

## **‘There are all sorts of lives’: Internal dialogicity within first-person narration in Jean Rhys’s *Voyage in the Dark***

**Marianne Fish**

### **Abstract**

This study gives insight into the relatively unexplored representation of speech and thought encapsulated within first-person narration. Studies examining the dialogicity of fictional consciousness within novels have tended to predominantly focus on third-person narratives and Free Indirect Style. Fewer studies have engaged with first-person narration or Interior Monologue, for such narratives are often considered to be confined to one viewpoint. Jean Rhys’s *Voyage in the Dark* is predominantly related through the protagonist’s, Anna Morgan’s, first-person narration, however, Rhys interweaves a multitude of other voices within this mode, creating a dialogic tension with the external viewpoints expressed. Through the representation of differing perspectives in conversation with one another, Rhys demonstrates how individual consciousness is not isolated but shaped and constructed through interaction with the ideological viewpoints of others. The cacophony of voices engaging in dialogic discourse within the protagonist’s consciousness destabilises the boundaries between self and other, between public and private discourses. While *Voyage in the Dark* is a first-person autodiegetic narrative, through a detailed analysis of linguistic mechanisms (repetition, adjacency pairs, modality), this study highlights the internal dialogicity of Interior Monologue. By investigating how Rhys has employed linguistic devices and effectively utilised the Interior Monologue to present differing worldviews through one consciousness, this study also exemplifies the relevance of Bakhtin’s concept of dialogicity to first-person narratives.

**Keywords:** stylistics, consciousness in fiction, dialogicity, consciousness, identity, subjectivity, internal dialogicity, narrative

## 1. Introduction

Klages (2012: 23) argues that the novel, more than any other form, captures a multitude of voices and viewpoints; it encourages dialogic speech, where characters express and challenge differing worldviews, rather than a monologic voice of authority speaking one truth. In addition to dialogue, where characters exchange perspectives in discourse with one another, ‘voices can [also] be woven together into a single syntactic construction [...] the “formal speaker” of which might not coincide with its “evoked speaker”’ (Sotirova, 2011: 3). Bakhtin (1981: 345) suggested that one’s utterances are always imbued with the traces of other’s voices and that these influence, and contribute to, the construction of self – that ‘everything that pertains to me enters my consciousness through the mouths of others. From them I receive words, forms, and tonalities for the formation of my initial idea of myself’. Previous studies of fictional consciousness have explored dialogicity within novels, but these have tended to focus predominantly on third-person narratives and Free Indirect Style. Few studies have examined dialogicity within first-person narratives or Interior Monologue – likely because texts told from one authorial stance tend to be perceived as monologic, where ‘who speaks is who sees, and there is no legitimate escape from the single perspective’ (Morini, 2011: 598). Yet, through a detailed analysis of linguistic mechanisms within Jean Rhys’s novel *Voyage in the Dark*, this study highlights the internal dialogicity of the Interior Monologue.

## 2. Jean Rhys’s *Voyage in the Dark*

*Voyage in the Dark* is often understood as a social commentary on ideological perspectives regarding women’s place in society. The protagonist, Anna Morgan, like many of Rhys’s protagonists, is an ‘ambiguous figure’, an outsider to the ‘traditional domestic world’, who lives ‘on the edges of respectability’ (Emery, 1982: 418). Anna initially works as a chorus-girl to support herself, until she becomes the mistress of an older man, Walter Jeffries, and financially relies on him (Abel, 1979: 170). Later, Walter leaves Anna, who—heartbroken—sinks into a depression, following which she begins working as a prostitute. The novel is a

'polyvocal, nonlinear narration, often presented through interior monologues' (Linnett, 2005: 437). This mode of consciousness presentation portrays characters' thought processes unselfconsciously, creating the impression of an unfiltered, unmoderated view into the character's mind.

### **3. The Interior Monologue**

The Interior Monologue is first-person present tense and characterised by linguistic features typical of spontaneous spoken discourse, such as repetition, simple syntactic constructions, unconventional word order, ellipsis, vague references, or exophoric deixis, and syntactic and discourse incoherence (Adamson, 1999; Dahl, 1970; Tumanov, 1997). Cohn (1978) argues that there is little difference, apart from graphologically (the lack of inquit formulas and quotation marks), between Interior Monologue (sometimes used synonymously with Free Direct Thought) and Direct Thought. While Direct Thought gives the impression of a character 'speaking to themselves' (a more traditional soliloquy, which is 'rhetorical, rational, deliberate' with 'more ordinary discursive language patterns'), Interior Monologue takes a much looser and often less coherent stream of consciousness ('associative, illogical, spontaneous' with '[s]taccato rhythms, ellipses, [and] profuse imagery'), which can be interpreted as a less conscious mode (Cohn, 1978: 12). However, Cohn (1978: 13) argues that 'this Interior Monologue-soliloquy distinction [...] makes one lose track of the twin denominators common to all thought-quotations, regardless of their content and style: the reference to the thinking self in the first person, and to the narrated moment (which is also the moment of locution) in the present tense'. She, therefore, conflates Interior Monologue with Direct Thought (or in Cohn's terms 'Quoted Thought'). However, Cohn (1978: 13) does concede that the prominence of the term 'Interior Monologue' means much of the history of the term would be lost by discarding it completely, thus she uses the term 'Quoted Interior Monologue'. Despite Cohn's assertions that Interior Monologue is the same as Direct Thought, Interior Monologue serves the purpose of capturing the inchoate essence of freeform consciousness, rather than the conscious, largely fully-formed, intentional thoughts

