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**The Portrayal of Mental Disorders in The British  
Modernist Novel**

**“A comparative study between Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* and Franz  
Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis*”**

*An Extended Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for a  
Master’s Degree in Literature and Civilisation*

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## *Dedication*

*This humble work is wholeheartedly dedicated to my lovely mother for her endless support, love, and care.*

*To my generous teacher and supervisor Dr. Azzedine Bouhassoun for being my source of inspiration, many thanks indeed!*

*To my sympathetic family*

*To all my dearest cousins, uncles, and aunts*

*I equally dedicate it to all my faithful friends and colleagues*

*Thank you all*

*Hanane*

## Acknowledgement

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Finally, I would thank the members of the jury for proof-reading and examining my paper.

**Hanane Benchama**

## Declaration

I hereby declare that this Master extended essay entitled “The Portrayal of Mental Disorders in The British Modernist Novel”- A comparative study between Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* and Franz Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis*, was written by me for Master’s Degree in Literature and Civilisation , under the supervision of Dr. Azzedine Bouhassoun, institute of letters and languages, at Belhadj Bouchaib university center.

This research is a presentation of my original work, my own interpretation, understanding, and analysis. Any scholar’s information mentioned is referenced faithfully.

For this thesis, which I am submitting to the university, no degree or diploma or distinction has been conferred on me before, either in this or in any other university.

Hanane Benchama

## Abstract

Modernism, as a literary movement, was shaped by a radical shift on the structure and the themes of the literary works, mainly on the construction of the novel. This change was shown in the appearance of new narrative techniques such as stream of consciousness, interior monologues, fragmentation, etc. In fact, these techniques were employed by the modernist writers as Virginia Woolf and Franz Kafka, as an emphasis on the role and the power of the human psyche and internal realm of the individuals, applying Freud's psychoanalytic theories. In this regard, the combination between conscious and unconscious led them to stress on the theme of madness and mental disorders as shell-shock, schizophrenia, paranoia, etc. Virginia Woolf, in her psychological novel, *Mrs. Dalloway*, projects the mind of a traumatized, shell shocked war veteran who commits suicide in order to escape from his unhelpful modernist society. In a similar way, Kafka, in his novella, *The Metamorphosis*, pictures the meaningless life of a salesman, called Gregor Samsa as he transforms into a giant bug, revealing the theme of insanity. Moreover, in these modernist works, the theme of madness is presented in parallel with subthemes as self and identity, androgyny, and the absurdity of existence.

**Key words:** Psychoanalysis – stream of consciousness – shell-shock – paranoia – Androgyny  
- Identity

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## Glossary

**The Avant-garde:** a notion that appeared with reference to visual art in 1850s, in France.

It was considered as the hallmark of Modernism which touched literature, art, fashion design, architecture, etc. This movement was characterized by aesthetic innovation, originality and the rejection of traditionalism.

**The Bloomsbury Group:** (1907-1930) it is a small group or an informal association of English writers, artists, philosophers, and intellectuals who lived in Bloomsbury area, London. This group included Leonard and Virginia Woolf, Clive and Vanessa Bell, Roger Fry, E. M. Forster, Duncan Grant, and John Maynard Keynes.

**Cyclothymia:** is a rare mood disorder (a form of bipolar disorder). It is characterized by fluctuating mood swings, emotional ups and downs and chronic episodes of hypomania.

**Dadaism:** is an artistic and literary movement that appeared in Switzerland in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, as a reaction to the First World War and nationalism. It was influenced by the avant-garde movement, Cubism, Futurism, and Expressionism. Dada's aesthetics marked by collage and photomontage techniques.

**Delirium:** is a serious and chronic disturbance in the psychic and mental abilities that results in; behavior change, emotional distrust, cognitive weakness, anxiety, and apathy.

**Expressionism:** is an artistic and literary movement that emerged in the beginning of the twentieth century. It aims at distorting the image of reality to make it expressive to the artist's or the writer's inner emotions and beliefs.



**Hypnosis:** is a special psychological state of the human consciousness with physiological features, where the patient resembles superficially sleeping in order to respond to suggestions.

**Hysteria:** is a neurotic over-reaction to a certain situation or event, in which the patient experiences physical symptoms as dramatics and exaggerated emotions.

**Kafkaesque:** comes from the Czech-born German language writer, Franz Kafka. This term refers to a style of storytelling in a nightmarish, complex, bizarre, and cryptic manner.

**Lesbianism:** also known as female homosexuality. It refers to the unusual erotic orientation and attraction of a female to another female.

**Mania:** or 'Bipolar disorder'. It is an abnormal elevated state of mood which is characterized by hyperactivity, severe insomnia, exaggerated emotions and strong sexual appetite.

**Oedipus complex:** is a notion coined by Sigmund Freud in "The theory of psychological stages of development". It denotes the unresolved and deviated sexual desire, unconsciously, of a child towards his or her opposite sex parent and the hostile feelings towards his or her same sex parent.

**Paranoia:** is a psychological condition of personality disorder which is based on premature delusions of persecution, jealousy and extreme anxiety.

**Psychosis:** is an abnormal condition of the mind which is characterized by a separated relationship with reality, hallucinations, illogical thinking, incoherent speech, and false beliefs and judgments.

**Schizophrenia:** is a serious and chronic brain disorder which affects the person's thinking, causing delusions, depression, and hardness in concentrating.

**Shell shock:** is a World War One term for what is known later by post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It is a major issue that affects the soldiers' mind, as a reaction to the horror of the war; the bombardment, shells explosion, etc. It is characterized by depression, fear, nightmares, flashbacks, numbness, etc.

**Surrealism:** is a twentieth century philosophical and artistic movement which grew out of Dada movement in 1924. It is based on juxtaposition, fragmentation, surprise, and imagination.

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## Epigraph

*“Science has not yet taught us if madness is or is not the sublimity of the intelligence”*

*Edgar Allan Poe*

# **General Introduction**

## Introduction

Modernism, as a whole concept, emerged at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, as a reaction to the emergence of capitalism and industrialization, touching literature, architecture, arts, religion, etc. In fact, it was shaped by the rise of new concepts, theories, ideologies, and technologies. The most important influence was the emergence of psychology, mainly the Freudian *psychoanalysis* which shed light on the human psyche and the inner reality. In effect, psychoanalysis took place as a reaction to the serious mental disorders that appeared at that period due to the sudden shocks, mainly the horror of the First World War (1914-1918).

Historically, the most significant event during this period was that of World War I. In spite of the fact that the war was not fought on the British land, its brutal effects infected the British society, leaving an imprint on almost all the fields, particularly literature. One of the most critical issues that the British society faced during the war and post war era, were the thousands of soldiers who were inflicted by destructive and chronic mental disorders, including; shell-shock, paranoia, schizophrenia, etc, as a response to the trauma of the war. Thus, many modernist writers as Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), depicted the theme of madness in their literary works, aiming at providing a fictionalized image of an insane individual. However, there were major definitions of insanity in fiction, namely the “mad” writer, the “mad character”, and the application of the psychological terms and symptoms on the characters.

Moreover, the modernist writers as Virginia Woolf and Fran Kafka (1883-1924), rebelled against the pre-modernist narrative techniques, wherein they employed new ones including “streams of consciousness” and “interior monologues”. Woolf used these techniques in her novels in order to emphasize more on the human thoughts, feelings, and desires, especially those who suffer from mental disturbances. In this regard, being

psychologically unstable helped her portraying the mental abnormalities in artistic and aesthetical literary pieces. In 1925, she wrote her masterpiece, *Mrs. Dalloway*, which added a lot to the British psychological modernist novel. The actions of the story take place during a single summer day in London, 1923, from morning to night. The actions of the novel are very simple and spontaneous which chronicle the fragmentation of time and mind through the lives of the two protagonists, Mrs. Clarissa Dalloway, an upper class lady who is portrayed planning for a party, and Septimus Warren Smith, a shell-shocked war veteran who is obsessed by terrifying memories. The story ends with the awful suicide of Septimus. This latter tries to escape from the cruelty of his society, especially his evil psychiatrists who try to impose their authority on him.

Just like Woolf, Franz Kafka, was influenced by the Freudian psychological concepts, particularly “*The Interpretation of Dreams*”, and the modernist artistic movements as *surrealism* and *Dadaism*. In his novella, *The Metamorphosis* (1915), Gregor Samsa, a traveling salesman who works hard to help his family members financially, awakes one morning from a scary dream to find himself transformed into a giant bug. After his sudden physical transformation, he discovers many things as; the unfairness of his society, the hypocrisy of his family members, and the absurdity and triviality of his meaningless life, committing suicide in the end of the story.

This research paper is organized in MLA 7<sup>th</sup> edition style format. I have chosen these given literary works, *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Metamorphosis*, as eminent samples of the modernist style of writing, in which the theme of madness is presented through psychological, aesthetical, and linguistic dimensions. This extended essay is based on the theoretical, analytical, and practical investigation, employing different fields of analysis; psychoanalysis, stylistic analysis, biographical analysis, and comparative literary analysis. The purpose of this study contains three main objectives:

- 1) To investigate whether there is a relationship between the sociopolitical background and the themes of literature.
- 2) To provide a clear explanation about the modernist literature's narrative techniques and themes.
- 3) To provide the literary study with a scientific dimension, through connecting psychology with fiction.

To conduct this research three questions are worthy asked:

- 1) To what extent did Freudian theories affect the British modernist novel?
- 2) Why does insanity become a central theme in the modernist fiction?
- 3) How does Virginia Woolf depict mental disorders in her masterpiece "*Mrs. Dalloway*" compared with Kafka's "*The Metamorphosis*"?

Therefore, to set reasonable findings to the questions above, the following hypotheses might be attributed:

- 1)
  - The emergence of psychology in the twentieth century led to the birth of several literary theories and approaches including the psychoanalytical literary theory.
  - The major fulfillment Freudian psychoanalysis made to modernist literature was the approach of conscious and subconscious thought, which led to the appearance of stream of consciousness.
- 2) With the horror of the First World War, people, especially soldiers were suffering from war trauma including emotional distress, paranoia, and shell shock. Thus, many modernist writers as Virginia Woolf turned the psychological effects of the war into symbolic images, through mad characters.



3) While Virginia Woolf focused on the interior world of her characters, through the use of stream of consciousness, Franz Kafka followed a more conventional method in portraying mental disorders and insanity in his writings as ambiguity and absurdity.

Structurally, this research consists of three chapters. Chapter one is devoted to literature review which includes the definition of modernist literature and its narrative techniques, and the cultural and scientific change as the emergence of psychoanalysis. This chapter also introduces the trauma of the war and the manifestations of shell shock on the literature of that era. Moreover, this chapter contains a biographical study of Woolf and Kafka's mental state.

The second chapter is based on a psychoanalytical study of the given literary works, and a comparative analysis between Woolf and Kafka and their insane protagonists. It deals also with the terms of self and identity and the absurdity of existence.

Chapter three aims to analyze the mental disorders given in the works from a linguistic, literary, and artistic perspective, applying the stylistic analysis.

# **Chapter One:**

## Literature Review

## **Chapter one: Literature Review**

### **1.1. Britain and the trauma of the WW1**

#### **1.1.1. The Manifestations of Shell Shock in the British Modernist Literature**

### **1.2. The Emergence of Psychology**

### **1.3. The Narrative Construction Techniques of the Modernist Novel**

### **1.4. Virginia Woolf and Franz Kafka's mental state**

Modernism formed an era of cultural shocks. It took place in the late 19th and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, particularly in Europe and North America. This movement coincided with particular events including the horror of the First World War (1914-1918) that aroused dangerous and alarming mental disorders such as shell shock. Moreover, the emergence of new publications of several unprecedented theories as Sigmund Freud's (1856-1939) "*psychoanalytic theories*", were an opening eye to emphasis on the inner self and the human psyche. In literature, the modernist period was connected with prominent writers like Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) and Franz Kafka (1883-1924) who implied new narrative techniques in their writings such as stream of consciousness and interior monologue.

