

**The Influence of Virginia Woolf's Life on Writing *Mrs.*
Dalloway and How She Used it as a Form of Therapy To
Work Through Her Unresolved Problems**

By Manal Alharbi

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Auburn University at Montgomery
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of
Master of Liberal Arts

Montgomery, Alabama

July 30, 2015

Approved by

Dr. Joyce Kelley
Thesis Director

Dr. Eric Sterling
Second Reader

Dr. Matthew Ragland
Associate Provost

COPYRIGHT

© 2015

Manal Alharbi

All Rights Reserved

Acknowledgments

It is a pleasure to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped me to complete my thesis. First of all, I would like to express my deep gratitude to my god Allah for everything and for easing the writing process as I wrote my thesis. Without him, I would have never prepared, written, and finished this thesis. Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Eric Sterling and Dr. Joyce E. Kelley for their helpful guidance and continuous constructive criticism during the research work. I would also like to give a special thanks to my dear and supportive husband Saleh Zuayr, who has supported me throughout the entire process. I would like to give a huge thanks to my parents and my family as well for their continuous encouragement and moral support.

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Chapter 1: The Inspiration Through The Tunneling Process	17
Chapter 2: Virginia Woolf's Illness.....	31
Chapter 3: Virginia Woolf's Life's Tragedies.....	49
Chapter 4: The Similarities between Clarissa Dalloway and Virginia Woolf.....	71
Chapter 5: The Similarities Between Virginia Woolf and Septimus Smith.....	102
Chapter 6: The Motherhood Dream	119
Conclusion	133
Works Cited	143

INTRODUCTION

There is an old philosophy that states: "great art comes from great pain" (Zara 1). This quotation subtly suggests the condition of the great modernist British writer Virginia Woolf. Through most of her life, she experienced many great tragedies, but these led her to be one of the most important English writers of all time. Those tragedies, which caused some serious psychological problems for Woolf, manifested themselves by influencing Woolf's art. Woolf suffered from a serious mental illness, today called bipolar disorder. It was such a great struggle to face a series of tragedies and have a mental illness at the same time, something a sensitive person like Woolf could not bear easily. As a result of those tragedies and the mental illness, Woolf used writing as a form of therapy to deal with her unresolved problems. This is demonstrated in most of her works, especially the autobiographically inspired novel *Mrs. Dalloway*, in which she works through many of her personal issues.

Virginia Woolf was the third child of Sir Leslie Stephen and Julia Stephen. Adeline Virginia Stephen was born on January 25, 1882. Both of her parents were widowed and had children from their first marriages. Sir Stephen had Laura from his first marriage while Julia had Stella, George, and Gerald from her first marriage. Then, when Sir Leslie and Julia married, they had Thoby, Vanessa, Virginia, and Adrian. Virginia's interest in writing started to reveal itself in her early years when she was almost thirteen. She loved to read and write literature for her own enjoyment, and her family expected her to be a writer. However, Virginia experienced several tragedies in a row which shaped her future writing. All those tragedies started when she was thirteen with the death of her mother. In later years she faced the death of her sister

Stella, sexual abuse by her half brothers, the painful, slow death of her father, and finally the death of her brother Thoby. Those tragedies encouraged Virginia to express death in most of her literary works. Therefore, Virginia began to write not just for her own enjoyment, but because she needed to treat herself and make herself feel better. She wrote many essays, articles, reviews, short stories, and novels. Her most famous works are *The Voyage Out* (1915), *Jacob's Room* (1922), *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To The Lighthouse* (1927), *Orlando* (1928), *A Room of One's Own* (1929), *The Waves* (1931), *The Years* (1937), and *Between The Acts* (1941).

Furthermore, with the death of her mother, Virginia developed a mental illness now called bipolar disorder or, as it was known at that time, manic-depressive illness. The illness is often genetic and cannot be cured, though it can be eased with long-term treatment. Virginia suffered from bipolar disorder's symptoms for her entire life. She experienced depressive periods or excited periods (later solely depressive periods) several times per year. Whenever she felt happy, her feelings would develop to reach a higher level of joy. Then her feelings would turn from the higher level of joy to the lowest level of sadness. Her depressive periods normally consisted of a sad feeling that became more intense until she became depressed and sometimes tried to commit suicide. At the end of her life, she had one of these depressive periods with some suicidal thoughts, but this time she succeeded in killing herself by drowning herself in the River Ouse on March 28, 1941 in England. Woolf's literary work is often influenced by these excited and depressive periods, especially her novels that exemplify a great deal of her own life.

Mrs. Dalloway is one of Woolf's novels which reveals many aspects of her personal life and her unresolved psychological problems. The novel's events concern one day in the life of the main character Clarissa Dalloway and her preparation for a party. Clarissa is an upper middle-class woman in her early fifties. The novel's events take place in June 1923, several years after the end of the Great War. Clarissa has been ill with influenza and has now recovered. Clarissa is feeling inspired, happy, and generous, and decides to make a party to share her happiness with everyone.

There are several flashbacks of Clarissa's past when she was eighteen and of her old memories with her old love Peter Walsh and her close friend Sally Seton, with whom Clarissa once had an intimate relationship as a teenager. Sally had some personal features and ambitions that Clarissa wished to have. Sally had an adventurous personality, was full of energy and ambition, and shared the same interests in reading and literature. Both of them hoped to change the world. Woolf describes Clarissa and Sally in *Mrs. Dalloway* by stating: "There they sat, hour after hour, talking in her bedroom at the top of the house, talking about life, how they were to reform the world" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 19). Clarissa appreciates the interesting time she spent with Sally, and cannot forget it for the rest of her life. However, Sally did not accomplish her goals because women were still more limited in ability at that time. Peter is a critical failure who too could not accomplish any of his life's goals; he spent his life trying to get over his love for Clarissa and could not do that either. Clarissa reveals she was once in love with Peter, but she ended their relationship for the sake of Richard Dalloway. Clarissa saw that her future life with Peter would be impossible while she could have a useful

marriage with Richard. Richard is a successful politician who respects and cares very much for his wife and gives her the private space that she likes. The novel expresses Clarissa's current relationship with her husband Richard and the effect of the marriage on her life. Their relationship is not of passionate love, but it is a loving relationship. It seems a stable, successful marriage, and they have been blessed with one child named Elizabeth. The novel shows a great deal about motherhood through the relationship between Clarissa and her daughter Elizabeth, even though their relationship is not close. Elizabeth is an educated girl and, like her father, interested in politics, and she does not share many features with her mother.

Originally, in writing the novel, Woolf intended for Clarissa Dalloway to die at the end of her party, but then she thought of adding a second main character to die in her place. That second main character is the double of Clarissa and is called Septimus Smith. Septimus is a soldier driven to insanity as a result of seeing his friend and officer, Evans, die during the Great War. Septimus is married to Rezia Smith, a young Italian girl, who likes to make hats and has struggled to help her husband Septimus during his time of illness. At the end of the story, Septimus commits suicide as a result of his mental illness, and Clarissa hears of his death at her party. While there are only a few connections between Septimus' scenes and Clarissa's scenes, the link is that both of them are representing sides of the same person, that person being Virginia herself. As Woolf declares in her diary about her plans for writing *Mrs. Dalloway*, it is intended as "a study of insanity & suicide: the world seen by the sane and the insane side by side" (*Diary 2*: 207). So, Woolf envisioned Clarissa representing the sane Virginia during her stable mental

periods and Septimus representing the insane Virginia during her unstable depressed periods. That is why the readers should know a brief background about Virginia's life before reading *Mrs. Dalloway* in order to fully understand her hidden suffering and the novel's autobiographical complexity.

My thesis, which will engage with these issues, will be divided into six chapters. It will show that Virginia Woolf was inspired by her personal life's experiences in writing her literary works, and I will use *Mrs. Dalloway* as an example of how she used writing as therapy to deal with her unresolved psychological problems. Major aspects that link *Mrs. Dalloway* with Woolf's life will be presented. Then, all the sources of Woolf's suffering will be explored by deep examination of her mental illness. This study will answer questions like: why would Woolf change from writing to enjoy herself to writing to heal herself? How did she manage to deal with those problems through *Mrs. Dalloway*? In order to deeply understand *Mrs. Dalloway* and the meaning behind that novel, we have to learn everything that participated in shaping the book.

Chapter One of this study will explore all the circumstances that shaped the novel before Woolf started to write it. This includes the reason that made Woolf expand the book from being a short story into a novel. Woolf came to a decision that led her to that transformation. This chapter will reveal the role of the theme of insanity and sanity in Woolf changing some major events in *Mrs. Dalloway*. It will demonstrate why Woolf added the character Septimus to the novel even though she did not plan to do so initially. As mentioned previously, Woolf added Septimus because she decided to let Clarissa live while

Septimus dies instead of Clarissa. There were several reasons behind that decision, which Chapter One will reveal.

In addition, the chapter will illustrate that the first working title of *Mrs. Dalloway* after it became a book was "The Hours." There was a sense of time that Woolf felt which inspired her with the title. However, she changed her mind again and called the novel *Mrs. Dalloway*. At the end, the chapter gives an explanation for these changes that Woolf keeps making through the process of writing *Mrs. Dalloway*. The chapter argues that these changes were happening because of the "tunneling process" that Woolf develops and uses. She reveals that she keeps discovering several important techniques and ideas as she writes *Mrs. Dalloway*. In addition, the chapter explores several incidents that happened while Woolf was writing *Mrs. Dalloway* that made her change some aspects about the novel.

Chapter Two will discuss the major reason why Virginia writes *Mrs. Dalloway*: to discuss the theme of insanity. She was consumed by her own mental illness, whose treatment was uncertain during her time. The chapter will illustrate all the aspects of her illness like the causes, the symptoms, and the treatment. Virginia's mental illness was a serious condition because it could not be cured. Instead, it required a long-term treatment. It was brought on not only by the tragedies that she faced during her early life, but also by genetic predisposition. According to Thomas C. Caramagno, several members of her family suffered from some periodic depression, which was one but not all the symptoms of the severe bipolar disorder that Woolf had. Moreover, bipolar disorder has two side effects on the mind. One is thinking in an uncontrolled way. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf's way of jumping from one's

character's daydream in the past into another character's daydream in the present shows how her thoughts are forming in an uncontrolled way, just like waves. She gives her disordered thoughts and changing moods particularly to Septimus. Bipolar disorder is famous for its mood swings and psychological side effects.

According to The National Institute of Mental Health, these psychological side effects make the patient's feeling go to an extreme level of joy or extreme level of depression with many thoughts of committing suicide. Woolf was the right person to understand her condition and demonstrated it through *Mrs. Dalloway*. She wanted her doctors and her family around her to understand what she was feeling and what her illness entailed. She noticed and acknowledged some of her own psychological and physical symptoms in *Mrs. Dalloway*. However, she knew that her physical illnesses like headaches, heart weakness, and influenza were not the real underlying problem. That was her mental illness. According to Susan Bennet Smith, neither her doctors nor her family could understand the nature of her illness, which increased her feelings of loneliness. Her doctors tried to treat the symptoms, but not the real cause for her illness. It was difficult to have an unknown illness for which doctors utilized useless treatment. If Woolf had lived in our time, doctors would have treated her differently with an effective long-term treatment, including medication and psychological therapy. But because doctors of her time had neither understanding nor cure, Woolf strove to demonstrate her illness from all sides through *Mrs. Dalloway*.

Chapter Three will explore the tragedies that made Virginia's illness worse. Here I will use the biographical accounts by Jean O. Love and Quentin

Bell. The first tragedy was her mother's death when Virginia was only thirteen years old. That age is very sensitive, and it is very difficult for most people that young to deal with experiencing death. The situation was worse for Virginia because she had a bipolar mind. Even though her father was still alive after her mother's death, he did not help his children feel better. Instead, his extreme grief for their mother made them feel worse, especially Virginia.

Along with this, during her childhood and adolescence her half brothers George and Gerald committed some inappropriate sexual acts towards Virginia. Virginia was confused because she did not know what to do, or how to stop them, and could not tell anyone about these behaviors until Vanessa talked about it with her doctor. These inappropriate actions made Virginia develop a distrust of men and later caused some sexual problems with her husband after she got married. In another misfortune, her half sister Stella died within two years of her mother's death, which increased Virginia's unresolved psychological issues. The chapter will illustrate Stella's positive role in Virginia's life and show that Stella supported Virginia. Thus, Stella's death made Virginia feel deeply sad and caused Virginia to enter another depressed period. After that, her closest sister Vanessa married. Vanessa was the only supportive and close person who was left for Virginia after the previous deaths. Therefore, Virginia suffered from loneliness after Vanessa's marriage. When Virginia married Leonard, she planned to have children. However, the doctors shocked her with their advice that she should not have any children because of her unstable mental illness. They believed she could pass the bipolar disorder to her children. That decision participated in making her life more tragic.

Chapter Four claims that there are several major and minor similarities in *Mrs. Dalloway*, which link the novel to Virginia's life. These similarities are based on the experiences of Virginia's life. Many Psychoanalytic critics, including Freudian critics, believe that the novel's events reveal several hidden psychological problems of the writer's life and personality. Moreover, these links prove that *Mrs. Dalloway* is a novel which reveals the sane Virginia and the insane Virginia. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part deals with major and minor similarities between the sane Virginia and her character Clarissa who is reflective of that side of her. Using the diaries of Virginia Woolf, edited by Anne Olivier Bell, and the novel *Mrs. Dalloway*, I will show there are several minor similarities between Virginia and Clarissa, like the influenza that Clarissa had, which weakened her heart just like Virginia's did. Both Virginia and Clarissa hated the war and felt happy when it finished, loved London and its streets, loved Big Ben's strikes, and had a sister who died as a result of her father's carelessness.

The second part of Chapter Four presents several major similarities between Virginia and her double Clarissa. According to Quentin Bell, Vereen M. Bell, and Hermione Lee, these include Clarissa's relationship with her husband Richard Dalloway, which represents Virginia's relationship with her husband Leonard Woolf and how he cared very much for Virginia and her health condition. Also, Richard represents Leonard's personal characteristics and political positions. Furthermore, the chapter discusses Virginia's relationship with other men before she got married and shows how she reflects on this through Clarissa's relationship with Peter Walsh. Finally, the

chapter explains Virginia's interest in relationships with women, which is exemplified through Clarissa's passionate relationship with Sally Seton.

Chapter Five will explain the "insane" Virginia, who is demonstrated through the character Septimus. Using the research of Thomas C. Caramagno and Danial Ferrer, I will show how Septimus actually represents the double of Clarissa, according to Virginia, and is therefore also reflective of the insane Virginia. There are several scenes of Septimus' mental illness that can be found in *Mrs. Dalloway* which express the symptoms that Virginia had. Even though there was not enough information about her mental illness, Virginia was very successful in describing symptoms exactly as she felt them during her periods of depression. *Mrs. Dalloway* presents through Septimus' thoughts and hallucinations how Virginia thought when she was mentally ill. Moreover, the way that doctors in *Mrs. Dalloway* treated Septimus is similar to the way Virginia's doctors treated her. Since Virginia's doctors could not understand her illness's nature, they treated her mostly with what was called the "rest-cure." The same treatment happened to Septimus as well. At the time, the rest-cure was the most common treatment for the psychologically ill, especially women. The rest-cure was not helpful and sometimes was even harmful because it stopped Virginia from writing and left her mind free for horrible thoughts. So, instead of letting Virginia help herself through writing as therapy, doctors stopped her from using her mind in writing, which left her mind free without protecting it from horrible, suicidal thoughts. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, the same negative thoughts happen to Septimus, especially when his doctors decide to take him away from his wife and put him on the rest-cure, and this leads to him taking his own life.

In *Mrs. Dalloway* Virginia also represents the suffering of the insane patient's spouse through Septimus' wife Rezia's suffering. Virginia believed that the insane person could torment his or her own spouse as well. Virginia demonstrates how Septimus makes his wife miserable because of his insanity and how his wife works hard in taking care of him. He said that his wife's life would be better after his death because he is making her life miserable. Ironically, that is almost exactly what Virginia herself said to her husband Leonard in her suicide note before she killed herself. Virginia also believed that Leonard worked hard in taking care of her. Moreover, Rezia shared the same agony as Leonard and Virginia because of their lack of having children as a result of being married to patients with mental instability.

Chapter Six will explain the sad psychological problem that resulted from prohibiting Virginia from having children. Using biographical research by Hermione Lee, Quentin Bell, and using Woolf's diaries, I will discuss how Virginia's doctors advised her, through her husband Leonard and her sister Vanessa, that Virginia should avoid having children because of her unstable mental condition. Even though Virginia wanted children and believed that having children was very important, doctors stood between her and her dream, and she obeyed their advice because of Leonard and Vanessa. She did not want to make that decision, but she was forced to accept it. Having a child was very important to Virginia for some important reasons related to her mother and sister Vanessa. Also, Vanessa, to whom Virginia always compared herself, had children. Virginia wanted to be like her sister, and whenever Virginia failed to accomplish one of the things that Vanessa did, Virginia became depressed. The consequences of stopping Virginia from being a

mother were severe, but she looked for therapy that would make her feel better, and achieved this by creating an imaginary daughter named Elizabeth in *Mrs. Dalloway*. When Virginia creates a daughter for Clarissa, who represented Virginia herself, that deed partly could satisfy Virginia's motherhood. By creating Elizabeth as a daughter, Virginia felt like she was fulfilling a dream.

Therefore, despite those tragedies that negatively impacted her and developed Woolf's illness, Woolf reached to find her own way to deal with her unresolved problems through two means: writing and imagination. Woolf used her imagination to deal with the death of her mother and father. She kept a live image of her parents in her mind from when they were still alive. The other way in which Woolf dealt with her unresolved problems was writing literary works. At the beginning, Woolf started to write to entertain herself. However, after her life became more and more tragic, she started to write because she really needed to. After that, she relied on writing to work through her issues. Through her writing, Woolf could lead two lives: her real life, which she could not control, and the fictitious life which she could control through her literary works as she did in *Mrs. Dalloway*.

CHAPTER ONE: The Inspiration Through The Tunneling Process

Psychoanalytic critics believe that the events in an author's life will usually influence his or her literary works. Most of the writer's life experiences will unconsciously reveal themselves through these works (Evans 45-46). This influence is particularly evident in Woolf's novel *Mrs. Dalloway*. In fact, *Mrs. Dalloway* is one of Woolf's literary works that best expresses her personal life. Inspired by traumatic events in her own life, Woolf was led to alter aspects of her novel that she did not actually plan for at the offset. What these aspects of *Mrs. Dalloway* were, how they changed, and what led to these changes are all items that will be addressed in this chapter.

In its early stages, *Mrs. Dalloway* was not even a novel. In fact, sources show that the book was based on one or two short stories, which Woolf ultimately amalgamated into a novel following a certain incident. According to Thomas C. Caramagno, the novel was originally based on a short story called "Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street." He states that:

soon after publishing *Jacob's Room* in 1922, Woolf began writing a short story entitled "Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street," which quickly expanded beyond her original plans: "Mrs. Dalloway has branched into a book; & I adumbrate here a study of insanity & suicide...."

(210)

Thomas C. Caramagno believes that Woolf changed her mind and extended the short story into a novel because she wanted to discuss the theme of insanity and suicide. Therefore, he claims that the novel was based only on one short story called "Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street." Ferrer, on the other hand, claims the novel was based on two short stories. He speaks of "the two

short stories which form the origin of the novel, 'Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street' and the first version of 'The Prime Minister'..." (9). To prove whether the novel was in fact based on one or two short stories, it is crucial to examine Woolf's own diary entry in August of 1922, in which she herself mentions both short stories by name: "Mrs. Dalloway finished on Sat...and then? Shall I write the next chapter of Mrs. D.—if she is to have a next chapter; & shall it be The Prime Minister? which will last till the week after we get back—say Oct. 12th" (*Diary 2*:196). This surely proves that Woolf wrote a short story called "Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street" and she finished it, according to the diary. However, even though she had planned to write the second short story "The Prime Minister," it would seem she did not do so by the time the novel was begun. On October 4, Woolf writes: "I have done my task here better than I expected. Mrs. Dalloway & Chaucer chapter are finished... I shall read Greek now steadily & begin 'The Prime Minister' on Friday morning" (*Diary 2*: 205). However, she could not do so because, by the following Saturday, she had learned of her friend Kitty Maxse's death.

The manner of Maxse's death instilled the idea of suicide in Woolf's head. (I will come back to Maxse's death later and explain its deep impact on Woolf.) Therefore, Woolf developed the idea of suicide for her novel and made it further complicated with the theme of insanity. So, in order to discuss the theme of insanity and the theme of suicide in her literary work, Woolf needed more pages to cover both of the themes. Therefore, she extended the second short story into a novel. Then, Woolf declared the beginning of the novel *Mrs. Dalloway* in her diary on October 8: "Mrs. Dalloway has branched into a book..." (*Diary 2*: 207). So, the time between finishing the short story and the

announcement of the novel was almost one week. One week is not enough time to finish writing the second short story since the first short story took almost a couple of months to be finished. Therefore, I agree with Thomas C. Caramagno's claim that the novel was based on only one short story according to previous evidence.

In addition, it is obvious that Maxse's death was the main reason Woolf changed her mind and transformed her short story into a novel. Kitty Maxse was one of Woolf's childhood friends. Her maiden name was Kitty Lushington, and her father was an old friend of Woolf's mother. In 1890, Kitty married Leo Maxse. Hermione Lee explains that: "Kitty felt responsible for the Stephen girls and wanted them to make good 'South Kensington' marriages" (160). Hermione Lee goes on to describe the circumstances that led to Maxse's death in the following passage:

Kitty was appalled by the move to Bloomsbury and the influx of shabby Cambridge young men and, as a result, was dropped by her protégées. But when Woolf heard of her sudden death at fifty-five, falling over her banisters, in what she suspected to be a suicide, she regretted the breach. (Lee 160)

Hermione Lee illustrates the close childhood bond between Woolf and Maxse. Woolf assumed that Maxse had committed suicide even though there were no particular circumstances to suggest this. A deeper look into Woolf's diary illustrates exactly how the author saw the incident. On Saturday, October 8, 1922, Woolf writes:

But the day has been spoilt for me—so strangely—by Kitty Maxse's death; & now I think of her lying in her grave at Gunby, & Leo going

home, & all the rest. I read it in the paper. I hadn't seen her since, I guess, 1908—save at old Davies' funeral, & then I cut her, which now troubles me—unreasonably I suppose. I could not have kept up with her; she never tried to see me. Yet yet—these old friends dying without any notice on our part always—it begins to happen often—saddens me; makes me feel guilty. I wish I'd met her in the street. My mind has gone back all day to her; in the queer way it does. First thinking out how she died, suddenly at 33 Cromwell Road; she was always afraid of operations. (*Diary 2*: 206)

The previous passage reveals what Woolf felt about her friend's death. Woolf rethinks and replays that same horrible day the following week, which implies that Woolf was deeply affected by Maxse's death.

At the same time Woolf was still thinking and forming ideas about her book. These complex thoughts about death and suicide played a hidden role in shaping the main theme of *Mrs. Dalloway*. Woolf was deeply affected by these thoughts, and this deep feeling continued into the next week, as Woolf states:

I was interrupted in this, & now Kitty is buried & mourned by half the grandees in London; & here I am thinking of my book. Kitty fell, very mysteriously, over some banisters.... How did it happen? Some one presumably knows, & in time I shall hear. Nessa regrets her, but says that the breach came through Kitty. (*Diary 2*: 207)

The manner in which Maxse died may have reminded Woolf of her own previous suicide attempts. As Quentin Bell states in his biography of his aunt, Woolf once tried to end her own life by throwing herself through a window,

which, he insists, "was not high enough from the ground to cause her serious harm" (Bell 1: 90-91). That may be why Woolf linked her own failed suicide attempt with Maxse's death. From Woolf's point of view, Maxse did not fall but threw herself over the banisters to kill herself just as Woolf did. The manner in which Maxse died may also have influenced the way that Septimus kills himself in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Woolf describes Septimus' last moments before his death: " 'I'll give it to you!' he cried, and flung himself vigorously, violently down on to Mrs. Filmer's area railings" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 83). It seems that Septimus' method of committing suicide is similar to Maxse's.