of Direct Thought. Furthermore, as Sotirova (2013: 44) argues, while the grammatical characteristics of first person and present tense see Interior Monologue as sharing similarities with Direct Thought, these modes of representation differ more than in just their graphological distinctions, but also in their effect and line of descent. Sotirova (2013: 44-45) outlines a different historical line of descent, pointing out that while Direct Thought was typical of the pre-nineteenth century narrative, in the nineteenth century the focus shifted to representing characters' consciousness with verisimilitude, often through Free Indirect Style. Interior Monologue, with its looser grammatical presentation, fits much more naturally with Free Indirect Style, while Direct Thought jars with a sense of artificiality. In Modernist writing, as Sotirova (2013: 45) points out, 'the two techniques [...] are used side by side' with transitions taking place almost imperceptibly, suggesting the Interior Monologue is 'a form of dissolution of Free Indirect Style' as it develops into 'a chain of free associations rather than the logical progression of coherent syntactic constructions [...] [which] readily take[s] the first person and present tense in closer alignment with the character's consciousness'. Thus, in opposition to Cohn's conflation of Interior Monologue and Direct Thought, this study follows the line of thought which positions Interior Monologue as a distinct form of consciousness representation with a markedly different effect, purpose, and line of descent.

#### **4. Dialogicity in first-person narratives**

While Interior Monologue is a first-person form, reserved for the innermost thoughts and feelings of a character's mind, in *Voyage in the Dark* there are many instances of external voices embedded within Interior Monologue. Rhys interweaves and encapsulates a multitude of other voices within this mode, creating a dialogic tension between Anna's consciousness and the external viewpoints. So, although the novel is a first-person autodiegetic narrative, told through Anna's narration which, as Nieragden (2002: 686) observes places 'personal experiences and perceptions [...] at the core of the story', Rhys demonstrates that dialogic relations can play out between different ideological viewpoints, seemingly through the focalisation of one consciousness. Throughout *Voyage in the Dark*, there is a tangible

tension between the idealised worldview of public discourse and the social reality of women in Anna's position (Emery, 2014: 67). Competing viewpoints, delineating the powerful cultural conflicts that Anna internalises and struggles with, are presented through 'fragmented perceptions and disjointed voices' (Emery, 1982: 418). This cacophony of voices destabilises the boundaries between self and other, between public and private discourses, leading to a 'decentred self', presented through Rhys's 'own unique form of Interior Monologue' (Emery, 1982: 418). As Elkin (2016: 72) argues, 'Rhys allows us to see the way she ventriloquizes the dominant culture in order to challenge it'. Through this representation of differing perspectives in conversation within one consciousness, Rhys demonstrates how individual consciousness is not isolated but shaped and constructed through interaction with the ideological viewpoints of others.

## **5. Analysis**

### **5.1 Echoes**

Cooren and Sandler (2014: 227) suggest '[a] person cannot autonomously express himself or herself [...] because all the forms in which expression can take place [...] come from others, not from the self'. Within Anna's Interior Monologue, external ideological perspectives impinge on her thoughts. As her friend Maudie talks to her, Anna's consciousness drifts and she muses on her appearance. Within her Interior Monologue an embedded quotation appears: 'the way my collar-bones stick out in my first-act dress. There's something you can buy which makes your neck fat. Venus Carnis. "No fascination without curves. Ladies, realize your charms." But it costs three guineas and where can I get three guineas?' (*Voyage in the Dark* p. 11). The reader is initially aligned with Anna's subjectivity, following her thought process as it happens: this is indicated through the use of the indefinite pronoun 'something', followed by her remembrance 'Venus Carnis'. The subsequent quotation, 'No fascination without curves. Ladies, realize your charms', is foregrounded as an external voice, distinct from Anna's consciousness, through the speech marks. Though there is no inquit formula attributing this quotation, the plural noun 'Ladies', and the second-person