### **1.1. Britain and the Trauma of the WW1**

The Great War that took place between (1914-1918) was a dramatic and cataclysmic event that the world's history has ever witnessed. It destroyed both nations and minds. In Britain, as the other participant countries in this drastic clash, soldiers turned back from the war with mental disorders and insanity as a reaction to the horrors of trench warfare. It was during this period that the syndrome of shell shock and what was known after 1980s as post traumatic stress disorder "*PTSD*" (Friedman), was first diagnosed by many psychologists and neurologists as a new mental disorder. As a reaction, some British soldiers including Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967), Edgell Richword (1898-1982), and Wilfred Owen (1890-1918), interpreted their spiritual and psychological wounds into dramatic poems. Thus, they were known as "*Trench poets*".

In Britain, thousands of combatants and veterans were diagnosed with different psychological and psychosomatic disorders. In fact, shell shock was the symbolic disorder of the war with 80.000 cases marked (Bourke) among the British army. This mental disease was studied and understood from different perspectives; as a psychological reaction to the war trauma, as a physical response to the long-lasting terror of the war, and through other

interpretations. The physical trauma was connected to external factors as, shell explosion, gunshot wound, trench foot, hearing loss or a sandbag pumping on the soldier's head, causing either visible or invisible injury left. These physical shocks caused emotional and psychological wounds as hysteria, terror, and extreme fear. One of Doctor Walter Mott's cases was affected by these symptoms, he wrote that "He was hurled into the air and fell into a hole, out of which he screamed to find all his comrades lying dead wounded around . . . , muttering continually "no send back", "dead all around", moving his arms as if pointing to the terrible scene he had witnessed" (Mott and Addison 16).

On the other hand, the psychic trauma was the most effective factor of shell shock because of the psychological wounds and the violence of the war that soldiers have witnessed. In this vein, Doctor Mott declared that the majority of shell shock cases were linked with turmoil, loss of consciousness, or changeable periods and accompanied by diverse symptoms such as amnesia, delirium, headache (Mott and Addison 67), and other hazardous symptoms as

Loss of memory, insomnia, terrifying dreams, pains, emotional instability, diminution of self-confidence and self-control, attacks of unconsciousness or of changed consciousness sometimes accompanied by convulsive movements resembling those characteristic of epileptic fits, incapacity to understand any but the simplest matters, obsessive thoughts, usually of the gloomiest and most painful kind, even in some cases hallucinations and incipient delusions. . . make life for some of their victims a veritable hell.(Smith and Pear 12-13)

As a vivid case of shell shock, Captain Francis A. reports that a soldier was hospitalized after showing an uncontrollable state of severe mania and hysteria, shouting "keep them back, keep them back", he states that this patient was given two hypodermic injections of morphine, and he slept well but surprisingly, he passed away a day after" (Mott

and Addison 37). In this case, the patient's moral panic, hallucinations, emotional outbursts, and sudden seizures due to what he lived in the war, led to his inability to perceive or accept any medication.

Veritably, physical trauma is connected with psychic trauma because both let to the soldiers' mental weakness and collapse or what Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) called war neurosis. In fact, Freud did not write a lot about this topic but he introduced some interpretations about traumatic neurosis as a major concept. According to Freud "A condition has long been known and described which occurs after severe mechanical concussions, railway disasters and other accidents involving a risk to life; it has been given the name 'traumatic neurosis'"(Malabou 80). From this perspective, Freud confirmed in his essays "*psychoanalysis and the war neuroses*" (1921) that the conflict between previous psychic and physical traumas "transference neuroses of peace –time" and the "traumatic neuroses of war" is the main cause of war neurosis (Bonitowski 35). In other words, ego conflict is the major agent that sparks off trauma, terming it as *war egos* and *peace egos*

The war neuroses, in so far as they differ from the ordinary neuroses of peace time through particular peculiarities, are to be regarded as traumatic neuroses, whose existence has been rendered possible or promoted through an ego-conflict. . . The conflict takes place between the old ego of peace time and the new war-ego of the soldier, and it becomes acute as soon as the peace-ego is faced with the danger of being killed through the risky undertakings of his newly formed parasitical double. Or one might put it; the old ego protects itself from the danger to life by flight into the traumatic neurosis in defending itself against the new ego which it recognizes as threatening its life. (Ferenczi et al. 2-3)

Shell shock might also be a cause of a set of hallucinations, nightmares, insomnia, and depression that soldiers have witnessed when accidentally killed their comrades. For instance, private CR, aged 21 while on duty on the 15<sup>th</sup> October, he accidentally shot and killed his comrade, ended up mentally unstable (Mott and Addison 35). Unfortunately, all the cases affected with shell shock were facing denial and negation at the beginning of the war because of the absence of psychological and neurological care. Besides, Britain at that time was adopting asylum and psychiatric hospitals system in order to control all the mental cases, a solution that was considered inappropriate for the shell shocked soldiers' families who preferred the private care homes. In a letter by Paul's wife, a shell shocked veteran, she explained to the doctor why she did not take her husband to a doctor

My husband came from war very agitated and always getting worse but we would never have imagined that this would be the reason. We had always thought it was due to all he had to endure. Believe me, sir, if we had known we would have had him examined. It's only now that we understood.

(Crouthamel and Leese 205)

### **1.1.1. The Manifestations of Shell Shock in the British Modernist**

#### **Literature**

Due to the fact that the war was a cataclysmic event, many soldiers and poets as Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon embodied the brutality, the breakdowns, the sorrow, and the mental disturbances caused by the war, through literary imagination. In fact, these poets were affected by shell shock. Under these circumstances, the trench poets rejected glorifying the achievements and the deeds of soldiers in the war. Instead, they wrote about their sufferings, their traumas, and about war atrocities. In this respect, Owen states that his subject is war, and the pity of war (Winn 18), in which he triggered an attack on traditional poetry and its classical themes. In Owen's poem "*Mental cases*" (1918), second stanza, he

describes the soldiers' mental damage due to the war, answering the speaker's questions in the first stanza

These are men whose minds the Dead have ravished.  
 Memory fingers in their hair of murders,  
 multitudinous murders they once witnessed.  
 Wading sloughs of flesh these helpless wander,  
 Treading blood from lungs that had loved laughter.  
 Always they must see these things and hear them,  
 Batter of guns and shatter of flying muscles,  
 Carnage incomparable and human squander  
 Rucked too thick for these men's extrication. (Owen 69)

In this stanza, Owen describes the miserable mental state of soldiers and the impact of shell shock on their lives, referring intrinsically to his own mental state. In the same manner, Siegfried Sassoon employed his poetic proficiency to get the reader back to the cruel atmosphere of the war; visualizing the hard moments of soldiers while in the battlefields. For instance, in his poem "A *working party*" (1916), he accentuates the tragic condition of the English soldiers and the slow death they experienced.

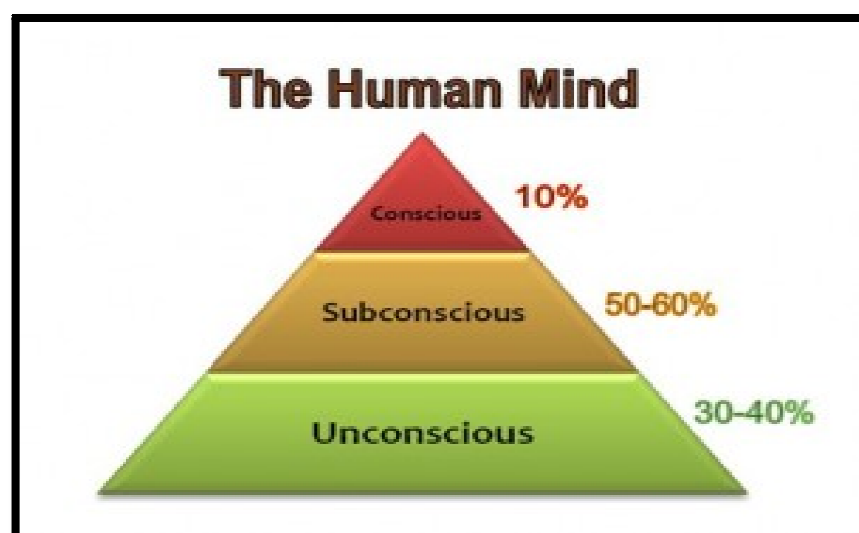
Furthermore, many modernist novelists including Ford Madox and Virginia Woolf projected the cases of shell shock through their novels. The shell shocked veterans were the protagonists of these writers by presenting their daily lives with the members of the British community during the post-war period. For example, in Virginia Woolf's novel *Mrs. Dalloway*, Septimus, a shell shocked veteran, shares several characteristics with Clarissa Dalloway as alienation and trauma. Thus, war literature was an outlet for the poet soldier and the novelist who experienced insanity or trauma.



All in all, the First World War played a crucial role in enriching the literature of that era and shedding the light on military psychiatry and psychological studies. Concurrently, the rise of several psychological theories by Sigmund Freud helped dealing with and diagnosing mental disorders as shell shock.

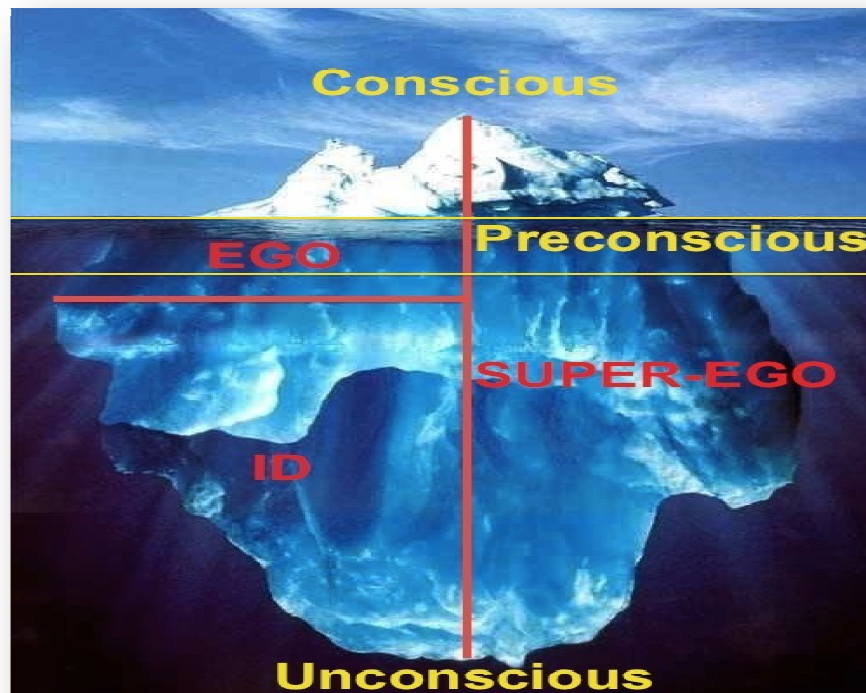
## 1.2. The Emergence Of Psychoanalysis

Psychology, as a discipline, took its roots from the time of Aristotle, emerging from philosophy. However, it was until the end of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries when considered as a science; after the publication of several approaches and theories, known as “*psychoanalytic theories*” (1896) by the Austrian neurologist and physician Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). In fact, the twentieth century was seen as Freud’s golden age due to his groundbreaking publications such as *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), *The Psychology of Everyday Life* (1901), *Three Essays on Theory of Sexuality* (1905), *Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (1917), etc. The emergence of psychoanalysis was shaped by Freud’s theories as the structure of personality, the interpretation of dreams, defense Mechanism, and transference and trauma that adjusted the way people and psychologists use to understand the human psyche. Furthermore, Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalytic theory did not influenced only the field of psychology, but it had also a remarkable touch on the literature of that era. On the other hand, the psychoanalytic literary criticism in turn, analyzed madness and the modernist self in general through Freudian lens, marking the features of the modernist literature.



