calm enough for you to land at the Lighthouse', she said. 'The Lighthouse! The Lighthouse! What's that got to do with it?' he thought impatiently. Instantly, with the force of some primeval gust, there issued from him such a groan, for he could not restrain himself any longer. 'Any other woman in the whole world would have done something, said something. I know it. All except myself', thought Lily, girding at herself bitterly, 'who am not a woman, but a peevish, ill-tempered, dried-up old maid presumably.'

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A.3 Modified Extract 3

A.3.1 Introduction to the passage

Lady Bruton has invited Richard Dalloway and Hugh Whitbread for lunch.

A.3.2 Study 1

Lady Bruton raised the carnations, holding them rather stiffly with much the same attitude with which the General held the scroll in the picture behind her; she remained fixed, tranced. *Which is she now, the General's great-grand-daughter? great-great-grand-daughter?* Richard Dalloway asked himself. *Sir Roderick, Sir Miles, Sir Talbot—that's it. It is remarkable how in that family the likeness persisted in the women. She should have been a general of dragoons herself.* And Richard would have served under her, cheerfully; he had the greatest respect for her; he cherished these romantic views about well-set-up old women of pedigree, and would have liked, in his good-humoured way, to bring some young hot-heads of his acquaintance to lunch with her. *As if a type like hers could be bred of amiable tea-drinking enthusiasts!* he thought. *He knows my country. He knows my people*, Lady Bruton thought 'There is a vine, still bearing, which either Lovelace or Herrick had sat under' she said. *I never read a word of poetry myself, but so the story runs.*' *Better wait to put before them the question that bothers me, better wait until they have had their coffee*, she thought; and so laid the carnations down beside her plate.

'How's Clarissa?' she asked abruptly.

Clarissa always said that Lady Bruton did not like her. Lady Bruton had the reputation of being more interested in politics than people; of talking like a man; of having had a finger in some notorious intrigue of the eighties, which was now beginning to be mentioned in memoirs. Certainly there was an alcove in her drawing-room, and a table in that alcove, and a photograph upon that table of General Sir Talbot Moore, now deceased, who had written there (one evening in the eighties) in Lady Bruton's presence, with her cognisance, perhaps advice, a telegram ordering the British troops to advance upon an historical occasion. She kept the pen and told the story. Thus, when she said in her offhand way 'How's Clarissa?' husbands had difficulty in persuading their wives and indeed, however devoted, were secretly doubtful themselves, of her interest in women who often got in their husbands' way, prevented them from accepting posts abroad, and had to be taken to the seaside in the middle of the session to recover from influenza. Nevertheless her inquiry, 'How's Clarissa?' was known by women infallibly, to be a signal from a well-wisher, from an almost silent companion, whose utterances, half a dozen perhaps in the course of a lifetime, signified recognition of some feminine comradeship which

went beneath masculine lunch parties and united Lady Bruton and Mrs. Dalloway, who seldom met, and appeared when they did meet indifferent and even hostile, in a singular bond.

A.3.3 Study 2

Lady Bruton raised the carnations, holding them rather stiffly with much the same attitude with which the General held the scroll in the picture behind her; she remained fixed, tranced. Which is she now, the General's great-grand-daughter? great-great-grand-daughter? Richard Dalloway asked himself. Sir Roderick, Sir Miles, Sir Talbot—that's it. It is remarkable how in that family the likeness persisted in the women. She should have been a general of dragoons herself. And Richard would have served under her, cheerfully; he had the greatest respect for her; he cherished these romantic views about well-set-up old women of pedigree, and would have liked, in his good-humoured way, to bring some young hot-heads of his acquaintance to lunch with her. 'As if a type like hers could be bred of amiable tea-drinking enthusiasts!' he thought. 'He knows my country. He knows my people', Lady Bruton thought 'There is a vine, still bearing, which either Lovelace or Herrick had sat under' she said. 'I never read a word of poetry myself, but so the story runs.' 'Better wait to put before them the question that bothers me, better wait until they have had their coffee', she thought; and so laid the carnations down beside her plate.

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posts abroad, and had to be taken to the seaside in the middle of the session to recover from influenza. Nevertheless her inquiry, 'How's Clarissa?' was known by women infallibly, to be a signal from a well-wisher, from an almost silent companion, whose utterances, half a dozen perhaps in the course of a lifetime, signified recognition of some feminine comradeship which went beneath masculine lunch parties and united Lady Bruton and Mrs. Dalloway, who seldom met, and appeared when they did meet indifferent and even hostile, in a singular bond.

A.4 Modified Extract 4

A.4.1 Introduction to the passage

Clarissa Dalloway's party is about to begin. The servants are finalizing preparations.

A.4.2 Study 1

Lucy came running full tilt downstairs, having just nipped in to the drawing-room to smooth a cover, to straighten a chair, to pause a moment and feel *whoever comes in must think how clean, how bright, how beautifully cared for, when they see the beautiful silver, the brass fire-irons, the new chair-covers, and the curtains of yellow chintz*: she appraised each; heard a roar of voices; *people are already coming up from dinner; I must fly!* she thought.

'The Prime Minister is coming, so I have heard them say in the dining-room' Agnes said, coming in with a tray of glasses. *Does it matter* thought Mrs Walker, *does it matter in the least, one Prime Minister more or less? It makes no difference to me at this hour of the night, among the plates, saucepans, cullenders, frying-pans, chicken in aspic, ice-cream freezers, pared crusts of bread, lemons, soup tureens, and pudding basins which, however hard we wash up in the scullery seem to be all on top of me, on the kitchen table, on chairs, while the fire blares and roars, the electric lights glare, and still supper has to be laid.* All she felt was, *one Prime Minister more or less makes not a scrap of difference to me*.

'The ladies are going upstairs already', said Lucy. The ladies were going up, one by one, Mrs.

Dalloway walking last and almost always sending back some message to the kitchen, *'My love to Mrs. Walker,' that was it one night*, Mrs Walker remembered *Next morning we will go over the dishes—the soup, the salmon; the salmon*, Mrs. Walker knew, *as usual underdone*. She always got nervous about the pudding and left it to Jenny; so it happened, the salmon was always underdone. 'But some lady with fair hair and silver ornaments said, about the entrée' Lucy said 'is it really made at home?' *But it is the salmon that bothers me* thought Mrs. Walker, as she spun the plates round and round, and pulled in dampers and pulled out dampers; and there came a burst of laughter from the dining-room; a voice speaking; then another burst of laughter—the gentlemen enjoying themselves when the ladies had gone. 'The tokay', said Lucy running in. 'Mr. Dalloway has sent for the tokay, from the Emperor's cellars, the Imperial Tokay'.

A.4.3 Study 2

Lucy came running full tilt downstairs, having just nipped in to the drawing-room to smooth a cover, to straighten a chair, to pause a moment and feel 'whoever comes in must think how clean, how bright, how beautifully cared for, when they see the beautiful silver, the brass fire-irons, the new chair-covers, and the curtains of yellow chintz: she appraised each; heard a roar of voices; people are already coming up from dinner; I must fly!' she thought.

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A.5 Modified Extract 5

A.5.1 Introduction to the passage

Ellie Henderson has been invited to a party by Clarissa Dalloway, her cousin, and her husband Richard.

A.5.2 Study 1

So, with her weak eyesight, Ellie Henderson craned rather forward, and it wasn't so much she who minded not having any one to talk to (she hardly knew anybody there), for she felt that they were all such interesting people to watch; *politicians presumably; Richard Dalloway's friends*, thought Ellie. But it was Richard himself who felt that he could not let the poor creature go on standing there all the evening by herself.

'Well, Ellie, and how's the world treating you?' he said in his genial way, and Ellie Henderson, getting nervous and flushing and feeling that it was extraordinarily nice of him to come and talk to her, said that many people really felt the heat more than the cold.

'Yes, they do,' said Richard Dalloway. 'Yes.'

But what more does one say? thought Ellie.

'Hullo, Richard,' said somebody, taking him by the elbow. *Good Lord, there is old Peter, old*

Peter Walsh Richard thought. 'I am delighted - ever so pleased to see you! you haven't changed a bit.' He said. And off they went together walking right across the room, giving each other little pats. *As if they haven't met for a long time*, Ellie Henderson thought, watching them go, certain she knew that man's face. *A tall man, middle aged, rather fine eyes, dark, wearing spectacles, with a look of John Burrows. Edith would be sure to know* she thought.

The curtain with its flight of birds of Paradise blew out again. And Clarissa saw —she saw Ralph Lyon beat it back, and go on talking. *So it isn't a failure after all! it is going to be all right now—my party. It has begun. It has started. But it is still touch and go. I must stand here for the present. People seem to come in a rush.*

A.5.3 Study 2

So, with her weak eyesight, Ellie Henderson craned rather forward, and it wasn't so much she who minded not having any one to talk to (she hardly knew anybody there), for she felt that they were all such interesting people to watch; 'politicians presumably; Richard Dalloway's friends', thought Ellie. But it was Richard himself who felt that he could not let the poor creature go on standing there all the evening by herself.

'Well, Ellie, and how's the world treating you?' he said in his genial way, and Ellie Henderson, getting nervous and flushing and feeling that it was extraordinarily nice of him to come and talk to her, said that many people really felt the heat more than the cold.

'Yes, they do,' said Richard Dalloway. 'Yes.'

But what more does one say? thought Ellie.

'Hullo, Richard,' said somebody, taking him by the elbow. 'Good Lord, there is old Peter, old Peter Walsh' Richard thought. 'I am delighted - ever so pleased to see you! you haven't changed a bit.' He said. And off they went together walking right across the room, giving each other little pats. 'As if they haven't met for a long time', Ellie Henderson thought, watching them go, certain she knew that man's face. 'A tall man, middle aged, rather fine eyes, dark, wearing spectacles, with a look of John Burrows. Edith would be sure to know' she thought.

The curtain with its flight of birds of Paradise blew out again. And Clarissa saw —she saw Ralph

Lyon beat it back, and go on talking. 'So it isn't a failure after all! it is going to be all right now—my party. It has begun. It has started. But it is still touch and go. I must stand here for the present. People seem to come in a rush.'

A.6 Modified Extract 6

A.6.1 Introduction to the passage

Clarissa Dalloway is giving a party, and walks around the room talking with her guests.

A.6.2 Study 1

'Dear Clarissa!' exclaimed Mrs. Hilbery 'you look to-night so like your mother as I first saw her walking in a garden in a grey hat' she said.

And Clarissa's eyes filled with tears. *My mother, walking in a garden! But alas, I must go*, she thought.

There was Professor Brierly, who lectured on Milton, talking to little Jim Hutton. *He is unable even for a party like this to compass both tie and waistcoat or make his hair lie flat*, thought Clarissa, *and even at this distance they are quarrelling*, she could see. *Professor Brierly is a very queer fish*, she thought, *with all those degrees, honours, lectureships between him and the scribblers he suspects instantly an atmosphere not favourable to his queer compound; his prodigious learning and timidity; his wintry charm without cordiality; his innocence blent with snobbery; he quivers if made conscious by a lady's unkempt hair, a youth's boots, of an underworld, very creditable doubtless, of rebels, of ardent young people; of would-be geniuses, and intimates with a little toss of the head, with a sniff—Humph!—the value of moderation; of some slight training in the classics in order to appreciate Milton.* Clarissa could see that Professor Brierly wasn't hitting it off with little Jim Hutton, who wore red socks, his black being at the laundry, about Milton. She interrupted.

She said 'I love Bach'. So did Hutton. *This is the bond between us*, she thought. Hutton, a very

bad poet, always felt that Mrs. Dalloway was far the best of the great ladies who took an interest in art. *It is odd how strict she is*, he thought. *About music she is purely impersonal. She is rather a prig. But how charming to look at! She made her house so nice if it weren't for her Professors*. Clarissa had half a mind to snatch him off and set him down at the piano in the back room. *For he plays divinely*, she thought.

A.6.3 Study 2

'Dear Clarissa!' exclaimed Mrs. Hilbery 'you look to-night so like your mother as I first saw her walking in a garden in a grey hat' she said.

And Clarissa's eyes filled with tears. My mother, walking in a garden! But alas, I must go, she thought.

There was Professor Brierly, who lectured on Milton, talking to little Jim Hutton. He is unable even for a party like this to compass both tie and waistcoat or make his hair lie flat, thought Clarissa, and even at this distance they are quarrelling, she could see. Professor Brierly is a very queer fish, she thought, with all those degrees, honours, lectureships between him and the scribblers he suspects instantly an atmosphere not favourable to his queer compound; his prodigious learning and timidity; his wintry charm without cordiality; his innocence blent with snobbery; he quivers if made conscious by a lady's unkempt hair, a youth's boots, of an underworld, very creditable doubtless, of rebels, of ardent young people; of would-be geniuses, and intimates with a little toss of the head, with a sniff—Humph!—the value of moderation; of some slight training in the classics in order to appreciate Milton. Clarissa could see that Professor Brierly wasn't hitting it off with little Jim Hutton, who wore red socks, his black being at the laundry, about Milton. She interrupted.

She said 'I love Bach'. So did Hutton. This is the bond between us, she thought. Hutton, a very bad poet, always felt that Mrs. Dalloway was far the best of the great ladies who took an interest in art. It is odd how strict she is, he thought. About music she is purely impersonal. She is rather a prig. But how charming to look at! She made her house so nice if it weren't for her Professors.

Clarissa had half a mind to snatch him off and set him down at the piano in the back room. For he plays divinely, she thought.

A.7 Modified Extract 7

A.7.1 Introduction to the passage

Clarissa Dalloway and her husband Richard are giving a party. Also Peter Walsh is there, recently back from India. She is having a chat with a young couple, Lord Gayton and Nancy Blow.

A.7.2 Study 1

'I meant to have dancing', said Clarissa.

For the young people cannot talk, she thought. *And why should they? Shout, embrace, swing, be up at dawn; carry sugar to ponies; kiss and caress the snouts of adorable chows; and then all tingling and streaming, plunge and swim. But the enormous resources of the English language, the power it bestows, after all, of communicating feelings. At their age, me and Peter would have been arguing all the evening. They will solidify young. They will be good beyond measure to the people on the estate, but alone, perhaps, rather dull.*

'What a pity!' she said. 'I had hoped to have dancing.'

It is so extraordinarily nice of them to have come! she thought *But talk of dancing! The rooms are packed.*

There is old Aunt Helena in her shawl. Alas, I must leave them—Lord Gayton and Nancy Blow.

There was old Miss Parry, her aunt.

For Miss Helena Parry is not dead, thought Clarissa, *Miss Parry is alive*. She was past eighty. She ascended staircases slowly with a stick. *She was placed in a chair, Richard has seen to it*, thought Clarissa. *People who had known Burma in the seventies were always led up to her. Where has Peter got to? They used to be such friends*. Clarissa knew that at the mention of India, or even Ceylon, Miss Parry's eyes, only one of which was glass, slowly deepened, became

blue, beheld, not human beings. She had no tender memories, no proud illusions about Viceroys, Generals, Mutinies. It was orchids she saw, and mountain passes and herself carried on the backs of coolies in the sixties over solitary peaks; or descending to uproot orchids, startling blossoms, never beheld before, which she painted in water-colour. *An indomitable Englishwoman* thought Clarissa *fretful if disturbed by the War, say, which dropped a bomb at her very door, from her deep meditation over orchids and her own figure journeying in the sixties in India—but here is Peter*.