pronoun 'your', indicate that this is likely to be an advertisement addressing the female population at large. Quoted discourse creates the potential for ideological distancing and critique by signalling that the utterance is a repetition of someone else's words and thus implying a non-committal attitude (Sotirova, 2011: 37). However, the interposing of this advertisement within Anna's consciousness and her subsequent desire to buy 'Venus Carnis'—as demonstrated through the interrogative, 'But it costs three guineas and where can I get three guineas?'—conveys her alignment with, and wish to conform to, the socially-promoted feminine ideal. This captures both Anna's impressionable nature at this formative stage of her life—highlighting how public discourse, such as advertisements, shapes and influences her worldview—and emphasises the distance between Anna's reality and society's enforced feminine ideals. As Emery (2014: 67) argues, throughout *Voyage in the Dark* there is '[i]ronic commentary on the power of popular opinion, fed by the official, quoted words of newspapers. And masking the social reality of young women in Anna's position'.

In addition to the use of embedded quotations, parentheticals are also used to interpose external viewpoints within Anna's consciousness, for example: 'she [the landlady] stayed there staring at me, so I went outside and finished putting on my gloves standing on the doorstep. (A lady always puts on her gloves before going into the street.)' (*Voyage in the Dark* p. 26). The parenthetical demonstrates an ideological perspective aligned with societal views of femininity and code of manners; it is unlikely Anna thought of this herself. Instead, as Emery (2014: 72) observes, this 'expresses an internalized [sic] rule for middle-class feminized [sic] behaviour'. Parentheticals are generally understood to signal syntactical independence from the wider narrative and, thus, are amenable to presenting alternative perspectives (Cui, 2014: 177). Similar to the use of quotation marks, parentheticals open up the presented viewpoint to ideological distancing, highlighting it as distinct from the core narrated consciousness. The use of the third-person pronoun 'her' and the noun 'lady', preceded by the indefinite article 'a', also foreground this parenthetical as impersonal and distanced from the more intimate representations of Anna's consciousness. The external

ideological perspective expressed is shown to have been partially internalised by Anna, demonstrated by its influence on her actions. However, despite her attempts to imitate the prescribed behaviour, her landlady's judgemental gaze forces her outside before she can put on her gloves, highlighting Anna's liminal position and the tension between her attempts to live up to social ideals and the reality of her life as a chorus-girl.

Baxter (2014: 25) argues that 'the process of constructing the self involves the hearing and assimilating of the words and discourses of others' which are processed dialogically. Consequently, these views become part of 'one's own words [...] they are half ours and half someone else's' (Bakhtin, 1981: 345). This dialogic discourse between social ideological perspectives and individual's own worldview is explored throughout *Voyage in the Dark*. Anna initially attempts to adhere to societal ideals, for example: 'I got the glass out of my handbag and looked at myself every time the taxi passed a street lamp. *It's soppo always to look sad. Funny stories – remember some, for God's sake.* But the only one I could remember was the one about the curate' (*Voyage in the Dark* p. 26). Her self-consciousness is demonstrated through the repetition of the mental verb 'look', which links Anna's self-observation to her concern about how she is viewed from the outside by others, highlighting how external attitudes impact internal perceptions of self. The italics, which appear in the narrative, signal a viewpoint shift into her Interior Monologue, expressing a perspective which is somewhat alien to, and somewhat aligned with, Anna's consciousness. Emery (2014: 68) suggests the italics here show Anna's coaching of herself. However, the imperative style and the interjection—"for God's sake"—implies the frustrated external voice of a remembered instruction. Therefore, the italics present a merging of Anna's own self-imposed coaching—in her desperation to impress Walter—with the voice of society's teachings on feminine charm. Through Anna's 'mimicry', Rhys highlights the social tensions experienced by Anna (Elkin, 2016: 72-3).

As Anna gains more life experience, she begins to separate herself from these perspectives, and her ‘individualised discourse gradually becomes distinguished from [the] external, “authoritative discourse”’ (Bakhtin, 1981: 342). These tensions between perspectives of other and self are portrayed through repetition. Morson and Emerson (1990: 126) discuss the concept, initially presented by Bakhtin, that every utterance is unrepeatable due to the different context and intentions behind each subsequent repetition. Bakhtin (1984: 189) refers to this as ‘double-voiced discourse’—arguing that every repetition contains at least two meanings: the original intention of the utterance and a new interpretation. Whilst Anna is working as a chorus-girl, her landlady accuses her of promiscuous behaviour and evicts her from the premises: ‘She [the landlady] began to bawl. “I don’t hold with the way you go on, if you want to know, and my ‘usband don’t neither. Crawling up the stairs at three o’clock in the morning [...] I don’t want no tarts in my house”’ (*Voyage in the Dark* p. 22). The landlady’s utterance is presented through Direct Speech, which is defined by Leech and Short (2007: 257) as a faithful report of the speaker’s words. Thus, it can be assumed that these words accurately reflect the landlady’s worldview. At this point in the narrative, the accusation is untrue, however, later as Anna is heading upstairs with Walter, where she sleeps with him for the first time, the landlady’s Direct Speech is embedded into Anna’s Free Direct Thought: ‘I walked softly. “Crawling up the stairs at three o’clock in the morning,” she said. Well, I’m crawling up the stairs’ (*Voyage in the Dark* p. 28). The ideological perspective condemning sexual promiscuity, expressed by the landlady, is repeated in Anna’s consciousness. That the words are repeated verbatim is testament to the impression and effect they have had on Anna—they have been so imprinted on her memory that she repeats them word for word. This embedded quotation within Anna’s Free Direct Thought now has a truth, which it previously lacked. It is this realisation which causes Anna to pause and question whether she wants to engage in the socially-condemned behaviour: ‘I stopped. I wanted to say, “No, I’ve changed my mind.” But [...] I didn’t say anything’ (*Voyage in the Dark* p. 28). The use of the progressive, ‘I’m crawling’, in ‘Well, I’m crawling up the stairs’, both creates a greater sense of immediacy of action in progress, and the impression of time