### **Figure 1.1**The Stratification of the Mind

According to Freud, the human mind (figure 1.1) is stratified into three major parts: the conscious, the subconscious, and the unconscious mind. This mental division plays an important role in producing the human behavior, creating an emotional conflict but helping in the understanding of the pathological mental process (Freud 1). As a start, the conscious mind embodies awareness which includes emotions, memories, intelligence, perception, or the activities that the human being achieves under logic and reason. Chiefly, it is that part of the mind which is responsible for reason and sense. In fact, “Being conscious is being aware of one’s past history and place in the world, one’s future intents and goals, one’s sense of agency, and of the culture and social formations which one lives” (Rose 166). Like the conscious mind, the subconscious or the preconscious mind covers all the human mental activities such as memories that are stored in the brain, but cannot be presently and consciously active. It is like a RAM of the computer. However, the largest part in the human’s mind is the unconscious. It is considered as a reservoir because it comprises feelings, desires, hopes, sorrowful emotions, and all the repressed memories. For instance, after the First World War, some servicemen who turned back from the war with traumatic memories that were not consciously experienced. These memories affected the conscious mind, causing shell shock illness. In spite of the fact that most of the unconscious mind’s productions including sexual desires are unacceptable, the subconscious mind is more titanic than the conscious. In addition to the three parts of the mind, Freud later (1923) divided the human psyche into three other components (Tripartite): the id, ego, and superego, linking them to an iceberg (figure 1.2).



**Figure1.2.** Freudian iceberg theory

According to Freud’s model of the psyche, the id is the basic agency of the human personality because it takes its origins from the birth. This part of the psyche embodies the primitive and animalistic instincts, the bodily needs, desires, urges, and the aggressive drives, shaping a container of the human behaviors. For instance, Frankenstein the monster is considered as the id of his creator; Victor Frankenstein. In fact, the id is related to pleasure principle; attached to the satisfaction and the gratification of the human’s needs. In this regard, Sigmund Freud asserts that “the id knows no judgments of value: no good and evil, no morality” (Thwaites 39). The second part of the human psyche is the ego. It is considered as the most rational state of the mind; aiming to satisfy the id’s desires in a realistic and reasonable way. In this vein, Freud claims that “the ego represents what may be called reason and common sense in contrast to the id, which contains the passions” (Searles 446). The superego is the part of the personality that holds the ideals, the values, and the morals of society that are acquired from parents and family. Its role is controlling the id’s instincts and

impulses which are seen inappropriate and forbidden such as taboo, sex, and aggression. According to Freud, this part develops around the age of 3-5; during the phallic stage of psychosexual development. By connecting the above, the id corresponds to the unconscious, the ego to the conscious, while the superego coordinates with the preconscious or the subconscious.

Moreover, the drive theory, or the theory of instinctual drive, was considered as a substantial approach in the field of psychoanalysis. It was discussed in Freud's book *The Ego and the Id* (1923), which linked the human behavior with two basic drives; Eros (sex), and Thanatos (death). According to Freud, these drives are dual in nature, claiming that "our views have from the very first been dualistic, and today they are even more definitely dualistic than before –now that we describe the opposition as being not between ego drives and sexual drives, but between life drives and death drives" (Carel 18). In the light of this, Eros is not associated only with sexual activities, but also with life, growth, happiness, and pleasure. On the other hand, aggression, or Thanatos represents desolation, negation, and anger that lead to death or suicidal desire. In fact, Thanatos and Eros interact together, creating a mutual and dichotomic impact as love and hate, and pain and pleasure.

In the field of trauma studies, Freud emphasized on the traumatic neuroses, creating a debatable concept among the psychoanalysts. The term traumatic neurosis denotes a psychopathological status which is caused by a previous emotional shock or trauma. Thus, trauma can be a result of a sexual abuse or the war horror. For instance, trauma can happen due to some type of sexual molestation, where the victim fails to deal with her/his post-traumatic feelings of shame and depression, causing a split in the conscious that may evoke the drive of Thanatos. In this context, Freud, in his seduction theory, asserted that the victim's memories of his infantile sexual abuse develop later symptoms and disturbances in his unconscious (Reviere 12). Similarly, he provided an explanation of shell shock in relation to war neurosis,

connecting it with the horror that soldiers experienced in the battlefields. In this regard, he insisted that “war neuroses were the result of psychic split to protect a soldier’s prewar identity from the new self –endangering experience of the warrior” (Meek 57). As a consequence, traumatic neuroses create other mental issues as hysterical symptoms, Freud stated

Hysteria is a neurosis in the strictest sense of the word\_ that is to say not only have no perceptible changes in the nervous system been found in this illness, but it is not to be expected that any refinement of anatomical techniques would reveal any such changes. Hysteria is based wholly and entirely on physiological modifications of the nervous system. (Reher-Langberg 3)

When literary critics got in touch with psychoanalysis and Freudian theories, they began to examine both the character’s and the author’s mental behavior through the motifs, symbols, and the thoughts in the literary text, using Freudian tools of psychoanalysis. Correspondingly, the psychoanalytic literary criticism emerged. In fact, this approach was highly influenced by psychoanalysis, where the text began to be evaluated through Freud’s concepts such as Oedipus complex, id, ego, and the interpretation of dreams. In other words, Freud helped the readers to understand literature in a different manner. Thus, literature is a medium for describing the human actions while psychoanalysis examines and analyses them.

To sum up, Freudian psychoanalysis was regarded as the most effective psychodynamic approach that tackled the human mind and mental disorders in a logical and scientific way; shaping the modern psychotherapy. Furthermore, Freud’s influence was greatly seen in the English modernist novelists’ works as Virginia Woolf, who employed his concepts in their writings and converted his theories into sophisticated literary techniques as stream of consciousness and internal monologues.

### 1.3. The Narrative Construction Techniques of The Modernist Novel

Modernism emerged from the end of the nineteenth century and went approximately through 1965s, making one of the most prosperous periods in English literature. This literary movement marked a radical shift from the traditions and the norms of the Victorian era; by using new and exceptional forms of writing. In fact, the modernist novel witnessed several changes in its structure, basically on the form, the style, the themes, and the semantic perspectives. The main goal of the modernist novel was depicting the feelings and the thoughts of the characters, and their psyche. From this perspective, the modernist novelists such as James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and D. H Lawrence, adopted new narrative techniques as *stream of consciousness* and *Internal monologues* in order to deeply introduce the human mind, linking Freud's theory of consciousness with the mental and spiritual experiences of the characters.

In the twentieth century literature, stream of consciousness was the most important and prominent literary technique because it helped in achieving the aims of the modernist literary text. It is shaped by lengthy sentences of introspection, where the writer narrates details; emotions, feelings, sensations, and actions that come from his mind, filtering them through the aware mind of the characters. This term was coined first by the American philosopher and psychologist William James, in his book "*Principles of Psychology*" (1890), he said

Consciousness, then, does not appear to itself chopped up in bits. Such words as "chain" or "train" do not describe it fitly as it presents itself in the first instance. It is nothing jointed; it flows. A "river" or a "stream" is the metaphor by which it is most naturally described. In talking of it hereafter, let us call it the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life. (James 239)

In here, William James explains the mind's thinking process, describing it as a flow of thought or stream of consciousness. In this regard, the writer shows whatever comes into his conscious mind in a nonlinear mode of thought "associative leaps", without any constraints of the style, punctuation, or cohesion. This narrative technique has been used by many modernist novelists, but Virginia Woolf was considered as the pioneer of this new technique. For instance, in her novel *Mrs Dalloway*, she introduces her own feelings and experiences through her characters especially Septimus, a shell shocked veteran, who reflects Virginia's psychosis.

In addition, interior monologue was one of the lineaments of the modernist narrative style. This technique displays the thoughts, sensations, beliefs, presumptions, inner desires, and the impressions that the characters produce in their minds before they translate them into linguistic patterns of speech and rational sequences of thought. Interior monologue may be either direct or indirect. On one hand, direct interior monologue portrays the characters consciousness in an uncontrolled and uninterrupted way, sometimes incoherently presented, using first person point of view. On the other hand, indirect interior monologue exhibits the inner thoughts of the character without control through a third person omniscient narrator, using punctuation and grammatically structured sentences.

Eventually, stream of consciousness and interior monologue techniques helped showing the complexity of the human mind which many modernist writers as Virginia Woolf and James Joyce used to present their characters' psyche, especially the insane ones. In fact, writers as Virginia Woolf and Franz Kafka utilized these modernist narrative techniques to reflect their mental instability and madness through their characters.

#### 1.4. Virginia Woolf's And Franz Kafka's Mental State

Though suffering from a mental disorder does not necessarily make a great writer, but many notable modernist writers; mainly novelists, suffered from different mental disorders such as paranoia, depression, Bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia. Their madness was a direct factor in their literary brilliance, in which they produced unparalleled literary pieces that scrutinize the secrets of the mind and the inner human voices, linked directly to their mental illnesses. Thus, madness became readable. Allen Thiher indicates that “much of modern literature is a response to madness” (251) where the major madness confrontation was between the insane writer and the writer who discerns insanity after being aware of the damaged state of the psyche. In fact, Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) and Franz Kafka (1883-1924) were the most remarkable modernist writers who projected their mental disturbance in their literary works especially in *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) and *The Metamorphosis* (1915).

Adeline Virginia Stephen Woolf was born in London on January 25, 1882. She was an English author, novelist, essayist, critic and publisher, who pioneered the “modernist literature” with her inspiring aesthetic writings such as her masterpiece “*Mrs Dalloway*” (1925). Like many modernist authors and novelists as Franz Kafka (1883\_1924), Virginia's characters were the reflexion of herself, mainly her mental state. In this context, Spater and Parsons wrote, “Every secret of a writer's soul, every experience of his life, every quality of his mind, is written in his works” (Halbert Bond 83). With regard to the above mentioned, we can understand that Virginia Woolf was obviously suffering from a mental disorder.