'Come and talk to Aunt Helena about Burma,' said Clarissa.

And yet he has not had a word with me all the evening! she thought.

'We will talk later,' said Clarissa, leading him up to Aunt Helena, in her white shawl, with her stick.

'Peter Walsh,' said Clarissa.

That means nothing, thought Miss Parry. *Clarissa asked me. It is tiring; it is noisy; but Clarissa asked me. So I came. It is a pity that they live in London—Richard and Clarissa. If only for Clarissa's health it would have been better to live in the country. But Clarissa has always been fond of society*.

A.7.3 Study 2

'I meant to have dancing,' said Clarissa.

'For the young people cannot talk', she thought. 'And why should they? Shout, embrace, swing, be up at dawn; carry sugar to ponies; kiss and caress the snouts of adorable chows; and then all tingling and streaming, plunge and swim. But the enormous resources of the English language, the power it bestows, after all, of communicating feelings, is not for them. At their age, me and Peter would have been arguing all the evening. They will solidify young. They will be good beyond measure to the people on the estate, but alone, perhaps, rather dull.'

'What a pity!' she said. 'I had hoped to have dancing.'

It is so extraordinarily nice of them to have come! she thought But talk of dancing! The rooms are packed.

There is old Aunt Helena in her shawl. Alas, I must leave them—Lord Gayton and Nancy Blow. There was old Miss Parry, her aunt.

For Miss Helena Parry is not dead, thought Clarissa, Miss Parry is alive. She was past eighty. She ascended staircases slowly with a stick. She was placed in a chair, Richard has seen to it, thought Clarissa. People who had known Burma in the seventies were always led up to her. Where has Peter got to? They used to be such friends. Clarissa knew that at the mention of India, or even Ceylon, Miss Parry's eyes, only one of which was glass, slowly deepened, became blue, beheld, not human beings. She had no tender memories, no proud illusions about Viceroys, Generals, Mutinies. It was orchids she saw, and mountain passes and herself carried on the backs of coolies in the sixties over solitary peaks; or descending to uproot orchids, startling blossoms, never beheld before, which she painted in water-colour. An indomitable Englishwoman thought Clarissa fretful if disturbed by the War, say, which dropped a bomb at her very door, from her deep meditation over orchids and her own figure journeying in the sixties in India—but here is Peter.

'Come and talk to Aunt Helena about Burma,' said Clarissa.

And yet he has not had a word with me all the evening! she thought.

'We will talk later,' said Clarissa, leading him up to Aunt Helena, in her white shawl, with her stick.

'Peter Walsh,' said Clarissa. That means nothing, thought Miss Parry.

Clarissa asked me. It is tiring; it is noisy; but Clarissa asked me. So I came. It is a pity that they live in London—Richard and Clarissa. If only for Clarissa's health it would have been better to live in the country. But Clarissa has always been fond of society.

A.8 Modified Extract 8

A.8.1 Introduction to the passage

Peter Walsh and Sally Seaton (now Mrs Rosseter) sit on a sofa and have a chat during Clarissa Dalloway's party (a common friend). They are meeting for the first time after many years.

A.8.2 Study 1

‘Have you written?’ she asked him, spreading her hand, her firm and shapely hand, on her knee in a way he recalled.

‘Not a word!’ said Peter Walsh, and she laughed.

She is still attractive, still a personage, Sally Seton. But who is this Rosseter? he thought. *He wore two camellias on his wedding day* he recalled. That was all Peter knew of him. ‘“You have myriads of servants, miles of conservatories”, Clarissa wrote; something like that’ he said. Sally owned it with a shout of laughter.

‘Yes, I have ten thousand a year’ she replied. ‘Whether before the tax was paid or after, I can’t remember, for my husband, whom you must meet,’ she said, ‘whom you would like,’ she said, ‘did all that for me’.

‘And you used to be in rags and tatters. You had pawned your grandmother’s ring which Marie Antoinette had given your great-grandfather to come to Bourton’ Peter said.

‘Oh yes’, Sally remembered; ‘I have it still, a ruby ring which Marie Antoinette had given my great-grandfather. I never had a penny to my name in those days, and going to Bourton always meant some frightful pinch. But going to Bourton meant so much to me—kept me sane, I believe, so unhappy was I at home. But this is all a thing of the past—all over now,’ she said. ‘And Mr. Parry is dead; and Miss Parry is still alive.’ ‘Never have I had such a shock in my life!’ said Peter. ‘I have been quite certain she was dead.’ ‘And the marriage has been,’ Sally supposed, ‘a success? And that very handsome, very self-possessed young woman is Elizabeth, over there, by the curtains, in red.’

Elisabeth is like a poplar, she is like a river, she is like a hyacinth Willie Titcomb was thinking. *Oh how much nicer to be in the country and do what I like!* thought Elizabeth. *I can hear my poor dog howling, I am certain*. ‘She is not a bit like Clarissa’ Peter Walsh said.

A.8.3 Study 2

‘Have you written?’ she asked him, spreading her hand, her firm and shapely hand, on her knee in a way he recalled.

‘Not a word!’ said Peter Walsh, and she laughed.

She is still attractive, still a personage, Sally Seton. But who is this Rosseter? he thought. He wore two camellias on his wedding day he recalled. That was all Peter knew of him. ‘“You have myriads of servants, miles of conservatories”, Clarissa wrote; something like that’ he said. Sally owned it with a shout of laughter. ‘Yes, I have ten thousand a year’ she replied. ‘Whether before the tax was paid or after, I can’t remember, for my husband, whom you must meet,’ she said, ‘whom you would like,’ she said, ‘did all that for me’.

‘And you used to be in rags and tatters. You had pawned your grandmother’s ring which Marie Antoinette had given your great- grandfather to come to Bourton’ Peter said.

‘Oh yes’, Sally remembered; ‘I have it still, a ruby ring which Marie Antoinette had given my great-grandfather. I never had a penny to my name in those days, and going to Bourton always meant some frightful pinch. But going to Bourton meant so much to me—kept me sane, I believe, so unhappy was I at home. But this is all a thing of the past—all over now,’ she said. ‘And Mr. Parry is dead; and Miss Parry is still alive.’ ‘Never have I had such a shock in my life!’ said Peter. ‘I have been quite certain she was dead.’ ‘And the marriage has been,’ Sally supposed, ‘a success? And that very handsome, very self-possessed young woman is Elizabeth, over there, by the curtains, in red.

‘Elisabeth is like a poplar, she is like a river, she is like a hyacinth Willie Titcomb was thinking. Oh how much nicer to be in the country and do what I like! thought Elizabeth. I can hear my poor dog howling, I am certain. ‘She is not a bit like Clarissa’ Peter Walsh said.

Appendix B

Questionnaire sample

To be completed by lab assistant

DATE:
PARTICIPANT NUMBER:

Dear participant,
thank you for taking part in this experiment, your help is essential to my research.
Please complete the questionnaire in the order in which the sections appear. Do not refer back to the passage to answer the questions.
You will be asked to give some personal information, which will be used for research purposes only.
You will then read some extracts and you will be asked to answer some questions.
Read normally, as you would if you were at home. Remember that there is no right or wrong answer.
If you have any doubts please ask the lab assistant, and if you have any further queries feel free to contact me here: aexgg@nottingham.ac.uk
Thanks!
Giulia.

Personal Information

Gender:	Female	Male
Age (in years):		
Highest level of education (High School, BA, MA, PhD, eg..) and subject:		
Profession		
If you are a student, please write here your course and year of study:		
Do you read books for pleasure?	Yes	No
If yes, what genre/s do you read mostly?		
Who is/are your favourite author/s?		
How many books do you read (on average) in a year?		
How much time a day (in hours) do you spend reading in general?		
Estimate how much of this time (hours/day) is spent reading the following: - novels		
- news and/or articles on the internet		
- magazines		
- other (please specify)		
Have you read or studied the work of any modernist writer?	Yes	No
If yes, who?		
Have you read Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse?*	Yes	No
Have you read Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway?*	Yes	No
Have you read anything else by Virginia Woolf?	Yes	No
If yes, what?		

Extract

The Ramsays and Lily Briscoe, an acquaintance, are back to the house on the Isle of Skye after ten years. Mr Ramsay and his son and daughter are going to the Lighthouse. While his kids get ready, he observes Lily. His wife is dead and he is looking for sympathy.

Was anybody looking after her? he said. Had she everything she wanted?
'Oh, thanks, everything,' said Lily Briscoe nervously. No; she could not do it. She ought to have floated off instantly upon some wave of sympathetic expansion: the pressure on her was tremendous. But she remained stuck. There was an awful pause. They both looked at the sea. Why, thought Mr. Ramsay, should she look at the sea when I am here? She hoped it would be calm enough for them to land at the Lighthouse, she said. The Lighthouse! The Lighthouse! What's that got to do with it? he thought impatiently. Instantly, with the force of some primeval gust (for really he could not restrain himself any longer), there issued from him such a groan that any other woman in the whole world would have done something, said something – all except myself, thought Lily, girding at herself bitterly, who am not a woman, but a peevish, ill-tempered, dried-up old maid presumably.
Mr. Ramsay sighed to the full. He waited. Was she not going to say anything? Did she not see what he wanted from her? Then he said he had a particular reason for wanting to go to the Lighthouse. His wife used to send the men things. There was a poor boy with a tuberculous hip, the lightkeeper's son. He sighed profoundly. He sighed significantly. All Lily wished was that this enormous flood of grief, this insatiable hunger for sympathy, this demand that she should surrender herself up to him entirely, and even so he had sorrows enough to keep her supplied for ever, should leave her, should be diverted (she kept looking at the house, hoping for an interruption) before it swept her down in its flow.

1. Without looking back at the extract, summarize it in 3-4 sentences.

2. What relationship do you think there is between Mr Ramsay and Lily?

3. Do you think this passage is difficult or challenging? If so, what do you think makes it difficult?

Now look at the same extract reproduced below and do the following:

- Circle the words/sentences that you think are **uttered by the characters**. Indicate that this is speaking and who is doing the speaking.
- Circle the words/sentences that you think are **part of a character's thoughts**. Indicate that this is thinking and who is doing the thinking.
- Underline the words/sentences that you think are conveyed by the **narrator**.

You don't have to assign words or sentences exclusively to one character/the narrator.

For example:

Polly speaking

Polly turned to her friend and said, What a beautiful dress'

Polly thinking

and imagined how much better it would look on her.

Was anybody looking after her? he said. Had she everything she wanted?

'Oh, thanks, everything,' said Lily Briscoe nervously. No; she could not do it. She ought to have floated off instantly upon some wave of sympathetic expansion: the pressure on her was tremendous. But she remained stuck. There was an awful pause. They both looked at the sea. Why, thought Mr. Ramsay, should she look at the sea when I am here? She hoped it would be calm enough for them to land at the Lighthouse, she said. The Lighthouse! The Lighthouse! What's that got to do with it? he thought impatiently. Instantly, with the force of some primeval gust (for really he could not restrain himself any longer), there issued from him such a groan that any other woman in the whole world would have done something, said something – all except myself, thought Lily, girding at herself bitterly, who am not a woman, but a peevish, ill-tempered, dried-up old maid presumably.

Mr. Ramsay sighed to the full. He waited. Was she not going to say anything? Did she not see what he wanted from her? Then he said he had a particular reason for wanting to go to the Lighthouse. His wife used to send the men things. There was a poor boy with a tuberculous hip, the lightkeeper's son. He sighed profoundly. He sighed significantly. All Lily wished was that this enormous flood of grief, this insatiable hunger for sympathy, this demand that she should surrender herself up to him entirely, and even so he had sorrows enough to keep her supplied for ever, should leave her, should be diverted (she kept looking at the house, hoping for an interruption) before it swept her down in its flow.

Extract

Clarissa Dalloway is giving a party, and walks around the room talking with her guests.

'Dear Clarissa!' exclaimed Mrs. Hilbery. She looked to-night, she said, so like her mother as she first saw her walking in a garden in a grey hat. And really Clarissa's eyes filled with tears. Her mother, walking in a garden! But alas, she must go.

For there was Professor Brierly, who lectured on Milton, talking to little Jim Hutton (who was unable even for a party like this to compass both tie and waistcoat or make his hair lie flat), and even at this distance they were quarrelling, she could see. For Professor Brierly was a very queer fish. With all those degrees, honours, lectureships between him and the scribblers he suspected instantly an atmosphere not favourable to his queer compound; his prodigious learning and timidity; his wintry charm without cordiality; his innocence blent with snobbery; he quivered if made conscious by a lady's unkempt hair, a youth's boots, of an underworld, very creditable doubtless, of rebels, of ardent young people; of would-be geniuses, and intimated with a little toss of the head, with a sniff—Humph!—the value of moderation; of some slight training in the classics in order to appreciate Milton. Professor Brierly (Clarissa could see) wasn't hitting it off with little Jim Hutton (who wore red socks, his black being at the laundry) about Milton. She interrupted.

She said she loved Bach. So did Hutton. That was the bond between them, and Hutton (a very bad poet) always felt that Mrs. Dalloway was far the best of the great ladies who took an interest in art. It was odd how strict she was. About music she was purely impersonal. She was rather a prig. But how charming to look at! She made her house so nice if it weren't for her Professors. Clarissa had half a mind to snatch him off and set him down at the piano in the back room. For he played divinely.

1. Without looking back at the extract, summarize it in 3-4 sentences.

2. Who thinks that Professor Brierly is a ‘queer fish’?

3. Do you think this passage is difficult or challenging? If so, what do you think makes it difficult?

Now look at the same extract reproduced below and do the following:

- Circle the words/sentences that you think are **uttered by the characters**. Indicate that this is speaking and who is doing the speaking.
- Circle the words/sentences that you think are **part of a character's thoughts**. Indicate that this is thinking and who is doing the thinking.
- Underline the words/sentences that you think are conveyed by the **narrator**.

You don't have to assign words or sentences exclusively to one character/the narrator.

For example:

Polly speaking

Polly turned to her friend and said, What a beautiful dress'

Polly thinking

and imagined how much better it would look on her.

'Dear Clarissa!' exclaimed Mrs. Hilbery. She looked to-night, she said, so like her mother as she first saw her walking in a garden in a grey hat. And really Clarissa's eyes filled with tears. Her mother, walking in a garden! But alas, she must go.

For there was Professor Brierly, who lectured on Milton, talking to little Jim Hutton (who was unable even for a party like this to compass both tie and waistcoat or make his hair lie flat), and even at this distance they were quarrelling, she could see. For Professor Brierly was a very queer fish. With all those degrees, honours, lectureships between him and the scribblers he suspected instantly an atmosphere not favourable to his queer compound; his prodigious learning and timidity; his wintry charm without cordiality; his innocence blent with snobbery; he quivered if made conscious by a lady's unkempt hair, a youth's boots, of an underworld, very creditable doubtless, of rebels, of ardent young people; of would-be geniuses, and intimated with a little toss of the head, with

a sniff—Humph!—the value of moderation; of some slight training in the classics in order to appreciate Milton. Professor Brierly (Clarissa could see) wasn't hitting it off with little Jim Hutton (who wore red socks, his black being at the laundry) about Milton. She interrupted.