slowing down (Sotirova, 2013: 35). This emphasises a pivotal moment in Anna's life, but also in her worldview: she officially moves, in the eyes of society, from innocent to impure. Her unspoken desire to stop is juxtaposed with her action—as the ideal and reality clash, she rejects society's ideological perspective of feminine purity. Furthermore, as Le Gallez (1990: 96) suggests, the switch from past tense to present tense drops 'the retrospective mode of the narrative [...] [bringing] the level of diegesis right up to date with the time of writing'. Therefore, the repetition of the landlady's words within Anna's consciousness portrays three voices: the landlady's original condemnation, the experiencing Anna's internalised realisation of becoming what her landlady accused her of, and the retrospective reflection of the narrating Anna's cynical and defiant tone. Historically, with regard to autodiegetic narratives, the narrating self has tended to be conflated with the experiencing self (Morini, 2011: 600). However, these two versions of the protagonist are temporally, and therefore perceptually, distanced (Edmiston 1989: 733). As an external perspective to that of the experiencing self, the narrating self adds another voice to the narrative. This type of echoing exemplifies how repeated words can demonstrate a dialogic relationship, communicating a multitude of voices and intentions simultaneously. As Cooren and Sandler (2014: 228) argue, '[t]he traces of other people's intentions are always there for us to exploit or struggle with. When we speak, we *orchestrate* these different voices in our utterances to make them express our own intentions'.

## 5.2 Confronting, borrowing, and manipulating voices

Rhys manipulates the dialogic presentation of consciousness to varying degrees. In one extended section of *Interior Monologue*, a whole conversation is played out within Anna's thoughts:

Everybody says, 'Get on.' Of course, some people do get on. Yes, but how many? What about what's-her-name? She got on, didn't she? 'Chorus-Girl Marries Peer's Son.' Well, *what* about her? Get on or get out they say. Get on or get out. What I

want, Mr Price, is an effective song for a voice-trial. *Softly Awakes my Heart as the Flowers Awaken* – that's a very effective one (*Voyage in the Dark* p. 59).

While the initial utterance 'Get on' is marked as Direct Speech by the inquit formula, '[e]verybody says', and is enclosed within quotation marks, the remainder of the section is, for the majority, void of both. The use of the collective, '[e]verybody', signals a shared societal ideological view, which is then followed by a discourse between (at least) two interlocutors. Whether this is the echo of a prior conversation which Anna has overheard and remembered, or a playing out of a conversation on assumed gender roles internally dialogised, is unclear. The narrative at first glance appears to be Free Direct Speech, following a conversational format featuring adjacency pairs (question and answer) and tag questions ('didn't she?'), suggesting the recounting of a conversation. Furthermore, while most prosodic features can only be communicated in writing by description within the narrative, such as the use of adverbs, some level of spoken quality can be added through orthographic conventions, for example: 'Well *what* about her?'. The italics indicate the placement of nuclear stress, which adds to the conversational quality of this section of narrative (Leech and Short, 2007: 256-7). However, as it is within a section of Interior Monologue, it is likely Anna is internally dialogising—using the conversational format to dramatise and evaluate societal ideological viewpoints. The references to 'Mr Price' and a 'song for a voice-trial' echo an earlier discourse within *Voyage in the Dark*, in which Walter offers to pay for Anna to have singing lessons. Walter tells Anna 'I believe it would be a good idea for you to have singing-lessons. I want to help you; I want you to get on. You want to get on, don't you?' (*Voyage in the Dark* p. 39). The Direct Speech here is reflected in Anna's consciousness, as she confronts the reality expected of her by society 'to get on'. The confusion of voices, played out through the third-person discourse embedded into Anna's Interior Monologue, creates a sense of dialogic consciousness, representing the collective voices which shape her perception of reality. These voices are engaged with and confronted in Anna's thoughts.