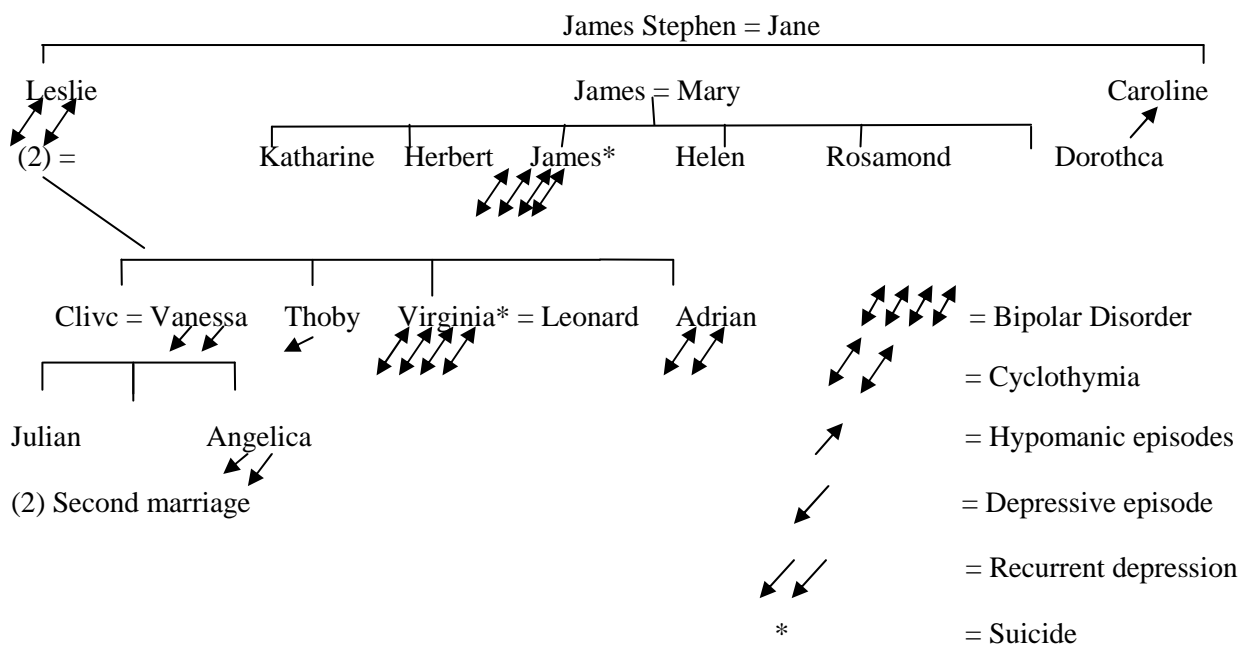
Virginia wolf was first suffering from depression which was the result of a set of breakdowns and sorrowful circumstances in her life. When Virginia was only thirteen years old, her mother died on 5 May 1895 due to influenza, followed by her father's death in 1904. Moreover, the most shocking event in Virginia's life was her sexual abuse by her half



brothers; George and Gerald Duckworth. Roger Poole extracted a passage from Virginia Woolf's memoirs

. . . Once I was very small, Gerald Duckworth lifted me onto this [slab in the hall], and as I sat there he began to explore my body. I can remember the feel of his hand going under my clothes; going firmly and steadily lower and lower. I remember how I hoped that he would stop; how I stiffened and wriggled as his hand approached my private parts too. I remember resenting, disliking it . . . this seems to show that a feeling about certain parts of the body; how they must not be touched; must be instinctive. (Poole 25-26)

Without doubt, her childhood traumas and her breakdowns are strong evidences and persuasive excuses to her mental disorder. On the other hand, biological inheritance can be another logical interpretation of Virginia's mental state.



**Figure 1.3** A partial History of Stephen Family Affective Disorders

Genetically, Virginia Woolf's mental illness was transmitted in the family's genes (figure 1.3); from Virginia's grandfather 'James Stephen' to her father Leslie, affecting the other siblings (Boeira et al. 1). To clarify, many effective illnesses as mania, depression, cyclothymia, schizo-affective disorders, and bipolar disorder were detected in Virginia's family. For instance, according to the British psychiatrist sir George savage (1842-1921), while Virginia's father was suffering from "*neurathenia*", her brothers Adrian and Vanessa had "*cyclothenia*" (Boeira et al. 1). Similarly, Virginia experienced several symptoms of insanity and madness including hallucinations; she was hearing birds singing in Greek and the muffled voice of King Edward VII (spark notes Editors), depression and shift in mood. In here, Virginia's husband, Leonard Woolf (1880-1969), claims that "she talked almost without stopping for two or three days, paying no attention to anyone in the room or on anything said to her . . . the sentences meant something, though it was nearly all widely insane. Then gradually it became completely incoherent, a mere jumble of dissociated words" (Topping Bazin 143). He also reacted on her shift in mood

I am sure that, when she had a breakdown, there was a moment when she passed from what can be rightly called sanity to insanity. On one side of this line was a kind of mental balance, a psychological coherence between intellect and emotion, an awareness and acceptance of the outside world and a rational reaction to it; on the other side were violent emotional instability and oscillation, a sudden change in a large number of intellectual assumptions upon which, often unconsciously, the mental outlook and actions of everyone are based . . . . (Caramagno 34)

Certainly, all the wistful circumstances and the hard breakdowns that Virginia witnessed were the major factors in her suicide on March 28, 1941. In such event, she wrote a letter for her husband, Leonard, before she committed suicide, saying

I feel certain that I am going mad again. I feel we can't go through another of those terrible times. And I shan't recover this time. I began to hear voices, and I can't concentrate. So I am doing what seems the best thing to do . . . I can't fight any longer. I know that I am spoiling your life; that without me you could work. And you will I know. You see I can't even write this properly. I can't read. What I want to say is I owe all the happiness of my life to you . . . I can't go on spoiling your life any longer. (Batchelor 9)

Likewise, Franz Kafka (1883-1924), the German-speaking Bohemian Jewish writer, was facing mental and physical troubles. In fact, his psychological state was justified as being a psychosomatic disorder; related to his organic illness, lungs' tuberculosis. In this context, Franz wrote to his beloved, Milena; "I am mentally handicapped, the lung disease is nor other than an overflow of the mental disorder" (D and Sperati 330). Furthermore, Kafka wrote to his best friend and his biographer, Madox Brod, telling him about his inherited illness

In any case my attitude toward the tuberculosis today resembles that of child clinging to the pleats of its mother's skirts. If the disease came from my mother, the image flits even better, and my mother in her infinite solicitude, which far surpasses her understanding of the matter, has done me this service also . . . sometimes, it seems to me that my brain and lungs came to an argument without my knowledge. (Gilman 182)

Additionally, Franz Kafka experienced several mental disturbances' symptoms like anxiety and depression, which were mirrored in his writings. For example, in *The Metamorphosis* (1915), Kafka projected the miserable aspects of his personal life; mentally and physically. He reveals his unstable mood, mental isolation, depression, rage, and his dispute with his family, especially with his father. Furthermore, Kafka underwent hard

insomnia where he wrote again to Milena, informing her that since fourteen days, his inability to sleep is getting worse (Kafka 9). With regard to the above, it was claimed that Kafka's depression and mental instability were also inherited from his mother's family side where his Jewish race belonged to (Gilman 181).

Correspondingly, Kafka's physical and mental illness led him to adopt suicidal desire, seeking for euthanasia (Felisati and Sperati 329). Nevertheless, instead of killing himself, he preferred to refuse any treatment or food. Kafka died of starvation on June 3, 1924, leaving a set of masterpieces such as *The Metamorphosis*.

In Brief, writers' personal experiences, mental disorders and moods, are often depicted in their writings as a reaction to their emphasis on the human psyche in particular, and psychology in general. In other words, the characters may reflect the author's soul and inner desolation.

As a conclusion, the twentieth century was considered as the golden age of psychology, psychiatry, and psychoanalysis, as a reaction to the spread of mental disorders due to the trauma of the war and the harshness of the modernist societies. In fact, Freudian psychoanalysis begins to enter the literary field with the appearance of the modernist writers as Virginia Woolf and Franz Kafka, who interpreted Freud's theories into new narrative techniques, combining between the conscious and the subconscious. Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, for instance, are seen as modernist psychological literary masterpieces, in which they tackle the theme of madness, portraying other new concepts as self and identity and the human existence.

## **Chapter Two:**

The Literary and Linguistic Construction of Mrs.

Dalloway and The Metamorphosis

## **Chapter Two: The Representation of Mental Disorders in Mrs. Dalloway and The Metamorphosis**

### **2.1. The Theme of Insanity**

#### **2.1.1. Septimus, Clarissa, and Gregor's Mental State**

#### **2.1.2. Kafka and Gregor versus Woolf and Septimus**

### **2.2. Self and Identity**

### **2.3. Madness and the Absurdity of Existence**

Modernist literature is considered as the literature of trauma due to the psychological effects of the First World War. As a reaction, a new generation of writers such as Virginia Woolf and Franz Kafka, appeared with new psychological themes as madness and insanity, which changed the face of literature, mainly the novel. Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* are good samples because they portray the inner side of the individuals who live in a chaotic modernist society. These two modernist works point on the theme of self and identity in relation with madness. At the same time they reveal the absurdity of the human's existence.

### **2.1. Insanity in Mrs Dalloway and The Metamorphosis**

Sanity is a state of mental stability and rationality that goes with a parallel relationship to awareness and consciousness, resulting in the individual's ability to direct and control his mind, emotions, and actions towards reality. Insanity, in contrast, is an unsafe psychological state of being disturbed and chaotic, where the person cannot dominate his activities and actions due to psychosis. In fact, the growth of psychology and psychiatry, especially after the manifestations of the Freudian theories of psychoanalysis led the modernist writers as Virginia Woolf and Franz Kafka to present the concept of insanity in their writings. On one hand, they project their personal mental state and psychological experiences through their insane characters. On the other hand, both writers exhibit ironically the corruption of the modernist society that is shaped by the psychologists of that time for their mistreatment of their mentally disordered patients under the pretext of reason. In these conditions, insanity is the most prevalent theme in *Mrs Dalloway* and *The Metamorphosis*, which is basically seen through the characters; Septimus, Clarissa Dalloway, and Gregor Samsa who show several mental disorders including; shell-shock, depression, schizophrenia, and delusion.

In *Mrs Dalloway*, insanity is seen through the characters Clarissa and Septimus, though this latter is the most tragic sample of a mentally disordered person. Virginia's own mental experience elucidates the features of insanity in as inconsistent image between the thoughts and the actions of her mad characters that manifest a set of psychotic disorders and manic behaviors such as hallucination, hysteria, and delusion. Similarly, in Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, the concept of insanity is presented openly through the character of Septimus, a salesman who transformed into a giant monstrous bug, stressing particularly on the mental isolation and the absurdity of life.

In fact, when *Mrs Dalloway* and *The Metamorphosis* were published, insanity was considered as a social stigma, in which mentally disordered patients did not receive the appropriate aid or medical care. In reality, people who suffered from mental health troubles, either stayed with their families; hidden away in cellars and dimness, or were taken to asylums for the rest of their lives. In *Mrs Dalloway*, for instance, the cruelty of the British society towards the insane individuals is projected in Doctor Holmes' and Sir Bradshaw's mistreatment of Septimus. In this regard, Dr. Holmes tells Septimus that there is nothing wrong with him, while he veritably shows clear symptoms of shell-shock, because the British society at that time was not ready to accept such mental disorders. Instead, Dr. Holmes advises Rezia, Septimus' wife, to make her husband taking an interest outside himself; as visiting a music hall or practicing sport (Woolf 31-37). It turns out that DR. Holmes starts representing a real dread for Septimus; "You brute! You brute! Cried Septimus. Seeing human nature, that is DR. Holmes, enters the room" (Woolf 141) because he does not feel his pain as a war victim.

Identically, Sir William Bradshaw, Septimus' psychotherapist, diagnoses Septimus from his personal British lens, claiming that Septimus' lunacy comes from his loss of proportion. In fact, Bradshaw's method is purely scientific, in which he does not accept any



kind of disorder. Instead, he believes that rest home or sanatorium is the appropriate remedy for Septimus

Health we must have; and health is proportion; so that when a man comes into your room and says he is Christ( a common delusion) . . . and has a message . . . and threatens . . . to kill himself, you invoke proportion; order rest in bed; rest in solitude; silence and rest; rest without friends, without books; without messages; six months' rest . . . .(Woolf 149-150)

Under these circumstances, Virginia writes, “Once you fall, Septimus repeated to himself, human nature is on you. Holmes and Bradshaw are on you” (Woolf 148). This shows the pressure that Sir Bradshaw and Dr. Holmes practice on Septimus, pushing him to commit suicide.

Likewise, Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis* represents the negative impact of social environment and the wrongful treatment of the mentally ill individuals by their societies and families, as if being insane is their fault. In this regard, Gregor’s family turns aggressive and sinister towards him after his transformation into a repulsive bug. For instance, his sister, Grete, whom he loves and trusts most, remains hateful. She convinces her parents to expel Gregor from their house, stating, “We have to try and get rid of it” (Kafka 24). Moreover, Gregor’s father shows more abuse and contempt towards his metamorphic son, treating him as an animal by kicking his back without mercy, and “making hissing noises at him as a wild man” (Kafka 9). Even more, after Gregor’s dreadful death, his family does not show any sorrow, instead, they thank god for his disappearance.