She said she loved Bach. So did Hutton. That was the bond between them, and Hutton (a very bad poet) always felt that Mrs. Dalloway was far the best of the great ladies who took an interest in art. It was odd how strict she was. About music she was purely impersonal. She was rather a prig. But how charming to look at! She made her house so nice if it weren't for her Professors. Clarissa had half a mind to snatch him off and set him down at the piano in the back room. For he played divinely.

Extract

Ellie Henderson has been invited to a party by Clarissa Dalloway, her cousin, and her husband Richard.

So, with her weak eyesight, Ellie Henderson craned rather forward, and it wasn't so much she who minded not having any one to talk to (she hardly knew anybody there), for she felt that they were all such interesting people to watch; *politicians presumably; Richard Dalloway's friends*, thought Ellie. But it was Richard himself who felt that he could not let the poor creature go on standing there all the evening by herself.

'Well, Ellie, and how's the world treating you?' he said in his genial way, and Ellie Henderson, getting nervous and flushing and feeling that it was extraordinarily nice of him to come and talk to her, said that many people really felt the heat more than the cold.

'Yes, they do,' said Richard Dalloway. 'Yes.'

But what more does one say? thought Ellie.

'Hullo, Richard,' said somebody, taking him by the elbow. *Good Lord, there is old Peter, old Peter Walsh Richard* thought. 'I am delighted - ever so pleased to see you! you haven't changed a bit.' He said. And off they went together walking right across the room, giving each other little pats. *As if they haven't met for a long time*, Ellie Henderson thought, watching them go, certain she knew that man's face. *A tall man, middle aged, rather fine eyes, dark, wearing spectacles, with a look of John Burrows. Edith would be sure to know* she thought.

The curtain with its flight of birds of Paradise blew out again. And Clarissa saw —she saw Ralph Lyon beat it back, and go on talking. *So it isn't a failure after all! it is going to be all right now—my party. It has begun. It has started. But it is still touch and go. I must stand here for the present. People seem to come in a rush.*

1. Without looking back at the extract, summarize it in 3-4 sentences.

2. Is Ellie Henderson comfortable at the party? Why?

3. Do you think this passage is difficult or challenging? If so, what do you think makes it difficult?

Now look at the same extract reproduced below and do the following:

- Circle the words/sentences that you think are **uttered by the characters**. Indicate that this is speaking and who is doing the speaking.
- Circle the words/sentences that you think are **part of a character's thoughts**. Indicate that this is thinking and who is doing the thinking.
- Underline the words/sentences that you think are conveyed by the **narrator**.

You don't have to assign words or sentences exclusively to one character/the narrator.

For example:

Polly speaking

Polly turned to her friend and said, What a beautiful dress'

Polly thinking

and imagined how much better it would look on her.

So, with her weak eyesight, Ellie Henderson craned rather forward, and it wasn't so much she who minded not having any one to talk to (she hardly knew anybody there), for she felt that they were all such interesting people to watch; *politicians presumably; Richard Dalloway's friends*, thought Ellie. But it was Richard himself who felt that he could not let the poor creature go on standing there all the evening by herself.

'Well, Ellie, and how's the world treating you?' he said in his genial way, and Ellie Henderson, getting nervous and flushing and feeling that it was extraordinarily nice of him to come and talk to her, said that many people really felt the heat more than the cold.

'Yes, they do,' said Richard Dalloway. 'Yes.'

But what more does one say? thought Ellie.

'Hullo, Richard,' said somebody, taking him by the elbow. *Good Lord, there is old*

Peter, old Peter Walsh Richard thought. 'I am delighted - ever so pleased to see you! you haven't changed a bit.' He said. And off they went together walking right across the room, giving each other little pats. *As if they haven't met for a long time*, Ellie Henderson thought, watching them go, certain she knew that man's face. *A tall man, middle aged, rather fine eyes, dark, wearing spectacles, with a look of John Burrows. Edith would be sure to know* she thought.

The curtain with its flight of birds of Paradise blew out again. And Clarissa saw —she saw Ralph Lyon beat it back, and go on talking. *So it isn't a failure after all! it is going to be all right now—my party. It has begun. It has started. But it is still touch and go. I must stand here for the present. People seem to come in a rush.*

Extract

The Ramsays (Mrs Ramsay, Richard and their daughter Minta), Lily Briscoe, Paul Riley, William Bakes and Charles Tansley are sitting at the table. The dinner has started and the 'Bœuf en Daube' is served.

'It is a triumph,' said Mr. Bankes, laying his knife down for a moment. He had eaten attentively. *It is rich; it is tender. It is perfectly cooked*, he thought. 'How do you manage these things in the depths of the country?' he asked her. *She is a wonderful woman*, he thought. All his love, all his reverence had returned. And she knew it.
'It is a French recipe of my grandmother's,' said Mrs. Ramsay, speaking with a ring of great pleasure in her voice. 'Of course it is French. What passes for cookery in England is an abomination'. They all agreed. She continued 'It is putting cabbages in water. It is roasting meat till it is like leather. It is cutting off the delicious skins of vegetables'. 'In which', said Mr. Bankes, 'all the virtue of the vegetable is contained'. 'And the waste' said Mrs. Ramsay. 'A whole French family could live on what an English cook throws away'. Spurred on by her sense that William's affection had come back to her, and that everything was all right again, and that her suspense was over, and that she was free both to triumph and to mock, she laughed, she gesticulated. *How childlike, how absurd she is, sitting up there with all her beauty opened again in her, talking about the skins of vegetables* thought Lily. *There is something frightening about her. She is irresistible. Always she gets her own way in the end. Now she has brought this off – Paul and Minta, one might suppose, are engaged. Mr. Bankes is dining here. She puts a spell on us all, by wishing, so simply, so directly*. Lily contrasted that abundance with her own poverty of spirit, and supposed that it was partly that belief in this strange, this terrifying thing, which made Paul Rayley, the centre of it, all of a tremor, yet abstract, absorbed, silent. *For her face is all lit up – without looking young, she looks radiant*, she thought. Lily felt that Mrs. Ramsay, as she talked about the skins of vegetables, exalted that, worshipped that; held her hands over it to warm them, to protect it, and yet, having brought it all about, somehow laughed, led her victims to the altar. It came over her too at that moment – the emotion, the vibration of love. *How inconspicuous I feel myself by Paul's side!* she thought. *He, glowing, burning; me, aloof, satirical; he, bound for adventure; me, moored to the shore; he, launched, incautious; me solitary, left out – and,*

ready to implore a share, if it were disaster, in his disaster.
She said shyly ‘When did Minta lose her brooch?’

1. Without looking back at the extract, summarize it in 3-4 sentences.

2. Why did Mrs Ramsey choose a French recipe instead of a British one?

3. Do you think this passage is difficult or challenging? If so, what do you think makes it difficult?

Now look at the same extract reproduced below and do the following:

- Circle the words/sentences that you think are **uttered by the characters**. Indicate that this is speaking and who is doing the speaking.
- Circle the words/sentences that you think are **part of a character's thoughts**. Indicate that this is thinking and who is doing the thinking.
- Underline the words/sentences that you think are conveyed by the **narrator**.

You don't have to assign words or sentences exclusively to one character/the narrator.

For example:

Polly speaking

Polly turned to her friend and said, What a beautiful dress'

Polly thinking

and imagined how much better it would look on her.

'It is a triumph,' said Mr. Bankes, laying his knife down for a moment. He had eaten attentively. *It is rich; it is tender. It is perfectly cooked*, he thought. 'How do you manage these things in the depths of the country?' he asked her. *She is a wonderful woman*, he thought. All his love, all his reverence had returned. And she knew it.

'It is a French recipe of my grandmother's,' said Mrs. Ramsay, speaking with a ring of great pleasure in her voice. 'Of course it is French. What passes for cookery in England is an abomination'. They all agreed. She continued 'It is putting cabbages in water. It is roasting meat till it is like leather. It is cutting off the delicious skins of vegetables'. 'In which', said Mr. Bankes, 'all the virtue of the vegetable is contained'. 'And the waste' said Mrs. Ramsay. 'A whole French family could live on what an English cook throws away'. Spurred on by her sense that William's affection had come back to her, and that everything was all right again, and that her suspense was over, and that she was

free both to triumph and to mock, she laughed, she gesticulated. *How childlike, how absurd she is, sitting up there with all her beauty opened again in her, talking about the skins of vegetables* thought Lily. *There is something frightening about her. She is irresistible. Always she gets her own way in the end. Now she has brought this off – Paul and Minta, one might suppose, are engaged. Mr. Bankes is dining here. She puts a spell on us all, by wishing, so simply, so directly*. Lily contrasted that abundance with her own poverty of spirit, and supposed that it was partly that belief in this strange, this terrifying thing, which made Paul Rayley, the centre of it, all of a tremor, yet abstract, absorbed, silent. *For her face is all lit up – without looking young, she looks radiant*, she thought. Lily felt that Mrs. Ramsay, as she talked about the skins of vegetables, exalted that, worshipped that; held her hands over it to warm them, to protect it, and yet, having brought it all about, somehow laughed, led her victims to the altar. It came over her too at that moment – the emotion, the vibration of love. *How inconspicuous I feel myself by Paul's side!* she thought. *He, glowing, burning; me, aloof, satirical; he, bound for adventure; me, moored to the shore; he, launched, incautious; me solitary, left out – and, ready to implore a share, if it were disaster, in his disaster*.

She said shyly 'When did Minta lose her brooch?'

This is the end of the questionnaire. Thank you for participating!

Appendix C

Results of statistical analyses

C.1 Study I

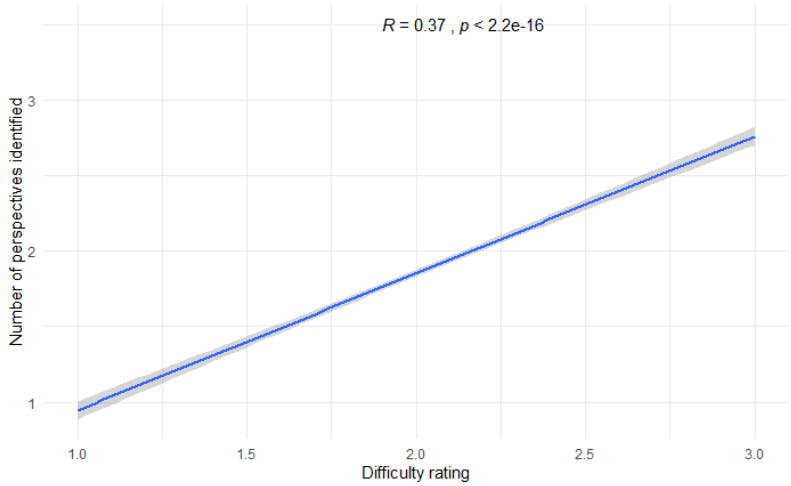


Fig. C.1 Correlation between difficulty ratings and appreciation ratings in Study I

	Difficult			
Pred	*Estimates*	*SE*	*z*	*p*
(Intercept)	2.26	0.10	22.40	**<0.001**
Modified	-0.60	0.10	-5.99	**<0.001**
Random Effects				
σ^2	0.47			
$\tau_{00\ Participant}$	0.03			
$\tau_{00\ BookYear}$	0.05			
$\tau_{00\ Text}$	0.02			
$\tau_{00\ ModernExp}$	0.00			
$N_{Participant}$	48			
N_{Text}	8			
$N_{BookYear}$	26			
$N_{ModernExp}$	2			
Observations	186			
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	0.139 / 0.292			

Fig. C.2 Linear mixed models for difficulty ratings in Study I

	Persp count			
Pred	*Estimates*	*SE*	*z*	*p*
(Intercept)	2.23	0.10	21.53	**<0.001**
Modified	-0.74	0.01	-72.11	**<0.001**
Random Effects				
σ^2	0.01			
$\tau_{00\ Participant}$	0.02			
$\tau_{00\ BookYear}$	0.01			
$\tau_{00\ Text}$	0.08			
$\tau_{00\ ModernExp}$	0.00			
$N_{Participant}$	49			
N_{Text}	8			
$N_{BookYear}$	26			
$N_{ModernExp}$	2			
Observations	196			
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	0.568 / 0.979			

Fig. C.3 Linear mixed models for Number of perspectives identified in Study I

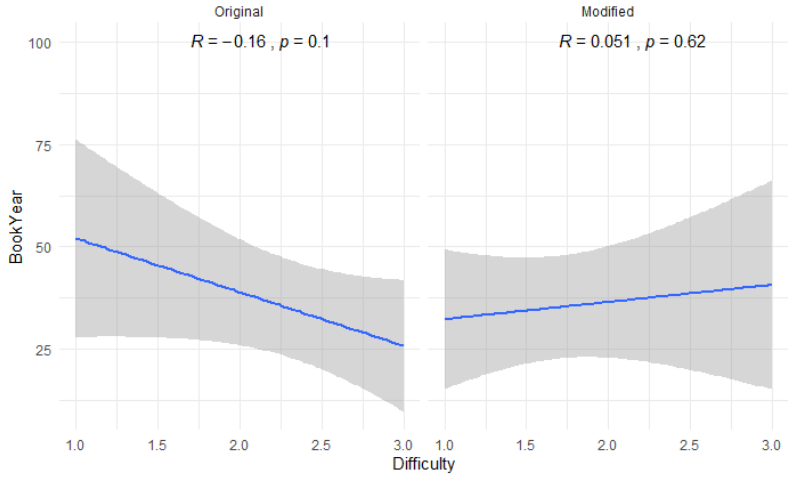


Fig. C.4 Correlation between number of books read in a year (by participant) and difficulty ratings for original and modified extracts in Study I

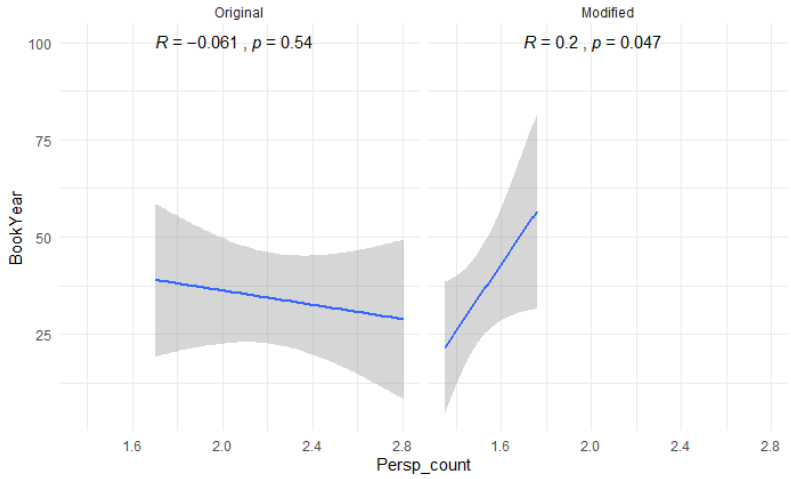


Fig. C.5 Correlation between number of books read in a year (by participant) and number of perspectives identified for original and modified extracts in Study I