Later in *Voyage in the Dark*, when meeting with her stepmother, Hester, another occurrence of repetition of an external voice appears in Anna's consciousness. Anna notices that '[t]here was an advertisement at the back of the newspaper: "What is Purity? For Thirty-five Years the Answer has been Bourne's Cocoa"' (*Voyage in the Dark* p. 46). This later reappears in her Interior Monologue: 'I kept on wondering whether she would ask me what I was living on. "What is Purity? For Thirty-five Years the Answer has been Bourne's Cocoa." Thirty-five years... Fancy being thirty-five years old. What is Purity? For Thirty-five Thousand Years the Answer has been... She cleared her throat' (*Voyage in the Dark* p. 47). As with previous echoes within Anna's consciousness, the repetition is verbatim and quoted in full within speech marks. In the examples already given, Anna's repetitions often appear to be attempts to imitate socially-enforced ideals. There is a sense of claustrophobia and suffocation as Anna struggles with, and attempts to mould herself to, the demands of these repeated voices. Heath's (1983) research into children's language acquisition, has revealed children appear to initially repeat utterances without any "active production"—a simple imitation—but, as their language develops, they begin to use repetitions creatively—moving words around—to produce their own utterances. As Ochs Keenan (1975: 283) suggests, 'it may be the case that the child first uses repetition to imitate and later comes to use it to perform other communicative tasks'. Ochs Keenan's (1975: 286) research on children's spoken discourse reinforces this perspective on the multi-functionality of repetition, highlighting how repetition is used by children—as well as adults—in answering [...] questions, commenting, affirming, self-informing, [and] querying', not just imitation. Thus, this suggests that, at times, children repeat the words of other speakers to 'comment attitudinally' and evaluate the interlocutor's utterances (Ochs Keenan, 1975: 284). In a similar way, this maturing of discourse—of breaking away from simple repetition into evaluation and individual voice—can also be tracked in adult characters. In Anna's case in *Voyage in the Dark*, Anna initially assimilates other characters' discourse; her repetitions are often simple mimicry paired with attempts to imitate the prescribed behaviour of external voices. This suggests a lack of agency, as she is submissively influenced by others' discourse. However,

as she develops confidence, the communicative intention of her repetitions changes; in parallel with her personal development, her discourse transitions from pure echoing and endorsing to a more critical and evaluative stance. This can be seen in her repetition of the newspaper advert. Anna's concern about Hester's disapproval of her situation as Walter's mistress manifests through her musing on the concept of 'purity' in relation to feminine ideals. Anna breaks the quote down into shorter sections and begins to inject it with her own evaluation—an example of double-voiced discourse. The orthographic mirroring of the newspaper advert in Anna's Interior Monologue closely aligns her utterance to the original quoted advert, but the change in wording demonstrates Anna's subtle repurposing of the sentiment. Repetition then, can be understood as 'a powerful evaluative device when featured across speakers, or *narrative consciousnesses* [my emphasis]' (Sotirova, 2005: 131). The advertisement is parodied by Anna; her mimicry subtly reappropriates the original meaning of the advert to more widely criticise and ridicule the societal obsession with purity. As Angier (2000: 160) suggests in her afterword to *Voyage in the Dark*, in the world Anna inhabits, '[m]orality is an advertisement on the back of a newspaper'.

Anna's consciousness also echoes other characters' speech throughout *Voyage in the Dark*. After Walter has left her, she recounts her heartbreak to Laurie: "It's always like that," she [Laurie] said [...] "Search me what the whole thing's about. When you start thinking about things the answer's a lemon. A lemon, that's what the answer is... But it's no use worrying" (*Voyage in the Dark* p. 96). The Direct Speech captures Laurie's hardened attitude towards life: the idiom 'the answer's a lemon' expresses her viewpoint that the world is unfair, but there is no satisfactory answer for why. Later, Anna imagines going to the hotel she and Walter frequented during their time together and asking for a room, knowing the staff will refuse her. In the form of Anna's Interior Monologue Laurie's words are repeated:

The damned way they look at you, and their damned voices, like high, unclimbable walls, closing in on you. And nothing to be done about it, either. The answer's a

lemon, as Laurie says. The damned way they look at you and their damned voices and the answer's a lemon as Laurie says (*Voyage in the Dark* p. 122).