As well, in *The Metamorphosis*, Kafka uses several symbols and images that elucidate the misery of the insane people and their yearning for better life and treatment. For example, Kafka displays the existence of a hospital across the street, opposite to Gregor’s window.

Basically, the hospital symbolizes care, aid, and hope for patients. However, the use of the color grey: “grey sky and grey earth” (Kafka 15) makes the hospital sounds neglected and careless. By way of illustration, when Gregor is in need of medical care after his mental and physical transformation, the hospital looks far, “he could not see it at all” (Kafka 14). Thus, Kafka points on the hardness and the impossibility of treating those helpless patients who suffer from mental disorders.

### **2.2.1. Septimus, Clarissa, and Gregor’s Mental State**

Septimus Warren Smith is a poet and a First World War veteran. He is considered as the most special case in *Mrs Dalloway* because he pictures a vivid image of a mad ‘modernist’ character that experiences several mental disorders’ symptoms such as shell-shock, anxiety, paranoia, depression, and schizophrenia. Through Virginia’s narratives, it is evident that Septimus is affected with shell-shock, as a result of his terrifying experience in the war. As a matter of fact, Smith’s case of shell-shock is represented through his actions, thoughts, and his relationship with people around him, mainly with his wife Lucrezia. By applying Freud’s study of *war neuroses* (1921), Septimus’ traumatic events and emotional shocks after the death of his friend Evans, lead to his depression and mental instability; provoking a split in his conscious mind. In fact, “to be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event” (Felman 174). With this in mind, Septimus’ physical and emotional breakdowns and traumatic events undergo a continuing process, in which four years after his returning from the war, his traumatic sufferings continue to repeat themselves, and thus frequently evoke the violence, the pain, and the terror of the previous traumatizing scenes of the First World War.

Based on textual evidence, Septimus’ traumatizing events are interpreted into auditory hallucinations, nightmares, numbness, and identity destruction. For instance, he is not able to

recognize that Evans is dead; he persistently talks to him, “Evans, Evans!” he cried” (Woolf 220) because he cannot distinguish between past and present due to his war neurosis and psychic destruction. Even worse, he starts seeing and hearing delusory things and situations; confusing trees and animals with humans; “the trees waved, brandished” (Woolf 104), and creating fantasy worlds. Simultaneously, “he said people were talking behind the bedroom walls . . . an old woman’s head in the middle of a fern” (Woolf 99-100), developing a serious degree of delusion. Moreover, it is clear that Septimus is also afflicted with paranoid schizophrenia because he shows vivid symptoms as; delusions, disorganized thinking and hallucination, low libido “sex drive”, emotional disconnectedness, and frequent suicidal desires. In this connection, Septimus is highly convinced that the entire world is evil and people are inimical and plotting to hurt him; claiming that human beings have neither fidelity, nor sympathy (Woolf 135). At the same time, he develops remarkable spirituality; showing exaggerated emotions towards nature “leaves were alive; trees were alive” (Woolf 32). Thereby, it is obvious that Septimus is insane. In fact, just as Septimus, Clarissa Dalloway also seems insane, though she does not show direct symptoms of insanity unlike Septimus’ case of madness which is diagnosable.

Clarissa Dalloway, the eponymous character, is a middle class lady who is married to a Member of the Parliament, Richard Dalloway. Clarissa’s mental state is fragmented; she represents the dichotomy between the sane and the insane because of her ambiguous and contradicted thoughts and actions. Although Virginia Woolf does not mention openly what is wrong with Clarissa, as she does with Septimus, it is lucid that Clarissa is experiencing several mental disturbances. “She had a perpetual sense, as she watched the taxi cabs, of being out, out far out the sea and alone; she always had the feeling that it was very, very dangerous to live even one day” (Woolf 11). This means that her fear and her mood swings cause her a sense of despair, anxiety, and isolation, though she seems sociable and vivacious.

Moreover, Clarissa personifies a unique sample of a modern lady who is afflicted by an external depression, which comes from the corruption of the British society and its superficial views; “the cruelest things in the world, she thought, seeing them clumsy, hot, domineering, hypocritical, eavesdropping, jealous, infinitely cruel and unscrupulous, dressed in a mackintosh coat” (Woolf 191). In truth, words as trouble, gloomy, darkness, sorrow, despair, and isolation, are typical for a patient suffering from *depression*, if not early symptoms of *paranoia*. However, Clarissa’s case of paranoia is accompanied by a sense of self-consciousness. In light of this, when she remains optimistic, describing the beauty of nature and love, she uses positive words like delightful, beautiful, soft, and wonderful, while when she talks about death, she uses bleak words as sorrow and sad. In like manner, Gregor Samsa, in *The Metamorphosis*, does not show any clear features of madness. Nevertheless, through his actions, especially his metamorphosis, implicit symptoms of insanity start to appear.

In Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis*, Gregor Samsa reveals a unique and complicated psychological case. In fact, Gregor is mentally unstable because of his financial and emotional loads; he is exhausted, overworked: “what a strenuous career it is that I’ve chosen!. . . Traveling day in and day out . . . much more effort . . . bad irregular food” (Kafka 2), and faces a stressful debt and personal conflicts with his dictatorial father. Accordingly, Kafka decides to metamorphose Samsa into a massive cockroach, altering completely his appearance, but in the same time he leaves his mind stuck between the repressed animalistic instincts and the human psyche. Considering that, our mind consists of two basic parts: conscious and unconscious; this latter is the responsible of our feelings, repressed wills and desires, drives, anxiety, and conflicts.

In the light of the above mentioned, Kafka focuses on Samsa’s unconscious mind in order to portray his inner world of insecurity and worries, wherein, he presents the separation

between Gregor's persona and his unconscious mind, resulting in his alienation and depersonalization. For instance, the use of words as darkness, foggy, dull weather, night, remind the reader of the unconscious mind, where most of the human's horrifying and gloomy events do exist, illustrated in Sigmund Freud's *iceberg paradigm* 'tripartite' which correlate the unconscious with hidden part of the psyche "*id*". Moreover, the setting of the novella takes the reader directly into Samsa's unconscious world of dreams, "one morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams . . . ." (Kafka 1). In regard to this, Freud, in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), claims that anxiety-dreams are the result of painful emotions and terrible events which keep torturing the person until he wakes up (46). Hence, since anxiety-dreams are just a rehearsal of the daily anxieties and despondency, the human mind perceives them and interprets them into dreams, imageries, and nightmares. However, Gregor's dream starts after waking up from his real dream; because, his dispute with his father and his miserable condition as a salesman are considered as Samsa's real life anxiety, disguised as a horrible dream 'transformation'. In fact, while people's dreadful dreams end up after waking up, Gregor's dream ends when he passes away.

Under these circumstances, it is clear that Gregor's mental state is not stable; he even shows some symptoms of paranoia. For example, he experiences a long period of hyper vigilance; "he would often lie there the whole night through, not sleeping a wink but scratching at the leather for hours on end" (Kafka 14), anger, anxiety, fear, and appetite loss. Gregor's paranoia, indeed, is a result of his stressful and miserable life, portrayed in a physical and mental metamorphosis. Actually, *The Metamorphosis* reveals Franz Kafka's real life, in which many similarities exist between the lives of Kafka and his protagonist, Gregor Samsa.

### 2.1.2. Kafka and Gregor versus Woolf and Septimus

When comparing Kafka to his miserable protagonist, Gregor Samsa, in *The Metamorphosis*, numerous similarities are common between them. Genuinely, this novella is considered as an exploration of Kafka's own life; his work, his family, and his wistful death. For instance, after Gregor's metamorphosis into a hideous insect, his father becomes aggressive and starts chasing him in order to injure him; he even bombards him with apples. These actions reveal the fake emotions of Mr. Samsa towards his son before his transformation, because Gregor was the source of income of his family members. Just as Mr. Samsa, Kafka's father was also brutal and merciless with his son. In Franz Kafka's *Letter to My Father (1919)*, he demonstrates his father's bad treatment towards him, stating, "You abused me directly with abusive words I cannot remember" (21). Apparently, Kafka did not live a happy childhood due to his father's mistreatment, mocking, severity, and hateful threats. Another common point between Kafka and Samsa is their intimacy with their sisters, Ottla and Grete. In such case, Samsa's younger sister, Grete, is the only member in the family who remains loyal and loving, wherein, she feels his handicap; she takes care of him patiently and observes his nutritional habits and preferences. For example, in order to realize what he likes and what he dislikes, "she brought him a whole selection of things, all spread out on an old newspaper" (Kafka 11). Kafka's sister, Ottla, was likewise very close and warm-hearted, in which she loved him, she took care of him during his illness, and provided him with support for his writings. Reciprocally, Kafka declared in his diaries (1948) that "love between brother and sister\_ the repeating of the love between mother and father" (273).

Moreover, *The Metamorphosis* is evidently, a representation of Kafka's mental state, projected in Gregor's transformation into a gruesome vermin. In fact, Kafka's diaries are vivid evidence that show his mental suffering, his distress, his social anxiety, and his chronic depression which resemble Gregor's feelings. In this regard, the Symptoms of depression are

clearly exposed in Kafka's letters to his friend Max Brod (1873-1939) and his sister, Ottla, informing them about his insomnia, his disappointment, and his distorted self-image. For instance, the feeling of uselessness is mostly a common point between Kafka and Samsa; the first one due to his psychosomatic illness and the later because of his unexpected metamorphosis. In Kafka's *Diaries* (1910-1913), he wrote, "For the first time in a week an almost complete failure in writing, why? last week too I lived through various moods and kept their influence away from my writing, but I am afraid to write about it"(159). Undoubtedly, it seems that Kafka's depressive state was aggravating, affecting his profession as a writer. Gregor, also, feels useless and unable to function as a human being after his transformation. These shared symptoms, de facto, are the result of Gregor and Kafka's melancholic lives, which include; stress, financial struggles, insecurity, and the rigid relationship with their fathers. Thus, the one who reads *The Metamorphosis* will recognize that Franz Kafka is indicating himself through Samsa, using his *Kafkaesque* style. Just as Kafka did, Virginia Woolf, in *Mrs Dalloway*, tried to portray herself through Septimus, especially her mental state.

According to what came in Virginia's biographies and what is narrated in *Mrs. Dalloway*, Septimus Warren Smith is somehow considered as his author's double. Septimus, an ex soldier who suffered the trauma and the horror of the *First World War*, faces several mental disorders such as; shell-shock, anxiety, depression, paranoia, and schizophrenia. In fact, his madness is a consequence of the traumatic war experiences which break the consistency of his consciousness, leaving it fragmented and unstable. He is unable to love his wife, Rezia, he feels numb and guilty, and he is emotionally paralyzed and frightened. Above all, he cannot get rid of the war's awful images; shells, bombs explosions, injuries, and the deads, especially his friend, Evans. Virginia Woolf, likewise, has passed through a severe trauma, caused by past sexual molestation by her stepbrother, George. Thus, "Virginia felt that George had spoiled her life before it had firstly begun. Naturally shy in sexual matters,

she was from this time terrified back into a posture of frozen and defensive panic” (Wolfe 36). This sexual assault made her mentally disturbed, with apparent symptoms as depression, despair, delusion, and a strong death desire. Therefore, Virginia’s sexual trauma pushed her to write about war trauma in a fictionalized image, through Septimus.

Furthermore, both Virginia and Septimus share the same source of *Thanatos* and *Eros*. In this regard, Woolf’s source of *Thanatos* derives from her personal life; her emotional breakdowns, her sexual trauma, and her psychosis. In fact, the continuous deaths in her family brought her severe depression and breakdowns. Under these circumstances, Virginia’s death instincts were triggered, causing her a strong desire towards suicide. Meanwhile, Woolf transfers her *Thanatos* into her novel, *Mrs. Dalloway*, affecting Septimus. In this vein, the *Thanatos* of Septimus in the novel comes from his pain, distress, and mainly after his friend, Evans, was killed. As a result, his death instinct leads him into suicide. In addition, both Woolf and Septimus have a kind of sexual frigidity towards the opposite sex. In effect, their mental disorders and their traumas, make them losing their *Eros*. Virginia, for example, the sexual invasion that she experiences as a teenager, left her a negative touch on her marital life.