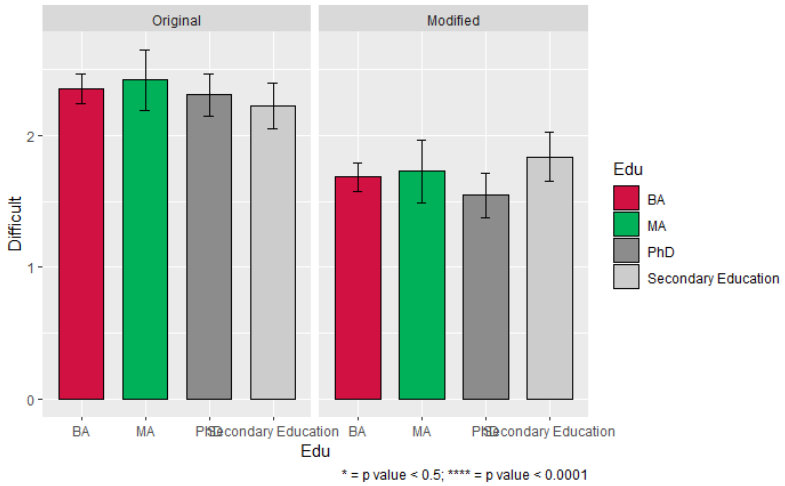


Fig. C.6 Difficulty ratings for original and modified extracts grouped by educational level in Study I

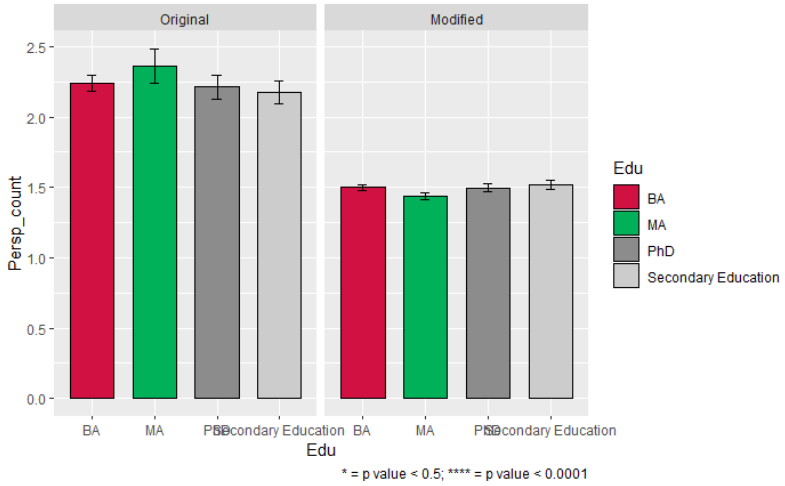


Fig. C.7 Number of perspectives identified for original and modified extracts grouped by educational level in Study I

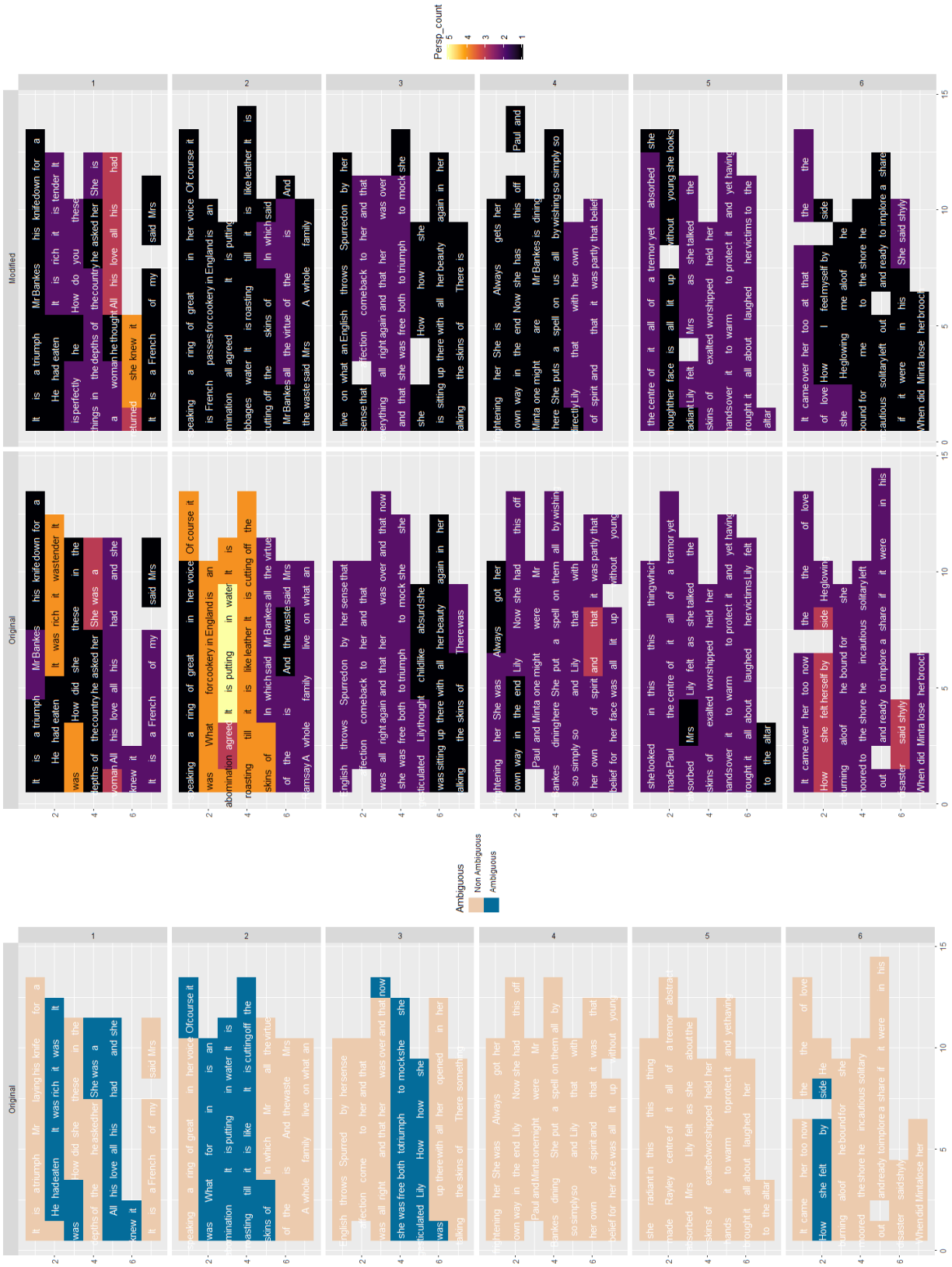


Fig. C.8 Segments of extract 1 identified as ambiguous in the stylisitc analysis (in blue, on the left), compared to heatmap highlighting the number of perspectives identified by readers in Study 1.

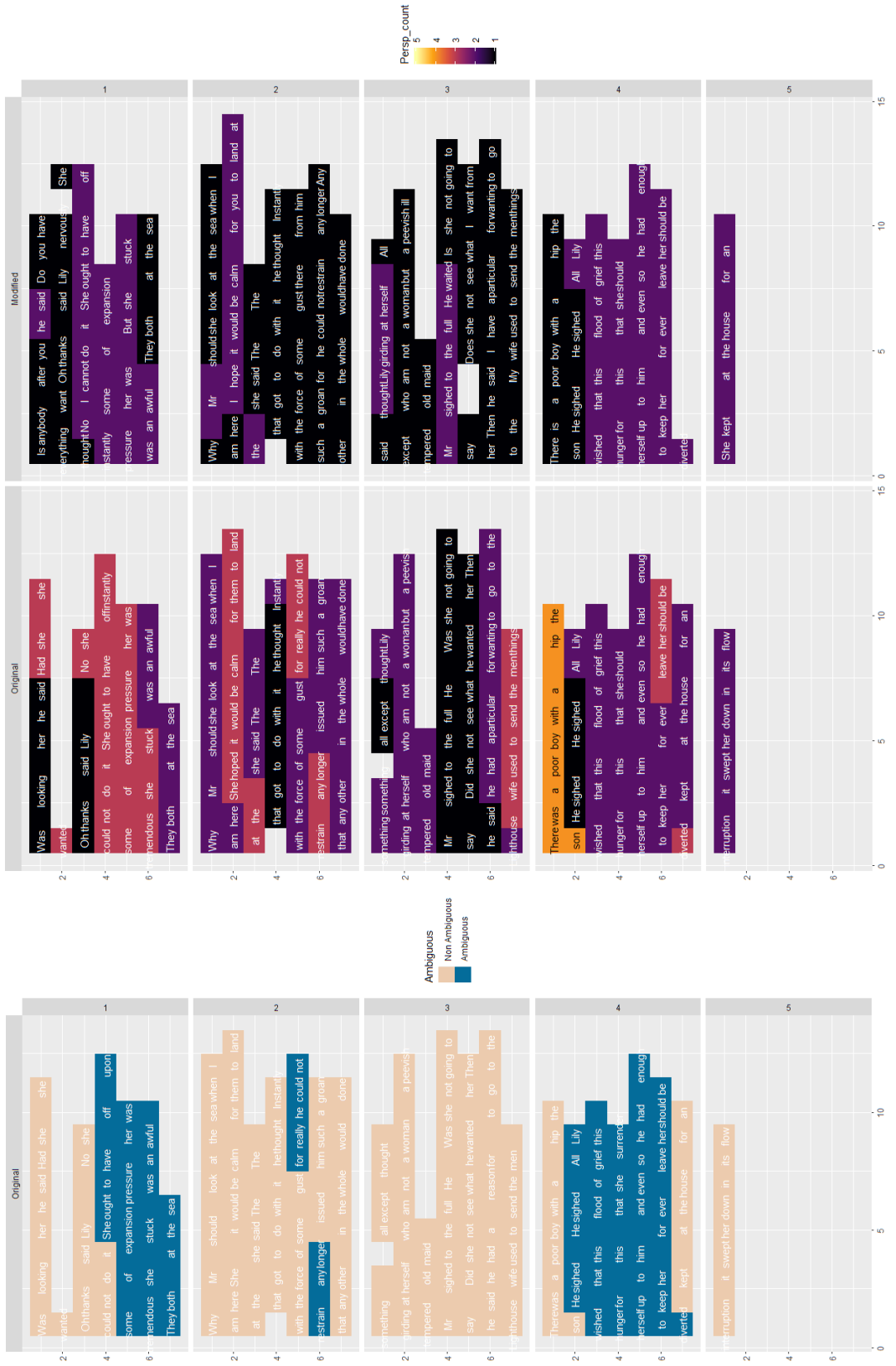


Fig. C.9 Segments of extract 2 identified as ambiguous in the stylisitc analysis (in blue, on the left), compared to heatmap highlighting the number of perspectives identified by readers in Study 1.

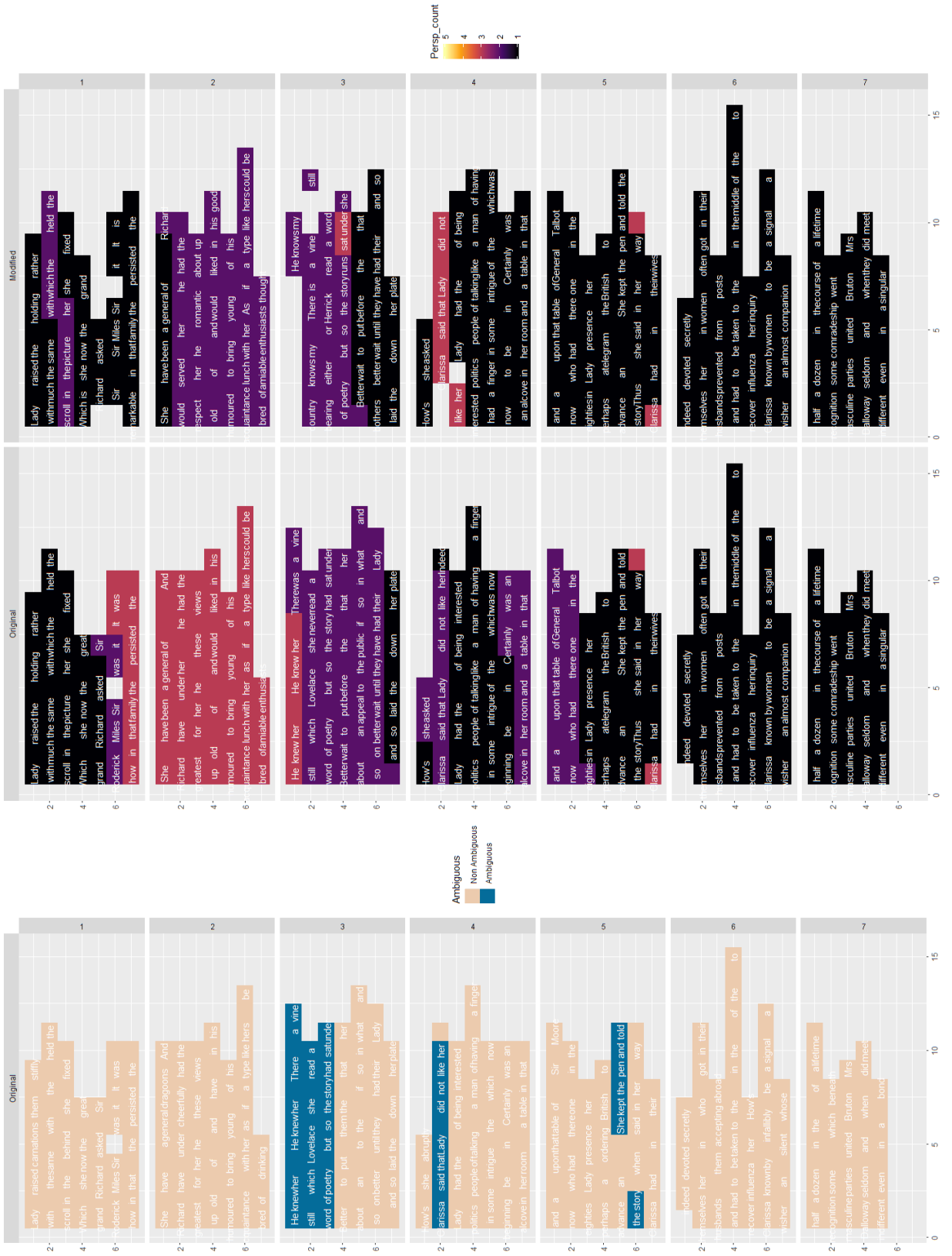


Fig. C.10 Segments of extract 3 identified as ambiguous in the stylisitc analysis (in blue, on the left), compared to heatmap highlighting the number of perspectives identified by readers in Study 1.