Although Maxse's death was the main impetus behind Woolf's decision to transform the short story into a novel, its effect on the novel did not stop there. Maxse's death also inspired Woolf's creation of the novel's main character, Clarissa Dalloway. While Woolf was preparing to write "The Prime Minister," she seemed to still be affected by news of Maxse's death, according to Hermione Lee:

The news came in October 1922, just as she was developing her ideas for *Mrs. Dalloway*. She had already used some of Kitty's qualities for the wifely, conservative Clarissa Dalloway who appears in *The Voyage Out*; now Kitty's death darkened and deepened her idea of the character. But her "distaste" for her persisted too, and lent Clarissa something of her "stiff, glittering," "tinselly" quality.

(Lee 161)

Hermione Lee assumes that Woolf linked Clarissa to Maxse and gave Clarissa some of Maxse's features. I agree because Woolf's description of Maxse in her diary is similar to her description of Clarissa. Some of the features that

Woolf saw in Maxse can be found as Woolf remembers: "how she sat upright... But she was very charming" (*Diary 2*: 206). These features are very similar to her description of Clarissa, whom Woolf depicts in *Mrs. Dalloway* as "a charming woman . . . waiting to cross, very up right" (3). Certainly Woolf based some aspects of the character of Clarissa on Maxse.

As Lee mentions, it is important to note that the character of Clarissa was by no means a new character that Woolf created solely for her novel, but rather an old one that the author sometimes used and returned to. As Quentin Bell describes, "Mrs. Dalloway had made a brief appearance on board the *Euphrosyne* in *The Voyage Out*; now she re-emerged from the shadows of Woolf's imagination. She was connected with several short stories which Woolf invented at Rodmell that summer" (Bell 1: 87). The reason Woolf returned to the character is not clear. Perhaps the character was also the closest character to Woolf among all the other characters that Woolf had created before. Therefore, when Woolf wanted to write about herself, she chose the most familiar character to her: Clarissa. What's more, Woolf presented Clarissa Dalloway in a way that linked her to both Maxse and to her real-life self. Woolf returned to use the character Clarissa Dalloway again because the character represented the upper middle-class society woman whom Woolf wished to emulate.

It would also seem that before forming the character of Septimus, Woolf had initially planned to have Clarissa commit suicide at the end of the novel. According to Ferrer, in the "first version Septimus, who later is intended to be her double, had no existence; and that Mrs. Dalloway was originally to kill herself, or perhaps merely to die at the end of the party" (9). So, after Maxse's

death, Woolf became fascinated by the theme of suicide and planned to make it one of *Mrs. Dalloway's* themes. Therefore, Woolf intended to have Clarissa kill herself at the end of the party.

In addition, there is another reason that led Woolf to make Clarissa kill herself. In spite of having the reality of suicide strike hard following Maxse's death, Woolf was already thinking about her own death. Her own failed suicide attempt during her breakdown in 1904 inspired her novel's morose ending, according to Jean O. Love: "In September she said that a gift of violets (from Violet) reminded her of the flowers that grow in the unhallowed part of the churchyard (where suicides are buried), where she would someday lie" (305). This passage implies that Woolf was, from the time she was young, expecting to end her life by committing suicide. This shows that by the time she started writing *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf was already contemplating her own death. Quentin Bell goes one step further and claims that she had already thought of writing her will (Bell 1: 84). There is a reason behind Woolf's deed of making her will. Perhaps she was expecting impending death. Therefore, the character Clarissa did not only represent Maxse, she represented the author herself—one who was also expecting to die.

It should be clear by now that Clarissa was Woolf's literary double. Like Clarissa, whom Woolf thought of making kill herself, Woolf was expecting to take her own life. Quentin Bell states that these ideas were firmly implanted when Woolf spoke to Jack Clive, who was Stella's husband: "That she was interested in the idea of self-destruction before the year 1904 seems likely enough, witness a remark made to Jack Hills at Queen Victoria's funeral:

'Jack, do you think I shall ever commit suicide?' " (Bell 1: footnote, 90). Woolf's question certainly implies apparent suicidal thoughts.

Although Woolf may have planned to have Clarissa commit suicide at the end of the novel, the author ultimately changed her mind and kept the character alive. Woolf decided Septimus would kill himself instead. The meaning of this switch lies in the true motivations behind *Mrs. Dalloway*. Woolf, in effect, wrote the novel to work through her own unresolved issues. She was initially expecting to commit suicide as she had attempted to once before. However, a part of her continued to hope that she could avoid this fate. I believe that is why she let Clarissa live. The scene in which Clarissa would seemingly kill herself before Woolf decided to let her live occurs when Clarissa is standing at the window alone at the end of the party. Clarissa is thinking about Septimus' suicide as Woolf writes:

She felt somehow very like him—the young man who had killed himself. She felt glad that he had done it; thrown it away.... He made her feel the beauty; made her feel the fun. But she must go back. She must assemble. She must find Sally and Peter. And she came in from the little room. (103)

Woolf declares that Clarissa "felt...like" Septimus and may have wanted to kill herself as well. That is why Clarissa feels happy that he did it instead of her. She experiences it vicariously through him, as if only part of her dies and the rest of her can live on. He was accomplishing something that she could not. In other words, he could commit suicide while she could not because she had to return to the party and her old friends. Clarissa repeats the sentence that "she must go back," implying that Woolf deeply wanted to stop thinking of death, to

quit having suicidal thoughts, (enacted through Septimus' suicide), and to go back to her life (the party) and enjoy it. When Clarissa returned, she felt happy. I believe the joyful feeling that Clarissa felt was Woolf's feeling as well. Woolf was happy because Clarissa was not the one who committed suicide. So, Woolf allowed Clarissa to keep living, and that gave some hope to Woolf that she could keep living, too, without committing suicide. The implication is that Woolf herself wanted to live. She imagined that she would overcome her suicidal tendencies and continue living, the same way she would often write about raising children she would never have in real life.

Furthermore, after deciding to write *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf revealed her true plans and purposes in her diary on June 19, 1923: "In this book I have almost too many ideas. I want to give life & death, sanity & insanity; I want to criticise the social system, & to show it at work, at its most intense— But here I may be posing" (*Diary 2*: 248). It seems that Woolf intended not only to make Clarissa her double but Septimus as well, as she stated in her letter. According to Thomas C. Caramagno, "Septimus and Mrs. Dalloway should be entirely dependent upon each other" (211). So, since Clarissa represents Woolf and Woolf declared that both Clarissa and Septimus are related to each other, that means that Septimus was representing Woolf too. It is clear that Woolf made Clarissa her "sane" double and Septimus her "insane" double. Clarissa, in effect, best reflected Woolf's personality when she led a normal life while Septimus represented Woolf during her breakdowns and intensely depressive periods. Ferrer does an excellent job of explaining this character's double, according to psychoanalytic critics. Ferrer states:

Even if Woolf did not suggest it herself, we would think here of the uncanny and its privileged example, the figure of the double. For Freud, the double is a substitute who has ceased to reassure.

Derived from the mirror image, the double was originally a means of defense, a protection against fragmentation, a conjuring of death. It has become, instead, a threat, a "harbinger of death." (12)

Ferrer suggests that Woolf created Septimus and isolated him from Clarissa as a way to protect Clarissa, who represented the sane Woolf. This protection is derived from the inner fears of her mental illness represented by Septimus. That is why when she wanted to discuss the theme of insanity in *Mrs. Dalloway*, she did not make Clarissa the one with mental illness. Instead, she gave Septimus the mental illness and never had the two meet in person.

In addition, Ferrer tries to explain why Woolf created a double for Clarissa:

To declare that Septimus is Clarissa's double is to say that there exists between them a mirror... and it is also to admit that the strangeness of the 'mad' character takes its origin from a familiarity not recognized as such.... According to Freud, the creation of fictional characters also proceeds from a need for projection which consolidates the ego. A character in a novel is a tamed double whose vitality is originally a reassuring token of life. Woolf refers to this aspect, but only to throw it back immediately into a lost childhood, at least for her. (13)

In this passage, Ferrer posits that this double character always existed in the author's mind. These doubles are therefore not just new characters that Woolf had just invented. They are, instead, characters who were inspired by real people, existing in the life of the author. This is how the complex characters of Clarissa and Septimus were formed.

Furthermore, changing the short story into a novel was not the only change that Woolf made while writing *Mrs. Dalloway*. The name of the novel was never supposed to be "*Mrs. Dalloway*." Woolf kept referring to the novel as "my next book" for a while until she settled on a name for it. Woolf called her next book "The Hours" for the first time in her diary entry of Sunday, May 12, 1923: "They [Vanessa and Leonard] think of my next book, which I think of calling 'The Hours,' with excitement" (*Diary 2*: 242). Woolf seemed to be inspired by this name after passing through a specific moment when she felt time passing infinitely quickly, which led her to become painfully aware of her own age. In spite of the novel's events, which takes readers through the hours of Mrs. Dalloway's day, Woolf seemed to instead be inspired by an event in her own life—a specific moment which she expressed in a diary entry on January 2, 1923: "Middle age then. Let that be the next of my discourse. I'm afraid we're becoming elderly. We are busy & attach importance to hours" (*Diary 2*: 222). The date she wrote this diary entry was close to her birthday when she was approaching forty, which explains why she became aware of her older age. Therefore, four months after this diary entry, she decided on the name "The Hours" for the first time as a result of the feeling that she started to feel recently. In addition, it seems that time itself became very important to Woolf when she reached that period, so much so that even the hours

themselves became noticeable. As with most aspects of *Mrs. Dalloway* which were to inspire Woolf during the writing process, that specific moment was no exception.

However, after a couple of months of calling the novel "The Hours," Woolf suddenly changed its name to *Mrs. Dalloway*. (Woolf kept referring to the novel as "The Hours" until as far as May 12, 1923.) In a diary entry dated August 15, 1923, she calls the novel by its current name: "For I see that Mrs. Dalloway is going to stretch beyond October" (*Diary 2*: 310). So, the novel remained "The Hours" for more than a year before Woolf changed its name. However, the author never mentioned any reasons that may have led her to change the name of the novel. It might be said that self-discovery was the real reason. Through the process of writing, Woolf kept discovering aspects of her own self that changed her plans, similar to what happened when she extended the short story into the novel or when she decided to form a new character called Septimus.

Furthermore, the character of Septimus' wife, Lucrezia (Rezia) Warren Smith, was inspired by a real person Woolf knew. Woolf wrote in a diary entry dated September 11, 1923 that she was in fact inspired by a real woman named Lydia: "I wanted to observe Lydia as a type for Rezia; & did observe one or two facts" (*Diary 2*: 265). What's more, Woolf kept mixing up both the real and fictional character in her own life. "Lydia (I called her Rezia by mistake) leaves crumbs sticking to her face" (*Diary 2*: 310-311). "Lydia," according to Quentin Bell, was in fact Lydia Lopokova: "Lydia had come to London as a principle dancer in Diaghilev's company in 1918, 1919 and 1921, and had danced very beautifully... she was pretty high-spirited, a comic, a

charmer and extremely well-disposed" (Bell 2: 90). It seems that Woolf invented the character Rezia as the novel was already in process, but she comes to play an important supporting role.

So, what was it that made Woolf keep changing aspects like the novel's name or the characters in it? While she was writing *Mrs. Dalloway*, it seems she was not always sure where the story was proceeding. Woolf mentions this indecisive on November 1923. "It took me a year's groping to discover what I call my tunneling process, by which I tell the past by installments, as I've need of it. This is my prime discovery so far" (*Diary 2: 272*). Woolf's life incidences, people whom she met every day, the depressed periods that came from time to time, and the nature of her mind and its uncontrolled thoughts made her change her mind very often throughout the writing process of *Mrs. Dalloway*. As Woolf created her characters, she described the situation as a "tunneling process" because she wanted to show a buried past behind the characters and was not sure what would be inside the tunnel until she entered to discover it. In other words, Woolf's method of inventing her novel was as much a "tunneling process" as her method of storytelling in the novel.

It can be said that Woolf was constantly discovering herself through what she called "the tunneling process." She did this in such a way that it sometimes led her into unplanned and uncharted literary territory. For instance, during the last stages of the novel, Woolf stated in her diary on September 7, 1924:

I find them very useful in my last lap of Mrs. D. There I am now—at last at the party, which is to begin in the kitchen, & climb slowly upstairs. It is to be a most complicated spirited solid piece, knitting

together everything & ending on three notes, at different stages of the staircase, each saying something to sum up Clarissa. Who shall say these things? Peter, Richard, & Sally Seton perhaps: but I don't want to tie myself down to that yet. (*Diary 2*: 312)

This passage implies that Woolf had almost formed the last scene of *Mrs. Dalloway* in her mind. At this moment, she already knew the final words that were going to end the novel. She just did not know who would say them yet. It is clear that she kept using that tunneling process to the very end, right up to *Mrs. Dalloway's* closing lines.

Woolf planned to do certain things during the process of writing *Mrs. Dalloway* and changed her mind later because, according to her, she discovered her own approach of writing the events of a novel through the tunneling process. It seems that Woolf sometimes let the novel's incidents lead her to the end of the story; since Woolf had thoughts that were forming inside her head in an uncontrolled way, she sometimes let these thoughts shape the next events of the novel and deepen the back stories of the characters. Her mind's strong ability of imagination, which allowed her to visualize the incidents, helped her in this process. She did not always know what would happen next, but she would sometimes be inspired by a real-life incident in her life, as when Maxse died, or by an inspiration that could come to her through an inner feeling. The tunneling process was like a dark tunnel; Woolf did not know what was inside it, but she could discover it as soon as she entered it, and she shared this depth with her readers.

CHAPTER TWO: Virginia Woolf's Illness

While Woolf wrote *Mrs. Dalloway* to explore many personal issues, one major reason was to express her thoughts about the themes of suicide and insanity. She was motivated by fears of her mental illness, which none of her family or friends could really understand. She was scared by the fact that one day she might end her life by committing suicide because of her illness, and she wanted to express her suffering when she was mentally ill. Her mental illness almost ended up controlling her entire life. It prevented her from doing the activities that she liked and prevented her from feeling happy for a long time. This mental illness, which we now call bipolar disorder, is seriously dangerous if left untreated. That is because many patients with bipolar disorder try to commit suicide during their depressed periods, and almost half of them succeed in ending their lives (NIMH). The scientific research about bipolar disorder had not progressed very far at Woolf's time. Therefore, most of her doctors attempted treatments that were only partly effective in decreasing the symptoms and sometimes caused negative results, as when Woolf's doctors advised a rest-cure. If Woolf had lived in our present time, she would have been treated differently than what her doctors did. She might have kept living and produced more literary masterpieces and, above all, she might have been able to have a little child of her own, fulfilling her dream of becoming a mother.

The True Nature of Woolf's Mental Illness:

Woolf's most difficult challenge in her life was her mental illness. The story of *Mrs. Dalloway* was partly written to deal with that problem and illustrate it for everybody to hear, especially her doctors. Unfortunately, during

the time in which Woolf lived, there was not enough information about this mental illness. As a result, Woolf felt that her doctors focused on treating her mental illness's symptoms instead of treating the cause in itself. While they tried their best, the extent of their knowledge was that her physical illness was related to her mental condition yet they did not know the cause. They linked it with her mood of mania or depression and that is why they called her illness "manic-depressive." Woolf's doctors believed that when a patient with "manic-depressive illness" felt excited about something in particular, his or her feelings would develop and reach a more severe level of mania. Then, his or her feelings would drop to a severe level of depression with a contemplation of thoughts of suicide. However, the doctors did not understand what was the matter with her mind's response to her feelings or why her illness became worse if she felt very happy or very sad. Therefore, they focused their treatment on the illness's side effects like weight loss, headaches, and insomnia.

Today, researchers have discovered much more about this disorder. Research has proven that bipolar disorder is an illness that occurs in the brain. It causes the patient's mood to swing from a high level of mania to a high level of depression. Also, it is a very serious illness because it can destroy a patient's relationships, affect job or school performance, and lead to suicide. According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) website:

Bipolar disorder, also known as manic-depressive illness, is a brain disorder that causes unusual shifts in mood, energy, activity levels, and the ability to carry out daily tasks. Symptoms of bipolar disorder can be severe. They are different from the normal ups and downs

that everyone goes through from time to time. Bipolar disorder symptoms can result in damaged relationships, poor job or school performance, and even suicide. But bipolar disorder can be treated, and people with this illness can lead full and productive lives.

(NIMH)

That explains why Woolf's mind responded to her feelings with either extreme joy and excitement or severe depression and desperation. Moreover, the swings also can be applied to the patient's energy and activities, not just his mood and feelings. Therefore, whenever Woolf did activities she liked for a long time, like writing, she started to feel sick with headaches and insomnia. Then she became depressed more and more, which made her condition worsen.

Furthermore, it seems that there is no specific cause for this illness. However, scientists believe that there are several "factors" which may come together to cause bipolar disorder and increase its threats. The NIMH states:

Scientists are studying the possible causes of bipolar disorder. Most agree that there is no single cause. Rather, many factors likely act together to produce the illness or increase risk for developing it....

Some research has suggested that people with certain genes are more likely to develop bipolar disorder than others. Children with a parent or sibling who has bipolar disorder are much more likely to develop the illness, compared with children who do not have a family history of bipolar disorder. However, most children with a family history of bipolar disorder will not develop the illness. (NIMH)

The NIMH suggests that one of the factors that may cause bipolar disorder is genetic. There are certain genes which seem connected to this illness that may cause it to appear in children if one of their parents has it. In addition, according to the NIMH, there are illnesses that have similar features that are close to bipolar disorder's features and they can develop and cause bipolar disorder. Those similar illnesses include schizophrenia and depression. However, the NIMH declares that scientists have not reached a great enough understanding of how these "factors" may interact with each other and cause bipolar disorder.

Moreover, scientists have discovered that the way the normal mind works is different from the way that a mind with bipolar disorder works. Also, there are some structural differences between the bipolar mind and the normal mind which can be perceived by some technological tools:

For example, one study using MRI found that the pattern of brain development in children with bipolar disorder was similar to that in children with "multi-dimensional impairment," a disorder that causes symptoms that overlap somewhat with bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. This suggests that the pattern of brain development in the two conditions may be associated with the risk for unstable moods. (NIMH)

These modern tools, not yet developed in Woolf's time, prove that the mind's structure of a bipolar patient is close to the structure of a mind with an illness like "multi-dimensional impairment" and schizophrenia. So, the study concluded that the brain's pattern could result in mood swings like in Woolf's condition.

Other MRI studies have suggested that "the brain's prefrontal cortex" in the bipolar mind is smaller than in the normal mind (NIMH). That part of the brain is related to the "executive functions" which help the person solve problems and make decisions. This is exactly what Woolf suffered, for sometimes she could neither judge nor explain things correctly. For example, according to Jean O. Love, Woolf declared that she could not distinguish between her hot and cold feelings. Also, she sometimes could not distinguish between realistic incidents and the incidents that she imagined (Love 259).

Bipolar Disorder's Symptoms as Diagnosed Today:

One of the most famous symptoms of bipolar disorder is the mood swing. A bipolar patient suffers from these "distinctive periods" which change the person from his or her usual moods and behavior. Those "mood episodes" can be either very happy or very sad. The joyful and excited episodes are called "manic episodes" while the very sad and depressed episodes are known as "depressive episodes." However, the two types usually mix with each other and form what is called the "mixed state," according to the NIMH.

According to the NIMH, each episode has behavioral features. The behavioral features include: talking in a fast way, the ideas and thoughts inside the brain changing very fast, the patient being distracted easily, and the patient feeling that he or she does not need to sleep. On the other hand, the mood features of the "depressive episodes" include having sad and desperate feelings for a long time. Patients often feel that they do not want to work nor do any other activities that they used to do, especially participate in sex. The behavioral features of "depressive episodes" include having no energy and being tired. The patient often cannot concentrate, recall incidents, or make

decisions. They often are thinking of death most of the time and may try to commit suicide. As well, habits like sleeping and eating change. Sometimes the patients who have severe "mania episodes" or "depressive episodes" may have psychotic symptoms like hallucinations and delusions. These episodes come and go in periods, and between these periods the patients can lead a normal life without any symptoms.

The symptoms of bipolar disorder are often developed during the teen years or at the beginning of the adulthood years. Woolf developed her bipolar disorder at the beginning of her teen years when she was thirteen, after the death of her mother. Moreover, there are several types of bipolar disorder and, unfortunately, Woolf seems to have had the severe type. The most severe type is Bipolar I Disorder in which the manic and mixed episodes can last seven days while the depressive episodes last for two weeks and may require hospital care. Woolf had several episodes of mania and depression that usually lasted for a couple of weeks, according to Thomas C. Caramagno (307-309). Woolf's breakdown in 1913 lasted until 1915. It was one of her most severe breakdowns and took place after the excitement of finishing her first novel *The Voyage Out* (Quentin Bell 2: 11) and after the initial depression of avoiding having children (Hermione Lee 331).

In addition, there is another severe type of bipolar disorder called Rapid-cycling Bipolar Disorder, which is linked to patients who have four or more bipolar disorder episodes (mania, depressive, hypomania, or mixed states) in less than a year, which seems close to Woolf's symptoms. Woolf had all these episodes almost every year, especially after she got married, according to Caramagno (307-309). People who have this type of bipolar disorder usually

develop their first episode of depression or mania during the middle or end of their teen years, and Woolf had her first episode when she was thirteen after her mother's death. The severe types are linked more to women than men. Patients with bipolar disorder are more likely to be affected by diseases such as migraine headaches. Woolf suffered from these before her episodes started, according to Caramagno (13). Clarissa, like Woolf herself, had headaches; Woolf described "Clarissa in bed with headaches" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 36). Bipolar disorder patients also usually have cold symptoms such as influenza, which Woolf had very often, for instance, after publishing *Jacob's Room*. In addition, heart disease is common among bipolar disorder patients: Woolf's heart was affected after several episodes according to Quentin Bell (2: 87). Clarissa also had influenza, which weakened her heart just like Woolf; Clarissa feels "a particular hush, or solemnity; an indescribable pause; a suspense (but that might be her heart, affected, they said, by influenza) before Big Ben strikes" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 3).

Bipolar Disorder's Treatment:

Bipolar disorder should not be left without treatment because it can become worse. Modern scientists have discovered that bipolar disorder is an illness that stays with the patient for the rest of his or her life (NIMH). It cannot be cured, but it can be treated. The treatment can decrease the negative effects of the bipolar episodes (and decrease duration times). Bipolar disorder needs long-term treatment to be controlled effectively. The treatment allows the patient to control his mood swings and all the other symptoms of bipolar disorder. Effective treatment includes medicine and psychotherapy. The patient needs to record his routine pattern of sleeping, life events, symptoms,

and daily moods. That is because there are different kinds of treatments, and the doctor needs to know which one works best for the patient. The doctors need to discuss all these things with the patient since the treatment can be more effective as the patient expresses his concerns and life events.

Bipolar disorder medicines today are mostly mood stabilizers like Lithium. Such disorders need medication and psychotherapy treatment in order to be treated effectively. If Woolf could have used such treatment, her condition would likely have been less severe and she might have been able to enjoy her life much more.

