

# **Writing as Representation of “Presence” and “Absence”: A Study of Metonymic and Metaphoric Perspectives in Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway***

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## **Abstract**

The approach of this paper is an attempt to examine the structure of the stream-of-consciousness novel *Mrs. Dalloway* in terms of Roman Jakobson’s theory of the two axes—“the metonymic way” and “the metaphoric way”—of language to distinguish and organize the two planes—presence and absence— interwoven in a complicated structure and perplexing network as in Virginia Woolf’s work, *Mrs. Dalloway*. According to Jakobson, a syntagmatic axis is about combination, contiguity and metonymy; whereas a paradigmatic axis is about selection, similarity and metaphor. The attempt to apply Jakobson’s two axes of metonymy and metaphor to examine the represented discourses in *Mrs. Dalloway* reveals that it is surprisingly meaningful for a clearer and more profound understanding of the book. In the book, there are events described along a syntagmatic axis on an ordinary day. In addition, along the syntagmatic axis, the linear time sequence of the story is frequently interrupted by the characters’ indirect interior monologues, which is a technique called montage in cinema, or metaphor in poetry. As for the symbolic analysis of the context, Todorov’s way of finding “textual indices” will help us explore what needs to be investigated from the hidden meaning in the story. With the help of this approach we are able to see what Woolf intends and criticizes in an intricate tapestry of presence and absence. The significance of examining *Mrs. Dalloway* from Jakobson’s metonymic and metaphoric perspectives, as well as the use of Todorov’s way of finding “textual indices,” shows it’s a valuable way to clear up the confusion of the presence and absence intermingling in a stream-of-consciousness novel as Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*.

Keywords: presence; absence; metonymic; metaphoric; stream-of-consciousness

# 書寫為「在場」與「不在場」的重現：維吉尼亞·吳爾芙的 《達洛威夫人》一書中的旁喻式與隱喻式的觀點研究

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## 摘要

本文試圖以雅克慎的兩軸論：「旁喻式」與「隱喻式」來檢視意識流小說《達洛威夫人》一書中的結構，以區分和組織複雜地交織在文中的「在場」與「不在場」。根據雅克慎的理論，「毗鄰軸」是一種組合、毗鄰與旁喻；而「聯想軸」則是一種選擇、類同與隱喻。以此兩軸來檢視書中的論述顯示出應用此方法能較清楚與深度的了解文中意義。首先，沿著水平軸的線性敘事是有關某個平常的一天所發生的事件；然而沿著水平軸的線性故事卻不時地被書中人物的間接的內在獨白所打斷，此種技巧在電影中為蒙太奇或在詩中為隱喻。至於文中的象徵意涵分析，本文以托多洛夫的尋找「文中標記」方法來找出及研究文中隱含的意義。以雅克慎的旁喻式與隱喻式的觀點以及托多洛夫的尋找「文中標記」的方法來研究《達洛威夫人》顯示出這是個具有價值的方法，因為它不但能釐清交織著「在場」與「不在場」的意識流小說亦能發掘作者真正的意圖。

關鍵字：「在場」；「不在場」；旁喻的；隱喻的；意識流