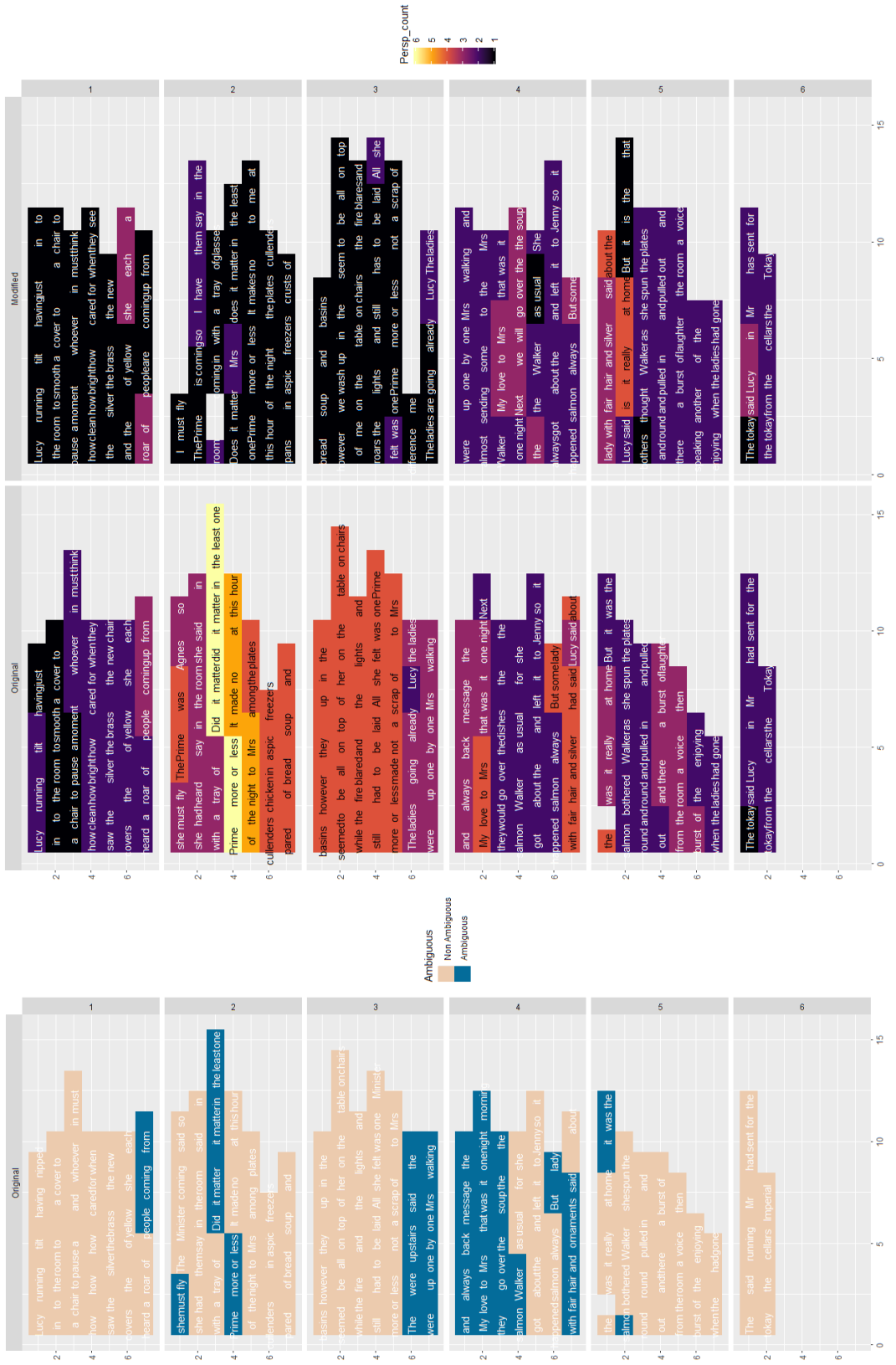


Fig. C.11 Segments of extract 4 identified as ambiguous in the stylisitc analysis (in blue, on the left), compared to heatmap highlighting the number of perspectives identified by readers in Study 1.

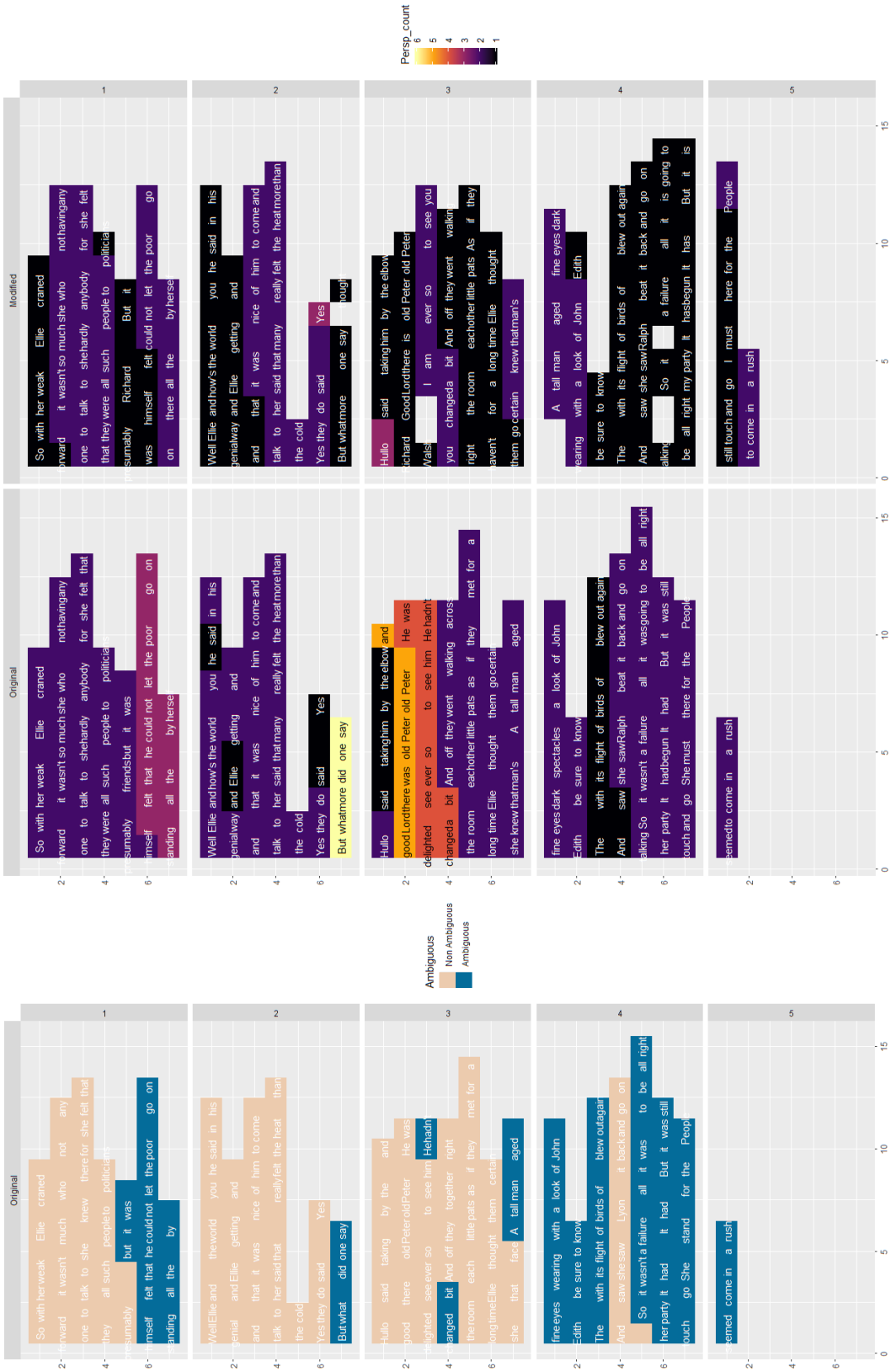


Fig. C.12 Segments of extract 5 identified as ambiguous in the stylisitc analysis (in blue, on the left), compared to heatmap highlighting the number of perspectives identified by readers in Study 1.

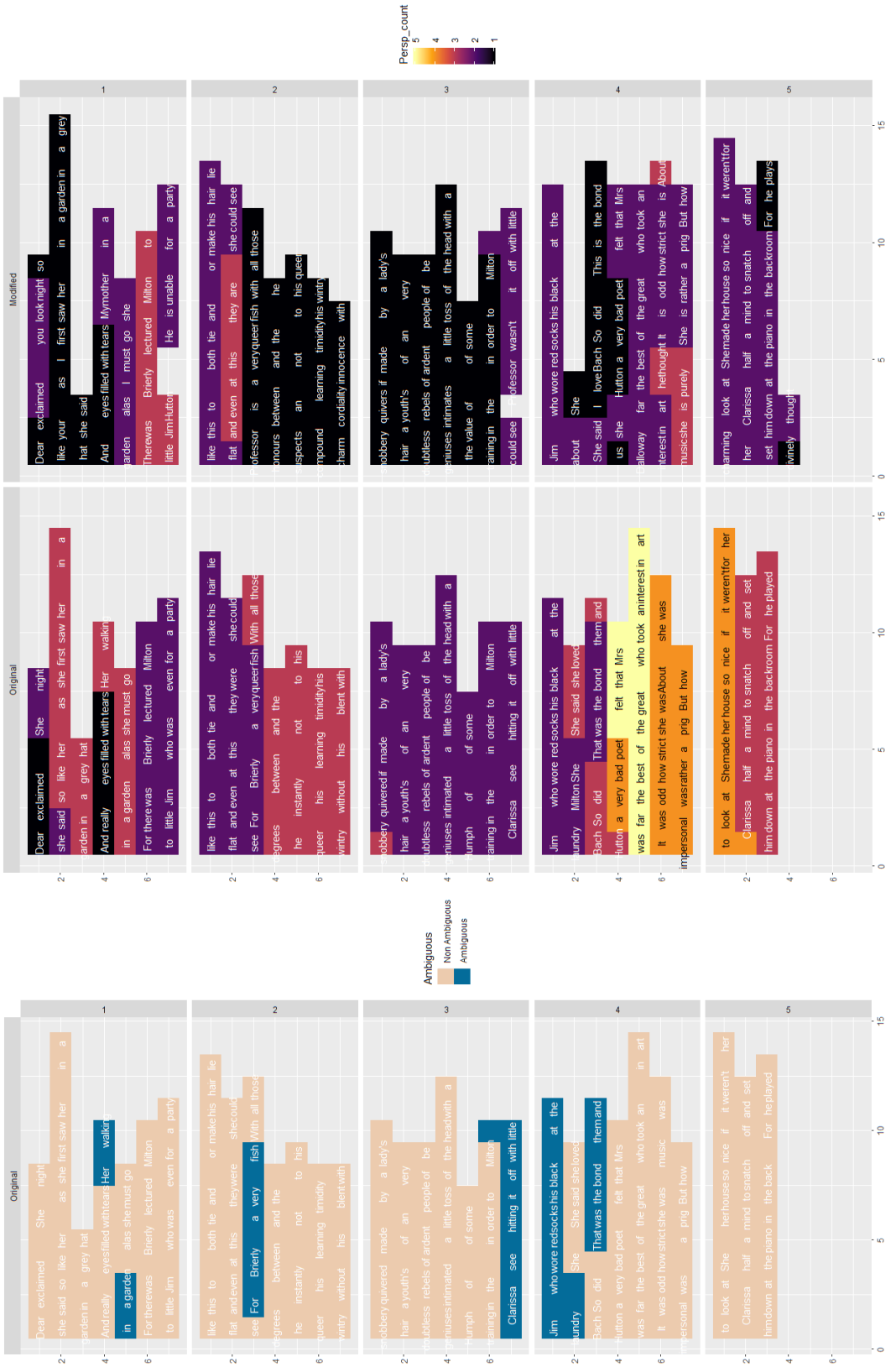


Fig. C.13 Segments of extract 6 identified as ambiguous in the stylisitc analysis (in blue, on the left), compared to heatmap highlighting the number of perspectives identified by readers in Study 1.

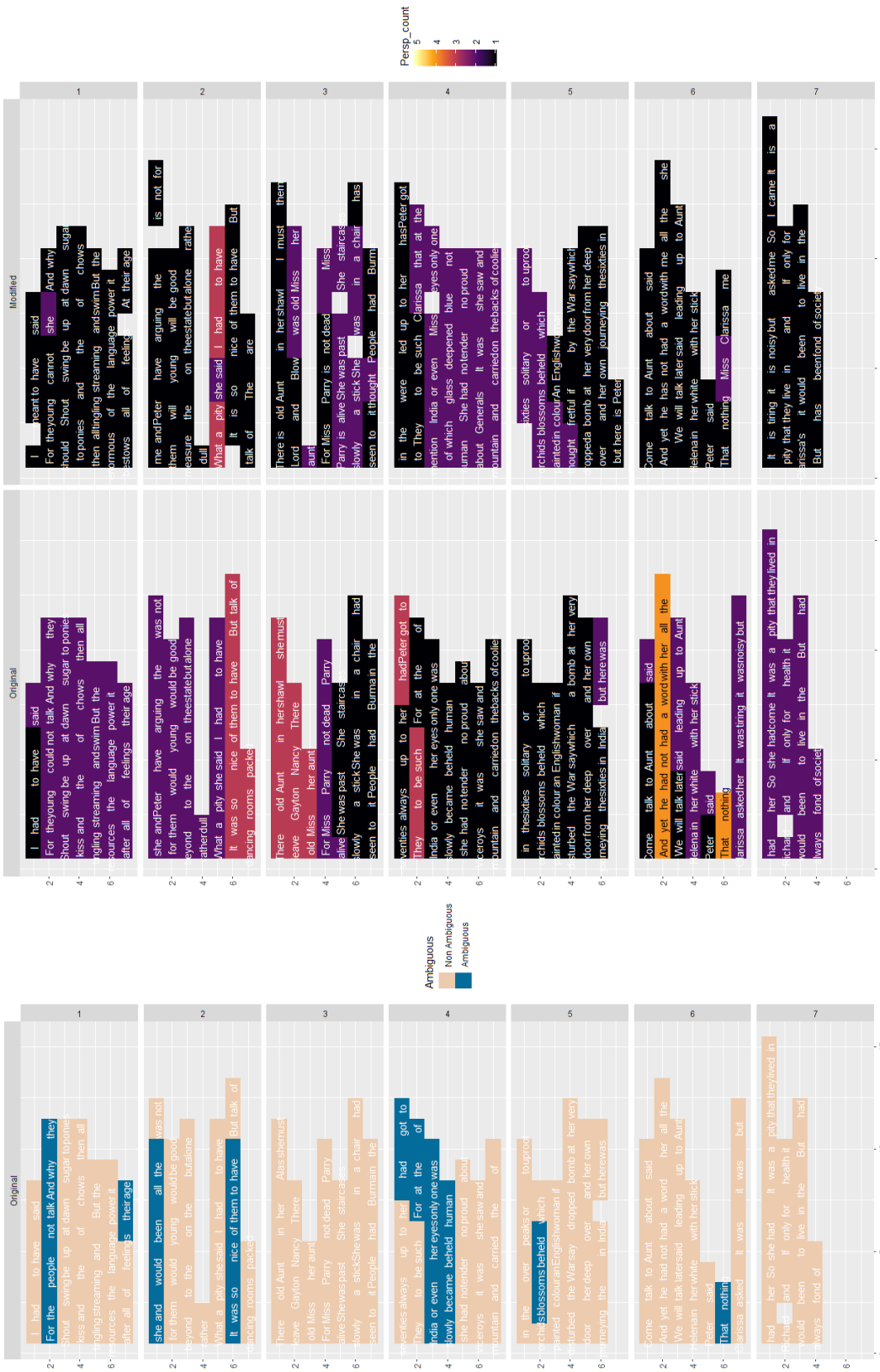


Fig. C.14 Segments of extract 7 identified as ambiguous in the stylisitc analysis (in blue, on the left), compared to heatmap highlighting the number of perspectives identified by readers in Study 1.