Woolf's Symptoms:

By knowing the nature of bipolar disorder, it is clear that Woolf's condition was in fact bipolar disorder. She had possessed various obvious bipolar disorder symptoms. As Jean O. Love notes: "She had at least four serious and several minor emotional mental breakdowns. She tried several times to take her own life and in 1941 succeeded in doing so when she became aware that she was going mad again" (Love 2).

In addition, Virginia's husband Leonard Woolf read Freud's books in order to understand his wife's illness. He describes one of her most severe breakdowns, which occurred after finishing her first novel *The Voyage Out*. Leonard Woolf states in his autobiography:

When I cross-examine Virginia's doctors, they said that she was suffering from neurasthenia, not from manic-depressive insanity, which was entirely different. But as far as symptoms were concerned, Virginia was suffering from manic-depressive insanity. In the first stage of the illness from 1914 practically every symptom

was the exact opposite of those in the second stage in 1915. In the first stage she was in the depth of depression, would hardly eat or talk, was suicidal. In the second stage, she was in a state of violent excitement and wild euphoria, talking incessantly for long periods of time. In the first stage she was violently opposed to the nurses and they had the greatest difficulty in getting her to do anything; she wanted me to be with her continually and for a week or two I was the only person who was able to get her to eat anything. In the second stage of violent excitement, she was violently hostile to me, would not talk to me or allow me to come into her room. She was occasionally violent with the nurses. (*Beginning Again* 161)

Leonard's description of Virginia's symptoms really demonstrates that Virginia was suffering from Bipolar Disorder I. Virginia used to have severe breakdowns or bipolar disorder depressive episodes after publishing her novels because she felt too much pressure and was concerned whether the readers would enjoy her novels. She kept struggling between excited periods and depressive periods.

There were also some times in Virginia's life when she led a normal steady life and no one would notice that she was mentally ill. However, Quentin Bell argues that too much excitement or work for Virginia may have caused some headaches for her. Her headaches caused her sleepless nights, which led to feelings of depression and, ultimately, would cause her to enter another bipolar depressive episode (Quentin Bell 2: 34).

On the other hand, sometimes during her life when she had a severe bipolar episode, she would experience depressive periods with thoughts of

killing herself. During these times she would see unreal people or hear unreal voices or imagine things and events which were not actually happening. For example, Quentin Bell assumes that Virginia had hallucinations. He states: "The pressures on Virginia did not relax: she thought people were laughing at her; she was the cause of everyone's troubles; she felt overwhelmed with a sense of guilt for which she should be punished. She became convinced that her body was in some way monstrous..." (Bell 2: 15). These episodes in Virginia's life illustrate typical bipolar disorder symptoms.

Moreover, one of the symptoms that Woolf experienced is that the ideas inside Woolf's head were formed suddenly and quickly, as Thomas C. Caramagno has discovered by examining one of Woolf's letters to Vita Sackville-West. One letter states:

I wish you could live in my brain for a week. It is washed with the most violent waves of emotion. What about? I don't know. It begins upon waking; and I never know which—shall I be happy? Shall I be miserable[?] I grant, I keep up some mechanical activity with my hands, sitting, typing; ordering dinner. Without this, I should brood ceaselessly. And you think it is all fixed and settled? Do we then know nobody?—But only our own version of them, which as likely as not are emanations from ourselves. (*Letters* 3: 245)

Thomas C. Caramagno explains:

How, unable to know herself, could she be known? The answer came in the form of a wish; if Vita could experience Virginia's inner world—without explanation—she might "know" her, or at least feel

what it is like to be her. This is essentially what *Mrs. Dalloway* does.

We live in a bipolar brain for a day. (Caramagno 243)

Caramagno illustrates how the ideas and thoughts inside Woolf's mind were occurring violently in a disorderly way. Woolf feels like jumping from one idea into another, which is one of the common features of bipolar disorder. She allows us to experience this through her writing.

Moreover, in her diary Woolf expressed her ideas and thoughts which were occurring suddenly all the time, as Woolf states on 29 September 1924: "...But how entirely I live in my imagination; how completely I depend upon spurts of thought, coming as I walk, as I sit; things churning up in my mind & so making a perpetual pageant, which is to me my happiness" (315). Woolf indicates that she cannot control her thoughts and ideas because they seem like they are jumping into her mind all the time. Even though she may be busy doing something, her mind forms thoughts and ideas about something else like thinking about one of her novels while she is talking with Leonard or playing with Vanessa's children. This could be a positive trait if the thoughts were happy. However, what would bother her is when those uncontrolled thoughts were sad or suicidal.

Furthermore, another symptom of bipolar disorder is the manic excitement to complete several activities at the same time and the loss of interest to do anything else. That is illustrated in Woolf's diary of 18 February 1922 when Woolf implies that she is excited to write and her mind is full of ideas, and that she wants to read and write at the same time. She states, "My note book lies by my bed unopened. At first I could hardly read for the swarm of ideas that rose involuntarily. I had to write them out at once. And this is

great fun" (*Diary 2*: 169). Her excitement about reading and writing at the same time is a symptom of a manic episode. On the other hand, there were times when Woolf lost her interest in writing or doing anything else, which is a symptom of a depressive episode. This is illustrated when she states: "I am so stifled with work of all sorts, society of all sorts, & plans of all sorts, that I can't pour a stream from my tap" (*Diary 2*: 277). Woolf would then lose her excitement about writing, her future plans, or seeing anybody. This would imply that she was feeling sad and would be about to enter a depressive episode.

Virginia Woolf's Bipolar Disorder and Mood Swings:

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf tries to reveal her mood swings of bipolar disorder and how they affected her. Thomas C. Caramagno argues in his essay "The sane & the insane, side by side" that "in *Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf represents not only the symptoms of manic-depression but also, how she coped with it" (313). Caramagno illustrates how Leonard described Virginia's explanation of her moods:

When Virginia was quite well, she would discuss her illness; she would recognize that she had been mad, that she had delusions, heard voices which did not exist, lived for weeks or months in a nightmare world of frenzy despair, and violence. When she was like that, she obviously was well and sane. (*Beginning Again* 79)

All these are symptoms of the severe type of Bipolar Disorder I and Rapid-Cycling Bipolar Disorder, which include hallucinations and last for a long time. Woolf noticed that and could not find a scientific explanation for it, but she tried to deal with it through her novel by presenting three types of moods: those of

Clarissa, Peter Walsh, and Septimus Smith. Mood swings created different types of daydreams for Woolf, which she illustrated through Clarissa's daydreams of the past, Peter Walsh's happy fantasies, and Septimus' horror-filled shell-shocked visions.

Thomas C. Caramagno indicates in his essay that the different types of daydreams are common features of a mood swing. He gives a great explanation of the daydream types in *Mrs. Dalloway* and how they are related to mood swings. He states:

Mood in itself is but a "view," as Woolf wrote. Shifting from daydream to daydream allows her to express the subtle aspect of bipolar illness; its connection with normal mentality, the ups and downs of how one feels about oneself and others, changes that can obscure when one is no longer walking upright on the narrow strip of pavement Woolf called sanity. Each character participates in self-representation, comprising various aspects of Woolf's experience of mood swings: milder cycles of high and low self-esteem (Peter), severe psychotic delusions (Septimus), and the balanced, or euthymic, states (Clarissa) which successfully integrates the other two. (Caramagno 317-318)

These changing daydreams reveal how her mind worked since no one could understand it, neither her family nor her doctors with their limited scientific tools. Therefore, through *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf presents a clear image of her disordered mind. The bipolar disorder caused her mood swings. These swings caused Woolf to have daydreams, which frequently changed without control, from happy moods to past memories and then to scary hallucinations. Woolf

succeeded in presenting a good explanation for her mind's complex condition through *Mrs. Dalloway*, quite in contrast to her doctors who could not find an accurate way to explain her condition.

Furthermore, Thomas C. Caramagno in his essay implies that "deluded patients are like normal people in at least one respect: they form theories to explain their experiences" (322). He continues:

Ordinary events.... Anomalous experiences.... Even hearing voices can be explained as radio transmissions picked up by fillings in your teeth. These are interpretations made with intact reality testing....

But if you are psychotic, and your biochemically altered brain mishandles perception, even bizarre explanations may seem believable to you because they fit bizarre experiences. (322)

Caramagno explains why a bipolar patient speaks nonsense: because the patient sees unreal or strange things which require an irrational explanation. Therefore, it seems that Woolf was thinking in the same way when she was mentally stable as when she was mentally ill. The difference is that when Woolf was mentally stable, she could see the real things around her as they were supposed to be. However, when she was mentally ill, her mind visualized unreal things and made her think that they were real. Therefore, she could see unreal things and could not distinguish whether they were real or not. She saw things which she thought were real, and explained them to her doctors and family in the same way that she explained normal, real things. People around her sometimes thought that she was mad because she explained things that did not exist. They could not see what she saw and that is why they could not understand her condition.

The Rest Cure and How Woolf's Doctors Treated Her Illness:

Woolf had several doctors during her life, and she did not like how they treated her, except for her first doctor. Woolf's first doctor was Dr. Seton. He was the family's doctor and Woolf liked him; perhaps this why she gave Clarissa's best friend Sally Seton his name. Susan Bennett Smith describes how during her first breakdown, Dr. Seton ordered "Virginia to rest her mind and exercise her body.... Physicians believed that by tending to the body they were tending to the mind.... Dr. Savage ordered rest in the country for Virginia after Leslie's death.... She gives the rest solution credit for helping her" (Smith 146). So, according to Smith, Woolf had two experiences with the rest cure. The first rest cure was in 1904 after her father died and the second rest cure was in 1913 after finishing her first novel *The Voyage Out* (Quentin Bell 2: 11).

Although the rest cures were not helpful most of the time for Woolf, it worked for her in 1904. Smith assumes that it worked because her depressed period was one of grief:

If Virginia's disorder was grief, why might the rest cure have been therapeutic? Virginia was accompanied by a hired nurse and stayed with Violet Dickinson, then her aunt Emelia Stephen. The seclusion of their homes, the company of sympathetic women, and the cessation of public activities combined to approximate a medical version of traditional mourning rituals. Both the rest cure and mourning ritual require a reduced existence for a fixed period of time. (147)

The passage talks about Woolf's first rest cure, which was in 1904. It seems that her treatment included medication treatment and psychotherapy, which was provided by the sympathy of close friends and family members. Besides, since Woolf was not married at that time, she was not taken away from a husband, which resulted in making her better. In fact, the treatment applied all the factors of modern bipolar disorder treatment, and that is why it worked at that time.

On the other hand, the second time, when Dr. Savage ordered Woolf to take a rest cure in 1913, her therapy did not work well and caused some negative effects for her (Jean O. Love 316). That rest cure was based on the medication treatment and isolation without the psychological therapy. That is because the rest cure isolated Virginia from her husband Leonard, and she was not allowed to talk to anyone, not even write to her husband or receive letters from him for almost one month (Quentin Bell 2: 13). So, during this rest cure Woolf missed the sympathy from close friends and family. This sympathy can be considered as a variety of psychological therapy, which is the second important factor of the bipolar disorder treatment. Therefore, the second rest cure in 1913 did not work well like the first rest cure did in 1904.

It seems that Virginia's doctors thought that support from family and friends was not very important to the patient as long as the patient had a good relationship with the doctors. The doctors and nurses thought that their support could replace the support of the family and friends, which is obviously not true. Susan Bennett Smith agrees with their opinion and illustrates the doctors' point of view about the treatment by stating:

Their focus was on the disease and on the importance of the doctor/patient relationship, a relationship which must be free of interference from family and friends. The physicians quietly took over the former roles of minister and family as social grief practices waned and medical discourse became increasingly powerful.

(Susan Bennett Smith 147)

Smith explains how these doctors worked with their patients. The doctors thought that family and friends were distracting from the treatment. In fact, that illustrated why Woolf disliked these doctors and hated their rest cure. That is because the doctors themselves took the role of Woolf's family and did not consider how important family and friends' support was to her. That may explain why Woolf made the rest cure a harmful treatment in *Mrs. Dalloway*, where Dr. William Bradshaw imposes a rest cure on Septimus away from his wife, and Septimus kills himself to avoid going.

However, Susan Bennett Smith claims that Woolf was not fair to the rest cure treatment, and that she presented it in *Mrs. Dalloway* as a more harmful treatment than what she actually experienced. Smith states:

In the novel Woolf does not explore the potential benefits of the rest cure as a substitution for the mourning ritual—even Holmes's home would provide a treatment from the on-going life of the city. One would never guess from reading *Mrs. Dalloway* that she had ever found a version of the rest cure helpful. (Smith 149)

Smith believes that Woolf should be realistic in presenting the truth and be fair to the rest cure. It seems that Smith is referring to Woolf's first experience with the rest cure—which was a positive experience, but Woolf, in *Mrs. Dalloway*,

was not referring to that positive experience. Instead, Woolf is writing in *Mrs. Dalloway* what she herself felt, based on her second experience with the rest cure in 1913.

In addition, Smith's opinion about rest cures is not totally accurate. That is because rest cures proved harmful to many people. Woolf was not the only writer who referred to the disadvantages of rest cures. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, who lived in the same time as Woolf, for example, refers to the scary potential of the rest cure in her short story "The Yellow Wall Paper." Both writers agree that rest cures worsen the condition of the patient instead of helping them to heal and feel better. The problem with rest cures is that they were based on treatment and isolation without psychological therapy. They mostly isolated the patients from family and friends, which caused negative effects on the patients. Therefore, Woolf might not only be expressing her own negative experience, but expressing the suffering of most patients who had negative experiences with rest cures.

What Woolf is portraying is important. She is showing us insight into what the doctors do not understand. She is putting aspects of herself into Septimus and his treatment to show us how she herself felt. All these aspects and several other similarities between Woolf and Septimus will be more fully explored in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER THREE: Virginia Woolf's Life's Tragedies.

Although she planned to focus on the themes of insanity and suicide in *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf unconsciously revealed several of her inner psychological problems through the process of writing. Her unstable mental condition, as discussed in Chapter Two, was made worse by various deaths and misfortunes. Her past unresolved problems were the death of her mother, her father, her sister Stella, and her brother Thoby. Then there was the sexual abuse that she endured from her half brothers, Virginia's loneliness after Vanessa's marriage, and the disappointment of not having children. These inner psychological problems manifested themselves through her writing.

Whether Virginia Woolf's illness passed to her from her father's side or her mother's side, the illness needed a suitable environment in which to be developed. Even though Virginia was born with bipolar disorder, the illness did not reveal itself until her mother died during her thirteenth year. The stress and the grief that Virginia faced caused her illness to be developed very early. That is because bipolar disorder is usually revealed after the onset of the teen years or at the beginning of adulthood. Besides, Virginia faced a series of tragedies which caused her bipolar illness to develop and become worse. The teen years are considered very sensitive years because a child is preparing herself to be personally and mentally mature. Unfortunately, Virginia could not pass through these years peacefully and could not form a steady personality because of her illness and the tragedies that she faced, which caused several major and minor breakdowns in her life.

Virginia's Mother's Death:

The first major tragedy, which caused the most negative effect on Virginia's life and personality, was her mother's death. Virginia said about it: "Her death, was the greatest disaster that ever could have happened" (qtd. in Quentin Bell 1: 40). Her mother Julia did not have a close relationship with her daughter. Therefore, Virginia was distressed that she could not remember her mother very much, not even how she spoke or how she looked. However, her mother had a major effect on Virginia's life.

Julia's death was a result of some health complications, which according to Jean O. Love, began with Vanessa's birth (136). Also, it seems that Sir Leslie Stephen was not aware of her health problems. Julia died as a result of influenza; having too many duties and responsibilities had weakened her health since she married Sir Leslie (136-137).

According to Jean O. Love, Julia Jack Jackson was born in 1846 (probably in India) and died on May 5, 1895. Julia married her first husband Herbert Duckworth when she was twenty one. In less than four years, she had her children Stella and George and was pregnant with her third child, Gerald. Julia's husband died in a sudden tragic way, and Virginia recreated that tragic death in *Mrs. Dalloway* with the death of Sylvia, Clarissa's sister. Jean O. Love explains how Duckworth died: "He reached up to the topmost branch of a tree to pick a fig for Julia; an abscess burst in his brain; he fell unconscious at his wife's feet and died within twenty-four hours" (63). Jean O. Love indicates that his death changed Julia's personality and negatively affected her children as well, especially Virginia:

His death changed Julia's life and character insofar as one can determine from the scant information about her earlier life. It was to have far reaching influence upon her children as well, especially Virginia. For Herbert Duckworth's death was one of the many instances in the family history when expectations were dramatically and tragically reversed and life seemed to betray by promising happiness and providing calamity instead. (63)

Julia had a sad life during the early years of her adulthood because of her first husband's sudden death. The death of her husband made Julia believe in life's treachery, and she passed that belief to her daughter Virginia. Jean O. Love explains by stating:

Virginia was influenced by Julia's sudden bereavement, a stark and horrifying example of the tragic theme and pattern of the Stephen family history, that life is likely to betray one just when it seems to promise great happiness. Julia's loss of her first husband was only one of many instances of this phenomenon. (70)

Virginia seemed to share Julia's beliefs about life's treachery because there were many tragedies in Virginia's family. She believed those tragedies proved Julia's theory about life's treachery.

Jean O. Love summarizes these tragedies by stating:

Julia herself was to die as her young family approached maturity. Her daughter, Stella Duckworth, died several months after her wedding day while expecting a child. Julia's son Thoby died at the beginning of what everyone expected to be a distinguished career. The pattern followed the family into the next generation, for the

promising scholar and poet Julian Bell, Vanessa's son, died as a young man fighting in the Spanish Civil War. (Love 70)

All those tragedies made Virginia believe like her mother that something tragic would always happen and corrupt her happiness. We see this belief twice in *Mrs. Dalloway*. It first appears in the opening scene after Woolf describes the joy and brightness of the day early in the morning when Clarissa stands by the window breathing the fresh air and thinks: "feeling as she did, standing there at the open window, that something awful was about to happen" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 3). The second time is when Clarissa thinks: " 'Oh this horror!' she said to herself, as if she had known all along that something would interrupt, and would embitter her moment of happiness" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 21). The scenes imply that whenever everything seems cheerful around Clarissa, she always expects that a sad thing will happen. In the opening scene, the day seems very nice and most people would expect great things to happen in such a happy day. However, Clarissa expects the opposite. Clarissa's negative feeling in both scenes expresses Virginia's feeling toward life.

Furthermore, Julia's effect on Virginia's life did not stop here, although Virginia's relationship with Julia was not close. Instead, it was, as Jean O. Love indicates:

One of Virginia's deepest and most persistent hurts. It left her unprepared for an independent existence and endowed her with a lifelong need for a mother-daughter relationship; after her need to be a writer, artist and to fight against madness, was the strongest motive in her life. (Jean O. Love 16)

Julia died at the time when Virginia needed her most. Virginia did not have enough of her mother. Therefore, Julia's death left Virginia with a feeling that she still needed a mother for the rest of her life, as Love states: "she was left with the definite need for her mother and simultaneously with the awful knowledge that her need could never be met" (Love 260).

Virginia's Father's "Exaggerated" Mourning:

Quentin Bell indicates that "The real horror of Julia's death came in the mourning of her" (Bell 1: 40). Quentin Bell as well as Susan Bennett Smith (145) and Jean O. Love (24) claim that the death of Julia was not the real problem; it was the reaction of Virginia's father, Sir Leslie Stephen. Quentin Bell illustrates his condition as "a man of sixty-three, [who] had every expectation of being nursed out of the world by a wife ... (and she would have done it so well). He had done his stint of widowhood and had endured it with as much fortitude as any man could reasonably display" (Quentin Bell 1: 40). Since Sir Leslie's personality was very sensitive, he was drawn into deep sadness by his wife's death. He forced his children to share the same exaggerated mourning. Love claims:

Virginia's worst and most inclusive fear—that her mother's death meant the end of the world—was of course hideously realized when Julia died. Virginia's father alone would convince her that with Julia's death the world as the family knew it had indeed been destroyed and that Virginia could not survive. His insistence that the children mourn as exaggeratedly as he and in his style, forced Virginia to lose her limited control and convinced her that she was helpless and powerless. (Jean O. Love 261)

Therefore, it seems that Virginia and the rest of the children would not have felt as much sadness and would have endured the mourning process more healthily if their father would have acted differently.

Sir Leslie's mourning was the result of several reasons, including his immature personality and his guilt of not doing anything to save Julia before she died. Jean O. Love argues that Sir Leslie's over-reaction to his wife's death was a result of his immature personality. In fact, he used to express his love to Julia by acting desperately. When she died, he expressed his love much more desperately than he ever did when she was alive (Jean O. Love 178). Therefore, as a result of Virginia's mother's death and her father's exaggerated mourning, Virginia developed her first symptoms of bipolar disorder and entered one of the most severe breakdowns in her life. Quentin Bell indicates that:

She did not, could not, admit all the memories of her madness.

What she did recall were the physical symptoms;... she had already heard what she was later to call "those horrible voices," she speaks of other symptoms, usually physiological symptoms. Her pulse raced—it raced so fast as to be almost unbearable. She became painfully excitable and nervous and then intolerably depressed. She became terrified of people, blushed scarlet if spoken to and was unable to face strangers in the street. (Bell 1:45)

This was her first breakdown in 1904, which showed itself to be one of the severest bipolar types. That is because the symptoms included hallucinations, which would have required going to the hospital immediately if she had lived in

our day. She also had fears of seeing strange people and hearing unreal voices, all considered severe bipolar disorder symptoms.

Also, that breakdown's symptoms included feeling guilty and losing interest in her favorite activities, which are very common in bipolar disorder patients. Virginia lost her interest in writing, which she loved very much. She had feelings of criticizing and blaming herself, for "being vain and egotistical" (Quentin Bell 1: 45). Besides, Virginia suffered from hallucinations, as Jean O. Love describes:

She might have dramatized her report of that "vision," for the several days between her mother's death and funeral were so unreal and histrionic that "any hallucination" was possible. Virginia recalled too that she was bothered by an experience that she had, many times in her life, of uncontrolled "pictures" coming to her mind. She told Stella about seeing the figure of a man and Stella replied only that it was nice that their mother was not alone—a well-meant response that may have made Virginia's near hallucination seem more "real." (Love 199)

All these psychological and physical symptoms illustrated Woolf's first bipolar disorder episode. That episode was her first and one of the most severe episodes that she had in her life.

Virginia's Half Sister Stella's Death:

The second tragedy that shortly followed Julia's death within two years was the demise of Virginia's half sister Stella. After Julia's death, Stella played her mother's role and took the responsibility of taking care of Sir Leslie's needs, as well as those of her brothers and sisters. According to Jean O. Love

and Quentin Bell, Stella did her best in taking care of the family. Quentin Bell describes Stella:

She accepted her passion without question. She was ready to comfort, to chaperone the girls, to keep the house running without alarming expense, to make all social arrangements and in particular to marshal the long procession of sympathizing females who came to be closest with Leslie. (Bell 1: 41)

Stella always made Virginia feel better, and Virginia loved her. Besides, Stella took care of Virginia during her breakdown after the death of their mother.