Essentially, *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Metamorphosis* give Virginia Woolf and Franz Kafka the opportunity to expose and explain their mental disorders through their insane characters. In fact, their aim behind fictionalizing madness is greater than reflecting their own insanity or the corruption of their societies, because through the madness of Septimus and Clarissa Dalloway, and the metamorphosis of Gregor Samsa, another issue is taking place, which is self and identity.

## **2.2. Self and Identity**

Through *Mrs Dalloway* and *The Metamorphosis*, Virginia Woolf and Franz Kafka, as modernist writers, try to investigate and convey the concept of self and identity, going



beyond the human psyche. Woolf, in this respect, examines the human identity of her characters, especially Mrs. Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Warren Smith, by portraying them as doubles. She also presents the heterosexual identity and the psychological androgyny and gender polarity. However, Kafka, in *The Metamorphosis*, sheds the light on the dualistic conception of personality between the humanistic and the animalistic self.

In Mrs. Dalloway, Woolf tries to reveal identity crisis on Clarissa and Septimus, by portraying them as doubles. In the same time, the novel carries several dichotomies and binary opposition's elements such as; life and death, sanity and insanity, and male and female. This later is shown through *psychological androgyny*, where Clarissa's and Septimus' thoughts and actions are interconnected. Although they may seem polar opposites, they have many things in common. Most significant is their unhappy lives; they feel depressed, empty, broken, and marginalized and oppressed by their societies. On one hand, Septimus is oppressed by his memory as an ex-traumatized soldier; where he still remembers the horrible scenes of the battlefield, and by the authority of his psychologists who mistreat him and neglect his identity as shell shocked victim. On the other hand, Clarissa is oppressed by her society; her upper class, and even her husband's name. In effect, Clarissa is not socially and psychologically independent; she is married to a member of the British parliament, Mr. Richard Dalloway. Thus, being an upper class wife abrogates her identity, making her feeling subordinate and useless, "she had the oddest sense of being herself invisible; unseen; unknown; there being no more marrying, no more having of children now . . . this being Mrs. Dalloway; not even Clarissa anymore; this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway" (Woolf 1).

With this in mind, Clarissa feels that she loses her own identity; although she seems sociable and comfortable with her husband. She feels nostalgic to the old self, Clarissa, the young girl. As an attempt to regain and reconstruct her lost identity, Clarissa devotes her

energy and time to meetings and extravagant parties for the upper class personalities, trying to be the perfect and elegant hostess in order to build new relationships with her surrounding class.

Moreover, Clarissa transgresses and challenges the social norms by involving herself in a romantic lesbian relationship with her best friend, Sally Seton. In a scene, “Sally stopped; picked a flower; kissed her on the lips” (Woolf 52). This incident is considered as the most exciting and pleasurable in Clarissa’s life, she does not feel it even with her husband. Like so, she tries to build a heterosexual identity, breaking the standards of her society. Consequently, she takes a new chance to live her life again while Septimus chooses to escape his trauma and the triviality of life, because he cannot feel his identity anymore due to his mental disorder. By representing both male’s and female’s psyche, Virginia Woolf proves that these two opposed sexes co-exist and function in parallel since “there are masculine and feminine elements in every human being” (Kaplan 130). However, Kafka, in *The Metamorphosis*, depicts his protagonist, Gregor Samsa, wondering about his humanistic identity as he transforms into a bug.

Gregor’s Metamorphosis into a hideous insect, triggers a problematic question about his human identity. As a start, “One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dream, found himself transformed into a horrible vermin” (Kafka 1). However, this sudden transformation does not affect Samsa’s consciousness, so it is physical rather than psychological, because Samsa is still capable to use his brain as a human being, questioning his new self; physically animal and psychologically human. This means that he loses his physical identity as a human being; he cannot walk or speak as a human anymore, but his consciousness is present. In here, it is obvious that memory plays a crucial role in directing the individual’s identification and sense of humanity. Taking this into consideration, Gregor still has human emotions; he feels the love, anger, nostalgia, fear, sorrow, and admiration. For

instance, when he listens to Grete's violin playing, he feels euphoric and amused by the grace of music "as no one appreciated her playing here as much as he would" (Kafka 23). That proves that he is still Gregor Samsa, the human being, more than the animal.

In effect, being an animal helps him separate from his previous identity that was controlled by his society; his boss, and his family. For Gregor, his job as an overworking salesman who travels a lot, is an exhausting mission, wherein he states that

Doing business like this takes much effort than doing your own business at home, and on top of that there is the curse of traveling, worries about making train connections, bad and irregular food, contact with different people all the time, so that you can never get to know anyone or become friendly with them.  
(Kafka 2)

This statement reveals Gregor feeling tired and unhappy because he is not occupying a job that he likes, but it is the only means to support his family and to pay his father's accumulated debts. Thus, his identity is oppressed and shaped by his unfair society and environment. Even more, Gregor's split of identity can be justified as an instinctive animalistic desire. As a result, his suicide is considered as a final attempt at keeping his human identity, as Gregor Samsa.

Generally, Virginia's portrayal of androgyny and Kafka's representation of the dualistic identity between the human and the animal provides their literary works with a philosophical and psychological dimension. In fact, by stressing on the issue of self and identity, the reader may raise the question of existence through the madness of the given characters.

### **2.3. Madness and the Absurdity of Existence**

Virginia, in *Mrs. Dalloway*, depicts the effects and the trauma of the First World War on an ex-soldier, Septimus Warren Smith, who is suffering from several mental disorders as

shell-shock. In this novel, Woolf aims at portraying the dilemma of the human life and the absurdity of the individuals' existence in a cruel modernist society, in relation to madness and insanity. Likewise, Kafka, in *The Metamorphosis*, stresses on the absurdity of life and the dispute between the human inclination for meaning in a chaotic world, and the harshness of society.

In Mrs. Dalloway, Woolf sheds the light on the lives of her protagonists, Clarissa and Septimus, who are considered as doppelgangers. By discussing their contradicted and fragmented lives, Woolf tries to show the absence of meaning and the value of existence in their capitalistic society, Britain, which leads to Clarissa's depression and isolation, and Septimus' madness and alienation. Indeed, by emphasizing on Septimus' mental state; his hallucinations, numbness, delusions, fear, and paranoid actions, Virginia proves that life becomes worthless after the war. Furthermore, Septimus' psychiatrists remain unhelpful and even evil, turning him angry with his guilty and cataclysmic society, in which he rebels against the human nature

One cannot bring children into a world like this. One cannot perpetuate suffering, or increase the breed of these lustful animals, who sic have no lasting emotions, but only whims and vanities, eddying them now this way, now that. . . . For the truth is . . . that human beings have neither kindness, nor faith, nor charity beyond that serves to increase the pleasure of the moment. They hunt in packs. Their packs scour the desert and vanish screaming into the wilderness. They desert the fallen. (Woolf 135)

Septimus, with this mentality, becomes discontented with the conditions of his society more than his neurotic symptoms and traumas. Thus, he commits suicide because he is highly convinced that the world is merciless and unsympathetic. When Clarissa hears about Septimus' suicide, she starts relating his tragic death to her personal life, "somehow it was

her disaster, her disgrace” (Woolf 282). This statement elucidates Clarissa’s feeling of guilt, in which she considers herself as one of the factors that pushes Septimus to end his life since she belongs to the corrupted upper society. This image shows the triviality of life and the absurdity of existence.

Side by side with Septimus and Clarissa, Gregor Samsa, in *The Metamorphosis*, also questions his existence. His wondering about his existence starts after his transformation into a bug, where he makes certain that his life is based on meaningless events. He works as a salesman, spending most of his time in hotels, waiting trains, looking for boring customers, eating bad food, and worrying about his family’s needs. He is the slave of his society; he is accomplishing the orders of his boss and providing a comfortable life for his family members, while he is neglecting his existence as a human being; he does not have even a family for his own or a woman in his life. In an image, “. . . a picture that he had recently cut out of an illustrated magazine. . . . It showed a lady fitted out with a fur hat and fur boa who sat upright, raising a heavy fur muff that covered the whole of her lower arm towards the viewer”(Kafka 2). This shows his desire to have a woman in his life as any man with instinctive needs. Apparently, Gregor’s life is hollow much like a useless bug. Moreover, the absurdity of his life appears when his family members start neglecting his presence as he transforms into an insect, then after everything he does to make them pleased, he becomes a shameful burden to them. In fact, Gregor’s metamorphosis and madness are the result of his society’s unbearable demands.

Altogether, Clarissa, Septimus, and Gregor oppose their antagonistic societies which try to absorb their identities and to cancel their existence. They escape from the absurdity of life; Septimus and Gregor choose to suicide and Clarissa gets back to her party, with hope and self confidence.

To sum up, mental disorders have been a central thematic issue for the modernist writers. They became interested in the individual's mental destruction after the war, showing the other face of the human nature from a psychological angle. In fact, the depiction of Freudian theories helped Virginia Woolf and Franz Kafka to project the inner world of their characters, and provide a clinical understanding of mental disturbances. In this sense, Woolf, in *Mrs. Dalloway*, expresses the painful experiences of a shell-shocked old veteran who is inflicted with several mental disorders, and the gloomy life of a depressed lady, Larissa Dalloway. In planning her novel, Woolf wants to show the impact of the cultural and political change on people's minds; the effects of the First World War on soldiers, the new technologies, and all the modernist cultural shocks, aiming at criticizing the social system and the cruelty of the modern life. Similarly, in *The Metamorphosis*, Kafka employs an imaginative approach to investigate the mystery of the human personality through the fantastical transformation of his protagonist. He distorts reality in order to expose the absurdity of existence and the triviality of the modern life, which tantalize the individual's mind, causing him madness. As a whole, both Woolf and Kafka prove that social environment is the main responsible of the individuals' mental disorders, by examining their consciousness, using modernist narrative techniques to fictionalize madness.

## **Chapter Three:**

The Literary and Linguistic Construction  
of Mrs. Dalloway and The Metamorphosis

## **Chapter Three: The Literary and Linguistic Construction of Mrs. Dalloway and The Metamorphosis**

**3.1. The Narrative Techniques**

**3.2. Language and Madness**

**3.3. The Aesthetics of Madness**



With the emergence of literary modernism, as a reaction against the authoritarian writing techniques of the Victorian literature, a set of modernist writers as Virginia Woolf and Franz Kafka came with new narrative techniques. In fact, the tendency towards psychology, individualism, and subjectivity, elevated the need for flexible techniques such as stream of consciousness and interior monologues, which made it easy for the writers to depict the inner realm of their characters. These writers stressed on self-reflexivity and self-consciousness, using fragmentation and montage technique. As an illustration, *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Metamorphosis* are authentically modernist works due to their unique storytelling techniques, linguistic patterns, and psychological themes which shape their linguistic and thematic aesthetics.

### **3.1. The Narrative Techniques**

Virginia Woolf and Franz Kafka, in an endeavor to connect the concept of insanity with the modernist literature, they adopted new narrative techniques such as; stream of consciousness and interior monologues, in order to dwell more on the psyche of the characters. In their modernist literary works; *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Metamorphosis*, they shed light on the flow of their protagonists' consciousness, capturing their thoughts, feelings, and emotions, to show their mental disorders, specifically Septimus and Gregor Samsa.