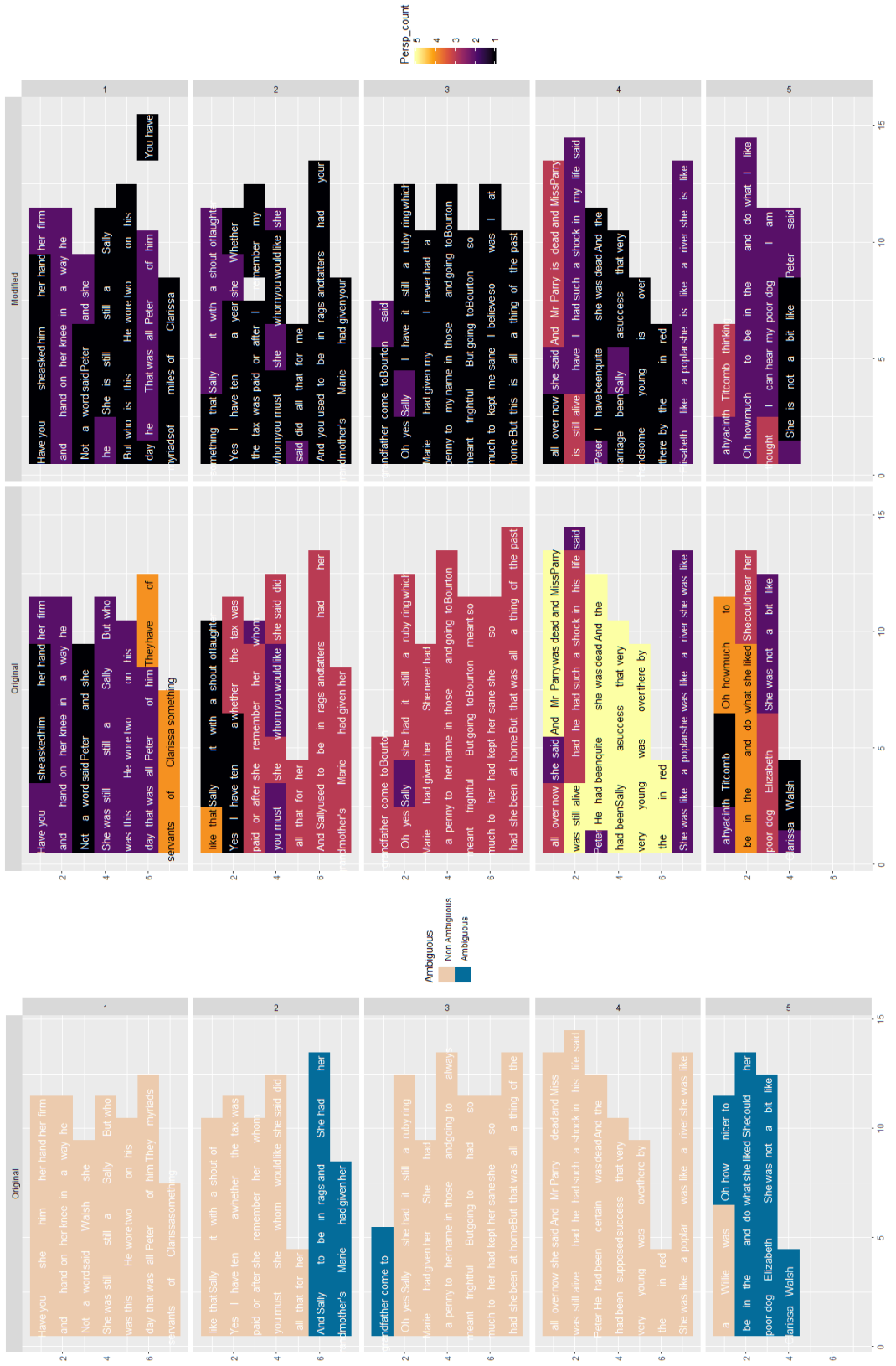


Fig. C.15 Segments of extract 8 identified as ambiguous in the stylisitc analysis (in blue, on the left), compared to heatmap highlighting the number of perspectives identified by readers in Study 1.

C.2 Study II

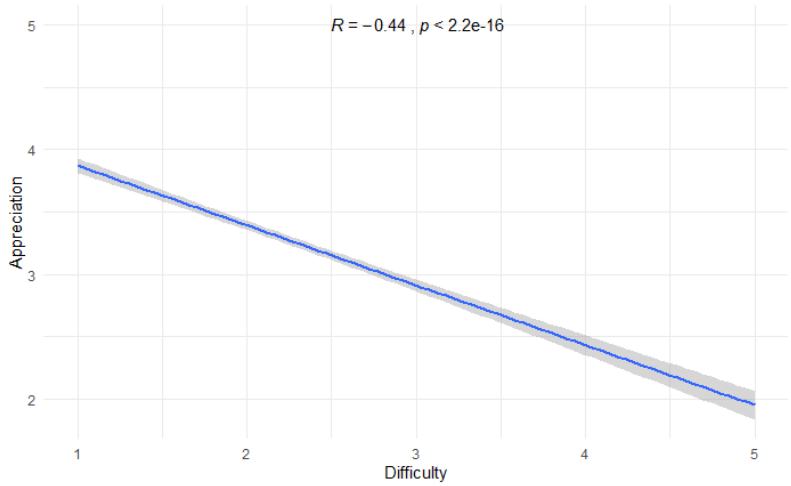
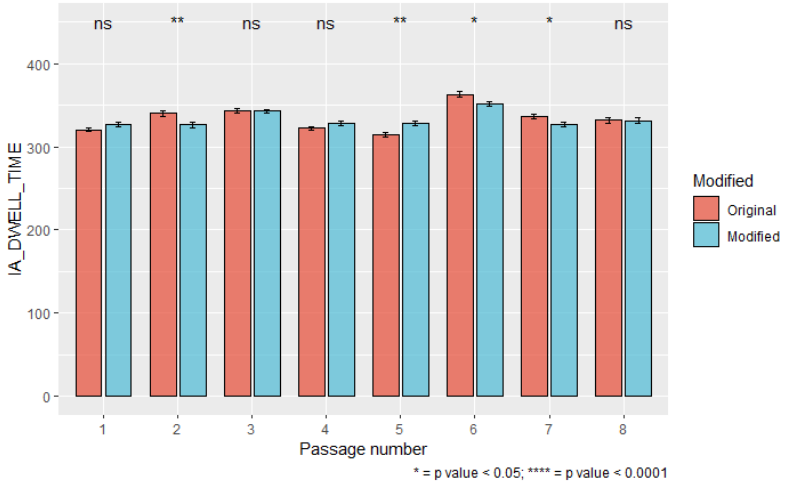
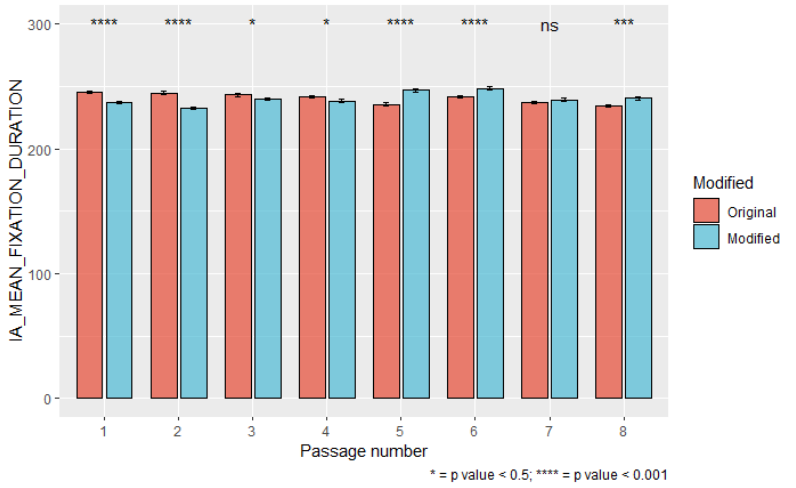


Fig. C.16 Correlation between difficulty and appreciation ratings in Study II



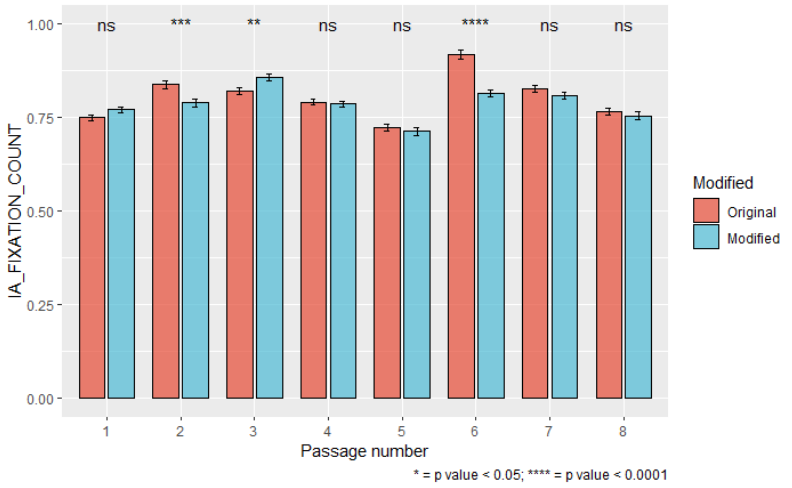
	log(IA DWELL TIME)			
Pred	*Estimates*	*SE*	*z*	*p*
(Intercept)	5.46	0.02	264.34	**<0.001**
Modified	-0.00	0.00	-0.77	0.442
Word length	0.04	0.00	63.72	**<0.001**
Position line	0.00	0.00	3.96	**<0.001**
Page	0.00	0.00	2.21	**0.027**
Trial	-0.01	0.00	-8.86	**<0.001**
Random Effects				
σ^2	0.23			
$\tau_{00\ Participant}$	0.02			
$\tau_{00\ Text}$	0.00			
$N_{\ Text}$	8			
$N_{\ Participant}$	58			
Observations	90189			
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	0.041 / 0.115			

Fig. C.17 Dwell Time



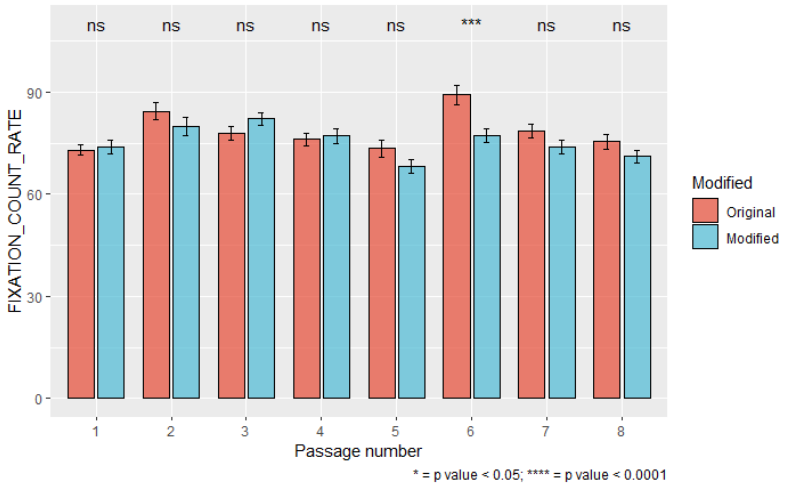
	log(IA MEAN FIXATION DURATION)			
Pred	*Estimates*	*SE*	*z*	*p*
(Intercept)	5.39	0.01	420.70	**<0.001**
Modified	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.987
Word length	0.00	0.00	12.32	**<0.001**
Position line	0.00	0.00	3.94	**<0.001**
Page	0.00	0.00	3.85	**<0.001**
Trial	-0.00	0.00	-1.19	0.234
Random Effects				
σ^2	0.08			
$\tau_{00\ Participant}$	0.01			
$\tau_{00\ Text}$	0.00			
$N_{\ Text}$	8			
$N_{\ Participant}$	58			
Observations	91984			
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	0.002 / 0.090			

Fig. C.18 Average Fixation Duration



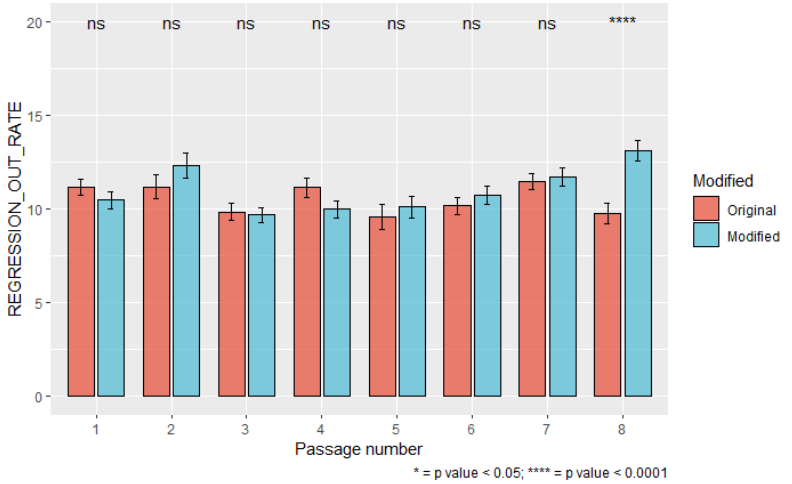
	IA FIXATION COUNT			
Pred	*Log-Mean*	*SE*	*z*	*p*
(Intercept)	-0.84	0.04	-22.12	**<0.001**
Modified	-0.02	0.01	-3.26	**0.001**
Word length	0.13	0.00	147.38	**<0.001**
Position line	0.02	0.00	9.87	**<0.001**
Page	0.01	0.00	3.69	**<0.001**
Trial	-0.02	0.00	-14.23	**<0.001**
Random Effects				
σ^2	0.83			
$\tau_{00\ Participant}$	0.06			
$\tau_{00\ Text}$	0.00			
$N_{\ Text}$	8			
$N_{\ Participant}$	58			
Observations	158015			
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	0.098 / 0.161			