The repeated use of the prenominal qualifying adjective 'damned' in relation to the plural third-person 'they'—the collective 'voices' of the society who condemn Anna—indicates a rejection of the worldview expressed by the voices she has previously listened to. The repetition of Laurie's idiom highlights Anna's acceptance of her fellow outcast's worldview. Unlike previous invasions of others' voices upon Anna's consciousness, in this instance, Laurie's words are not differentiated by speech marks, parentheses, or italics. The only indication that this is not Anna's perspective alone is the presence of the repeated inquit formula 'Laurie says'. This freer presentation suggests a merging with Anna's own thoughts—that she is attempting to align herself with Laurie's ideological perspective. Furthermore, this demonstrates Anna's acceptance of her inevitable failure to live up to the societal expectations she had originally aspired to. This is exemplified in Anna's behaviour, as she goes on to sleep with another man, Carl, shortly after the adoption of this viewpoint.

Another example of echoed dialogue, demonstrating the double-voiced nature of repetition, is when Anna and Carl return from dinner to find Anna's landlady, Ethel, has left them out champagne: 'Carl said, "There you are. All done by kindness, as Laurie would say' (*Voyage in the Dark* p. 128). This is later repeated within Anna's narrative: 'If I brought Carl back to the flat after dinner she [Ethel] was usually out or in her bedroom. All done by kindness. ("And you do understand, kid, don't you? that under the circumstances two and a half guineas a week isn't too much to ask")' (*Voyage in the Dark* p. 130). The repetition of 'All done by kindness' echoes layers of voices: capturing Laurie's speech within Carl's Direct Speech, which has now been represented in Anna's consciousness through Free Indirect Thought. Furthermore, the initial conjunction '[a]nd', which begins Ethel's subsequent Direct Speech within parentheses, implies a link between the repeated phrase and Ethel's thinly-veiled exploitation of Anna. Anna's expression of Free Indirect Thought is ambiguous, it encompasses a double meaning: it implies that while the experiencing self accepts Ethel's

actions are ‘done by kindness’—an echoing without evaluative or ironic undertones—the narrating self ironically and cynically reflects on this, adding a further layer to this utterance. This type of echoing in the narrative exemplifies how repeated words can demonstrate a dialogic relationship: a double-voiced discourse communicating a ‘multiplicity of voices and intentions [...] simultaneously’ (Coreen and Sandler, 2014: 228).

### 5.3 Dissociation

Psychological access to other characters is generally restricted in first-person narratives; as Edmiston (1989: 732) observes, ‘[i]nternal focalization [sic] by one character logically implies an external view of the others who inhabit the same world’. However, while both the narrating and experiencing self are outside observers of other characters’ consciousnesses, through the dialogising of imagined conversations, Rhys enacts others’ viewpoints within the narrative (Elkin, 2016: 76). Through the construction of others’ thoughts, Anna perceives herself through their eyes: this, in turn, impacts how she evaluates herself, for example, Anna—now Carl’s mistress—gazes in the mirror reflecting on her life:

imagining that there was nothing I couldn’t do, nothing I couldn’t become. Imagining God knows what. Imagining Carl would say, ‘When I leave London, I’m going to take you with me.’ And imagining it although his eyes had that look – this is just for while I’m here, and I hope you get me. ‘I picked up a girl in London and she... Last night I slept with a girl who...’ That was me. Not ‘girl’ perhaps. Some other word, perhaps. Never mind (*Voyage in the Dark* p. 130).

Anna observes that Carl’s ‘eyes had that look’ which she dialogises as Carl’s words, ‘this is just for while I’m here, and I hope you get me’. This is followed by an imagined unspoken Direct Speech form of Carl’s voice embedded within Anna’s Interior Monologue: ‘I picked up a girl in London and she... Last night I slept with a girl who...’. The sentences are incomplete, as signalled by the ellipses, which indicate an ‘intentional omission [...] or an unfinished thought [...] a temporary suspension of the narrative flow’ (Volpone, 2014: 88). This creates an impression of aposiopesis—the sudden breaking off in speech, often due to

emotion—as though there is a reluctance to continue (Volpone, 2014: 88). As this representation of Carl's Direct Speech is recounted through Anna's consciousness, the cutting off of the rest of the sentence is likely attributed to Anna's reluctance to voice (or think) about the way in which Carl (and wider society) perceives her and, consequently how she views herself. While the ellipsis could be attributed to Carl, this is less plausible, it is much more likely that Anna has constructed Carl's utterance and, in her discomfort with how she is viewed by others, leaves the sentences unfinished. Such omission of expected discourse (signalled by the ellipsis) creates a conceptual lacuna— 'a tangible gap, a sense that there is not simply a space but something missing that was previously occupying the space' (Stockwell, 2009: 35). The term 'lacuna' is primarily used by stylisticians in relation to negation, however, the term has broader relevance and the parameters could be extended (as in this case) to include ellipsis and other 'gaps'. The gap (or lacuna) left by the ellipted discourse prompts the reader to fill it in, likely with the implied condemnatory societal attitudes towards a woman in Anna's position and, thus, to an extent, becoming complicit in such judgement.