Because Stella played the mother role well, according to Quentin Bell, Sir Leslie tried to stop her marriage. Even though Stella was almost mothering Sir Leslie, he felt that she was being ungrateful to him when she decided to marry and leave the house. Stella was very unselfish and sacrificed herself for the family, and she rejected Jack Hills' proposal twice before she accepted it because she was thinking of the family. According to Quentin Bell, Sir Leslie was afraid to lose the woman who best mothered him after Julia. He tried to keep Stella living in his house after she was married. However, Stella thought that would bring too many problems to her own new small family, and she decided to live in a house near him, to have her privacy and still stay close to the big family. Sir Leslie delayed Stella's marriage for almost eight months. After Stella's marriage, she died within four months while she was expecting her first baby. Stella's death affected Virginia, according to Quentin Bell. That is because Virginia lost the person who took care of her after her mother's death. Virginia felt like she had lost another mother. However, Virginia's sadness after Stella's death was not as bad as when her mother died. That is

because her sister Vanessa took care of her very well. Therefore, Virginia could recover faster than before.

The Abuse by Virginia's Half Brothers George and Gerald:

The other childhood event that negatively affected Virginia during her grief for her mother was the abuse she suffered at the hands of her half brothers. It seemed that Virginia as well as Vanessa experienced sexual abuse from her half brother George. In addition, Virginia had another unwanted sexual encounter from her other half brother Gerald.

The first sexual abuse occurred when Virginia was six years old. Woolf states in "A Sketch of the Past" from *Moments of Being*:

I must have been ashamed or afraid of my own body. Another memory, also of the hall, may help to explain this. There was a slab outside the dining room door for standing dishes upon. Once when I was very small Gerald Duckworth lifted me into this, 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. But it did not stop. His hand explored my private parts too. I remember resenting, disliking it—what is the word for so dumb and mixed a feeling? It must have been strong, since I still recall it. This seems to show that a feeling about certain parts of the body; how they must not be touched; how it is wrong to allow them to be touched; must be instinctive. (68-69)

It seems that this incident deeply affected Woolf since she still remembers all the specific details and her mixed feelings about that incident although the incident had happened almost forty years before. Woolf wrote *Moments of Being*, where she mentions this incident, when she was at the end of her fifties. She was too old to recall memories from her early childhood that she had not remembered or dwelled on before.

Jean O. Love gives examples of George's abuse: "George's 'fondling' of Virginia during her Greek lessons and that she had thought of him as a 'nasty creature' " (204). Another reference comes from Virginia's "Memoir Club" as Jean O. Love states: "She described George's overly affectionate nature, quite likely one of the truths about him. She said that when one tried to argue with him—for example about his snobbery and social ambitions—he would end the argument with an excessive show of affection. "[H]e would seize you in his arms and cry out that he refused to argue with those he loved. 'Kiss me, kiss me, you beloved,' he would vociferate; and the argument was drowned in kisses. Everything was drowned in kisses" (Love 204). Virginia also mentioned another incident of George's behavior after they went to a party:

Sleep had almost come to me. The room was dark. The house was silent. Then, creaking stealthily, the door opened; treading gingerly, someone entered. "Who?" I cried. "Don't be frightened," George whispered. "And don't turn on the light, oh beloved. Beloved—" and he flung himself on my bed, and took me in his arms. (qtd. in Love 205)

Quentin Bell also mentioned some instances of George's abuse, and Bell expected these events took place when Virginia was mentally ill: "George

would fling himself on my bed, cuddling and kissing and otherwise embracing me in order, as he told Dr Savage later, to comfort me for the fatal illness of my Father—who was dying three or four storeys lower down of cancer" (Bell 1: footnote, 96).

Those incidents prove that there was abusive behavior which occurred between George and his half sister that caused some psychological problems for Virginia. According to Jean O. Love: "one thing already present was of course her shame about the sexual parts of her body. As we have noted, her shame was so profound it seemed to her an archetypal inheritance. And Gerald Duckworth, not George, was responsible for initially arousing this deep sense of shame" (Love 281). Therefore, each one of her half brothers caused Virginia a certain type of psychological problem. Gerald caused her to feel shame while George's behavior was one of the reasons she experienced some sexual problems with her husband in her later life. In fact, Virginia blamed George for disturbing her life with her husband:

George had certainly left Virginia with a deep aversion to lust; but perhaps he did no more than inflame a deeper wound and confirm Virginia in her disposition to shrink from the crudities of sex.... Virginia felt that George had spoiled her life before it had fairly begun. Naturally shy in sexual matters, she was from this time on terrified into a posture of frozen and defensive panic. (Quentin Bell 1: 44)

Jean O. Love also agrees by stating: "Virginia herself was inclined to blame George Duckworth" (Love 281). Also, Love states that Leonard and Vanessa implied that George affected Virginia negatively. Even though George was

very good in giving sympathy to Virginia and Vanessa after their mother's death, his behavior started to become inappropriate. Also, his inappropriate behavior lasted for several years. As Love states: "Supposedly, George was repeatedly offensive over a period of nearly nine years, until after her father's death, when Virginia was again disturbed. George was stopped, according to Quentin Bell, when Vanessa told Virginia's doctor, who upbraided George about his conduct" (Love 200).

However, some critics like Jean O. Love claim that these documentaries are not reliable because Virginia during her madness had several hallucinations. Love claims we cannot judge whether the abusive incidents were actually happening or they were just some kind of delusion. However, if Virginia was not a reliable person, she had another witness. Vanessa was mentally stable and she expressed that the abuse happened to her as well. It is understandable that Vanessa and Virginia were confused and did not tell anyone. Even if they had wanted to tell, they had no one to turn to, and they could not have stopped George's behavior. Quentin Bell explains their confusing situation by stating: "there was no one to whom they could turn to for protection and guidance, no one who would even believe them if they reported their brother" (Quentin Bell 1: 43).

There were several reasons which stopped the two sisters from telling anyone about George's behavior. For example, the girls were too shy to tell anyone, and George had a good reputation among women and men alike. That good reputation would make it difficult for anyone to believe that such bad behavior could be committed by such a good man. Virginia described his personality when she stated: "George was in truth a stupid, good natured

young man, of profuse, voluble affections" (qtd. in Love 203), which would make it impossible for others to think that George would act improperly.

However, according to Quentin Bell, in the end Vanessa had the courage to tell Dr. Savage about George:

Virginia went mad in the summer of 1904. Vanessa told Savage of what had been happening and Savage, it seems, taxed George with his conduct. Even George might then have felt that his presence under the same roof as his half-sisters was no longer desirable. But he was invulnerably dense and incapable of pursuing a course that ran counter to his feelings and so, faced by his amiable insistence, they weakly acquiesced. Gone were all their hopes of flying from the past. The past was coming to live with them. (Quentin Bell 1: 96)

Vanessa and Virginia hesitated to tell someone about George's behavior because it seemed that they felt that George had control over them. According to Hermione Lee: "With Leslie in deaf, isolated retreat, the sentimental and conventional George became their unofficial guardian and their passport to the outside world" (140). Also, George was richer than the Stephen family. George gave presents to Virginia and Vanessa like jewelry and clothes, decorations for Virginia's room, a horse for Vanessa, and other expensive presents. All those gifts made the two girls feel indebted and powerless. Therefore, they could not tell anyone about him because in this way they would not have to repay his generosity with an ungrateful response. That is why Vanessa needed much more courage, even more than what Virginia had, to take the step and tell Dr. Savage about George's inappropriate behavior.

Therefore, Virginia suffered from several tragedies at one time, including her mother's death, her father's extreme mourning, and George and Gerald's abuse, which made her condition mentally, psychologically, and physically worse.

Virginia's Father's Death:

The final major tragedy that happened to Virginia was the death of her father. Virginia's father, Sir Leslie Stephen, died of cancer. Quentin Bell describes: "In April 1903, it became clear to Dr. Seton and the nurse that the disease was spreading and that the patient must soon die. This news was communicated to Vanessa, who told her brothers and sister and thought it would be best that Sir Leslie should, if possible, be kept in ignorance" (Quentin Bell 1: 84). The children had to watch their father dying slowly and could not do anything for him. According to Quentin Bell:

of the children none, I think, suffered so much as Virginia....

Virginia, although she had felt hatred, rage and indignation at Leslie's conduct to Vanessa, felt also a very deep love for him. She saw that he was reluctant to die because his children had at last got to an age at which he could know them, and knowing, loved them.

He wanted to see what would become of them. In his present state, he could no longer be a tyrant and his tyranny might be forgotten.

Between him and Virginia, a special bond had been established.

She loved him and he, for his part, had for some time felt a special tenderness toward her. "Ginia," he wrote, "continues to be good to me and is a great comfort," and again: "She can be most

fascinating." Thus, for her, the conflict of feeling was most acute and most miserable. (Quentin Bell 1: 84-85)

Virginia had loved her father very much since she was a child. It was very hard for Virginia to watch her father suffering as he was waiting for his death.

Virginia felt her father's struggle, and it seemed that there would be no end for this suffering. Even death seemed more merciful than this suffering. Virginia states in her diary, "this illness," she observed, "is a revelation of what human nature can be—in the way of sentimentality and uselessness" (qtd. in Bell 1: 85). Then she kept wondering: "Why must he die? And if he must why can't he?" (qtd. in Bell 1: 85). Although she loved him, she started to wish him death at this point, according to Jean O. Love, who states, "She began to admit that she now wanted him to die" (306). Leslie stayed alive for more time than the doctor expected. He struggled with his cancer for over six months. Bell assured his readers that even Sir Leslie himself wished to die, too: "Leslie was clearly dying and, after a time clearly wished to die, but still death would not come...it was not until 22 February that death came at last" (Quentin Bell 1: 86). Finally, Leslie's suffering ended with a sad, slow, painful death.

Therefore, Virginia felt very sad for her father's painful death. As a result, she became depressed and her condition became worse because of her grief. She started to feel guilty because she wished death for him. In fact, when she felt that he would die soon, she started to make herself believe that Leslie himself wanted to die. In that way, when his death came, she would not feel very sad because he wanted that. According to Jean O. Love:

She got through the long death watching by grim determination, by trying not to think, and finally by convincing herself that her father

wanted to die.... Soon after he died, she began to become preoccupied with the idea that he had not really wanted to die but had wanted very much to live.... Certainly Virginia's growing belief that she had killed her father by wishing him dead.... She was overwhelmed by terrible guilt for "causing" her father to die and for not having been more comforting to him in his last years. (Love 307-308)

This gave her feelings of guilt and caused her to blame herself, which made her more depressed. As Quentin Bell states:

She was more than ever convinced that he had wanted to live and that the true and happy relationship between him and his children was only just beginning. She had never done enough for him; he had been lonely and she had never told him how much she valued him. At night, she dreamed that he was alive again and that she could say all the things that she had meant to say.... His fault was forgotten, his kindness, his quickness, his intelligence were not. (Quentin Bell 1: 87)

She seemed to keep thinking about him most of the time, which made her feel even sadder. She even started to forget his mistakes, and her love for him grew.

Virginia tried to maintain a stable mood, but that did not happen. Quentin Bell illustrates how Virginia tried to deal with her sadness and pretend that she was fine: "Her grief, as she later realized, was something feverish, morbid, something which made her feel isolated and afraid. In her attempts at writing she was, as she put later, 'only trying to prove to myself that there was nothing

wrong with me—which I was already beginning to fear that there was' " (Quentin Bell 1: 88). Also, Jean O. Love indicates that Virginia could control her emotions before Leslie's death, but she gave up after his death: "Virginia was able to maintain control of her emotions until her father finally died, and for several months thereafter" (Love 306). After that, Virginia began to refer to her mother's belief about life's betrayal. According to Love, "After he died her belief recoiled, for she concluded that 'life' had betrayed her, as it seems often to betray the Stephen family. As she said in her memoir, with time and good intention, the unhappy aspects of the relationship with her father would have worked themselves out, had not death once again intervened" (Love 307).

So, Virginia's condition was unstable, and she was suffering from many depressed thoughts. In fact, her mental condition was already becoming worse when her mother died. Quentin Bell illustrated Virginia's condition by stating, "Virginia, emotionally strained, exhausted and exasperated by the long months of Sir Leslie 's last illness, still guilty and still inconsolable, found this more than she could bear" (Quentin Bell 1: 89). Actually, Virginia did not know at that time that she was about to enter one of the most depressed periods in her life. She had her second major breakdown shortly after the death of her father. Virginia's second breakdown was very severe and had most of the severe bipolar disorder symptoms. Quentin Bell illustrated that by stating:

In the breakdown that followed she entered into a period of nightmare in which the symptoms of the preceding months attained frantic intensity. Her mistrust of Vanessa, her grief for her father became maniacal, her nurses—she had three—became friends. She heard voices urging her to acts of folly; she believed that they

came from overeating and that she must starve herself.... she made her first attempt to commit suicide. She threw herself from a window, which, however, was not high enough from the ground to cause her serious harm. It was here too that she lay in bed, listening to the birds singing in Greek and imagining that King Edward VII lurked in the azaleas using the foulest possible language. (Quentin Bell 1: 89-90)

Her doctors advised her family to stay away from London because its noise would disturb Virginia's treatment since she could not sleep well.

After that breakdown's dark days passed, Virginia could not bear to live without her father. So, in order to continue living, she created an imaginary image of her father and convinced herself that he was still alive. According to Jean O. Love:

Possibly Virginia tried to create a fantasy to keep her father "alive" as she had with her mother... if she did in fact try to imagine her father still present, she must have been less successful in bringing him back than her mother, since she only mentioned using the fantasy to keep her mother with her. (Love 309-310)

Even though Virginia tried to deal with her grief after her father's death as she did when her mother died, Virginia's way did not work. As Love states, "Since she was unable to create her father within fantasy, another recourse was to try not to think at all about his death. She said to Violet, 'Much thinking would send me down to the bottomless pit...' " (Love 310). That seems to have worked with Virginia and helped her feel better along with some support from her family.

However, Love indicates that Woolf still did not yet recover "but was still haunted by his loneliness and the failure to help" (311). Therefore, it seems the death of her father was one of the most horrible tragedies that happened to Virginia besides the death of her mother. Her father's death might not have affected her that badly if Virginia had refrained from thinking too much about it. However, one of the symptoms of bipolar disorder is to think about things in a dark way and keep blaming oneself and judging things mistakenly.

Virginia's Brother Thoby's Death:

The other tragedy was the death of her brother Thoby. His death's effects lasted for almost twenty years. That effect is what made Virginia write *Jacob's Room* a long time after his death, producing a novel that largely concerned her feeling for Thoby. According to Jean O. Love:

Thoby died in 1906, at the age of twenty-six. His death was so horrifying that she could not, and did not, face up to the reality of it. There were several reasons for this, but mainly it was because she loved her brother. Also, as was true of her mother, she had lost someone she believed she had not really known. When she wrote *Jacob's Room* (1922) and *The Waves* (1931), she tried to rediscover, eulogize, and memorialize him, but could not approach Thoby's memory directly. (Love 320)

As Love states, Thoby's death affected Virginia deeply. These effects lasted until Virginia revealed them through her novels. That indicates that Virginia struggled with these feelings until she finally used her writing to express these unresolved feelings.

After Thoby's death, Virginia tried to deal with her grief as she did before with her parents' death. She used her imagination in order to deal with her sadness. In fact, that protected Virginia from entering another breakdown as happened to her when her parents died. According to Jean O. Love: "Virginia gave a brilliant macabre performance and it apparently served to prevent an immediate emotional and mental collapse" (322). However, Virginia struggled after Thoby's death with another type of suffering: her loneliness because her only sister left for her married life soon after Thoby's death.

Vanessa's Marriage and Virginia's Loneliness:

Virginia's sister Vanessa was the closest person to her after Stella died. When Virginia committed suicide, she wrote only to the two most important people to her: Vanessa and her husband Leonard. Since Virginia was very close to Vanessa, Virginia felt that she lost Vanessa after Vanessa decided to marry Clive Bell shortly after Thoby's death (Quentin Bell 1: 110). Although Virginia loved Vanessa, she felt that Vanessa "betrayed" her, as Jean O. Love States, "for Vanessa's engagement and marriage were another source of distress for Virginia and a kind of betrayal, for they meant that she would now be physically separated from her sister" (323). That is because Vanessa was the closest person to Virginia before Virginia married Leonard.

Ever since Virginia was a child, she always tried to be like Vanessa, older than Virginia by three years, and when Virginia failed to be like her, she felt like a failure. Jean O. Love indicates:

Virginia's sister was in many ways a better model, and in childhood Virginia both compared herself to Vanessa and tried to copy her. As we have observed, usually she failed to be like Vanessa and for

that reason her comparisons told Virginia little about her own positive qualities. Instead, efforts to imitate and compare served to remind Virginia of what she lacked, since she inevitably did lack certain capabilities of a sister three years older than she and one whose temperament was somehow more stable and placid. (Jean O. Love 258-259)

Virginia placed herself in unfair comparison with her older sister. That comparison illustrated what Virginia lacked without showing what good features she had.

There are several aspects of Virginia's behaviors that illustrate how much Virginia was really imitating Vanessa in everything. For instance, one funny example was Virginia's habit of writing while she was standing. Since Vanessa planned to be a painter, she started to paint early in her childhood. Also, since painting required the painter to stand and paint, Vanessa used to stand while she was painting. Virginia watched her ideal sister and thought that to be great like Vanessa, she herself should write while she was standing. According to Quentin Bell:

Her manner of working was unusual. She had a desk standing about 3 feet 6 inches high with a sloping top; it was so high that she had to stand to her work. For this peculiar method of operation she advanced various reasons but it would seem that her principal motive was the fact that Vanessa, like many painters, stood to work in order to be able to move away from and look at her canvas. This led Virginia to feel that her own pursuit might appear less arduous than that of her sister unless she set matters on a footing of

equality, and so for many years she stood at this strange desk and, in a quite unnecessary way, tired herself. (Quentin Bell. 1: 73)

Also, when Virginia wrote letters to Vanessa, she used an intimate language: "she wrote poignant, often passionate letters to Vanessa, to maintain a sense of their intimacy" (Love 324). Therefore, Virginia's loneliness after the marriage of Vanessa was extreme. It seemed to her that she had lost a close brother and sister at the same time.

Virginia Woolf's Passing to Adulthood:

In spite of all the previous tragedies and sad childhood incidents, Virginia managed to pass through these events and transformed from childhood to adulthood without extreme personality damage. Jean O. Love illustrates how Virginia passed this stage of her life by stating:

Perhaps it is more accurate to say only that her childhood was technically at an end. Her childhood continued vividly present in her mind for the remainder of her life; its happy and tragic themes became a main focus of her fiction and her major personal preoccupation. Therefore, by 1907, Virginia's childhood and past had effectively become her future and her destiny. She would of course change as she lived out and realized her destiny, but she was never to escape her childhood completely. (Love 325)

It seems that Virginia physically passed childhood's stage, but mentally she was still harmed by her unresolved childhood issues. Those unresolved issues kept revealing themselves through her literary works, and the next chapters will explore how these issues manifested in *Mrs. Dalloway*.

CHAPTER FOUR: The Similarities between Clarissa Dalloway and Virginia Woolf

When Woolf wrote *Mrs. Dalloway* she revealed, whether consciously or unconsciously, aspects of her personal life. There are several major and minor similarities that can be found between the character Clarissa and the author of the novel, which reveal Woolf's unsolved problems. In addition, major similarities can be observed between Clarissa's husband, Richard Dalloway, and Virginia's husband, Leonard Woolf. Virginia's romantic interest in women is embodied in Clarissa's feeling for Sally Seton. Woolf also portrayed her old love affair with Lytton Strachey, one of her old friends whom she expected to marry, in Clarissa's relationship with Peter Walsh. The connection between these characters and elements of Woolf's real life reveals that she used the novel to express her inner feelings and some unsolved issues of her past and present.

Richard Dalloway and Leonard Woolf:

There are some major similarities between Clarissa and Virginia that suggest that Clarissa in *Mrs. Dalloway* represents Virginia herself. One major similarity is that Clarissa's husband, Richard Dalloway, shares characteristics with Leonard Woolf. Mr. Richard Dalloway appears briefly in Virginia's first novel *The Voyage Out* as an enthusiastic man who is a member of Parliament. Virginia presents Richard in *Mrs. Dalloway* as a conservative husband who cares for his loving wife. She describes him as a man with a "simple mind." In his youth he was "a fair young man, rather awkward" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 35).

Richard's character is largely based on Leonard Woolf's personality. Through Richard's characteristics, Virginia likely intended to show that

Leonard is a good man who cares a lot for his wife and she reveals how she feels grateful for his attention. When Virginia met Leonard, he was "in his late twenties, an employee of the Colonial Civil Service in Ceylon" (Hermione Lee 293). Leonard became, as Hermione Lee said, "more and more ambivalent, politically schizophrenic, an anti-imperialist who enjoyed the flesh-pots of imperialism" (Lee 293). He was interested in politics, just like Richard, and Leonard was a writer, just like Virginia. By the end of 1911, he started to enjoy being with Virginia: "he continually sought Virginia's company.... Thus for the last three months of 1911 Leonard and Virginia saw a great deal of each other, and Leonard found himself falling deeply in love. She obviously liked him, but what her liking amounted to was clear neither to herself nor to him, and his doubts as to how strong her feelings were prevented him from expressing his own" (Quentin Bell 1: 180). Leonard's closest friend Lytton Strachey was the one who suggested and encouraged Leonard to marry Virginia. As Hermione Lee states in a letter from Strachey to Leonard: "if you came and proposed she'd accept you. She really would" (Lee 299). Leonard asked Virginia to marry him on January 11, 1912, but Virginia needed more time to decide. According to Quentin Bell, after his proposal there were several letters from Leonard to Virginia that were full of love. In his letters, he asked her to reply to his proposal because his business depended on her decision. On the other hand, it seems that Virginia was not sure about her feelings toward Leonard. She kept asking him to give her more time to find her way to love him.

According to Hermione Lee, there were some factors that affected Virginia's decision. The main reason was that after a couple of months she would turn thirty. Besides, Virginia was not certain of her feelings after she

survived her second breakdown. Also, Virginia compared her life to Vanessa's which was, as Virginia fears, "to be 29 and unmarried—to be a failure—childless—insane too, no writer" (Lee, 302). On the other hand, Vanessa had "a husband, two children, a promising career as a painter" (Hermione Lee 302). With some hesitation, Virginia accepted Leonard's proposal after Vanessa's encouragement. As she and Leonard got to know each other, all of Virginia's worries disappeared. They married on August 10, 1912. Their relations, just like the relations between Clarissa and Richard, were based on love and mutual respect. As Quentin Bell describes it: "they had discovered that their personalities were complementary, their sympathies extraordinarily close. Their love and admiration for each other, based as it was upon a real understanding of the good qualities in each, was strong enough to withstand of the major and the minor punishments of fortune" (Quentin Bell 2 : 5).

Leonard loved Virginia in the same way Richard loves Clarissa in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Richard loves his wife very much, but this love is passionless. He buys flowers for Clarissa and plans to tell her that he loves her. He is very certain that he will tell her that when he sees her. However, when he meets her, he forgets: "What was he going to say?... he stood for a moment as if he were about to say something; and wondered what? Why? There were the roses" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 66). Even though he is not a passionate lover, he really cares for his wife, especially her health:

He returned with a pillow and a quilt.

"An hour's complete rest after luncheon," he said. And went.

How like him! He would go on saying "An hour's complete rest after luncheon" to the end of time.... It was like him to take what doctors

said literally; a part of his adorable simplicity, which no one had to the same extent." (*Mrs. Dalloway* 67)

Clarissa appreciates his kindness. Their love is expressed in mutual respect, care, understanding, and appreciation of each other. They may not say "I love you," but they show their love by actions, like when Richard buys roses for Clarissa. Virginia implies that Leonard, too, usually does not express his love in words, but shows it with actions. In one of her letters she writes: "I write one sentence—the clock strikes—Leonard appears with a glass of milk" (Quentin Bell 1: 32). Leonard was taking care of Virginia during her periods of illness. His first priority was Virginia's well-being, not his own.