Fig. C.19 Fixation Count



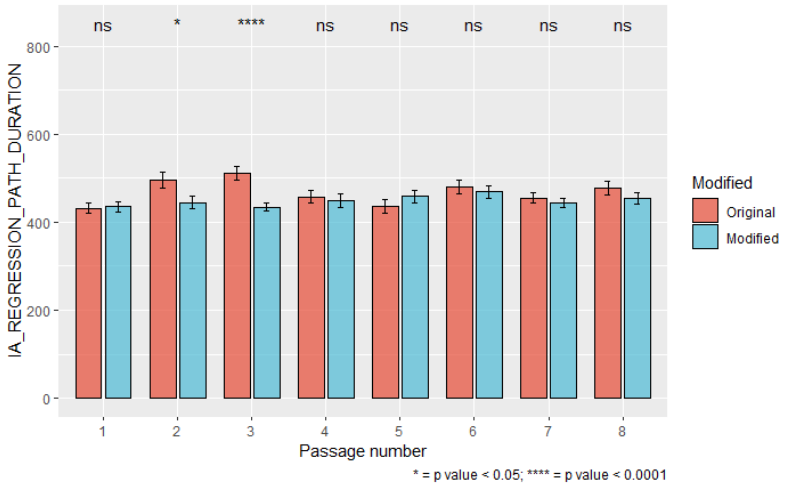
	FIXATION COUNT RATE			
Pred	*Estimates*	*SE*	*z*	*p*
(Intercept)	14.30	5.83	2.45	**0.014**
Modified	-2.21	0.73	-3.01	**0.003**
Word length	15.94	1.10	14.54	**<0.001**
Trial	-1.40	0.16	-8.55	**<0.001**
Page	0.54	0.22	2.42	**0.016**
Random Effects				
σ^2	340.59			
$\tau_{00\ Participant}$	350.76			
$\tau_{00\ Text}$	10.12			
$N_{\ Text}$	8			
$N_{\ Participant}$	58			
Observations	2556			
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	0.073 / 0.550			

Fig. C.20 Fixation %



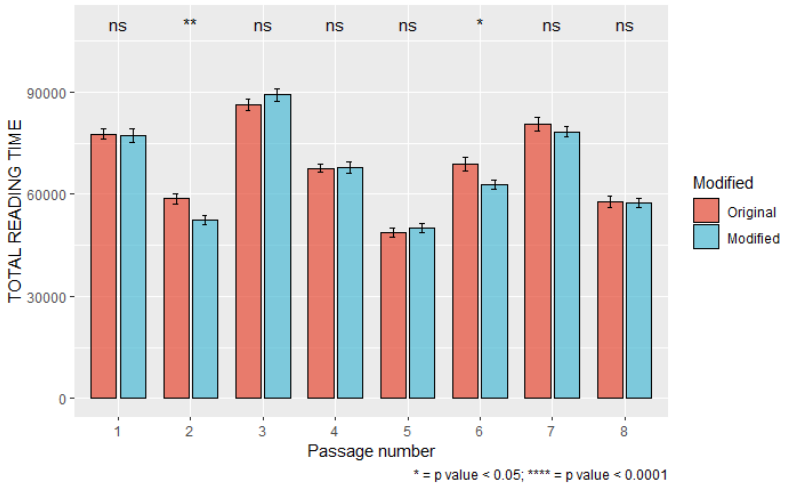
	REGRESSION OUT RATE			
Pred	*Estimates*	*SE*	*z*	*p*
(Intercept)	13.03	1.62	8.03	**<0.001**
Modified	0.43	0.23	1.87	0.061
Word length	-0.54	0.33	-1.63	0.104
Trial	-0.20	0.05	-3.93	**<0.001**
Page	0.30	0.07	4.43	**<0.001**
Random Effects				
σ^2	33.12			
$\tau_{00\ Participant}$	7.91			
$\tau_{00\ Text}$	0.41			
$N_{\ Text}$	8			
$N_{\ Participant}$	58			
Observations	2556			
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	0.014 / 0.212			

Fig. C.21 Regression %



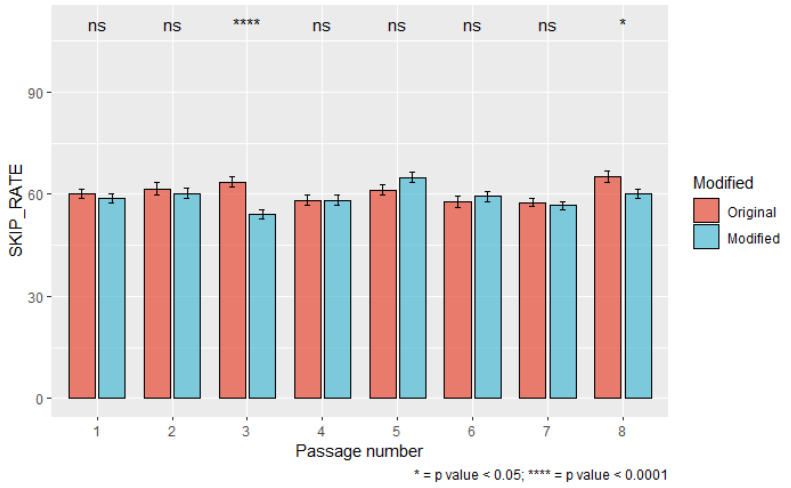
	log(IA REGRESSION PATH DURATION)			
Pred	*Estimates*	*SE*	*z*	*p*
(Intercept)	5.60	0.02	260.85	**<0.001**
Modified	-0.00	0.00	-1.05	0.293
Position line	0.00	0.00	2.17	**0.030**
Page	0.00	0.00	0.28	0.783
Word length	0.03	0.00	36.63	**<0.001**
Trial	-0.01	0.00	-5.29	**<0.001**
Random Effects				
σ^2	0.42			
$\tau_{00\ Participant}$	0.02			
$\tau_{00\ Text}$	0.00			
$N_{\ Text}$	8			
$N_{\ Participant}$	58			
Observations	90318			
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	0.015 / 0.057			

Fig. C.22 Regression Path Duration



	log(PASSAGE DWELL TIME)			
Pred	*Estimates*	*SE*	*z*	*p*
(Intercept)	11.18	0.08	141.61	**<0.001**
Modified	-0.02	0.00	-4.42	**<0.001**
Trial	-0.02	0.00	-19.59	**<0.001**
Random Effects				
σ^2	0.01			
$\tau_{00\ Participant}$	0.08			
$\tau_{00\ Text}$	0.04			
$N_{\ Text}$	8			
$N_{\ Participant}$	58			
Observations	2556			
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	0.014 / 0.914			

Fig. C.23 Total Reading Time per Extract



	SKIP RATE			
Pred	*Estimates*	*SE*	*z*	*p*
(Intercept)	76.35	4.46	17.10	**<0.001**
Modified	-1.89	0.65	-2.90	**0.004**
Word length	-3.57	0.91	-3.91	**<0.001**
Trial	0.48	0.14	3.31	**0.001**
Page	-0.80	0.19	-4.13	**<0.001**
Random Effects				
σ^2	269.47			
$\tau_{00\ Participant}$	66.06			
$\tau_{00\ Text}$	1.66			
$N_{\ Text}$	8			
$N_{\ Participant}$	58			
Observations	2556			
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	0.017 / 0.214			

Fig. C.24 Skipping %

Table C.1 IAs with the longest average fixation duration in original extracts.

Original extracts				
Text	**IA**	**Mode**	**Avg. Fix. Duration**	**POS***
5	it	CPN	396.33	Personal pronoun
4	is	FIS	395.00	Verb, 3rd person singular present
4	and	FIT	381.00	Coordinating conjunction
3	he	CPN	366.25	Personal pronoun
8	I	DS	360.67	Personal pronoun
8	so	FIS	346.00	Preposition or subordinating conjunction
5	go	FIT	338.60	Verb, base form
1	that	CPN	335.29	Preposition or subordinating conjunction
1	absorbed	CPN	334.68	Verb, past participle
3	She	FIT	328.38	Personal pronoun
1	he	N	327.38	Personal pronoun
6	some	FIT	327.19	Determiner
5	and	CPN	326.43	Coordinating conjunction
3	her	CPN	324.33	Possessive pronoun
5	So	FIT	321.67	Preposition or subordinating conjunction
5	old	FIT	320.95	Adjective
5	again	N	320.80	Adverb
1	is	DS	320.72	Verb, 3rd person singular present
3	a	FIT	319.77	Determiner
1	in	FIT	315.50	Preposition or subordinating conjunction
4	Tokay	FIS	314.59	Proper noun, singular
6	how	FIT	314.00	Whadverb
8	I	FIT	313.63	Personal pronoun
6	of	FIT	311.57	Preposition or subordinating conjunction
6	between	FIT	310.17	Preposition or subordinating conjunction
2	an	CPN	309.87	Determiner
8	she	FIT	309.56	Personal pronoun
1	her	FIT	309.23	Possessive pronoun
8	Oh	FIT	309.00	Interjection
7	Clarissa	N	307.56	Proper noun, singular
5	saw	RP	307.49	Verb, past tense
6	rebels	FIT	307.46	Noun, plural
5	genial	CPN	307.37	Adjective
3	a	CPN	307.25	Determiner
6	like	FIT	307.00	Preposition or subordinating conjunction
3	of	CPN	306.00	Preposition or subordinating conjunction
7	her	FIT	305.68	Possessive pronoun
4	some	FIS	305.32	Determiner
6	favourable	FIT	305.16	Adjective
1	his	CPN	304.88	Possessive pronoun

*The column POS indicates the *part of speech*, automatically tagged to IAs with the R packages *tm* and *NLP* (Feinerer et al., 2008; Hornik, 2018).

Table C.2 IAs with the longest average fixation duration for modified extracts

Modified				
Text	**IA**	**Mode**	**Avg. Fix. Duration**	**POS**
5	it	CPN	396.33	Personal pronoun
4	is	FIS	395.00	Verb, 3rd person singular present
4	and	FIT	381.00	Coordinating conjunction
3	he	CPN	366.25	Personal pronoun
8	I	DS	360.67	Personal pronoun
8	so	FIS	346.00	Preposition or subordinating conjunction
5	go	FIT	338.60	Verb, base form
1	that	CPN	335.29	Preposition or subordinating conjunction
1	absorbed	CPN	334.68	Verb, past participle
3	She	FIT	328.38	Personal pronoun
1	he	N	327.38	Personal pronoun
6	some	FIT	327.19	Determiner
5	and	CPN	326.43	Coordinating conjunction
3	her	CPN	324.33	Possessive pronoun
5	So	FIT	321.67	Preposition or subordinating conjunction
5	old	FIT	320.95	Adjective
5	again	N	320.80	Adverb
1	is	DS	320.72	Verb, 3rd person singular present
3	a	FIT	319.77	Determiner
1	in	FIT	315.50	Preposition or subordinating conjunction
4	Tokay	FIS	314.59	Proper noun, singular
6	how	FIT	314.00	Whadverb
8	I	FIT	313.63	Personal pronoun
6	of	FIT	311.57	Preposition or subordinating conjunction
6	between	FIT	310.17	Preposition or subordinating conjunction
2	an	CPN	309.87	Determiner
8	she	FIT	309.56	Personal pronoun
1	her	FIT	309.23	Possessive pronoun
8	Oh	FIT	309.00	Interjection
7	Clarissa	N	307.56	Proper noun, singular
5	saw	RP	307.49	Verb, past tense
6	rebels	FIT	307.46	Noun, plural
5	genial	CPN	307.37	Adjective
3	a	CPN	307.25	Determiner
6	like	FIT	307.00	Preposition or subordinating conjunction
3	of	CPN	306.00	Preposition or subordinating conjunction
7	her	FIT	305.68	Possessive pronoun
4	some	FIS	305.32	Determiner
6	favourable	FIT	305.16	Adjective
1	his	CPN	304.88	Possessive pronoun

Table C.3 IAs with the longest dwell time in original extracts

Original extracts				
Text	**IA**	**Mode**	**Dwell Time**	**POS**
3	great-grand-daughter	FIT	988.88	Adjective
6	sniff-Humph-the	FIT	794.00	Verb, gerund or present participle
6	intimated	FIT	787.79	Verb, past participle
3	cognisance	FIT	779.08	Noun, singular or mass
2	tuberculous	FIS	754.86	Adjective
7	indomitable	FIT	745.26	Adjective
8	conservatories	FIS	726.46	Noun, plural
8	camellias	FIT	722.00	Noun, plural
6	cordiality	FIT	674.39	Noun, singular or mass
6	made	FIT	660.48	Verb, past participle
6	prodigious	FIT	653.39	Adjective
2	Mr	N	652.00	Proper noun, singular
7	I	DS	650.67	Personal pronoun
3	well-set-up	CPN	645.12	Adjective
3	however	CPN	644.40	Adverb
6	looked	FIS	629.96	Verb, past tense
6	Hilbery	N	626.85	Proper noun, singular
2	everything	FIS	605.19	Noun, singular or mass
1	incautious	FIT	603.37	Adjective
1	contrasted	CPN	595.43	Verb, past tense
6	youths	FIT	592.15	Adjective
7	startling	CPN	579.72	Adjective
4	tokay	FIS	574.73	Noun, singular or mass
7	solitary	CPN	574.48	Adjective
8	personage	FIT	574.04	Noun, singular or mass
1	putting	FIS	573.43	Verb, gerund or present participle
3	abroad	CPN	572.33	Adverb
6	moderation	FIT	572.00	Noun, singular or mass
6	suspected	FIT	571.46	Verb, past tense
4	underdone	FIT	571.33	Noun, singular or mass
4	cullenders	FIT	570.33	Noun, plural
5	Hullo	DS	569.11	Proper noun, singular
7	descending	CPN	565.70	Verb, gerund or present participle
7	aunt	RP	564.20	Noun, singular or mass
4	fire-irons	FIT	562.56	Noun, plural
6	some	FIT	560.67	Determiner
1	solitary	FIT	559.96	Adjective
6	innocence	FIT	559.82	Noun, singular or mass
6	underworld	FIT	557.93	Noun, singular or mass
6	black	FIT	556.65	Adjective