*Mrs. Dalloway* is considered as a psychological novel; it is shaped by complexity because it focuses on the characters' inner thoughts and emotions rather than their actions or their rational behaviors. It is written in a rigid structure since the entire events take place during a single day, in London, with many characters and events included. It is centered on Clarissa Dalloway's preparation for a party, and her relationships with her surrounding people; Richard, Sally Saton, Peter Walsh, and other characters from her social class. It is

also about the miserable life of a shell-shocked veteran, who suffers from depression, paranoia, and schizophrenia. In keeping with the theme of madness, Woolf involves new narrative technique, known as stream of consciousness and interior monologues, which make the reader feel as if he is inside the character's mind. Woolf, in this context, tries to open her novel by preparing the reader to get inside Clarissa's mind, she claims that "Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself. For Lucy had her work cut out for her. The doors would be taken off their hinges; Rumpel mayers' men were coming. And then, through Clarissa Dalloway, what a morning – fresh as if issued to children on a beach" (3).

In this passage, Woolf employs stream of consciousness technique through the use of free indirect style, which allows entering into Clarissa's consciousness; that she wants to buy flowers for her party. For example, by referring to a fresh morning through Clarissa's thought, the reader can feel it, as if he is in the same place where Clarissa is. In addition, when Mrs. Dalloway hears about Septimus' suicide, she feels depressed and sad about this horrible event, stating that "Death was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate people feeling the impossibility of reaching the centre which, mystically, evaded them; closeness drew apart; rapture faded; one was alone. There was an embrace in death" (Woolf 280-281).

This statement reveals Clarissa's feeling after the death of Septimus, and how she feels connected to him spiritually, proving that he is her psychological double. They share the same view about death, and they are both isolated. In fact, this image evokes Mrs. Dalloway's inner feeling of depression. Moreover, Woolf focuses on Septimus' mental state. Through the use of stream of consciousness, she proves that Septimus is afflicted with a mental disorder, by visualizing his abnormal actions and thoughts. As an illustration, Woolf says

He listened. A sparrow perched on the railing opposite chirped Septimus, Septimus, four or five times over and over and went on, drawing its notes out, to sing freshly and piercingly in Greek words how there is no crime and, joined by another sparrow, they sang in voices prolonged and piercing in Greek words, from trees in the meadow of life beyond a river where the dead walk, how there is no death. (36)

In this paragraph, the narration represents Septimus' stream of consciousness thoughts which are caused by his mental instability. Through this psycho narration, the reader may think that the image of the birds singing in Greek, and Septimus' friend, Evans, approaching, is real, because he is inside Septimus' mind. However, this image shows Septimus Warren smith's hallucination, as a consequence of his post traumatic stress disorder. Thus, the stream of consciousness provides a clear explanation of his mental state, revealing the split of his consciousness. Furthermore, Woolf varies in her narrative techniques, in which she uses interior monologue with its two major forms; direct and indirect. For in direct monologue, she tries to picture Septimus' distress and social failure after the war

So there is no excuse; nothing whatever the matter, except the sin for which, human nature had condemned him to death; that he did not feel. He had not cared when Evans was killed; what was worst; but all the other crimes raised their heads shock their fingers and jeered and sneered over the rail of the bed in the early hours of the morning at the prostrate body which lay realizing its degradation; how he had married his wife without loving her; had lied to her; seduced her. (101)

In this direct monologue, Woolf uses the third person pronoun "he", in order to discuss Septimus' psyche, mainly his traumatized mind. This passage, detects the shocking

effects of the war on his mind, stressing on his social and marital failure, which is embodied in his frigidity towards his wife. This monologue says a lot about Septimus; it reveals his mental instability, his trauma, and his inability to love his wife.

Interior monologue, indeed, tells the reader about the characters' life experiences; their memories, their past, and their future. In a passage, Woolf mixes between direct monologue with the pronoun "I" and indirect monologue with the third pronoun "she", to represent Clarissa's past experiences and their impact on her feelings, she reports

And Clarissa had leant forward, taken his hand, drawn him to her, kissed him, actually had felt his face on hers before she could down the brandishing of silver flashing, plumes like pampas grass in a tropic gale, in her breast, which, subsiding, left her holding his hand, patting his knee and, feeling as she sat back extraordinarily at her ease with him and light-hearted, all in a clap it came over her, if I had married him, this gaiety would have been mine all day!.(Woolf 69-70)

Through this monologue, Woolf demonstrates Clarissa's feelings and desires towards Peter Walsh, revisiting her happy memories with him. With this narration, the reader recognizes that Clarissa still loves Peter, so that she imagines how much she would be happy if they are married.

Apparently, the use of stream of consciousness, especially interior monologue, provides the literary work with a sense of ambiguity, in which the reader feels lost in the chaotic psyche of the character. For instance, through the narration of Clarissa's inner mind, such as; happiness and sadness, sanity and insanity, and inner self and social self. In this vein, Woolf states

She heard the click of the typewriter. It was her life, and bending her head over the hall table, she bowed beneath the influence, felt blessed and purified, saying to herself, as she look the pad with the telephone message on it, how moments like this are bad or the tree of life, flowers of darkness they are, she thought (as if some lovely rose had blossomed for her eyes only). (Woolf 42-43)

Here, Woolf exposes the contradictions in Clarissa's psyche. She seems happy because she participates in the social activities, she also lives her life as any upper class lady. However, the darkness of life inside her mind turns her depressed. In the same time, Woolf gives the reader a hint about Septimus' suicidal desire, in which he is prepared for the horrible death in the end, because Woolf pictures Septimus saying "I'll kill myself" (Woolf 22)

In this sentence, the use of direct monologue, with the pronoun "I", offers a clear and a vivid image of an insane person threatening to kill himself, as if he is communicating directly with the reader. Similarly, in *The Metamorphosis*, Kafka, adopts this narrative technique in order to put the reader in Gregor's mind. As an illustration, Kafka makes Gregor Samsa questioning his sudden physical inability after his metamorphosis, stating "I'm slight unwell, an attack of dizziness, I haven't been able to get up. I'm still in bed now. I'm quite fresh again now, though. It's chocking, what can suddenly happen to a person! I was quite alright last night" (6).

This direct monologue portrays Gregor's wondering about the sudden change on his human appearance, trying to convince himself that he is fine and nothing bad happens with him. Through his monologue, the reader is able to take a look on the inner mind of Gregor; discovering his life, his isolation, and his depression. Since Gregor is the protagonist of the

story, Kafka writes *The Metamorphosis* from his perspective, where the reader is never given any other's thoughts, other than Gregor's experiences and feelings. Although, Kafka narrates his story in a third person point of view, the focus is still on Gregor's life, with several direct monologues. In fact, Kafka's aim in using the third person point of view is getting inside the minds of multiple characters; Grete, Mr. Samsa, and Mrs. Samsa, in order to analyze their relationship with Gregor, especially after his metamorphosis, then after his death. For instance, after Gregor's suicide, his family members ". . . left the flat together . . . until then they had never asked each other about their work but all three had jobs which were very good and held particularly good promise for the future. . . all the time, Grete was becoming livelier. . . they become quieter"(Kafka 2). This statement shows the actions of Gregor's family after his death, wherein they seem happy and comfortable without him.

Furthermore, Kafka's use of stream of consciousness is different and unique of that of Woolf. His goal is not exposing Gregor's mental state, but he aims at showing society in its cruelest degree, and its effect on Gregor's mind and life. In effect, his interest is not the mechanism of the mind's actions, but the impact of the environment on the conscious and subconscious of the individuals. On this point, Kafka uses stream of consciousness to disclose the negative effects of Gregor's tiresome job and the maltreatment of his family. Virginia Woolf, in contrast, employs stream of consciousness technique to reveal the impact of Septimus' insanity and the reaction of his society towards his mental disorder; his wife, Mrs. Clarissa Dalloway, and his psychiatrists.

All in all, *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Metamorphosis* are considered as complex modernist literary works due to their emphasis on the human psyche with its vagueness and contradictions. Kafka and Woolf, as a response to the originality of the modernist literature, adopted stream of consciousness technique with its different forms, providing a psychological study about the deterioration of the mind. Actually, while in Virginia's narrative,

consciousness reveals truth, Kafka makes them analogous. Generally, these two modernist masterpieces; *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Metamorphosis*, offered an artistic touch to the literature of that era, thanks to the proficient use of language which conveys the theme of madness in a clear way.

### 3.2. Language and Madness

Due to the strong connection between language and madness, the modernist writers as Woolf and Kafka, shifted their narrative perspectives from external facts and events to the inner reality of the psyche, shaping a new novelistic aesthetics. The novelty and the uniqueness of their writings are shown through their linguistic choices. Thus, in order to understand the ramified stylistic features depicted by Woolf and Kafka, the reader should analyze the linguistic features of their literary works; morphology, syntax, semantics, and lexis, applying stylistic analysis.

In *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Metamorphosis*, both of Woolf and Kafka, express the theme of madness through a set of modernist lexical choices. For instance, Woolf uses specific lexical field to represent the mental process of her characters, especially Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Smith. Words as; alone, awful, feelings, lunatic, strange, shocked, tears, grief, hollowness, etc, portray the inner world and the human psyche in an aesthetical lexico-semantic combination. En effect, Woolf chooses the strongest adjectives and nouns to shape the sorrow and the mental suffering of Septimus who is traumatized by the war. Coequal, Kafka, employs similar words as; melancholy, anxious, and sad, to represent Gregor Samsa's state of depression as he transforms into an insect. Moreover, Woolf tries to show the reader the harmony between her mad character's fragile mind and his actions, in relation to her sentences structure, using parallelism and synonymous utterances. Considering this, she claims that Septimus “. . . dropped his head on his hands. . . Now he had surrendered;

now other people must help him. People must be sent for. He gave in” (136). This image reveals Septimus’ weakness and loss of hope as he sees his wife crying her miserable life with him, thus, he shows surrender, dropping his head on his hands. In the same way, Kafka uses synonyms to stress on the bad mental state of his protagonist after his metamorphosis, stating that “He lay there for a while, numb and immobile” (17). In addition, in order to expose the inner mental activity of the insane characters, Virginia exploits the reflexive pronouns as an effective lexical item, proving that the flow of the person’s thoughts and emotions has a conscious dimension. For example, she pictures Septimus “. . . talking to himself, or to that dead Evans” (Woolf 99), covering his delusions as he communicates with himself or with his dead friend.

As a rebellion against the traditional form of the novel, Woolf and Kafka touched the weakness of language in portraying the inner self of characters. For this reason, they broke the narrative system of linearity and coherence, using a free-flowing of sentences and flexible syntax. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf’s successful use of the syntactical elements as fragmentation, repetitive structure, inversions, etc, make the novel purely modernist. Her use of repetitive, as she shows Septimus crying and repeating the name of his dead friend “. . . Evans, Evans, Evans! . . . It was awful; he cried, awful, awful!” (224-79). This image, with the repetition of the same words, is strong evidence that there is something wrong with Septimus. However, the syntactic structure of *The Metamorphosis* is not constructed by Kafka, since it is a translated version of the original “*Die Verwandlung*”, in which the translator might be faithful to the original meaning not to the structure of the source text. In *The Metamorphosis*, the writer uses anacoluthon technique in order to fragment his sentences to reveal the chaos and meaninglessness of the protagonist’s life after his unexpected transformation, stating that



. . . he had used to curse the ever present view of the hospital across the street, but now he could not see it at all, and if he had not known that he lived in Charlottenstrasse. . . he was looking out the window at a barren wattle where the grey sky and the grey earth mingled inseparably.(Kafka 14)

In This passage, the writer interrupts the expected flow of the sentence where the speaker mentions a hospital, then the street where he lives, moving to describe the sky and the earth. In effect, this shows the distortion in the character's mind. Furthermore, Virginia Woolf, in *Mrs. Dalloway*, uses the progressive forms, especially when she describes Septimus' abnormal actions and flow of thoughts, in which she says, "And he was always stopping in the middle, changing his mind; wanting to add something; hearing something new; listening with his hand up" (212-213).