Clarissa claims that she appreciates Richard for giving her her own space, a private world of her own. As Clarissa states: "And there is a dignity in people; a solitude; even between husband and wife a gulf; and that one must respect, thought Clarissa, watching him open the door; for one would not part with it oneself, or take it, against his will, from one's husband without losing one's independence, one's self-respect—something, after all, priceless" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 67). Similar thoughts belong to Virginia herself. Hermione Lee indicates that Virginia realized while they were courting that "if Virginia was to marry Leonard, she would need a great deal of solitude and privacy" (Hermione Lee 306). Clarissa, as well as Virginia, values her privacy; she needs a world of her own that nobody interferes with, even her life's partner.

Although Clarissa's marriage is successful, there is something missing in it. Clarissa knows that something is missing, and she wonders what it is. Even though she does not know exactly what it is, she feels that it is her fault. This

is illustrated in a scene when Clarissa enters her private room to prepare her dress for the party:

she went upstairs,.... She pierced the pincushion and laid her feathered yellow hat on the bed. The sheets were clean, tight stretched in broad white bands from side to side. Narrower and narrower would her bed be.... So the room was an attic; the bed narrow.... suddenly there came a moment... when, through some contraction of this cold spirit, she had failed him. And then at Constantinople, and again and again. She could see what she lacked. It was not beauty; it was not mind. It was something central which permeated; something warm which broke up surfaces and rippled the cold contact of man and woman, or of women together.

(Mrs. Dalloway 18)

Even though they are a couple, Clarissa implies that there is no complete sexual enjoyment between her and her husband. She knows that it is not his fault and that is why she blames herself. Also, the narrow bed implies that she has her own bed, and she sleeps alone. She has been sleeping there since catching influenza, and she is still there. The separation in bed implies the separation between them in spirit and a separation in their sexual life.

In fact, the feeling of fault experienced by Clarissa is the same feeling that Virginia felt, too. Quentin Bell asserts that both Virginia and Leonard were aware of Virginia's lack of sexual attraction towards men: "Even before her marriage, they must have expected that Virginia would not be physically responsive, but probably they hoped that Leonard, whose passionate nature was never in question, could affect a change" (Quentin Bell 1: 5). Vanessa,

Virginia's older sister, explains Virginia's condition by saying that "she never had understood or sympathized with sexual passion in men. Apparently she still gets no pleasure at all from the act" (Quentin Bell 1: 6). Quentin Bell assumes that Virginia's coldness might have been associated with the abuse of her half-brother George Duckworth. As explored in Chapter Three, after the death of Virginia's mother, Duckworth became very close with her and inacted some sort of sexual behavior which "left Virginia with deep aversion to lust" (Quentin Bell 1: 6). However, Quentin Bell claims that there might be another reason:

I think that the erotic element in her personality was faint and tenuous. Of the two women who knew her best, one as we have seen, said that she had no understanding of sexual passion in men, the other—Vita Sackville West—was to note many years later that "She dislikes the possessiveness and love of domination in men. In fact she dislikes the quality of masculinity." (Quentin Bell 1: 6)

Therefore, Virginia's sexual coldness was the reason for Virginia's feeling of fault. That coldness revealed itself through the similar feelings of Clarissa in *Mrs. Dalloway*. In addition, Leonard and Virginia were not having an intimate sexual relationship even though they loved each other.

Sally Seton and Madge Vaughan:

Although the cause of Virginia's sexual coldness might be any of the reasons previously discussed, Virginia implied in Clarissa's character that Clarissa has a passion only for women. Clarissa is attracted to women more than men, which is one of the major similarities between Virginia and Clarissa. The woman whom Clarissa feels passionate for is Sally Seton. Clarissa's

closeness with Sally echoes Woolf's intimate relationship with Madge Vaughan.

Sally Seton was Clarissa's closest friend when she was eighteen: "an attractive creature, handsome, dark with the reputation in those days of great daring and he [Peter Walsh] used to give her cigars which she smoked in her bedroom" (Virginia 34). Clarissa remembered her relationship with Sally, and she described it by stating: "The strange thing, on looking back, was the purity, the integrity, of her feeling for Sally" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 19). There is a remembered moment that clarifies their intimacy when "Sally stopped; picked a flower; kissed her on the lips" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 20). Clarissa's intimate relationship with Seton indicates her interest in women, like Virginia, who also had relationships with women. In fact, the character of Sally Seton was inspired by one of Virginia's closest friends named Madge Vaughan. In this regard, Quentin Bell states, "V[irginia] told me the history of her early loves—Madge Symonds who is Sally in *Mrs. Dalloway*" (Bell 1: 61). Hermione Lee indicates that Virginia "adored" Madge" (Lee 159). Hermione Lee argues that the relationship between Virginia and Madge was a love relation, just like between Clarissa and Sally Seton:

To Virginia, at that time, Madge was a romantic figure. She was beautiful, intense, unconventional, dashing, and sympathetic with ambitions as a writer.... She wanted talk and adventure and people.... But the wildness was quashed. Like Sally Seton in *Mrs. Dalloway*, the passionate, outrageous young woman turned into a solid, middle-class matron. (Lee 159)

There are several other reasons which may have made Woolf romantically interested in Madge, and other women, more than men. These reasons include Virginia's sexual problems caused by her half brothers' abuse and her desire for her mother's sympathy. Jean O. Love argues that because of Virginia's half brothers' abuse, she ran away from relationships with men to more sympathetic relationships with women. As Love indicates: "Virginia's fear and her desire to escape from men made it increasingly unlikely that she could learn to love a man fully or sexually. Correspondingly, in late adolescence Virginia began to find females even more sympathetic and began turning more than ever to them for emotional satisfaction" (Love 291). Love even suggested that Virginia, after her mother died and before she was attracted to any woman, was almost in love with her sister Vanessa. Therefore, Virginia was looking for women who could mother her:

There can be no doubt that she was still acting primarily out of her longing for her mother but Virginia was, after all, past puberty and thus biologically mature, even if socially and personally quite immature, especially in sexual matters. Thus her needs, motives, and expectations of women had become more complicated than when she was a child. (Love 291)

Love indicates that Virginia was pushed away from having relationships with men as a result of her half brothers' abuse. At the same time, Virginia was motivated toward having relationships with women because of her unsatisfied infantile feeling. Therefore, Virginia's primary attention was toward the closest woman in her life: Vanessa. Love argues:

Virginia was acting out of long years of a close and, as she later acknowledged, erotic attachment to Vanessa. She also acted on the basis of skills acquired in "flirting" with Vanessa and "courting" her attentions. She had developed few skills in trying to attract men, and said she found courtship between the sexes difficult to comprehend. (Love 291)

However, when Vanessa started a love affair with Jack Hills, Virginia felt jealous and moved her attentions toward Madge Vaughan.

Jean O. Love indicates that Virginia's love of Vaughan was a result of Vanessa's love affair with Stella's husband, Jack. Since Virginia always tried to imitate her sister Vanessa, and since Vanessa fell in love with Jack, Virginia too fell in love with her closest friend Madge (Love 291). "When Virginia was fifteen or sixteen, she began a half-passionate attachment to Madge Vaughan (the wife of Virginia's cousin) that continued for more than a decade. She became attracted to Madge, especially by her sympathetic and motherly treatment. Later, after Madge's children were born, Virginia called Madge 'Mama Vaughan' and 'Foster Parent,' and referred to herself as Madge's 'infant' " (Love 291). So, it seems that Virginia's interest in women had a hidden motif behind it: that of hungering after maternal feelings. In other words, Virginia struggled with an inner psychological problem caused by a lack of a mother's love, so Virginia looked for a mother's love in other women.

Quentin Bell also illustrates Virginia's motives that explain her attraction to women: "Like Madge Vaughan, Violet Dickinson fulfilled a need. She provided sympathy and stability at a time when it was badly needed" (Bell 1:

83). That explains why Woolf loved older women, mostly in their thirties, while she was eighteen. As Hermione Lee notes:

There was a pattern to these friendships. The women were unusual, and they were all older. In 1900, when Virginia was eighteen, Janet Case was thirty-eight, Violet Dickinson was thirty-five, Kitty Maxse was thirty-three, Nelly Cecil was thirty-two, Madge Vaughan was thirty one, and Emma Vaughan was twenty-six. (Lee 158)

Furthermore, Jean O. Love gives another explanation of Virginia's motives:

She also shared many of her father's emotional attitudes toward her mother, which reinforced her tendencies to look to women (as he did) for fulfillment of emotional needs. Correspondingly, to some extent.... her deepest emotional attachments were to females—her mother and Vanessa—making it easier for her to look to women than to men for all kinds of love and emotional gratification....

Virginia's unsatisfied, unresolved infantile love.... caused Virginia all her life to search for someone who might be to her all that her mother was and, more important, all that she had never been to Virginia. (Love 282-283)

Jean O. Love also illustrates why it is important for the infantile need to be satisfied for a person to grow up sexually in an ideal way:

her infantile need for her mother was fundamental also because until it was resolved (and of course that time never came), Virginia could not easily move ahead to more mature forms of love and sexual gratification. So much has been made of the Oedipal and

Electra attachment of children for parents of the opposite sex that it is often overlooked that the first emotional attachment and first "love affair" of both girls and boys is with the person who mothers them and that the first family romance antedates by some years the Oedipal and Electra attachment. It is often overlooked, too, that a girl needs to resolve, as Virginia could not, the emotional attachment to the mother in order to form an Electra attachment to the father. If the attachment to the mother is not resolved, a likely outcome is precisely what occurred with Virginia—the continued search for the mother and difficulty in learning to find men attractive. Another probable outcome is a continued need for relatively infantile expressions of love, rather than mature sexual expressions of it. (Love 183)

Both Quentin Bell and Love demonstrate that Virginia admired women to satisfy her infantile need of a mother, because Virginia did not have enough of her mother's attention. Her mother was always too busy and then she died young, and that is why Virginia had to learn to be independent. However, she could not mature in an ideal way. Therefore, it is possible that she became interested in women to deal with her unresolved psychological problems which found their way into *Mrs. Dalloway* in a relationship between Clarissa and Sally Seton.

Furthermore, a closer look at Virginia's attraction to women reveals another interesting fact: the women that Virginia admired had qualities which Virginia did not have but wished to have. Similarly in *Mrs. Dalloway* Clarissa lists Sally Seton's features that she admires: "But all that evening she could

not take her eyes off Sally. It was an extraordinary beauty of the kind she most admired, dark, large-eyed, with that quality which, since she hadn't got it herself, she always envied—a sort of abandonment" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 19). Behind her admiration for Sally's beauty is a longing for more courage and features which Sally has and which Clarissa wished to have. Clarissa thinks that by accompanying Sally she can achieve her dreams. Virginia feels the same way as Clarissa. That explains why Violet "attracted Virginia, I surmise, because she was so very unlike her; she had breezy masculine assurance, a cheerful imperturbable balance, she was a lofty and reassuring tower of strength. But she must have had something more than strength, a certain real greatness of mind and character" (Quentin Bell 1: 83). In fact, Violet helped Virginia in her early steps as a writer and participated in shaping Virginia's talent. So it seems Virginia's love relationships with women were based on either the infantile need for love or the desire to be more like them.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia explains Clarissa's feelings for Sally Seton: "The strange thing, on looking back, was the purity, the integrity, of her feeling for Sally. It was not like one's feeling for a man. It was completely disinterested, and besides, it had a quality which could only exist between women, between women just grown up. It was protective" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 19). Clarissa explains all that she feels for Seton and summarizes it in one word, "protective." Since Clarissa is the double of Virginia, that indicates that Virginia's relations with women were often based on the need for protection. Also, since the mother is often the basic source of protection for any child, Virginia's mother formed the source of safety for Virginia, too, and that is exactly what Jean O. Love tries to communicate: " 'World' was a word she

used in many ways, for example, as a metaphor for personality: she herself was a small world within a larger, safe happy world 'created' by her mother" (Love 220). Therefore, all Virginia's relationships with women reveal one of the unsolved problems buried deep in her consciousness. Whether Virginia was aware of that reason or not, the fact is that she was looking for her mother's love.

Peter Walsh and Lytton Strachey:

One of the major similarities that Virginia and Clarissa have is their young loves. Clarissa's relationship with Peter Walsh echoes Woolf's relationship with Lytton Strachey. When Peter and Clarissa were young, he was Clarissa's close friend with whom she shared the same interests. He was a man of great expectations but ended up as a failure without doing any of the things that he promised to do. They were in love with each other and were going to get married, but Clarissa ended their relationship and decided to marry Richard even though she loved Peter. Clarissa thought that the marriage should have "a little license, a little independence there must be between people living together day in day out in the same house which Richard gave her.... But with Peter everything was different. And it was intolerable.... she had to break with him or they would have been destroyed, both of them ruined" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 5). Clarissa thought that it would be wrong to marry Peter because in their marriage she would have to share everything with him. Richard, however, could give her private space. In several parts of the novel, Clarissa repeats to herself that her choice was right. Love between Peter and Clarissa made Richard feel jealous: "Richard was nearly driven mad by him, and as for Peter Walsh, he had never to this day forgiven her for liking him" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 5).

On the other hand, Clarissa felt jealous, too (which proves that she still liked him), when she found out that he got married on his way to India.

Clarissa's relationship with Peter reflects Virginia's love relationships with men before she married Leonard. During her life, Virginia had a few marriage proposals. One of those men shared some similarities with Peter. In fact, Peter in *Mrs. Dalloway* was inspired by Lytton Strachey. Virginia seemed to wish that she had had a deep love affair with one man of her childhood. Therefore, she used Lytton, who seems just like Peter, to form the youthful love in the novel.

Lytton was a close friend who proposed to Virginia. As Quentin Bell notes, "he was intimate with and confided in Virginia and Vanessa" (Bell 1: 166). Hermione Lee describes how their relationship started: "They had grown intimate since Thoby's death. Once she got used to his silences and his physical peculiarities, his mixture of shyness, vanity and desire to be liked, she found him charming, impressive, affectionate and interesting.... But from about 1908 he became one of the most important people in her life. Both, in the matter of friendship, were as tenacious as they were treacherous. This was one of several similarities between them" (Lee 251).

Also, Hermione Lee adds a feature that Lytton and Peter share: "Part of the pleasure they took in each other was the pleasure of 'tattle' (or what has been called 'tit-for-tattle')" (Hermione Lee 254). "Tattle" is a word which Virginia and her sister Vanessa used to refer to all the gossiping and sharing secrets about other people. Virginia liked to "Tattle" only with her close friends, including Lytton. The same tendency can be found in *Mrs. Dalloway* between the three friends Clarissa, Sally, and Peter: "She wrote him all that summer long letters; how they talked of him, how Clarissa burst into tears! It was an

extraordinary summer—all letters, scenes, telegrams—arriving at Bourton early in the morning, hanging about till the servants were up; appealing tête-à-tête with old Mr. Parry at breakfast" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 36). This is a clue that suggests Woolf was thinking of Lytton.

Just like Clarissa and Peter in *Mrs. Dalloway*, who were to be married, Virginia and Lytton's friends expected them to marry each other: "By the end of 1908, Virginia and Lytton themselves were the object of speculation. Virginia wrote to Clive, of Lytton: 'You will be glad to hear that I am not in love with him, nor is there any sign that he is in love with me.' Vanessa then wrote to Clive, of Virginia: 'I think that she will most likely have married Lytton in less than 2 years, or at any rate be practically engaged to him.' Lytton wrote to Leonard Woolf: 'Don't be surprised if you hear one day—I don't know that you ever will—that I've married Virginia!'... Their proposal scene is often read as a comic interlude, a 'ludicrous' aberration on both their parts" (Lee 255). Virginia saw the same thing in Lytton that Clarissa saw in Peter, which eventually would make their marriage unhappy: "the marriage would have been a disaster for her. 'If I'd married him [Lytton], I caught myself thinking, I should have found him querulous. He would have laid too many ties on one, and repined a little if one had broken free.... Had I married Lytton I should never have written anything.... He checks and inhabits in the most curious way' " (qtd. in Lee 256). Like Clarissa, Virginia thought that her life with Lytton would not be happy even though she was in love with him. This inner struggle is revealed in the relationship between Clarissa and Peter. Clarissa, like Virginia, refused a proposal because the man involved did not give her enough freedom. In other words, Peter thought that the married couple should share

everything, so in her marriage with Peter she would not have the freedom she wanted. Virginia felt the same as her fictional double. She thought that if she married Lytton, he would not give her the freedom to write what she wanted. She felt Lytton would be checking whatever she was doing and would know about everything she did, including her writing.

Virginia struggled with her decision not to marry Lytton even though she loved him. Quentin Bell claims that Strachey could have been a homosexual while, at the same time, Clive Bell describes him as a womanizer, which makes the truth unclear: "The picture that we have of him at this period when he was thought of as a possible husband for Virginia is a dark one" (Quentin Bell 1: 129). However, Virginia liked Lytton for his skills as a writer, which means that Virginia, being a writer herself, valued those skills in others: "she liked him very much; in a way she feared him and perhaps she might—in a way come to love him" (Quentin Bell 1: 131).

Whether he was a homosexual or not, Virginia caught his attention. Throughout Virginia's process of writing *Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia remembered her relationship with Strachey. This is just like Clarissa when she remembers Peter. Virginia writes, "Let me have one confessional where I need not boast. Years & years ago, after the Lytton affair, I said to myself, walking up the hill at Beireuth, never pretend that the things you haven't got are not worth having; good advice I think. At least it often comes back to me" (*Diary 2*: 221). Even though Strachey was not the only man who proposed to her, at the time he was the only one that she really wanted to marry.

On February 17, 1909, Lytton came to 29 Fitzroy Square, proposed to Virginia, and was accepted. However, after that, Lytton realized that his proposal had been a mistake. Quentin Bell explains Lytton's situation:

Lytton realized that the idea, an idea which he had been meditating for some time and saw as a solution to the problems of his very complicated private life, was in fact no solution at all. He discovered that he was alarmed by her sex and by her virginity; he was terrified by the notion that she might kiss him. He perceived that his imagined "paradise of married peace" was an impossibility; it would not do at all. He was horrified by the situation in which he had placed himself, all the more so because he believed that she loved him. (Quentin Bell 1: 141)

Quentin Bell argues that Lytton's motive in marrying Virginia was that their marriage would be a solution of his own problems. Besides, he thought that Virginia was in love with him while he was not deeply in love with her. On the other side, Quentin Bell believes that Virginia was not falling in love with Lytton, but she just wanted to get married. She loved Lytton especially because of his literary genius, which was really important to her, and that is why she accepted his proposal without too much hesitation. Quentin Bell describes Virginia's situation and her motives to accept the proposal:

After a second meeting, at which he finally declared that he could not marry her, while she assured him that she did not love him, they contrived a gentle disengagement.... She still considered the possibility of marrying him. She had told Lytton that she was not in love with him. Nor was she, I think. She might accept his personality

but not, when it came to the push, his person. She had always been, as she was later to admit, a sexual coward and her only experience of male carnality had been terrifying and disgusting. But she did want to be married; she was twenty-seven years old, tired of spinsterhood, very tired of living with Adrian and very fond of Lytton. She needed a husband whose mind she could respect....

(Quentin Bell 1: 141)

Virginia wanted to get married by that age in order to be like Vanessa—married and with children. "But if she continued, as I think she did and as Vanessa certainly did, to hope for such marriage, her expectations must have been faint when once Lytton's offer had been withdrawn. It was, certainly, a deeply disappointing and saddening experience" (Quentin Bell 1: 142).

Quentin Bell argues that she did not love Lytton but she still accepted Lytton's proposal just to be married.

However, if Virginia just wanted to be married, why did she refuse the proposal of Edward Hilton, who proposed after Lytton? Even though Virginia saw that Hilton had good character and "was attracted to Virginia but never—I should suppose—was deeply in love with her; she accepted his attentions with pleasure and yet, when it came to the point, thought him a little unsubtle....

Somehow his perfections bored Virginia; he had all the good qualities and yet failed to be more than interesting. But he was interesting and for some years she saw a good deal of him and felt that it might be nice to be married to him or at all events to be proposed to by him" (Quentin Bell 1: 131). It seems that they liked each other, that they would have made a nice married couple, and at the same time, Virginia would have had the opportunity to accomplish the

goal of being married and having children just like Vanessa. However, Virginia did not accept his proposal as she did previously with Lytton's: "she knew she did not love him and that she could not marry him. It was perhaps as a kind of excuse that she told him she could marry no one but Lytton" (Quentin Bell 1: 144). Virginia said that she preferred Lytton more than the other men. In one of her letters to a friend, Vanessa wrote about Virginia: "I think she would like very much to marry, and certainly she would like much better to marry Lytton than anyone else" (qtd. in Quentin Bell 1: 144). This statement implies that Virginia loved Lytton in contrast to Quentin's assertion. Besides her refusal of Hilton's proposal, a good opportunity for a woman who wanted to get married, she still remembered Lytton's affairs years later, which shows how much she really loved him. This is why she chose him as a model for Peter Walsh.

Another clue that Virginia loved Lytton are Clarissa's feelings for Peter; Peter was the only one whom Clarissa really wanted to marry. Virginia describes Clarissa's emotion after she remembers how she ended her relationship with Peter in the past: "She looked at Peter Walsh; her look, passing through all that time and that emotion, reached him doubtfully; settled on him tearfully; and rose and fluttered away, as a bird touches a branch and rises and flutters away. Quite simply she wiped her eyes" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 24). This passage shows that the old Clarissa still has deep affection for Peter and when she looks at him in the present, she feels a deep sadness for their old love that ended with separation in the past. Her tears prove her inner sorrow for that lost love. That sorrow in *Mrs. Dalloway* reveals part of Virginia's love for Lytton.

However, if Peter partly represents Lytton, why did Virginia make him look like a failure? In fact, since Virginia wrote *Mrs. Dalloway* as a way to deal with her unsolved problems, it shows how she was, in a way, jealous of Lytton after he broke off the engagement with her. In contrast to Peter, Lytton turned out to be a successful writer whose reputation was, at that point, even better than Virginia's. Quentin Bell writes that: "Clive... declared that Virginia was jealous—absurdly and disgracefully jealous—of Lytton's success. If she was, she didn't tell her diary, but probably she did feel a pang" (Quentin Bell 2: 55). Quentin Bell illustrates that Clive, Virginia's brother in law, during that time was in a good friendship with Virginia and used to tease her, saying Lytton was more famous than she was. Once Virginia and Clive were among a group of people in public and someone asked Virginia, " 'Do you really know Lytton Strachey?' rather than, 'Are you *the* Virginia Woolf?' " (Quentin Bell 2: 55). Clive mentioned that Virginia felt jealous when that person did not recognize her and only asked about Lytton. Therefore, in *Mrs. Dalloway*, it is possible that Virginia made Peter look like a failure because that would satisfy her own feelings of jealousy. At the same time, she kept feeling content with her marriage to Leonard. That is because throughout *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa keeps trying to convince herself that she was right not to marry Peter, and her decision to marry Richard was a correct choice. So, Woolf used the novel to convince herself that she, too, made the right choice in marrying Leonard.