Table C.4 IAs with the longest dwell time in modified extracts

Modified extracts				
Text	**IA**	**Mode**	**Dwell Time**	**POS**
3	great-grand-daughter	FIT	1142.25	Adjective
7	indomitable	FIT	972.19	Adjective
2	tuberculous	FIS	922.89	Adjective
3	great-great-grand-daughter	FIT	860.04	Adjective, comparative
4	underdone	FIT	766.04	Adjective
6	to-night	FIS	758.04	Adjective
3	cognisance	FIT	757.82	Noun, singular or mass
8	camellias	FIT	749.75	Noun, plural
8	conservatories	FIS	743.55	Noun, plural
6	prodigious	FIT	702.07	Adjective
6	sniff-Humph-the	FIT	689.25	Verb, gerund or present participle
7	disturbed	FIT	652.78	Verb, past participle
1	gesticulated	CPN	652.74	Verb, past tense
8	hyacinth	FIT	641.89	Adjective
1	worshipped	CPN	632.07	Personal pronoun
8	I	DS	629.00	Personal pronoun
3	infallibly	CPN	624.96	Adverb
7	communicating	FIT	623.19	Verb, gerund or present participle
3	which	FIS	622.87	Whdeterminer
6	being	CPN	622.84	Verb, gerund or present participle
3	well-set-up	CPN	622.30	Adjective
3	amiable	FIT	619.96	Adjective
6	youths	FIT	598.81	Adjective
4	tokay	FIS	588.70	Noun, singular or mass
1	satirical	FIT	580.56	Adjective
1	incautious	FIT	569.48	Verb, gerund or present participle
1	Bankes	FIT	568.04	Proper noun, singular
6	would-be	FIT	565.71	Adjective
4	cullenders	FIT	556.80	Noun, plural
6	black	CPN	554.00	Adjective
8	personage	FIT	552.86	Noun, singular or mass
2	sighed	N	545.76	Verb, past tense
8	owned	N	544.33	Verb, past tense
1	attentively	CPN	541.54	Adverb
1	glowing	FIT	541.42	Verb, gerund or present participle
6	instantly	FIT	539.48	Adverb
7	solidify	FIT	538.54	Verb, base form
3	carnations	CPN	538.08	Noun, plural
6	intimates	FIT	537.33	Noun, plural
4	fire-irons	FIT	536.50	Noun, plural

Table C.5 IAs with the highest fixation count for original extracts

Original				
Text	**IA**	**Mode**	**Avg. Fix. Count**	**POS**
3	great-grand-daughter	FIT	3.96	Adjective
6	sniff-Humph-the	FIT	3.28	Verb, gerund or present participle
2	tuberculous	FIS	3.11	Adjective
6	intimated	FIT	2.90	Verb, past participle
7	indomitable	FIT	2.79	Adjective
3	cognisance	FIT	2.65	Noun, singular or mass
8	conservatories	FIS	2.57	Noun, plural
8	camellias	FIT	2.50	Noun, plural
7	meant	DS	2.43	Verb, past participle
6	cordiality	FIT	2.41	Noun, singular or mass
6	made	FIT	2.41	Verb, past participle
8	personage	FIT	2.39	Noun, singular or mass
3	well-set-up	CPN	2.38	Adjective
6	Hilbery	N	2.38	Proper noun, singular
6	suspected	FIT	2.34	Verb, past tense
6	looked	FIS	2.31	Verb, past tense
6	innocence	FIT	2.28	Noun, singular or mass
6	conscious	FIT	2.28	Adjective
1	putting	FIS	2.25	Verb, gerund or present participle
4	underdone	FIT	2.25	Noun, singular or mass
4	tokay	FIS	2.25	Noun, singular or mass
1	inconspicuous	FIT	2.21	Adjective
4	fire-irons	FIT	2.21	Noun, plural
6	youths	FIT	2.21	Adjective
6	creditable	FIT	2.21	Adjective
6	underworld	FIT	2.17	Noun, singular or mass
8	great-grandfather	FIS	2.14	Adjective
6	quivered	FIT	2.14	Verb, past tense
1	incautious	FIT	2.11	Adjective
2	everything	FIS	2.11	Noun, singular or mass
6	prodigious	FIT	2.10	Adjective
3	tea-drinking	FIT	2.08	Noun, singular or mass
1	contrasted	CPN	2.07	Verb, past tense
4	drawing-room	RP	2.07	Noun, singular or mass
7	solidify	FIT	2.07	Verb, base form
6	doubtless	FIT	2.07	Adverb
7	descending	CPN	2.04	Verb, gerund or present participle
8	hyacinth	FIT	2.04	Adjective
6	moderation	FIT	2.03	Noun, singular or mass
1	solitary	FIT	2.00	Adjective

Table C.6 IAs with the highest fixation count for modified extracts

		Modified		
Text	**IA**	**Mode**	**Avg. Fix. Count**	**POS**
3	great-grand-daughter	FIT	4.75	Adjective
3	great-great-grand-daughter	FIT	3.57	Adjective, comparative
7	indomitable	FIT	3.52	Adjective
2	tuberculous	FIS	3.34	Adjective
8	conservatories	FIS	2.86	Noun, plural
6	to-night	FIS	2.86	Adjective
3	cognisance	FIT	2.79	Noun, singular or mass
6	sniff-Humph-the	FIT	2.75	Verb, gerund or present participle
4	underdone	FIT	2.74	Adjective
8	camellias	FIT	2.66	Noun, plural
7	communicating	FIT	2.59	Verb, gerund or present participle
1	worshipped	CPN	2.57	Personal pronoun
7	disturbed	FIT	2.44	Verb, past participle
1	gesticulated	CPN	2.43	Verb, past tense
3	well-set-up	CPN	2.43	Adjective
6	prodigious	FIT	2.43	Adjective
4	tokay	FIS	2.41	Noun, singular or mass
6	would-be	FIT	2.36	Adjective
4	drawing-room	RP	2.33	Noun, singular or mass
3	infallibly	CPN	2.32	Adverb
8	personage	FIT	2.31	Noun, singular or mass
8	hyacinth	FIT	2.25	Adjective
8	self-possessed	FIS	2.21	Adjective
8	Rosseter	FIT	2.17	Proper noun, singular
7	solidify	FIT	2.15	Verb, base form
6	youths	FIT	2.14	Adjective
1	attentively	CPN	2.11	Adverb
6	conscious	FIT	2.11	Adjective
2	thanks	DS	2.10	Interjection
1	incautious	FIT	2.07	Verb, gerund or present participle
4	fire-irons	FIT	2.07	Noun, plural
4	chair-covers	FIT	2.07	Noun, plural
1	Bankes	FIT	2.07	Proper noun, singular
3	amiable	FIT	2.07	Adjective
3	which	FIS	2.07	Whdeterminer
3	cherished	CPN	2.04	Verb, past participle
3	tea-drinking	FIT	2.04	Noun, singular or mass
6	scribblers	FIT	2.04	Noun, plural
2	lightkeepers	FIS	2.03	Noun, plural
8	owned	N	2.03	Verb, past tense

Table C.7 IAs with the highest regression count for original extracts

Original				
Text	**IA**	**Mode**	**Avg. Reg. Count**	**POS**
7	society	FIT	0.82	Noun, singular or mass
2	things	FIS	0.75	Noun, plural
4	pudding	FIT	0.71	Noun, singular or mass
3	enthusiasts	FIT	0.69	Noun, plural
8	said	N	0.68	Verb, past tense
1	brooch	DS	0.64	Noun, singular or mass
4	Tokay	FIS	0.64	Proper noun, singular
3	singular	CPN	0.62	Adjective
1	Ramsay	N	0.61	Proper noun, singular
7	Peter	FIT	0.61	Proper noun, singular
6	conscious	FIT	0.59	Adjective
6	divinely	FIT	0.59	Adverb
3	alcove	FIT	0.58	Noun, singular or mass
8	her	FIS	0.57	Personal pronoun
6	charming	FIT	0.55	Adjective
3	utterances	CPN	0.54	Noun, plural
8	something	FIS	0.54	Noun, singular or mass
5	People	FIT	0.52	Noun, plural
1	putting	FIS	0.50	Verb, gerund or present participle
1	something	FIT	0.50	Noun, singular or mass
3	persuading	CPN	0.50	Verb, gerund or present participle
4	underdone	FIT	0.50	Noun, singular or mass
6	grey	FIS	0.48	Noun, singular or mass
6	blent	FIT	0.48	Adjective
1	cabbages	FIS	0.46	Noun, plural
1	waste	FIS	0.46	Noun, singular or mass
2	everything	DS	0.46	Noun, singular or mass
7	solidify	FIT	0.46	Verb, base form
7	was	FIT	0.46	Verb, past tense
6	Jim	RP	0.45	Proper noun, singular
1	young	FIT	0.43	Adjective
2	flow	CPN	0.43	Noun, singular or mass
5	rather	IM	0.43	Adverb
7	feelings	FIT	0.43	Noun, plural
7	coolies	CPN	0.43	Noun, plural
7	meant	FIT	0.43	Verb, past tense
8	recalled	CPN	0.43	Verb, past tense
8	conservatories	FIS	0.43	Noun, plural
8	the	FIS	0.43	Determiner
3	great-grand-daughter	FIT	0.42	Adjective

Table C.8 IAs with the highest regression count for modified extracts

Modified				
Text	**IA**	**Mode**	**Avg. Reg. Count**	**POS**
2	interruption	CPN	0.86	Noun, singular or mass
4	Tokay	FIS	0.78	Proper noun, singular
1	altar	CPN	0.75	Noun, singular or mass
3	utterances	CPN	0.68	Noun, plural
7	coolies	CPN	0.67	Noun, plural
1	brooch	DS	0.63	Noun, singular or mass
4	underdone	FIT	0.63	Adjective
7	Burma	FIT	0.63	Proper noun, singular
4	crusts	FIT	0.56	Noun, plural
3	women	FIT	0.54	Noun, plural
7	solidify	FIT	0.52	Verb, base form
7	packed	FIT	0.52	Verb, past participle
2	everything	DS	0.52	Noun, singular or mass
2	significantly	N	0.52	Adverb
7	society	FIT	0.50	Noun, singular or mass
8	Rosseter	FIT	0.48	Proper noun, singular
8	know	FIT	0.48	Verb, non3rd person singular present
4	made	FIS	0.48	Verb, past tense
4	tokay	FIS	0.48	Noun, singular or mass
5	herself	FIT	0.48	Personal pronoun
7	Peter	FIT	0.48	Proper noun, singular
1	French	DS	0.46	Adjective
1	Rayley	CPN	0.46	Proper noun, singular
8	personage	FIT	0.45	Noun, singular or mass
1	something	FIT	0.43	Noun, singular or mass
3	dragoons	FIT	0.43	Noun, plural
3	amiable	FIT	0.43	Adjective
6	Professor	RP	0.43	Proper noun, singular
6	Jim	RP	0.43	Proper noun, singular
6	instantly	FIT	0.43	Adverb
6	being	CPN	0.43	Verb, gerund or present participle
6	Professors	FIT	0.43	Noun, plural
8	thinking	N	0.43	Verb, gerund or present participle
8	servants	FIS	0.41	Noun, plural
8	Walsh	N	0.41	Proper noun, singular
1	Pauls	FIT	0.41	Proper noun, singular
4	drawing-room	RP	0.41	Noun, singular or mass
4	aspic	FIT	0.41	Adjective
4	freezers	FIT	0.41	Noun, plural
4	ladies	RP	0.41	Noun, plural

Table C.9 IAs with the longest regression path duration for original extracts

Original				
Text	**IA**	**Mode**	**Reg. Path Dur.**	**POS**
2	things	FIS	7694.33	Noun, plural
8	her	FIS	7209.94	Personal pronoun
1	something	FIT	6503.47	Noun, singular or mass
3	utterances	CPN	5832.53	Noun, plural
3	alcove	FIT	5724.31	Noun, singular or mass
1	young	FIT	5452.60	Adjective
3	whose	CPN	5119.93	Possessive whpronoun
4	said	N	4610.38	Verb, past tense
8	past	FIS	4394.60	Adjective
5	People	FIT	4258.91	Noun, plural
6	charming	FIT	3973.67	Adjective
4	and	FIT	3897.50	Coordinating conjunction
4	pudding	FIT	3880.08	Noun, singular or mass
8	she	FIT	3851.00	Personal pronoun
3	persuading	CPN	3768.80	Verb, gerund or present participle
2	woman	FIT	3622.00	Noun, singular or mass
4	Lucy	N	3586.55	Proper noun, singular
1	When	DS	3565.80	Whadverb
3	enthusiasts	FIT	3506.09	Noun, plural
6	with	RP	3332.55	Preposition or subordinating conjunction
2	house	CPN	3273.31	Noun, singular or mass
2	for	CPN	3264.77	Preposition or subordinating conjunction
2	hoping	CPN	3231.37	Verb, gerund or present participle
3	down	N	3228.06	Preposition or subordinating conjunction
4	walking	RP	3105.46	Verb, gerund or present participle
3	carnations	N	2987.70	Noun, plural
5	face	CPN	2954.58	Verb, non3rd person singular present
7	had	FIT	2951.56	Verb, past tense
5	mans	CPN	2869.09	Noun, plural
7	She	FIT	2851.00	Personal pronoun
1	an	FIS	2829.71	Determiner
6	innocence	FIT	2813.54	Noun, singular or mass
6	blent	FIT	2801.68	Adjective
3	their	CPN	2724.13	Possessive pronoun
5	say	FIT	2560.67	Noun, singular or mass
8	was	FIT	2513.82	Verb, past tense
8	had	FIS	2477.69	Verb, past tense
6	little	RP	2406.13	Adjective
4	last	RP	2308.85	Adjective
7	the	FIT	2282.90	Determiner

Table C.10 IAs with the longest regression path duration for modified extracts

Modified				
Text	**IA**	**Mode**	**Reg. Path Dur.**	**POS**
8	your	FIS	6370.92	Possessive pronoun
3	and	FIT	6252.67	Coordinating conjunction
6	it	RP	6143.00	Personal pronoun
4	some	FIS	5368.58	Determiner
6	off	RP	5261.50	Particle
4	ladies	RP	4161.40	Noun, plural
1	could	FIS	4110.36	Modal
5	begun	FIT	4076.83	Verb, past participle
7	People	FIT	3852.74	Noun, plural
7	at	FIT	3756.80	Preposition or subordinating conjunction
7	coolies	CPN	3689.04	Noun, plural
2	done	FIT	3615.30	Verb, past participle
5	It	FIT	3584.20	Personal pronoun
5	mans	CPN	3403.63	Noun, plural
4	freezers	FIT	3349.65	Noun, plural
2	would	FIT	3279.35	Modal
3	whose	CPN	3262.89	Possessive whpronoun
1	Rayley	CPN	3242.96	Proper noun, singular
6	hitting	RP	2996.46	Verb, gerund or present participle
7	nothing	FIT	2972.60	Noun, singular or mass
6	how	FIT	2679.22	Whadverb
8	like	FIT	2667.78	Preposition or subordinating conjunction
1	a	FIT	2532.13	Determiner
5	face	CPN	2523.44	Verb, non3rd person singular present
6	But	FIT	2476.40	Coordinating conjunction
3	utterances	CPN	2474.45	Noun, plural
1	Paul	CPN	2423.31	Proper noun, singular
2	have	FIT	2318.74	Verb, base form
5	has	FIT	2278.44	Verb, 3rd person singular present
4	gone	RP	2261.60	Verb, past participle
3	women	FIT	2123.59	Noun, plural
4	pared	FIT	2112.00	Verb, past tense
1	wonderful	FIT	2108.15	Adjective
3	As	CPN	2056.80	Preposition or subordinating conjunction
5	say	FIT	1978.00	Interjection
4	up	FIT	1931.20	Preposition or subordinating conjunction
8	is	FIT	1849.50	Verb, 3rd person singular present
6	as	FIS	1844.13	Preposition or subordinating conjunction
3	persuading	CPN	1843.07	Verb, gerund or present participle
8	past-	FIS	1832.00	Noun, singular or mass