By applying *Speech Act Theory* (1962) on *Mrs Dalloway* and *The Metamorphosis*, the actions that the mad characters perform via utterances, reveal their mental state. This theory is based on three elements; the illocutionary act, the locutionary act, and the perlocutionary act. The first one includes the intentions and the desires of the speaker. The second highlights the linguistic production of the previous intentions, while the later expresses the influence of the speech on the listener. With this in mind, Septimus' suicidal desire represents his illocutionary act, and then he performs this desire linguistically through locutionary act, declaring, "I'll kill myself" (Woolf 22). Finally, the level of perlocutionary act is achieved when his wife, Rezia, ". . . looked at crowd. Help, Help! She wanted to cry out to butchers' boys and women" (Woolf 22), as a reaction to the threatening of her husband to kill himself.

In short, modernist literature employs language to reveal the content of the mind and the inner realm of the post-war individual. In this sense, the traditional structure of the literary text has been ceased by a set of modernist writers who apply their individualistic

aesthetics on the linguistic patterns of their literary pieces; syntactically, lexically, pragmatically, etc, achieving a linguistic, a stylistic, and an artistic creativity.

### 3.3. The Aesthetics of Madness

Since modernism was a literary and an artistic movement which aims at rebelling against traditionalism and transmitting the mechanism of the human mind, modernist writers as Woolf and Kafka, wanted to create a connection between madness and literary aesthetics. With this in mind, they expressed mental abnormalities by adopting the modernist techniques of visual art as *Expressionism* and *Surrealism*. For instance, in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Metamorphosis*, the theme of madness is portrayed in a poetic manner; through the use of symbolism, allegory, allusion, and many other aesthetical techniques which show the beauty of the fragmented mind.

Starting with *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf, bases her novel on artistic elements that show her modernist individuality and originality, adopting the principles of the artistic movements of her period. In fact, being a member of the Bloomsbury group which contains writers, painters, philosophers, and intellectuals, affected her literary works with a remarkable aesthetical and stylistic dimension. Under these circumstances, she builds *Mrs. Dalloway* on the standards of expressionism which gives her a total freedom to express the mental phenomenon. In this regard, she focuses on the inner lives of her protagonists; Septimus Warren Smith and Clarissa Dalloway, who are considered insane according to the cryptic and mysterious narrative of Woolf. She extracts the sublimity of Septimus' fragmented mind, where he hears and sees unreal things as his dead friend, Evans. In fact, although she does not mention openly that Septimus is mad, through her expressions which are presented as symptoms, the reader can easily grasp the theme of madness. Moreover, Virginia provides a visual image of the war, which is seen from Septimus' disordered mind, through his

flashbacks and memories. For example, Septimus says, “It was horrible, terrible to see a dog become a man!”(Woolf 102). In this image, Woolf achieves the aims of expressionist movement, following its artistic techniques as exaggeration and distortion of the norms, because the image of a dog transforming into a man is purely fantastical. In this way, she expresses Septimus’ delusional disorder through his spontaneous self-expression. Also

He would shut his eyes; he would see no more. But they beckoned; leaves were alive; trees were alive. And leaves being connected by millions of fibers with his own body, there on the seat, fanned it up and down; when the branch stretched, he, too, made that statement. The sparrow fluttering, rising, and falling in jagged fountains were part of the patterns; the white and blue, barred with black branches. Sounds made harmonies with premeditation; the spaces between them were significant as the sounds. (Woolf 32-33)

In this statement, Woolf connects the reader with Septimus’ mind, in which he can feel the beauty of nature; trees, leaves, birds, fountains, and sounds, through Septimus’ imagination, as if he is closing his eyes too. In fact, this juxtaposing symbolic image has a satirical dimension, where the sane learns to appreciate the beauty of nature from the insane.

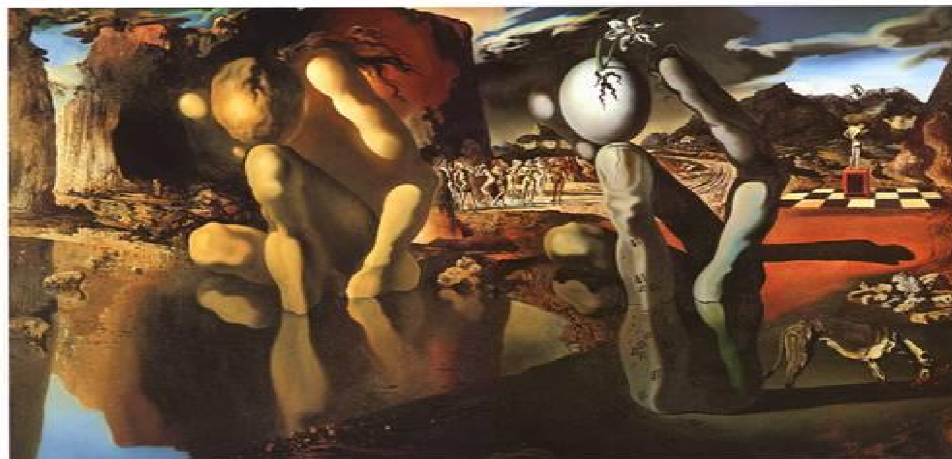
In like manner, Kafka’s unique style of writing, makes his literary works genuinely modernist, giving birth to the term *Kafkaesque*. This term denotes the strange, horrifying, illogical, and absurd way of writing in which the story is gloomy and bizarre. As a modernist writer, he created an individualistic fictional world, full of imageries, symbols, allegories, and juxtapositions, in a nightmarish surreal world. In fact, like Virginia Woolf, he was influenced by the modernist artistic movements as *Dadaism* (1916), *Surrealism* (1920-1930), and *Expressionism* (1905-1925). With this in mind, Kafka, in *The Metamorphosis*, reveals the irrationality of the human psyche in an aesthetical manner, applying the surrealistic elements

to create an avant-garde style. This novella, in fact, can be studied through different angles because it is constructed on supernatural, surrealistic, and allegorical dimensions. *The Metamorphosis* absolutely falls into the ramifications of surrealism with dreamlike events. One of the reasons that make it a surrealistic story, is when a sane traveling salesman, named Gregor Samsa, wakes up in the morning from a horrific dream to find himself unexpectedly transformed into a nasty monstrous vermin, no longer a human being, no longer Gregor, but just a giant ugly creature. In fact, Kafka does not provide the readers with a logical reason or an explanation for this sudden metamorphosis, leaving them making their own interpretations in order to think about their lives. Even Gregor has no idea about what is happening with him, asking himself “What’s happened to me? . . . How about if I sleep a little bit and forget all this nonsense” (Kafka 8). After the transformation, Gregor becomes lonely, alienated, and depressed, especially when his family marginalize him, forgetting his good deeds and sacrifice for them.

However, the juxtapositions of surrealism are seen when Gregor transforms physically into a bug, but his mental abilities are still humanistic, in which, Kafka, produces an aesthetical fusion between something surreal and the real events. As an illustration, after Gregor’s transformation, he remains satisfied with his new life as an insect, crawling on the walls of his room as an entertainment, he even starts enjoying bad food, “. . . but the milk did not taste at all nice. Milk like this was normally his favorite drink” (Kafka 10). In the same time, his feelings are still that of a human being; he can enjoy his sister’s violin playing, he still loves his family, feels sad and ashamed. Through these images, Kafka wants to prove that Gregor’s life after the metamorphosis is more suitable for him than his life as a traveling salesman, portraying the absurdity of life and the poetics of transformation.

In fact, Kafka’s interest in art is clearly projected in *The Metamorphosis*, in which the artistic elements of surrealism such as transformation, distortion, dislocation, fantasy, etc, are

openly presented in this novella. By applying these surrealistic techniques on this given literary work, transformation and scale change are the most used characteristics. Considering this, while transformation is achieved when Gregor Samsa's physical appearance changes into a bug, scale change is shown in his abnormal size; he does not look like a normal insect, but a giant one. Furthermore, as a comparison between Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* and Salvador Dali's (1904-1989) *The Metamorphosis of Narcissus* (1937) (Figure 3.4), while Kafka depicts Gregor's transformation within his original self; Gregor and the bug are one, Dali, in contrast, shows the transformation of the young mythical Narcissus in one image, but in a separated dualistic figure; a human figure and a stony hand carrying an egg. However, as surrealists, they both aim at visualizing the irrationality of life.



**Figure 3.4** The Metamorphosis of Narcissus (1937)-Salvador Dali

Generally, the artistic movements have a great impact on the writings of the modernist writers as Virginia Woolf and Franz Kafka, who depict the irrationality and the triviality of their characters in aesthetical fictionalized images. In fact, while expressionism gives them the opportunity to reveal the internal world of their characters, surrealism allows them to distort reality, showing the beauty and sublimity of the fragmented mind.

As a conclusion, through stylistic analysis, *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Metamorphosis*, shape the basic modernist narrative techniques, standing as successful modernist samples. In these works, Woolf and Kafka show their rejection of the traditional narrative techniques, in which they base these works on the new ones as stream of consciousness, interior monologues, and subjective voices of multi-narrators. In fact, the need to reveal the fluidity and the subjectivity of the human mind, leads them to employ such techniques. Woolf's and Kafka's symbolic reconstruction of the human psyche, push them to use special rhetorical and linguistic patterns as syntax, lexis, aiming at revealing the disturbances inside their characters' minds, mainly those who are considered mad. Even more, since the modernist movement affected many domains such as philosophy, psychology, literature, art, etc, the modernist writers as Woolf and Kafka, try to create intertextually between literature and art, by adopting the elements of several artistic movements as Dadaism, Surrealism, and Expressionism. In this sense, when the modernist artists attempt to visualize the irrationality and the fragmentation of the mind, Woolf and Kafka, interpret the chaotic mind of their protagonists through narrative, in art-like images.

## **General Conclusion**

## General Conclusion

With the emergence of modernism and the Freudian theories of psychoanalysis which investigate the labyrinth of the human psyche, the modernist writers as Woolf and Kafka showed their tendency towards psychiatry, connecting their own mental illnesses with their fictional characters. They adopted Freud's theory of conscious and unconscious and translated it into stream of consciousness and interior monologues, shedding light on the inner lives of their mad characters 'Septimus and Gregor. In fact, their goal was showing the relationship between modernism and madness that was embodied in the transformation of self, war trauma, and the fragmentation of the mind.

Through the analysis of the given works, Kafka and Woolf succeed in achieving the psychological effects by using stream of consciousness and interior dialogues. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, for instance, Virginia makes a connection between her mad characters and her readers, in which she exposes the inner suffering, the obsessions, fear, and the troubles of Septimus through the flow of his emotions and thoughts, employing the mentioned narrative techniques. In addition, Kafka makes his readers getting inside Gregor's mind, questioning his existence after the metamorphosis. Moreover, the use of the aesthetical devices as; imageries, metaphors, and fantastical elements, make his novella looking as an artistic piece of painting. In fact, both of Kafka and Woolf prove that madness is even connected with sublimity and aesthetics.

In short, I argue that the reason behind fictionalizing madness is to criticize the cruelty of the modernist society more than emphasizing on the psychological troubles. In effect, the modernist society was self-destructive, corrupted, and violent, in which the human mind became distorted and unstable. This goal is revealed in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Metamorphosis*, where Woolf shows the superiority and the authority of the sane individuals



on the insane. Similarly, Kafka exhibit the hypocrisy of society I an absurd manner, showing the shallowness and the aimlessness of life.

All in all, in the depiction of madness, Kafka and Woolf protest against the modernist society by highlighting its negative ideologies and beliefs, wherein they demonstrate that mental disorders are the result of the sickness of culture.

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