Minor Similarities between Virginia and Clarissa:

Clarissa Dalloway, Woolf's main character, is portrayed as a 52 year old, upper middle-class woman. Virginia endowed Clarissa with some features of her childhood friend Kitty Maxse, like her natural charm and the manner to

stand very upright. However, she also resembles Woolf. Virginia described Clarissa as "grown very white since her illness... that might be her heart, affected, they said, by influenza" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 3). Clarissa, like Virginia, had severe influenza that affected her heart. Virginia had influenza after finishing her novel *Jacob's Room* and before writing *Mrs. Dalloway* that weakened her heart: "she was struck down with influenza and was back in bed for a fortnight . . . her temperature too behaved very abnormally. She was sent to two specialists, one of whom said that her heart was affected and that she had not long to live; another specialist pronounced it was her lungs" (Quentin Bell 2: 84). However, it seems that it was indeed her heart because after that, she had frequent visits by a doctor called Dr. Harrington Sainsbury, "a distinguished heart specialist of 52 Wimpole Street, to whom VW had been referred by Dr. Fergusson" (*Diary* 2: footnote, 170). Virginia refers to his visit in her diary on 6 March 1922 as she states: "I have walked for 10 minutes only, according to the directions of Dr. Sainsbury, who after examining me for an hour said—many things... " (*Diary* 2: 170). This entry shows that Virginia's heart, just like Clarissa's, was affected by influenza.

Furthermore, according to Love, Virginia's mother taught her daughter that life was certain to betray her just when it seemed very promising (63). Virginia believed this idea, which is immediately evident from Clarissa's opening thoughts: "What a lark! What a plunge!... How fresh, how calm, stiller than this course, the air was in the early morning; like the flap of a wave... feeling as she did, standing there at the open window, that something awful was about to happen" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 3). Similarly when Clarissa hears the sound of Big Ben, she suddenly feels that something bad will happen. Virginia

had similar beliefs. When she finished her novels she felt happy, but soon her mood changed to sadness because she expected the worst to happen.

Virginia was affected by her mother's pessimistic beliefs, unconsciously feeling depressed whenever she saw the world around filled with joy and happiness.

Like her mother, she expected that life would betray her as soon as she showed her cheerful mood. Virginia's feelings found their way into *Mrs.*

Dalloway in the form of Clarissa's feelings; Clarissa also felt that something bad would happen because life seemed so cheerful and promising.

Moreover, Virginia and Clarissa chose to marry certain men over others and that choice affected their lives. Clarissa had to choose Richard instead of the love of her life, Peter. That is because she thought that her life with Walsh would be impossible while her life with Richard would be stable with a husband who is successful, understanding, and allows her to have what she wants. As Vereen M. Bell writes, "The choice between two men, Peter and Richard, has determined what kind of woman she would become" (Vereen M. Bell 55). Clarissa chose Richard, whom she was not passionately in love with, over Walsh and became an upper middle-class woman who gave parties to support her husband's politics and make people feel happy. On the other hand, Virginia, for some other reasons, which will be explained next, chose to marry Leonard, whom she was not passionately in love with at the beginning, but whom she tried to love by focusing on the good features of his personality. Although Virginia seemed inclined to marry Lytton, she rejected the marriage and decided to break their engagement.

Both Clarissa and Virginia cared for the social status of their respective families and tried to support their husbands by hosting parties. Psychoanalytic

critics would be interested that Virginia's interest in political status and her own social status is revealed through Clarissa's interests in having social gatherings to support her husband and raise their social status. Virginia states in her diary on March 6, 1923: "Then the social question rises between L and me. Are we becoming 'respectable'? Shall we dine with the Richmonds. L. says no.... I regret it seriously, this shutting of the door upon suburban studies. I love the chatter & excitement of other peoples houses. Have I not just said that it depresses me too? But then I wanted to meet Percy Lubbock & show myself off as a woman who can talk sense. & so on. I ask people here too often. In short I must take the social side into my own hands" (*Diary 2*: 237). It seems that Virginia wanted to socialize in popular circles which would help her husband too by meeting important people who were also interested in politics. She wanted to reach that position and never go lower than that. She thought that she could do it by dining with high-class people and hosting parties.

Clarissa did the same things: hosting parties and inviting high-class people. Upon his return from India, Peter describes Clarissa: "here she's been sitting all the time I've been in India; mending her dress; playing about; going to parties; running to the House and back and all that, he thought, growing more and more irritated, more and more agitated, for there's nothing in the world so bad for some women as marriage, he thought; and politics; and having a Conservative husband like the admirable Richard" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 23). Walsh implies that Clarissa is affected by her husband's political career. Vereen M. Bell argues that Clarissa and Virginia lost their personal identities for their husbands. Neither Virginia nor Clarissa fully became who they wanted to become. Clarissa became only Mrs. Dalloway. As Clarissa thinks in *Mrs.*

Dalloway: "this being Mrs. Dalloway; not even Clarissa anymore; this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 7). Virginia was in the same position; she is not Virginia anymore, but only Mrs. Woolf. Both of them lost part of themselves to the "process of life" (Vereen M. Bell 55).

Furthermore, one of the strong links that can be found in *Mrs. Dalloway* between Clarissa and Woolf is the loss of a sister. Clarissa has a sister named Sylvia who died from a falling tree. Clarissa's response to Sylvia's death obviously related to Woolf's sister Stella. "...you behaved like a lady. That phase came directly after Sylvia's death—that horrible affair. To see your sister killed by a falling tree (all Justine Parry's fault—all his carelessness) before your very eyes, a girl too on the verge of life, the most gifted of them, Clarissa always said, was enough to turn one bitter" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 43).

Psychoanalytic critics would be interested in this part of the novel because Sylvia's death likely revealed Virginia's hidden feelings. Virginia was unconsciously motivated by these feelings to describe Sylvia's character in that way. In fact, the incident's details, that Clarissa mentions how Sylvia's death affects her, and the way Sylvia dies tragically while blaming her father Justine Parry, is a clear reference to Virginia's loss of her half-sister Stella. As I have discussed in Chapter Three, according to Quentin Bell, Stella did an amazing job in taking care of Virginia and the Stephen family after the death of Virginia's mother. Sadly, Stella died only four months after her marriage. Stella had taken care of Virginia during her breakdown after the death of Virginia's mother. Stella made Virginia feel better, so Stella's death was a shock. She had taken on her mother's role and sacrificed herself for them. However, Sir Leslie selfishly delayed her marriage for eight months before she

died, because he wanted her to keep taking care of him and his children. That is why Virginia blamed her father, for forbidding Stella to marry and enjoy her life. Psychoanalytic critics would be interested in this scene because it shows Woolf's deepest thoughts; Woolf felt pity for her half-sister and blamed her father for that. Virginia thought that if Stella had married her husband Jack Hills as they planned, which was soon after their engagement, Stella would have been married for about one year and one month by the time she had died. Stella could have had a baby because at the moment of death she had been pregnant for four months. Virginia might still have had hidden anger for her father because Stella died too early as a result of his carelessness.

Also, Sylvia, with a name which means "woods," was killed by a tree falling on her, and this is similar to the way that Stella's father Herbert Duckworth died: "He reached up to the topmost branch of a tree to pick a fig for Julia; an abscess burst in his brain; he fell unconscious at his wife's feet and died within twenty four hours" (Jean O. Love 63). His sudden, tragic death deeply affected Virginia. Therefore, the way that Sylvia died is another hint that Sylvia clearly represents Stella.

The significant similarities between Woolf and Clarissa show how Woolf put much of herself into the character. Woolf also put her feelings into Clarissa and has her feel happy and relieved after the end of the Great War, like most of English Society. Clarissa's happiness derived from Virginia's happiness. The first pages of *Mrs. Dalloway* demonstrate Clarissa's feeling of relief that the war had finally ended: "For it was the middle of June. The war was over.... But it was over; thank Heaven—over" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 4). This relief reflects Virginia's actual feelings at the end of the war. As Quentin Bell notes:

her cousin, Fisher,...announced; "We've won the war today." She wrote in her diary: *Wednesday, October 30*: "we talked of peace: how the sausage balloons will be hauled down and gold coins dribble in; and how people will soon forget all about the war and the fruits of our victory will grow as dusty as ornaments under glass cases in lodging house drawing rooms." (Qtd. in Quentin Bell 2: 61-62)

Virginia felt truly happy because the times of war were very gloomy and depressing. She kept hearing the sound of bombs and guns very near, which forced her to change the place where she slept. Besides, one of her husband's brothers was killed in the war. According to Bell, she and her husband had to sleep in the kitchen:

On these occasions bedding and blankets were brought down and disposed in passages and pantries: Leonard would lie like a funerary image upon the kitchen table, Virginia lay beneath it. The servants had regular bunks, preferring to sleep below ground every night.... One of Leonard's brothers had been killed over there before Christmas.... Virginia felt uneasy and unhappy and it seemed to her there was an odd and unhealthy pallor in those days of spring sunshine. (Quentin Bell 2: 52-53)

Virginia had been afraid that her husband would have to go to war. That idea was especially fearful considering her mental illness. Leonard had to make a good excuse that would allow him to stay with his wife. As Quentin Bell states:

Leonard had decided that he was not a conscientious objector; he was therefore in immediate danger of being called to the colours.

This would undoubtedly have meant the end of all hopes of permanent recovery for Virginia. He suffered from trembling of the hands which prevented him from filling the tea cups with any ease on occasions, from signing his own name. Dr. Maurice Wright... must have known very well that the health of both his patients depended upon Leonard's ability to stay at home. He provided Leonard with a certificate which secured exemption by the medical board.... Virginia wrote on May 14, 1916 to Vanessa: "Leonard went to Craig who said that he would give him a certificate of unfitness on his own account, as well as mine." (Quentin Bell 2: 30)

Leonard got a certificate that proved his unsteady physical condition and which would allow him not to participate in hostilities. The doctors also believed Virginia would suffer from a severe mental breakdown if the army took him away from her. No wonder she was very happy to know that those sad days were gone and she could enjoy peaceful life again. That seems why Virginia made Clarissa feel happy after the War's ending.

One minor similarity Virginia and Clarissa share is their love of dogs. Clarissa had "that great shaggy dog" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 42), while Virginia had "her dog Gurth" (Quentin Bell 1: 107). According to psychoanalytic critics, loving dogs indicates deep maternal instincts. However, when Clarissa grew middle aged, she had a daughter, Elizabeth. Virginia, however, was childless. That is why she had this habit until she grew old, when she had "two dogs, Shot and Mike" (Quentin Bell 2: 20). Virginia was subconsciously motivated by her maternal instinct.

Another minor similarity that Woolf and Clarissa share is their love of London. As Woolf puts her love of London in the novel, she shows plenty of beautiful descriptions of the city and many nostalgic feelings that are derived from Virginia's love of it. For example, Woolf described how much she loved London as well as the buildings and the strikes of Big Ben at the beginning of the novel as she states: "There! Out it boomed. First a warning, musical; then the hour, irrevocable. The leaden circles dissolved in the air. Such fools we are, she thought, crossing Victoria Street. For Heaven only knows why one loves it so, how one sees it so, making it up, building it round one tumbling it, creating it every moment afresh" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 3). Clarissa in *Mrs. Dalloway* admired London's streets: "Bond Street fascinated her; Bond Street early in the morning in the seasons; its flags; its hops; no splash; no glitter" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 7). There are several descriptions of famous London streets, such as St. James Street, Oxford Street, Victoria Street, Bond Street, and Great Portland. Clarissa and Virginia admired the beauty of these streets. She liked every street, and she wanted the reader to recall the street's view while reading *Mrs. Dalloway*.

Another clue that shows Clarissa and Virginia's love of London is their love of hearing the strikes of Big Ben (a symbolic landmark of that city). Unlike most other novels, *Mrs. Dalloway* is not divided into separate chapters. Instead, Virginia divided her novel according to the frequency of hours, showing Big Ben's strikes. As Woolf writes in the novel: "The sound of Big Ben striking the half-hour struck out between them with extraordinary vigor, as if a young man, strong, indifferent, inconsiderate, were swinging dumb-bells this way and that" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 27). Virginia paid attention to that sound

whenever she heard it and that made her feel happy, just like Clarissa, who feels happy, too. By examining Virginia's diaries one notices that she was aware of Big Ben's sound. It seems that whenever she was writing a diary entry and heard the sound, she could not resist mentioning it. She mentioned the strikes of Big Ben several times in her diaries she wrote while writing *Mrs. Dalloway*. For example, on June 28, 1923 she wrote, "I make my frenzied dashes up to London, and leave, guiltily, as the clock strikes 11" (*Diary 2*: 251) and in her diary dated January 20, 1924 Virginia wrote of "the clock striking six..." (*Diary 2*: 287). Also, on September 15, 1924 she wrote "the clock strikes 7 and I wonder..." (*Diary 2*: 313), and, in a letter she wrote, "I write one sentence—the clock strikes—Leonard appears" (qtd. in Quentin Bell 2: 32). These examples show how much Virginia loved the strikes of Big Ben.

Also, Virginia loved London itself, although she could not explain the reason for her admiration. In fact, she was missing London and searching for a house during the process of writing *Mrs. Dalloway*, as she notes on November 3, 1923:

And now I've found a house at 35 Woburn Square. Yes, shall I write that address often? Certainly I hope to. For me it would be worth £500 a year in pleasure. Think of the music I could hear, the people I could see, easily, unthinkingly. And then comes before me the prospect of walking through the city streets.... Why this so obsesses my mind I don't know.... the squares with their regular houses, & their leafless trees, & people very clearly outlined filled me with joy. Indeed, it was so lovely in the Waterloo Road.... No: its

life; going on in these very beautiful surroundings. (*Diary 2: 272-273*)

Virginia's nostalgic feelings revealed themselves in these beautiful descriptions, though Virginia wonders why she "obsesses" over it that much. In the diary entry dated April 6, 1924 Virginia writes, "We walk home from theatres, through the entrails of London. Why do I love it so much?... for it is stony hearted, & callous" (Woolf's ellipses, *Diary 2: 298*). Another diary entry on May 26, 1924, also shows her love of London:

London is enchanting.... The nights are amazing, with all the white porticoes & board silent avenues. And people pop in & out, lightly, divertingly like rabbits... and I... watch the omnibus going & coming, & hear the old crazy organs. One of these days I will write about London, & how it takes up the private life & carries it on, without any effort. (*Diary 2: 301*)

This explains why it is simple to find that much sentimental affection for London in the pages of *Mrs. Dalloway*. Woolf loved London as it is, and during the time of writing *Mrs. Dalloway*, she missed London too much. As a result, it became a reason why she argued with Leonard over the possibility of their relocation to London. She tried to convince him that it was time to change the house. She succeeded and Leonard agreed, although he was concerned about Virginia's health condition. Leonard was afraid that life in London might harm Virginia's health (Quentin Bell 2: 21).

All these previous similarities found in *Mrs. Dalloway* link the novel to the author's life. With some close reading of *Mrs. Dalloway* and knowing the biography of Woolf, it is easy to discover many similarities between the lives

and personalities of Clarissa Dalloway and Virginia Woolf. These similarities do not make them identical, but elucidate the strong link between the character and the author, which reveal many private insights about the author's life. It seems that Clarissa Dalloway represents the double of the "sane" side of Woolf's life because Clarissa shares several major and minor similarities with Woolf during Woolf's stable mental periods. On the other hand, Septimus represents the double of the "insane" side of Virginia's life because Septimus shares several major and minor similarities with Woolf during her unstable mental periods, as I will illustrate in my next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: The Similarities between Virginia Woolf and Septimus

Smith

In contrast to the bright side of *Mrs. Dalloway* when we notice Clarissa preparing for her party, there is the dark side of the novel which relates to Septimus Smith's madness. In addition to the previously mentioned similarities between Clarissa and Virginia, there are several similarities between Septimus and Virginia. Since Clarissa is the double of the sane Virginia, Septimus is presented as the double of the insane Virginia. We find that Septimus shares many similarities with Virginia, such as his madness, his incompetent doctors, his inept treatment, and the suffering of his wife, Rezia. Rezia struggled to help Septimus just as Virginia's husband struggled to help Virginia during her periods of insanity.

Septimus is a poet and educated man. Virginia describes Septimus in *Mrs. Dalloway* as "Septimus Warren Smith, aged about thirty, pale-faced, beak-nosed, wearing brown shoes and shabby overcoat, with hazel eyes which had that look of apprehension in them which makes complete strangers apprehensive too" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 9). He was an educated man with a promising future. However, he participated in the war and that destroyed his future. He watched his superior officer Evans die in the war, which caused him to have a mental illness, at the time called shell shock. As Vereen M. Bell explains, "He suffers from shell shock, a traumatic stress disorder peculiar to the Great War because of the heavy artillery bombardments of troops pinned down in their trenches" (Vereen Bell 49-50). Although brought on by the war, Septimus' illness shares many symptoms with Virginia's illness like

"headaches, sleeplessness, fears, dreams—nerve symptoms" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 51).

While Clarissa and Septimus both represent Virginia, Virginia makes Clarissa 52 years old while Septimus is young, almost thirty. Virginia may have made Septimus in his thirties because Virginia was trying to focus on her mental illness during a specific time of her own life. One of the most darkest periods of illness which happened to Virginia happened in her early thirties, in 1913, and lasted until 1915. Virginia, in making Septimus represent the insane side of her life, was not illustrating her illness generally. Instead, she was presenting the severest level of her illness when she was almost "mad."

Giving Bipolar Disorder Symptoms to Septimus:

Like Woolf, Septimus suffered from symptoms of mental illness. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf reveals a detailed description of her suffering because of these symptoms through Septimus' suffering. She makes Septimus have most of her own symptoms in order to show how her illness is serious and severe. Also, Woolf struggled with her mental illness because no one could really understand what was wrong with her, which was the same problem for Septimus.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf, through the events of the novel, reinforced the irony of Dr. Holmes' sentence: "there was nothing whatever the matter with him" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 13). This sentence seems to be similar to the one Virginia used to hear from her doctors who did not really know the true nature of her illness or understand what she felt: "The doctors with their prescriptions of rest and food... and mulled wine at night, could at least relieve the symptoms of Virginia's disorder. It was something of which they understood almost as little

as did their great-grandfathers" (Bell 2: 13). Virginia struggled to describe what she felt. She illustrated it excellently in the character of Septimus in *Mrs.*

Dalloway. Hermione Lee states:

In all her fictional versions of her illness she expresses the horror of not being able to make sense to others. The fear of incomprehensibility links madness and writing. The voices she hears in her head create a new kind of fictional language.... It may well be that her extreme apprehension of the reviews of her novels is partly a fear of being thought crazy rather than brilliant. (Lee 190-191)

Since no one could really understand what she was struggling with, Virginia wrote *Mrs. Dalloway* to deal with that suffering and to express what was happening to her in her own way, through Septimus' struggle.

Just as with Virginia and Clarissa, there are striking similarities between Virginia and Septimus. Septimus shares symptoms of Virginia's mental illness. For instance, Septimus calls himself a criminal and blames himself for crimes he did not commit: "He had committed an appealing crime and been condemned to death by human nature. 'I have—I have,' he began, 'committed a crime—' 'He has done nothing wrong whatever,' Rezia assured the doctor" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 54). He cannot remember what crime he committed. As Thomas C. Caramagno writes, "Septimus is *guilty of having suffered*—a common depressive belief, one that common sense tells us should be correctable by appeals to the patient to reconsider his premorbid actions and feelings and to recognize that pain is not a sin" (Caramagno 221). Caramagno is connecting Septimus' illness to more common psychological disorders.

Similarly, Virginia, during her periods of madness, blamed herself and said that it was her fault. Leonard describes such instances: "She believed, for instance, that she was not ill, that her symptoms were due to her own 'faults' " (qtd. in Caramagno 240). An intense feeling of being at fault is a common symptom in bipolar disorder patients.

Furthermore, it seems that Virginia during her periods of mad episodes seemed a different person, just like Septimus. Rezia reflects on, "having left Septimus, who wasn't Septimus any longer.... He said people were talking behind the bedroom walls.... He saw things too—he had seen an old woman's head in the middle of a fern.... Suddenly he said, "Now we will kill ourselves...." (*Mrs. Dalloway* 37). Septimus, like Virginia, suffers from hallucinations, hears scary, imaginary voices, and has many thoughts about suicide. He has several uncontrolled daydreams and mostly they are scary. Most of the time he sees his friend Evans coming to him back from the dead. Even though Septimus looks fine and nothing is wrong with his body, he is mentally ill and approaching madness.

Both Woolf and Septimus consider suicide to solve their problems. When young Virginia tried to kill herself, it was just like Septimus. The way that Septimus killed himself by throwing himself out of the window is similar to Virginia's first suicide attempt: "She threw herself from a window, which, however, was not high enough from the ground to cause her serious harm" (Bell 1: 90). Near the novel's end, Virginia presents echoes of her own suicide attempt in Septimus' suicide scene:

There remained only the window, the large Bloomsbury-lodging house window, the tiresome, the troublesome and rather

melodramatic business of opening the window and throwing himself out.... (He sat on the sill.) But he would wait till the very last moment. He did not want to die. Life was good.... Coming down the staircase opposite an old man stopped and stared at him. Holmes was at the door. "I'll give it you!" he cried, and flung himself vigorously, violently down on to Mrs. Flimer's area railings. (*Mrs. Dalloway* 83)

Septimus is just like Virginia, who seemed to be a different person during her periods of illness. Leonard describes Virginia during her madness:

There were moments or periods during her illness, particularly in the second excited stage, when she was what could be called "raving mad" and her thoughts and speech became completely uncoordinated, and she had no contact with reality. Except for these periods, she remained all through her illness, even when most insane, terribly sane in three-quarters of her mind. The point is that her insanity was in her premises, in her beliefs. She believed, for instance, that she was not ill, that her symptoms were due to her own "faults"; she believed that she was hearing voices when the voices were her own imaginings; she heard the birds outside her window talking Greek; she believed that the doctors and nurses were in fact contradicted by reality. But given these beliefs as premises for conclusions and actions, all Virginia's actions and conclusions were logical and rational. (Qtd. in Caramagno 240.)

Caramagno adds analysis to Leonard's description of Virginia:

It is easy to identify Septimus' madness in this passage, but more important is Leonard's strategy: he not only describes Virginia's symptoms but argues that an underlying logic connects the sane Virginia and the insane Virginia. This is a cognitive explanation of delusions. He asserts that a core self still operates; only her beliefs have no objective basis. What Leonard gave Virginia was the sense that she was still *real*, that she survived beneath the crest and troughs, and that somehow the sane Virginia and the insane Virginia were related. (Caramagno 239-240)

Leonard's interpretation was very close to Virginia's own description of her condition during her periods of madness. She was still the same Virginia, but her ability to judge and perceive reality around her was different. Virginia experienced difficulties in perceiving the real world without any delusions, which made it difficult for her to judge correctly what she saw around her. So, she still explained and judged the reality around her in the same way but did so according to what she saw, or, it is perhaps better to say, what her delusional mind showed her. That is why her speech seemed to be illogical and strange.

Furthermore, Virginia's hallucinations, which she shares with Septimus, can be interpreted from different perspectives. Leonard describes Virginia during her illness as having some hallucinations about birds singing in Greek. Septimus shares the same hallucination in *Mrs. Dalloway* where sparrows: "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" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 14). Hermione Lee explains Septimus' hallucinations of the birds singing in Greek as being inspired by Virginia's hallucinations:

There is a gap between the inner, "incomprehensible" language of the ill person, and the language of witnesses and retrospect. For example, how should we read one of the best known stories of her illness, her aural hallucination of birds singing in Greek? She recalls these hallucinations in her 1922 memoir "Old Bloomsbury." Here she says that in 1904 Vanessa moved the family into Gordon Square "while I had lain in bed at Dickinsons' house at Welwyn thinking that birds were singing Greek choruses and that King Edward was using the foulest possible language among Ozzie Dickinson's azaleas." Leonard Woolf mentions these Greek-talking birds twice in his autobiography, but gives the impression they might have featured in later breakdowns.... in 1921, she had again been very ill; she was reading Greek for an essay to be called "On Not Knowing Greek"; and she was starting work on *Mrs. Dalloway*. In the essay, she talked about the impersonality of Greek plays, with their choruses, "the undifferentiated voices who sing like birds in the pauses of the wind.".... Meanwhile she is working on Septimus' hallucinations. (191-192 Lee)

Therefore, it seems that Septimus' hallucinations are based on Virginia's hallucinations. Through his hallucinations, Virginia is trying to explain the nature of her own. It seems that no one could understand what she saw during her severe periods of illness. Virginia had difficulty expressing what she felt and saw. That is why Hermione Lee explains it as "the difficulty of knowing

exactly what she was experiencing when she was 'mad,' and what to make of these experiences, is like the difficulty of explaining dreams" (Lee 192).