Gaps and omissions are a common occurrence in Rhys's writing—her novels are characterised by their silences; as Su (2015: 176) points out there is a 'pattern in Rhys's writing of highlighting moments of silence—or, more precisely, thoughts that are only partially formed or left unsaid'. Graphologically, using ellipsis ('suspension dots') visually draws the reader's attention to Anna's omission, ironically highlighting the 'unvoiced' discourse. For Anna, to verbalise or conceptualise makes it real, she later tells herself: 'don't think of it for thinking of it makes it happen' (*Voyage in the Dark* p. 134). In a similar way, the presence of epistemic modality – expressed through the repeated word of estrangement ('perhaps') – signals a level of uncertainty over Carl's viewpoint (Fowler, 1986: 142; Simpson, 1993: 41-43). This softens the blow of that which Anna knows but does not want to accept—the unspoken (or 'unthought') but implied derogatory attitudinal noun used to describe women in Anna's situation: 'Not "girl" perhaps. Some other word, perhaps'. The

omission of such a word again demonstrates Anna's unwillingness to see herself through Carl's, and society's, eyes. This unvoiced discourse again signals the internal dialogicity key to *Voyage in the Dark's* narrative.

Another voice is also captured within this fragmented section; the reporting verb 'imagining' and conjunction 'that' ('imagining that there was nothing I couldn't do'), signals Indirect Thought, before subsequently switching into Free Indirect Thought. This repeated interruption of the reporting verb and the use of Indirect Thought highlights the presence of the narratorial voice (Rundquist, 2017: 77). Anna self-observes through the voice of the narrating self, as well as self-consciously constructing herself through the eyes of others. While the narrator always has access to the consciousness of the younger self, the temporal distance between them means that the 'knowledge, perceptions, and diegetic loci of one do not equal those of the other', as demonstrated by the older Anna's exasperated, 'Imagining God knows what' (Edmiston, 1989: 738). By shifting from the experiencing Anna's mind to those of the characters around her and the self-reflexive narrating voice, *Voyage in the Dark* enacts a multitude of viewpoints through first-person narration (Hite, 1989: 53).

The verbalising of other characters' thoughts is also demonstrated in Anna's mimicry of her stepmother's voice:

She had [...] an English lady's voice with a sharp, cutting edge to it. Now that I've spoken you can hear that I'm a lady. I have spoken and I suppose you now realize that I'm an English gentlewoman. I have my doubts about you. Speak up and I will place you at once. Speak up, for I fear the worst. That sort of voice (*Voyage in the Dark* p. 45–46).

Anna's interpretation of Hester's ideological worldview is deduced from the quality of Hester's 'English lady's voice', rather than from the look of her eyes, as was the case with Carl. In this imagined speech, Anna narrates her stepmother's disapproval, 'I have my doubts about you', demonstrating how in *Voyage in the Dark* 'polyvocally, heteroglossically,



multiple perspectives [...] [emerge] through the voice of the narrator' (Elkin, 2016: 78). The transition to the imagined occurrence of Hester's Direct Speech is not announced in any way—it is only Anna's commentary, 'She had [...] an English lady's voice' and 'That sort of voice', either side of the Direct Speech that attributes the segment to Hester's voice.

Hester's reference to herself as 'a lady' in Anna's consciousness is echoed in the characterisation of her voice. The use of the second-person pronoun 'you', along with the repeated imperative 'speak up', directs Hester's imagined discourse at Anna. This reveals Anna's awareness that she cannot live up to the expectations of her stepmother. This self-directed enacting of other characters' discourses further demonstrates how multiple voices and worldviews can co-exist within first-person narration. The verbalising of external perspectives also highlights Anna's self-observation—how she 'watches herself as another would and [...] becomes her own [...] spectator' which subsequently influences her view of herself (Simpson, 2005: 38).

## **6. Conclusion**

Rhys portrays consciousness through the presentation of a cacophony of voices, engaging in dialogic discourse within her protagonist's consciousness. Through Interior Monologue, Rhys interweaves a multiplicity of ideological views which are both covertly and overtly accepted or rejected by Anna. Other voices are assimilated by Anna and shape her worldview and behaviour, demonstrating how consciousness is made up of its dialogic relationship with external viewpoints. Through repetition and echoes, the blurring between private and public discourse, and double-voicing, Rhys captures the inherent dialogicity of consciousness. This social heteroglossia also creates an ironic commentary on women in Anna's ambiguous position, presenting differing social viewpoints in conflict. The use of Interior Monologue in *Voyage in the Dark*, gives the reader intimate access into Anna's subjectivity, tracking the external influences and how these affect the development of her character. This is further revealed through the switch between, or double-voicing of, the experiencing and narrating self—the naive younger Anna and her more mature and cynical

counterpart, who speaks self-reflexively at various points in the narrative. Studies of fictional consciousness have tended to focus on third-person narratives with little attention being paid to the first-person mode, which has remained largely ignored in comparison. This study gives insight into the diverse representations of speech and thought encapsulated within first-person narration. By investigating how Rhys has employed a number of devices, and effectively utilised the Interior Monologue to present differing worldviews through one consciousness, this paper exemplifies the relevance of Bakhtin's concept of dialogicity to first-person narratives.