Virginia's doctors and Septimus' doctors:

In addition, the way which Dr. Holmes and Sir William Bradshaw treated Septimus was the same way doctors treated Virginia. The doctors treated them usually by giving them medicine for the headaches and sleeplessness, and by ordering them to rest and to eat a lot to avoid weight loss. Sir William Bradshaw would particularly: "order rest in bed; rest in solitude; silence and rest; rest without friends, without books, without messages; six months' rest; until a man who went in weighing seven stones six comes out weighing twelve" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 55). During breakdowns or severe depressed periods, it was typical for doctors to order patients the rest cure, where they would be isolated from their family and friends while seeing only doctors and nurses. Virginia had to take the rest cure twice in her life. According to Quentin Bell, Dr. Savage, the old friend of the family, thought that:

Virginia was very ill indeed, but I doubt whether he had more understanding of the causes or cure of her illness than Leonard. For him it was the same thing as usual, and the same remedy was prescribed. A few weeks in bed in Jean Thomas's Twickenham nursing home appeared to have cured her in 1910; it therefore seemed best, in spite of her own remonstrance, to repeat this treatment.... In retrospect both these recommendations seem disastrous. The rest cure proved worse than useless; it separated Virginia from the one person who could now help her. (Bell 2: 13)

The doctors did not understand the real nature of Virginia's illness as I mentioned previously; the rest cure in the nursing home was a depressing experience for Virginia. She was strongly attached to Leonard, but the doctor separated them from each other, expecting that it would be good for her health. Quentin Bell explains:

A few miserable shaky pencil-written notes to Leonard survive from that time.... Everything, she complained, seemed so cold, so unreal. Childlike, she burst out against the husband who had put her away in this awful place. Again and again they expressed to each other the hope that somehow the cure would work.... But this time... it did not work. She left Twickenham shaky, desperate, and so intolerably driven that the temptation to end it all by suicide became acute. (Bell 2: 13)

The doctor did not consider that during the previous breakdown in 1910, Virginia was not married yet, and there was no one she was attached to other than Vanessa. As a result, in *Mrs. Dalloway* Virginia expressed this feeling of separation between Leonard and herself in the separation between Septimus and Rezia by Sir William Bradshaw. Septimus

remembered Bradshaw said, "The people we are most fond of are not good for us when we are ill." Bradshaw said, he must be taught to rest. Bradshaw said they must be separated.

"Must," "must," why "must"? What power had Bradshaw over him? "What right has Bradshaw to say 'must' to me?" he demanded. (*Mrs. Dalloway* 81)

Therefore, the attempt to cure Virginia's illness during her breakdown in 1913 made her condition even worse, which convinced her and Leonard to change Dr. Savage for another doctor. Virginia's condition became, as Leonard described it in his "abbreviated records": "*worry*— 'Virginia good deal worried,' 'less worry,' —and *cheerful*, which word indeed occurs but rarely among the worries and the good and bad nights—nights when he had to give her veronal for her sleeplessness" (Bell 2: 14). Also, Vanessa described Virginia: "she seems to me pretty bad. She worries constantly and one gets rid of one worry only to find that another crops up in a few minutes. Then she definitely has illusions about people" (Bell 2: 14). Bell asserted that Virginia's condition became worse:

The pressures on Virginia did not relax: she thought people were laughing at her; she was the cause of everyone's troubles; she felt overwhelmed with a sense of guilt for which she should be punished....

It was one of the horrors of Virginia's madness that she was sane enough to recognize her own insanity, just as one knows that one is dreaming when one begins to wake. But she could not wake. (Bell 2: 15)

According to Bell, after this ineffective treatment, Leonard thought that they should see another doctor instead of Dr. Savage, but Virginia was afraid, just like Septimus who was also afraid when Rezia decided to see another doctor than Dr. Holmes. Leonard and Virginia saw Dr. Head and Dr. Write: "Dr. Write told Virginia that she must accept the fact that she really was ill; and in the afternoon Dr. Head repeated this opinion, saying that she would get

perfectly well again if she followed advice and re-entered a nursing home" (Bell 2: 15). Even though doctors saw what happened to Virginia after the last time she was sent to a nursing home, they still thought it was her only chance to cure the illness. They did not seem to understand the gravity of Virginia's condition. That is exactly what happened to Septimus when the doctors tried to force him to go to the rest homes, and separate him from his beloved Rezia.

As a result, Septimus hated the rest cure as much as Virginia who hated it until the last days of her life. Her hatred can be seen in the conversation between Virginia and the last physician she saw, named Octavia Wilberforce. During Virginia's examination she stopped and said to Wilberforce, "Will you promise, if I do this, not to order me a rest cure?" (Bell 2: 225). Similarly, Septimus hated the rest cure and preferred to die before the doctors would take him to that place. The cure was not good. It was a painful experience as the patient was separated from the most important person in his life.

Therefore, Virginia had a negative attitude toward doctors and it seems that she used Dr. Holmes to represent Dr. Savage. Hermione Lee suggests that Septimus' feeling toward these doctors represents Virginia's feeling, too:

Though a little toned down in the final Version of *Mrs. Dalloway*, Dr. Holmes is still a vigorous caricature of the kind of doctor who had been on her case.... The novel's most outraged satire is leveled against the Harley Street specialist, Sir William Bradshaw, who shuts up his lunatics in his nice "homes" in the interests of proportion and his lucrative bank balance. Her clinical diagnosis of his condition—a political reading, ahead of Foucault, of the conspiracy between social engineering, the restraint of the mentally

ill, and the patriarchal self-protection of the establishment—takes revenge on all the diagnoses that his type has made of her. (Lee 188-189)

So, through Septimus' struggles, Virginia attempted to describe her personal suffering. Virginia wrote that doctors treated her with food and rest but without giving any attention to her mental illness: "order rest in bed; rest in solitude; silence and rest; rest without friends, without books, without messages" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 55). Virginia was the only one who could understand her own condition. Her problem was that during her madness she was unable to explain correctly what she was seeing or feeling. Her illness was in her mind and presented the world to Virginia in a different way than did the normal mind. Her mind, with its acute ability to visualize images, presented some unreal things. It is just like Septimus when he tries to explain everything he sees in a scientific way, as when he says to himself: "But what was the scientific explanation (for one must be scientific above all things)? Why could he see through bodies, see into the future, when dogs will become men?" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 38). He tries to explain his delusion in a logical way but he does not know that his logic sounds insane. That was the problem that Woolf wanted the doctors to understand.

The Struggle of Virginia's Husband and Septimus' Wife:

In *Mrs. Dalloway* Virginia also captures the struggle of the patient's spouse, something she knows from her own life. Rezia, who is Septimus's wife, struggled in taking care of him which was inspired by the struggle of Leonard. It is not easy to be a partner of a patient with bipolar illness, and Leonard understood this.

Furthermore, one of the common problems of a patient's partner is that he or she is often not aware of how serious the bipolar illness is and how it is dangerous for the patient during periods of depression. Also, the partner of the bipolar patient has to put forth a great effort in taking care of the patient. Virginia expressed Rezia's suffering and efforts that she had to take to help her husband: "Look! Her wedding ring slipped—she had grown so thin. It was she who suffered—but she had nobody to tell" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 14). Rezia loved Septimus and he loved her too: "with her he was always very gentle. She had never seen him wild or drunk, only suffering sometimes through this terrible war, but even so, when she came in, he would put it all away. Anything, anything in the whole world, any little bother with her work, anything that struck her to say she would tell him, and he understood at once" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 81). However, Septimus' problems, caused by shell shock, became worse, and Rezia had to do her best to help him. She left her home and family and came to a strange country just for his sake. Nevertheless, his condition had not improved and became even worse. As a result, she had lost her happiness: "Since she was unhappy, for weeks and weeks now, Rezia had given meanings to things that happened, almost felt sometimes that she must stop people in the street, if they looked good, kind people, just to say to them 'I am unhappy' " (*Mrs. Dalloway* 46). She felt lonely and unhappy in her marriage as it did not seem normal anymore. However, she kept supporting her husband as a good spouse would, just as Leonard did.

Leonard, too, did not know how dangerous Virginia's illness was but still supported her until the last day of their marriage. Bell describes:

Leonard had undertaken the care of a woman who had twice been mad and had once attempted suicide without—as far as I can discover—any serious and wholly unequivocal warning of what he was letting himself in for. Neither Vanessa nor Adrian gave him a detailed and explicit account of Virginia's illnesses or told him how deadly serious they might be, until this greatest and worst crisis occurred. Her insanity was clothed, like some other painful things in that family, in a jest.... Thus, in effect if not in intention, Leonard was allowed to think of Virginia's illness as something not desperately serious, and he was allowed to marry her without knowing how fearful a care such a union might be. (Bell 2: 18)

Virginia expressed her husband's suffering and fears through Rezia's fears and feelings. Virginia showed how hard it was for Leonard to take care of her; he must have been depressed by her mental illness, which destroyed his expectations for a happy marriage.

Another similarity between the struggle of Leonard and Rezia was their common fear that their spouse might kill himself or herself at any moment. Rezia most of the time was afraid that her husband might kill himself: "All the little red and yellow flowers were out on the grass, like floating lamps he said, and talked and chattered and laughed, making up stories. Suddenly he said, 'Now we will kill ourselves' " (*Mrs. Dalloway* 37). This also illustrates Leonard's struggle when he took care of Virginia during her periods of insanity. Virginia could not be left by herself, even for one moment, because she could kill herself at any time. Once, Leonard had to leave Virginia with a friend to take care of her while he was out. Virginia was left alone for just a little time, and

her friend checked on her several times, but "at 6:30 Cox telephoned to him that she had found Virginia unconscious on her bed. He ran for a taxi and... realized what had happened. Virginia had found the case in which he kept drugs. It was unlocked. She had taken 100 grains of veronal—a mortal dose... At 12:30 Leonard went exhausted to bed and slept. At 1:30 Virginia nearly died; at six in the morning Vanessa woke Leonard to tell him that she was better..." (Bell 2: 16). For the rest of their marriage, Leonard lived in fear that Virginia might kill herself whenever she was in a state of depression: "he had for so long to endure the constant threat of her suicide" (Bell 2: 18). The partner of a bipolar patient lives in fear most of the time during the periods of madness. In other periods, couples can lead a normal life but they are threatened by these periods of depression.

It is not easy to live with a patient of bipolar disorder. The patient is suffering and that makes his or her partner suffer, too. Therefore, Leonard's life with Virginia was not easy. Thomas C. Caramagno illustrates Leonard's position by stating:

Whatever we may think of Leonard as a person (and opinion varies widely among critics, some of whom see him as a loving saint and some as a petty tyrant), we must remember that it is not easy to live with a manic-depressive, who may, without self-awareness, in one mood judge a situation, desire, or destiny in ways that diverge considerably from a judgment made in some other mood. Love of life, of spouse, and of self may change swiftly and without warning to suicidal despair, paranoid hostility, or grandiose self-indulgence.

Subtler shifts can be even more alarming and destructive of trust in personal relationships. (Caramagno 21)

Leonard was doing a lot of hard work by taking care of Virginia and helped her to pass through all her symptoms. Leonard seemed to sacrifice his life for Virginia's sake. Their marriage, as Virginia expressed through Rezia's character, was not the marriage they expected because the partner had to sacrifice many things, like a stable life and the prospect of having children.

Another illness-related problem that Virginia expressed through Septimus and Rezia in *Mrs. Dalloway* is their lack of children. Virginia described this aspect several times in *Mrs. Dalloway*. According to Hermione Lee and Quentin Bell, Virginia and Leonard were forbidden from having children because the doctors advised them not to. They thought that their children might inherit Virginia's illness. Although Virginia felt it was an unfair decision, she accepted the doctors' advice; she gave up having children, just like Rezia and Septimus.

Like many other women, Rezia wished to have children. However, for Rezia that was a faraway dream since she married a person with shell shock. Virginia also wished to have children but since it was impossible because of her illness, she suffered from unfulfilled maternal instinct, as I will discuss in Chapter Six.

It seems that when Virginia wrote *Mrs. Dalloway*, she still had some angry feelings towards those doctors. That is illustrated through Virginia's point of view about Dr. Bradshaw, one of the doctors who forbids Septimus from having children. As she stated, "Sir William not only prospered himself but made England prosper, secluded her lunatics, forbade childbirth..." (*Mrs.*

Dalloway 56). Virginia presented Dr. Bradshaw as a character who acts like he is doing good for people while he actually cares most for his reputation and money. Virginia's hatred for those doctors was caused by their inability to comprehend Virginia's illness.

In writing *Mrs. Dalloway* Virginia was motivated by her motherhood instinct as well as her suffering from her mental illness, especially her suffering during her breakdown of 1913-1915. Therefore, Virginia chose to give Septimus her bipolar disorder's symptoms in order to represent the insane side of her life. Virginia consciously make some similarities between Septimus and her personal life to reveal her mental illness and make every one understand it. Virginia made him the same age as she when she had that severe breakdown. That age was thirty, and it was the same age when she was forbidden from having children. This illustrates that Virginia since that breakdown still had some unresolved problems related to the fears of her illness and frustration of how she was forbidden from having children. Those motives were still hidden in Virginia and they found a way to reveal themselves in *Mrs. Dalloway*.

CHAPTER SIX: The Motherhood Dream

As I have shown in previous chapters, *Mrs. Dalloway* reveals many aspects of Woolf's personal life. Another unresolved problem, which the novel illustrates, is her inability to have children. It complicated her psychological illness. One of the most important disadvantages of the illness was the way it took her dream of being a mother away from her. Woolf struggled with her lack of children for her entire life because she could not live with the fact that she could not have a little child, someone to call her own. When she decided to marry Leonard Woolf, she declared that one of her goals to accomplish in marriage was having children. According to Virginia's letter of 1 May 1912, when Virginia wrote to Leonard as a response to his proposal letter: "The obvious advantages of marriage stand in my way. I say to myself, Anyhow, you'll be quite happy with him; & he will give you companionship; children, and a busy life.... Again, I want everything—love, children, adventure, intimacy, work" (qtd. in Quentin Bell 1: 185). The letter clearly reveals how important having children was to Virginia because she repeated twice in the same letter, listing it along with other important goals, that she wanted to have children.

Moreover, Hermione Lee has made some comments about the previous letter, which indicates that Virginia was expecting to have children when she married. As Hermione Lee states:

Her letter made it clear that she would want to have children if she married. When Violet Dickinson, characteristically, sent her a cradle after the honeymoon, her response was full of embarrassment but positive: "My baby shall sleep in the cradle." (Lee 329)

Here, Virginia was very optimistic and surely she planned to have a baby.

However, Hermione Lee notices that the next April, Virginia told Violet that:

"We aren't going to have a baby, but we want to have one, and 6 months in the country or so is said to be necessary first." But Leonard, anxious about her from the beginning of the year, was consulting all the doctors, and debating the question with Vanessa. In January 1913, he talked to Maurice Craig and to Jean Thomas, who both thought Virginia should not have children. Maurice Wright and George Savage were in favor; Dr. Hyslop recommended putting off the decision. (Lee 329)

Virginia's sister Vanessa seemingly agreed with the doctors, as she states in a letter to Leonard: "The risk she will experience is that of another bad nervous breakdown and I doubt if an innocent baby would be worth that" (qtd. in Hermione Lee 329). But she added that if Virginia led a boring life in the country it might be possible and that "of course I think on the whole almost any amount of temporary boredom *is* worthwhile for the sake of having children" (qtd. in Lee 329). Hermione Lee suggests that Vanessa told Virginia that she could possibly have one child, but she told something different to Leonard. Hermione Lee indicates that: "in any case, it is clear that Virginia's maternity was decided for her" (330).

Moreover, Virginia seemed to blame herself for this sad condition, which she caused for herself as well as Leonard. Virginia stated: "My own fault too— a little more self control on my part, & we might have had a boy of 12, a girl of 10: This always makes me wretched in the early hours" (*Diary 3*: 107). In fact, Virginia blamed herself but unconsciously she also blamed Leonard because

he is the one who encouraged her to make the decision to not have children. According to Hermione Lee, "it was 'L' who stopped them having children, and it may be that part of her anger with him during her breakdown, and part of her sense that marriage could be a form of 'damnable servility,' was a result of that decision" (Hermione Lee 329). In addition, *Mrs. Dalloway* suggests that Virginia did not just blame her husband Leonard, but also her doctors, too. Their ideas are represented in *Mrs. Dalloway* through Dr. Bradshaw: "Sir William not only prospered himself but made England prosper, secluded her lunatics, forbade childbirth" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 56). Virginia expressed how she felt about her doctors controlling her life and forbidding people from having children.

Virginia's desire to be a mother is revealed in the scene when Peter Walsh describes Clarissa's character:

And of course she enjoyed life immensely. It was her nature to enjoy (though goodness only knows, she had her reserves; it was a mere sketch, he often felt, that even he, after all these years, could make of Clarissa). Anyhow there was no bitterness in her; none of that sense of moral virtue which is so repulsive in good women. She enjoyed practically everything. If you walked with her in Hyde Park now it was a bed of tulips, now a child in a perambulator, now some absurd little drama she made up on the spur of the moment. (Very likely, she would have talked to those lovers, if she had thought them unhappy.) She had a sense of comedy that was really exquisite, but she needed people, always people, to bring it out, with the inevitable result that she frittered her time away, lunching,

dining, giving these incessant parties of hers, talking nonsense, sayings things she didn't mean, blunting the edge of her mind, losing her discrimination. There she would sit at the head of the table taking infinite pains with some old buffer who might be useful to Dalloway—they knew the most appalling bores in Europe—or in came Elizabeth and everything must give way to HER. (*Mrs.*

Dalloway 44)

This scene shows Clarissa's love for children as part of her love of life and it shows her affection for Elizabeth. Also, it demonstrates how much Virginia really wanted to have a child. Virginia would sacrifice everything for the sake of having a child.

As a result, Virginia felt depressed that she could not accomplish one of the most important dreams of her life, which was being a mother. Therefore, she endured one of the longest breakdowns in her life. Later in life, Woolf expressed that breakdown and all other suffering she experienced through the suffering of Septimus in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Hermione Lee explains how Virginia decided to avoid having children with some encouragement from Leonard because they were afraid that they might have a child with the same mental illness as Virginia:

It suggests that fear of hereditary insanity might have been one of the reasons for their not having children.... It suggests that this decision may have been forced upon her in the same way that she felt "forced" into rest-homes and rest cures. For 98 days between 6 August and 12 November 1913, the time of her suicidal breakdown in the first year of her marriage, Virginia Woolf had no periods.

During this time and again in 1915 she had outbursts of violent rage against Leonard (and hostility towards Vanessa)... The onset of her periods was always particularly stressful and would often leave her, as she put it, "recumbent."....

"Leonard made me into a comatose invalid," she wrote to Violet, putting off a visit in 1912. It is a suggestive phrase. Though it is unwarranted and extreme to say that Leonard was the cause of her 1913-1915 breakdowns (even if the content of her illness had to do with the marriage), there is no doubt that after her suicide attempt he "made her into an invalid" in order to prevent a recurrence. A playful "contract" which he drew up, and she signed, when he had to go away in the summer of June 1914, sets the tone for his guardianship. (Lee 331)

This passage indicates that both Leonard and Vanessa convinced Virginia that she should have no children to avoid any future breakdowns. Ironically, that directly led her to one of the major breakdowns in her life. They did not know how important motherhood was to Woolf. That is why through most of that long breakdown Virginia seemed violent toward Leonard and Vanessa; Virginia subconsciously blamed them for her depression and misery. As a result, however, Virginia passed through that breakdown with a shaky and worrisome personality and a hungry motherhood instinct. Virginia kept suffering with the desire to have children for the rest of her life. That unresolved desire also kept revealing itself through many of her writings, especially her diaries and her novel *Mrs. Dalloway*.

There were some experiences in Virginia's life that illustrate Virginia's love for taking care of children. For instance, her love of taking care of someone who needed help revealed this kind of love. Her diary entry dated 3 February, 1924 reveals: "I didn't write however, because L. started the flu, the very next day, & gave me an unpleasant day; but there's an odd pleasure too, purely feminine I suppose, in 'looking after' being wanted; giving up my pen, & sitting with an invalid" (*Diary 2*: 290). She seemed to enjoy taking care of her husband Leonard when he was sick. It seems that she felt like a mother to Leonard, which momentarily satisfied her desire of being a mother. She was not a mother, and she did not know that the feelings which she was expressing were maternal, but according to psychoanalytic literary critics, Virginia was subconsciously expressing her desire to be a mother. Those feelings found their way into *Mrs. Dalloway*. When Virginia wrote the above diary, she was working on *Mrs. Dalloway*.

Another diary entry from this time period revealed Virginia's wishes to be a mother. On 29 September 1924 Virginia wrote:

And of course children are wonderful & charming creatures. I've had Ann talking about the white seal book, and wanting me to read to her. There's a quality in their minds to me that is very adorable: to be alone with them, and see them day to day would be an extraordinary experience. (*Diary 2*: 315)

In this diary, Virginia shows how she enjoyed spending time with two children and wishes that she could see them every day.

Furthermore, another diary entry which Virginia wrote while she was working on *Mrs. Dalloway* also expresses Virginia's desire to be a mother. On Tuesday, 2 January 1923 Woolf wrote:

We came back from Rodmell yesterday, & I am in one of my moods, as the nurses used to call it, today. And what is it & why? A desire for children, I suppose; for Nessa's life; for the sense of flowers breaking all round me involuntarily. Here's Angelica—here's Quentin & Julian. Now children don't make yourself ill on plum pudding tonight.... Let me have one confessional where I need not boast. Years & years ago, after the Lytton affair, I said to myself, walking up the hill at Beireuth, never pretend that the things you haven't got are not worth having; good advice I think. At least it often comes back to me. Never pretend that children, for instance, can be replaced by other things. (*Diary 2: 221*)

Virginia's "desire for children" is clearly revealed through this diary entry. She also mentions Vanessa's children, which shows that she still was comparing her life to Vanessa's. Virginia considered herself to be a failure if she failed to accomplish goals which Vanessa had accomplished. Vanessa had three children while Virginia had not even one. That unfair comparison made Virginia feel remorseful.

Virginia's Sorrow of Being Forbidden From Having a Child:

Virginia's doctors noticed her suffering and how severe her illness was, so they advised Virginia, Vanessa, and Leonard that Virginia should not have children. One of those doctors was Dr. Savage, who also noticed Virginia's father shared some of the same symptoms of Virginia's mental illness.

Hermione Lee agrees that these doctors believed in the possibility that Virginia probably would pass the illness to her children. She gives an example with some explanation by stating:

Bertrand Russell and his first wife Alys, for example, were persuaded in 1893 that the danger of inherited insanity from both sides of the family should prevent them from having children; Russel read Galton on eugenics and went to see Ibsen's *Ghost* and said that his family home felt "like a family vault haunted like the ghosts of maniacs." It may be that such fears played their part in the advice the Woolfs were given about having children: George Savage wrote in the 1880s that "an insane patient may have an insane idiotic, wicked, epileptic or somnambulistic child." (Lee 183-184)

For these reasons, Virginia's doctors advised her not to have children. They saw no need to potentially make them suffer as Virginia had. Her mental illness was severe and dangerous during her breakdowns and some of her depressed periods. So, Hermione Lee suggests that it seemed very risky for Virginia to have children while she had a manic-depressive illness at the same time.