## References

- Abel, E. (1979) 'Women and Schizophrenia: The Fiction of Jean Rhys', *Contemporary Literature* 20(2): 155–177.
- Adamson, S.M. (1999) 'Literary Language', in S. Romaine (ed.) *The Cambridge History of the English Language, Volume 4: 1776–1997*, pp. 591–690. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Angier, C. (2000) 'Afterword', in J. Rhys. *Voyage in the Dark*, pp.157–166. London: Penguin.
- Bakhtin, M. (1981) *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist). Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bakhtin, M. (1984) *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (trans. C. Emerson). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Baxter, J. (2014) *Double-voicing at Work: Power, Gender and Linguistic Expertise*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cohn, D. (1978) *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Cooren, F. and Sandler, S. (2014) 'Polyphony, Ventriloquism, and Constitution: In Dialogue with Bakhtin', *Communication Theory* 24(3): 225–244.
- Cui, Y. (2014) 'Parentheticals and the Presentation of Multipersonal Consciousness: A Stylistic Analysis of *Mrs Dalloway*', *Language and Literature* 23(2): 175–187.
- Dahl, L. (1970) *Linguistic Features of the Stream-of-Consciousness Techniques of James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Eugene O'Neill*. Turku: Turun Yliopisto.
- Edmiston, W. (1989) 'Focalization and the First-Person Narrator: A Revision of the Theory', *Poetics Today* 10(4): 729–744.
- Elkin, L. (2016) 'Getting the Story Across: Jean Rhys's Paranoid Narrative', *Journal of Narrative Theory* 46(1): 70–96.
- Emery, M. (1982) 'The Politics of Form: Jean Rhys's Social Vision in *Voyage in the Dark* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*', *Twentieth Century Literature* 28(4): 418–430.
- Emery, M. (2014) *Jean Rhys at "World's End": Novels of Colonial and Sexual Exile*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Fowler, R. (1986) *Linguistic Criticism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Heath, S.B. (1983) *Ways with Words. Language, Life, and Work in Communities and Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Hite, M. (1989) *The Other Side of the Story: Structures and Strategies of Contemporary Feminist Narratives*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Klages, M. (2012) *Key Terms in Literary Theory*. London: Continuum.
- Le Gallez, P. (1990) *The Rhys Woman*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Leech, G. and Short, M. (2007) *Style in Fiction a Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn). Harlow: Pearson Longman.
- Linett, M. (2005) “New Words, New Everything”: Fragmentation and Trauma in Jean Rhys’, *Twentieth Century Literature* 51(4): 437–466.
- Morini, M. (2011) ‘Point of View in First-Person Narratives: A Deictic Analysis of *David Copperfield*’, *Style* 45 (4): 598–618.
- Morson, G. and Emerson, C. (1990) *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics*. California: Stanford University Press.
- Nieragden, G. (2002) ‘Focalization and Narration: Theoretical and Terminological Refinements’, *Poetics Today* 23(4): 685–697.
- Ochs Keenan, E. (1975) ‘Making It Last: Repetition in Children's Discourse’, *Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society*, pp. 279–294.
- Rhys, J. (2000) *Voyage in the Dark*. London: Penguin.
- Rundquist (2017) *Free Indirect Style in Modernism: Representations of Consciousness*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Simpson, A. (2005) *Territories of the Psyche: The Fiction of Jean Rhys*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Simpson, P. (1993) *Language, Ideology and Point of View*. London: Routledge.
- Sotirova, V. (2005) ‘Repetition in Free Indirect Style: A Dialogue of Minds?’, *Style* 39(2): 123–136.
- Sotirova, V. (2011) *D.H. Lawrence and Narrative Viewpoint*. London: Continuum.
- Sotirova, V. (2013) *Consciousness in Modernist Fiction: A Stylistic Study*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Stockwell, P. (2020) *Cognitive Poetics: A New Introduction*. London: Routledge.
- Su, J. (2015) ‘The Empire of Affect: Reading Rhys after Postcolonial Theory’, in Moran, P. and Johnson, E. (eds.) *Jean Rhys: Twenty-first-century approaches*, pp. 171–189. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Tumanov, V. (1997) *Mind Reading: Unframed Direct Interior Monologue in European Fiction*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Volpone, A. (2014) 'The Poetics of the Unsaid: Joyce's Use of Ellipsis between Meaning and Suspension', *European Joyce Studies* 23: 87–108.