Hermione Lee indicates that there are advantages and disadvantages of Virginia's lack of children. She states:

it has often been said, for instance by Brennan: "There could have been no question of her ever having children though she may occasionally have day-dreamed of it. She knew that her bouts of madness put her in a different category from other women." What *is*

known is that she liked and was good at talking to children (there are many witnesses to this), that she often bitterly regretted not having them; and that she never consoled herself with the belief that her books were a substitute or an equivalent. These feelings would surface whenever she was depressed. In her deepest plunges into "melancholy" or a sense of failure, she always uttered the words "children": "It's having no children," it's "a desire for children." Though she knew that childlessness left her open to, or created, other kinds of relationships and other sorts of work ("These efforts of mine to communicate with people are partly childlessness"), that perception did not lessen "the horror that sometimes overcomes me." (Hermione Lee 328-329).

This passage illustrates how huge the effect of having no children was in Virginia's life. Hermione Lee suggests that most of Virginia's activities were designed to fill the empty space of having no children.

Furthermore, the desire to have children became a very important issue in Virginia's life. Being a mother and having children was not just a simple desire for Virginia. In fact, children were a symbol of success to her. When her ideal sister Vanessa married and had children, Virginia wanted to be successful too, just like Vanessa. Virginia stated: "I put my life blood into writing, & she had children" (*Diary* 5: 120). Virginia here is comparing herself and Vanessa and considers being a writer as much a success as having children. In fact, Virginia seems to redirect her attention from her own lack of having children to her success in writing. Hermione Lee explains that diary entry by stating: "she would console herself with having earned money"

(Hermione Lee 329). So, Virginia tried to make herself feel better by appreciating herself for being a writer compared to her sister who became a mother.

However, Virginia could not forget the sadness of not having children. She kept struggling with that problem for the rest of her life. That is because she noticed children everywhere around her, especially when she saw Vanessa's children. No matter how much Virginia distracted her attention with her writing or made herself busy with her literary works, she usually failed in defeating the strong desire to be a mother. She implied that this feeling could not be denied or exchanged by even her favorite habit: writing.

Therefore, all these diary entries explain why there are many references in *Mrs. Dalloway* about motherhood and children. Also, at Virginia's age—about forty years old—after having endured many tragedies, she still suffered with her desire of having a little child. When her parents died, she almost managed to imagine them still alive and deal with that suffering. When Vanessa married, Virginia could get over that loneliness when she married Leonard. However, her inner hunger of having a little child could not be resolved at the time of writing this diary in 1923. Virginia declares in 1923 that she could not find anything that made her forget the desire for motherhood and the charm of having children.

In writing *Mrs. Dalloway* during this time, Virginia presented two themes related to her lack of children. The first side related to the suffering of not having children, while the second side illustrates the joy of having a child. She expressed her suffering over the lack of having children in the novel through Rezia's suffering: "But, Rezia said, she must have children. They had been

married five years" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 49). Rezia feels that she should have children because she has been married so long. Virginia, who had been married for almost eleven years by the time she started to write *Mrs. Dalloway*, put her feelings into Rezia: "At tea Rezia told him that Mrs. Filmer's daughter was expecting a baby. SHE could not grow old and have no children! She was very lonely, she was very unhappy! She cried for the first time since they were married" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 50). Rezia's crying in this scene represents Virginia's sorrow since she really wants to have children but her doctors stand between her and her dream.

Virginia's Daughter Elizabeth:

The only way that Virginia could deal with that unsolved problem as well as many other unresolved problems was through writing *Mrs. Dalloway*. In order to satisfy her desire of being a mother, Virginia creates a fictional daughter for her double Clarissa. Clarissa's daughter would then be symbolically Virginia's daughter. Virginia's wish to have a child unconsciously made her create a daughter for herself in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Since Virginia lived through her imagination most of the time, she could live this dream of having a daughter through this novel. For instance, we see Clarissa's excessively cheerful feeling for seeing her daughter Elizabeth: "The door opened. 'Here is my Elizabeth,' said Clarissa, emotionally, histrionically, perhaps" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 27). The cheerful feeling for seeing Elizabeth may have been Virginia's true feeling of seeing her imaginary daughter start to develop and participate in the story's events.

In the novel, there are many aspects about Elizabeth which illustrate that Elizabeth is Virginia's imagined daughter. For example, in *Mrs. Dalloway*,

Virginia presented Elizabeth as a daughter without a close relationship to her mother. Their relationship is therefore similar to that of Virginia and her mother Julia. Elizabeth and Clarissa's relationship is not a close relationship. Peter describes by stating about Elizabeth: "Probably she doesn't get on with Clarissa. 'There's my Elizabeth'—that sort of thing—why not 'Here's Elizabeth' simply?— trying to make out, like most mothers, that things are what they're not" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 32). Peter's description illustrates that Clarissa pretends that she has a close relationship with her daughter. Peter understands that Clarissa loves her daughter very much but Elizabeth is not that close with her mother.

In addition, Virginia presents another side of the lack of children through the struggle of Septimus and Rezia. As Septimus thinks:

But, Rezia said, she must have children. They had been married five years.... She must have a son like Septimus, she said. But nobody could be like Septimus; so gentle: so serious; so clever....

One cannot bring children into the world like this. One cannot perpetuate suffering, or increase the breed of these lustful animals, who have no lasting emotions, but only whims and vanities, eddying them now this way now that. (*Mrs. Dalloway* 50)

Septimus believes their children will inherit his suffering. That is why Woolf allows her sane double to have a child: Elizabeth. However, there are several differences that can be found between Virginia and Elizabeth. Virginia means by these differences to show that Elizabeth was not like her mother Clarissa, who represents Virginia. Virginia did not want Elizabeth to be similar to her because Virginia did not want Elizabeth to suffer like she did. Virginia did not

want Elizabeth to have her own illness. For that reason, she makes her very different from Clarissa and from herself. Peter describes her as "a round-eyed, pale-faced girl, with nothing of her mother in her" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 44). In addition, Elizabeth does not love London like Clarissa or Virginia. Virginia stated in *Mrs. Dalloway* when she talked about Elizabeth: "she so much preferred being left alone to do what she liked in the country, but they would compare her to lilies, and she had to go to parties, and London was so dreary compared with being alone in the country with her father and the dogs" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 75).

Instead of writing that Elizabeth loved London, Virginia made her interested in politics. By that, Virginia wished that her daughter (if she would have had a real daughter), would be interested in politics and would be educated and capable of finding her own way in her life, which her mother could not do. Also, there are some different personal interests between Elizabeth and her mother: "Gloves and shoes; she had a passion for gloves; but her own daughter, her Elizabeth, cared not a straw for either of them" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 7). Clarissa was interested in clothes and hats in contrast to Elizabeth.

Virginia's point of view about her own imaginary daughter was that she would see her pretty daughter as a lily. As Virginia states: "She was like a lily, Sally said, a lily by the side of a pool" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 106). However, Virginia represents Elizabeth without Julia's daughter's famous beauty. Virginia described Elizabeth in *Mrs. Dalloway*: "Elizabeth, on the contrary, was dark; had Chinese eyes in a pale face; an Oriental mystery; was gentle, considerate, still" (*Mrs. Dalloway* 68). Virginia seemed not to appreciate her own beauty,

and that may be why she did not want her imaginary daughter to be beautiful in the same way the Stephen girls were beautiful. Instead, Virginia made her look exotic. It seems that Virginia made Elizabeth look and act more like her father, Richard, which implies that Virginia might want Elizabeth to be like her husband Leonard rather than herself.

It seems that Woolf through writing *Mrs. Dalloway* could accomplish both professional and personal goals. She could make a beautiful and creative work of literature as well as deal with her unresolved problem related to her lack of having children by creating Elizabeth to satisfy her maternal instinct.

Conclusion

Writing *Mrs. Dalloway* was a form of therapy that helped Virginia Woolf release some painful, inner issues. Also, it seems that the novel helped Woolf to feel better and reach new levels of understanding in her life. Woolf gave some explanation about what writing could do for her in *Moments of Being*. As Woolf states, "I suppose that I did for myself what psycho-analysts do for their patients. I expressed some very long felt and deeply felt emotion. And in expressing it I explained it and then laid it to rest" (81). Woolf illustrates that when she wrote her novels, she was trying to express her feelings and her life's experiences. She was not just presenting certain incidents of her life as they were, but she created similar scenes in her novels, which represent the feelings that she felt herself in her life. Then, she tried to explain it to the readers and let them understand and feel what she actually felt. In that way, Woolf felt relief and some satisfaction from this expression.

Writing *Mrs. Dalloway* was an experience that changed Woolf's concept of life and death. As Thomas C. Caramagno states: "Woolf's attitude toward death did change during the writing of *Mrs. Dalloway*." She reached a new level of understanding death. Her reaction to death before finishing *Mrs. Dalloway* is illustrated by a scary automobile accident in 1924 that involved Angelica Bell, Woolf's niece; Angelica could have died but she survived. Woolf illustrated her feeling by stating: "What I felt was... that death & tragedy had once more put down his paw, after letting us run a few paces. People never get over their early impressions of death I think. I always feel pursued" (*Diary* 2: 299). It seems that the idea of death haunted Woolf because in the past it stole her mother and other close family members from her. She always felt

scared the moment she heard about death, and it could be that it reminded her of all the horror of losing her parents, Stella, and Thoby. That is why while writing *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf made death's presence unwelcome by making Clarissa feel upset when Dr. Bradshaw mentioned Septimus' suicide in the middle of Clarissa's party. Even though Clarissa did not know Septimus, Clarissa reacted strongly to the news of the suicide:

Oh! Thought Clarissa, in the middle of my party, here's death, she thought.... What business had the Bradshaws to talk of death at her party? A young man had killed himself. And they talked of it at her party—the Bradshaws, talked of death. He had killed himself—but how? Always her body went through it first, when she was told, suddenly, of an accident; her dress flamed, her body burnt. (*Mrs. Dalloway* 101)

Clarissa is very displeased with the Bradshaws talking about death. Her party is supposed to make everyone happy and talk, and forget ideas such as sadness, illness, and war. However, Dr. Bradshaw corrupted her moment of joy by the sad news. Clarissa's attitude toward death in this passage reflects Woolf's attitude.

However, Woolf's attitude toward the idea of death changed after she finished *Mrs. Dalloway*. This is illustrated by her reaction to the death of one of her friends named Jacques Raverat. She acted in a different way than in the previous incidents. She explained her feeling in one of her diary entries at the beginning of 1925, after she finished *Mrs. Dalloway* in the previous year:

Jacques died, as I say; & at once the siege of emotions began. I got the news with a party here—Clive, Bee How, Julia Strachey,

Dadie. Nevertheless, I do not any longer feel inclined to doff the cap to death. I like to go out of the room talking, with an unfinished casual sentence on my lips. That is the effect it had on me—no leavetakings, no submission—but someone stepping out into the darkness. (*Diary 3: 7*)

Woolf this time seems more confident and not scared of death like she used to be. She could continue and enjoy what she was doing without her past fears of death. Thomas C. Caramagno explains what Woolf felt in that incident and links it with Clarissa's feelings by stating:

Both Woolf and Mrs. Dalloway receive at a party the news of a sudden death—news that should inspire Clarissa's stiffing, what Woolf called her "screen making habit" (what Norman Holland calls a filtering identity theme) of automatic denial in response to the threat of loss. Instead, they let go of fear, abandoning their sense of vulnerability, of "penetrability" (to paraphrase Peter Walsh) in order to see what the event might mean. Death itself becomes personal ... an experience to be integrated into a lifetime of experiences. It is a 'new vision of death,' Woolf notes in a November, 1926, entry to her diary, one that is "active, positive, like all the rest, exciting; & of great importance—as an experience" (*Diary 3: 117*) that can be "owned." (Caramagno 238-239)

So, Virginia was no longer afraid of facing death in writing the end of *Mrs. Dalloway*. After all, Clarissa comes back to the party renewed. Woolf began to think of death as something that is not horrible and an acceptable incident.

She even called the death "an experience," which means that she considered it like any other experience in her life.

I believe Woolf decided to let Clarissa live at the end of *Mrs. Dalloway* because Woolf herself wished to live. Woolf had a hidden fear that someday her illness might push her to commit suicide. Therefore, by letting Clarissa live, Woolf deals with her fear, and satisfies her deep desire to keep living. At the same time Woolf can defeat her illness by letting Septimus die, because he represents the illness side in her life. As a part of her fighting against her illness, she defeated her illness by killing the symbol of that illness: Septimus.

However, it seems that Woolf accepted the idea of committing suicide after writing *Mrs. Dalloway* as a solution for her illness if no other solutions worked. She was expecting that her life would be ended by suicide. Virginia described her suicide as an experience that she would have in her life like any other experience. As Quentin Bell states, it was " 'the one experience,' as she had said to Vita, 'I shall never describe' " (Bell 2: 226). Since that time of writing this letter to Vita, Woolf already started to think of her death, but she was not looking at her death as a sad or tragic incident. Instead, she accepted it like any other incident, like moving from London to some other place without sadness or feeling bad about it.

Furthermore, Woolf's views about death changed to embrace it more as a cure rather than as a sorrowful experience. For a long time Virginia seemed convinced that there was no real cure for her mental illness, other than suicide. Jean O. Love indicates that:

To know that you have had cancer in your body and to know that it may return must be very horrible; but a cancer of the mind, a

corruption of the spirit striking one at the age of thirteen and for the rest of one's life working away somewhere, always in suspense, a Dionysian [sic] sword above one's head—this must be almost unendurable. So unendurable that in the end, when the voices of insanity spoke to her in 1941, she took the only remedy that remained, the cure of death. (Love 123)

So, Woolf struggled with her mental illness, which came in the form of a breakdown several times per year. There was no cure yet to stop its symptoms, and her doctors did not know how to treat her mental illness effectively. Therefore, later in life when she realized that she was about to enter another breakdown, she did what her literary double Septimus did. She chose to take the only cure that was left for her, the cure that would end her sad and tragic life, which was death. Woolf wrote in her suicide note to Leonard:

Dearest,

I feel certain 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 begin to hear voices, and I can't concentrate. So I am doing what seems the best thing to do. You have given me the greatest possible happiness. You have been in every way all that anyone could be. I don't think two people could have been happier till this terrible disease came. 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. You have

been entirely patient with me and incredibly good. I want to say that—everybody knows it. If anybody could have saved me it would have been you. Everything has gone from me but the certainty of your goodness. I can't go on spoiling your life any longer.

I don't think two people could have been happier than we have been. (Qtd. in Quentin Bell 2: 226.)

Virginia's suicide note clarifies her grateful feelings for Leonard who took care of her through most of her times of illness. It seems that Leonard sacrificed his life for his wife. For that reason, she declares that she is grateful for him, much like Clarissa in *Mrs. Dalloway* who felt grateful for Richard.

By now, it should have become very obvious that *Mrs. Dalloway* gives one of the clearest clues about Virginia's writing's purpose. She wrote to treat herself when no doctor, from her point of view, could find a real cure for her mental illness. When she wrote *Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia was inspired by many aspects from her personal life. The incidents of daily life during the process of writing *Mrs. Dalloway* played a major role in shaping *Mrs. Dalloway*. Several events as well as her psychological condition changed Virginia's fundamental plans when she wrote the novel. Her moods, which would change very often, colored *Mrs. Dalloway* with different ideas of joy and depression from her surroundings. For example, at first Clarissa feels that her party is a "failure," which represents Woolf's familiar feelings of depression. Then the mood changes from the depression of failure to the joy of success after Clarissa realizes that her party is successful. It captures Woolf's success of finishing the novel.

Furthermore, Woolf's mental illness developed her ability to be a genius in writing by being very productive during her excited periods, because it gave her the energy to write many pages at one time with many excellent ideas which came into her head suddenly. However, her ability to produce fabulous literary works was not without a price. The mental illness was responsible for taking away her dream of motherhood, and it did not allow her to enjoy her success. It took her life away from her when she killed herself during her last breakdown in her life. Through her life, Woolf passed through several breakdowns. Each breakdown came after a major tragedy in her life. Even though she managed to make it through these breakdowns with only minor negative results, she could not survive the last breakdown of her life, which was a result of the stress of publishing her novel *Between The Acts*, and the stress of the Second World War and the fear of being taken by the Nazis.

Therefore, bipolar disorder can be considered Woolf's most major cause of suffering in her life. She could not run away from its effects because she was born with it. Even though her mental illness was not that severe by itself, her life's tragedies formed a suitable environment to develop her illness to a severe level. Her illness would have been less severe if it was treated correctly, but unfortunately, the scientific research about bipolar disorder was not sufficient at Woolf's time. That left Virginia to face bipolar disorder alone. If she had lived in our time, she would have been able to enjoy her life with effective treatment with which to help to decrease bipolar disorder's effects and allow her to do what she was forbidden to do. As a result, Woolf's genius led her to use her imaginative and creative mind to create a peaceful world where she could escape from the pain and express her feelings and illness.

However, *Mrs. Dalloway* certainly focused on her inner world and personal issues, as Jean O. Love states:

Before Virginia was thirteen, she wrote principally because she enjoyed it, found it useful in relating to others, and gained a sense of her identity from it... writing became the means whereby she confronted and tried to resolve the discrepancies and conflicts in her world, which in her novels were expressed as the omnipresent dialectics.... In short, writing provided her with a means of creating sanity, of discovering her own wisdom, and of fighting off madness.... Therefore, writing became far more necessary to Virginia than it might have been and was less likely to be sheer fun. (276-277)

I agree with Love that Woolf used to write for her own enjoyment before her life tragedies happened and her illness developed. Therefore, she became in need to write in order to deal with her inner unresolved psychological problems. Hermione Lee agrees with Jean O. Love, too, and adds that Woolf could adapt her illness:

Since in her writing she transforms illness into a language of power and inspiration, it is inviting to think of her illness as a "gift," not as a disability, and of her fiction-writing as a form of therapy.... Madness is not her only subject. Nor does she write simply in order to make herself feel better (though it's true that she feels worse when she is not writing). A great deal of the process of controlling egotism, or translating personal material into art, is done with laborious painful

difficulty. And that strenuous work marks the difference between the illness itself and what she does with it. (Lee 190)

Even though Virginia started to write for her enjoyment when she was thirteen, she later began to write because she needed to feel better and to treat her inner pain. As Woolf stated: "I feel that by writing I am doing what is far more necessary than anything else" (*Moments of Being* 73). After the success of her first novel *The Voyage Out*, Woolf became aware of her ability and what writing could provide her. Therefore, she started using her novels to deal with her unsolved problems. Each novel dealt with some specific issue in her life. Among all of her wonderful novels, *Mrs. Dalloway* best expressed the unresolved problems of Virginia's private personal life. Virginia also used the novel to explain her illness from the inside. Everyone around her, like Leonard, Vanessa, and Virginia's doctors, noticed her symptoms and explained how they saw these symptoms. However, no one except Virginia could really understand what bipolar disorder was or how it made the mind function in contrast to that of normal people.

Woolf's illness should have been treated with medication to balance cerebral chemicals and relieve any periods of depression. Also, she needed psychological treatment which would allow her to express any inner or hidden problems and release the pain. Instead, her doctors treated her illness with medication for its symptoms only, like her insomnia, with no actual treatment for the bipolar disorder. In the severe episodes, her doctors would use rest cures as treatment which seemed useful during her break down in 1904, but during the break down in 1913 it caused some damage to her personality. That is why Woolf escaped specifically through writing *Mrs. Dalloway*, which

allowed her to express her suffering, especially from her mental illness as well as other psychological problems, which were hiding deeply in her mind.

Through *Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia expressed her mental illness as well as her hidden pain and anxieties such as her marital problems with her husband Leonard Woolf and her old love affair with Lytton Strachey in her youth. Also, she expressed through Clarissa her erotic interest in women and her coldness to men which might have been a result of her half brother's abuse and her unsatisfied infantile desire. Finally, she expressed her frustration with not having children. However, Virginia found a way to deal with this problem by having an imaginary daughter for herself through Elizabeth in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Above all, this daughter was not like either her mother or Virginia because Virginia did not want her to suffer like she did.

Reading *Mrs. Dalloway*, as well as Virginia's other novels, is like enjoying the abstract paintings of Picasso or Van Gogh. It would be better if the reader knew the background of these painters and their psychological conditions to understand their paintings' meaning. Woolf's novels, especially *Mrs. Dalloway*, give the reader a different view of life after reading them. The readers would not understand most of the hidden aspects inside the novel or see the connection between the scenes of madness in *Mrs. Dalloway* and the other scenes in the novel if they did not know about Virginia's tragic life and her bipolar disorder. It seems that *Mrs. Dalloway* shows a window into Virginia Woolf's life.

Bibliography

- Bell, Quentin. *Virginia Woolf: A Biography*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc, 1972. Print.
- Bell, Vereen M. "The 'Death of the Soul' in *Mrs. Dalloway*." *Critical Insight: Mrs. Dalloway: Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Dorothy Dodge Robbins. Pasadena, California: Salem Press, 2012. 44-58. Print.
- Caramagno, Thomas C. *The Flight of The Mind: Virginia Woolf's Art and Manic Depressive Illness*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992. Print.
- , " 'The sane & the insane, side by side'. The Object-Relations of Self-Management in *Mrs. Dalloway*." *Critical Insight: Mrs. Dalloway: Virginia Woolf*. Ed. Dorothy Dodge Robbins. Pasadena, California: Salem Press, 2012. 313-336. Print.
- Evans, Robert C. *Close Readings*. Montgomery: New South Books, 2010. Print.
- Ferrer, Daniel. *Virginia Woolf and The Madness of Language*. New York: Routledge, 1990. Print.
- Lee, Hermione. *Virginia Woolf*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997. Print.
- Love, Jean O. *Virginia Woolf: Sources of Madness and Art*. California: University of California Press, 1977. Print.
- National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH). "*Bipolar Disorder in Adults*." U.S.: Department of Health and Human Services. NIH Publication No. 12-3679. 2012. Web.
- Smith, Susan Bennett. "Representations of Mourning in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*." *Critical Insight: Mrs. Dalloway: Virginia Woolf*. Ed.

Dorothy Dodge Robbins. Pasadena, California: Salem Press, 2012. 144-164. Print.

Woolf, Leonard. *Beginning Again: An Autobiography of the Years 1911 to 1918*. Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964. Print.

Woolf, Virginia. *The Diary of Virginia Woolf. Volume Two, 1920-1924*. Ed. Anne Olivier Bell. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc, 1978. Print.

----- . *The Diary of Virginia Woolf. Volume Three, 1925-1930*. Ed. Anne Olivier Bell. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc, 1978. Print.

----- . *The Letters of Virginia Woolf. Volume Three, 1932-1924*. Ed. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann. New York and London: A Harvest/ HBJ Book. 1976. Print.

----- . *Mrs. Dalloway*. Lavergne, TN: Important Books, 2014. Print.

----- . "A Sketch of the Past." *Moments of Being*. Orlando, Florida: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1985. 64-159. Print.

Zara, Christopher, and Robbie Lee. *Tortured Artists: From Picasso and Monroe to Warhol and Winehouse, the Twisted Secrets of the World's Most Creative Minds*. Avon, MA: Adams Media, 2012. Print.