

CHAPTER III

THE ANALYSIS

Every human being has own conflicting problem when he or she is faced to option in his or her life. There are some factors that will determine how a person makes his way of life, such as his or her surroundings, background, and personality. Woolf's novel *Mrs. Dalloway* is a sustained effort to show us about this. Woolf pictures the characters in the novel struggling to cope with their similar traumatic event. Those characters are Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Warren Smith. Their relations, however, are not clear. They never meet in the novel, and yet they share the same philosophy of life. Both characters are highly sensitive, imaginative, and willful. If Clarissa is a social artist of human relations, Septimus is her doppelganger-the uncontrolled, demonic side of the creative imagination.

In the following parts going to analyze what the same causes of trauma can lead to a different ending. This analysis will reveal what factors, especially about psychological factors, that will make the difference between them. By discovering the reason why Clarissa and Septimus have different result in dealing with the trauma, the point Woolf is trying to convey by writing this novel will be achieved. To arrive at this point, each character will be treated separately in order to show the differences between them.

Using Freudian psychoanalysis will be attempted to disclose the reason why the similar causes can bring about a different result to them. This is due to a

strong assumption that this process starts taking place and developing mostly in unconscious level and only psychoanalysis is capable to explain and disclose it.

Since Clarissa and Septimus are considered as each other's doppelganger, this study will begin at the sight of the same philosophy of both characters' life and also their similar traumatic experience. Then, the next discussion will be focused on the different responses of both characters.

3.1 The Similarity of Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Smith in Terms of Their Traumatic Experience and Philosophy of Life

As a literature of trauma, Virginia Woolf's characterization of Septimus Smith and Clarissa Dalloway in *Mrs. Dalloway* illustrates not only the psychological injuries suffered by victims of severe trauma such as war but also the need of them to give meaning for their suffering in order to recover from trauma. However, Septimus and Clarissa fail to give meaning to their traumatic experience. This failure results in an unsatisfying life and even death. The cause of trauma of Septimus and Clarissa is not precisely the same, but both of them lose the person whom they love very much in their life. Septimus Warren Smith is a war veteran. Evidence shows Septimus' homosexual relationship with Evans:

he was promoted; he drew the attention, indeed the affection of his officer, Evans by name. It was the case of two dogs playing on a heart-rug; one worrying a paper screw, snarling, snapping, giving a pinch, now and then, at the old dog's ear; the other lying somnolent, blinking at the fire, raising a paw, turning and growling good-temperedly. They had to be together, share with each other, fight with each other, and quarrel with each other.(p. 86)

However, it is not the guilt or humiliation of homosexuality toward Evans, which damages Septimus psychologically, but witnessing Evans' death is more disturbing than any disgust he may feel regarding his homosexual desires. Rezia and Sir William Bradshaw claim that Septimus has done nothing wrong because he has served with great distinction and been promoted, but his success suggests that although he does nothing beyond the requirements of war, he probably feels responsible for the destruction and death, whether by his own hands or those of the soldiers he commands. This feeling of guilty can be seen in some of Septimus' delusion:

He sang. Evans answered from behind the tree. The dead were Thessaly, Evans sang, among the orchids. There they waited till the war was over, and now the dead, now Evans himself- "For God's sake don't come!" Septimus cried out for he could not look upon the dead. But the branches parted. A man in grey was actually walking towards them. It was Evans! But no mud was on him; no wounds; he was not changed. I must tell the whole world, Septimus cried, ...and with legions of men prostrate behind him he, the giant mourner, receives for one moment on his face the whole-(p. 70)

Septimus' trauma can be seen from the above quotation. He is afraid that Evans comes to him. He can not look upon the dead. His closeness with Evans can be seen after his death. Septimus loses someone whom he loves very much and he is imagining that Evans haunts him. There is evidence showing the deep connection between them;

No crime; love; he repeated, fumbling for his card and pencil, when a Skye terrier snufed his trousers and he started in an agony of fear. It wasturning into a man! He could not watch it happen! It was horrible, terrible to see a dogbecome a man...! Why could he see through bodies, see into the future, when dogs will become men? (pp. 67-68)

Septimus pictures dogs turning into men (an inversion of the image he creates to represent himself and Evans, as dogs, playing in front of fire) because the truth has become demented in his mind to the point of delusion.

Another evidence showing that Septimus has trauma is about his reaction to the noise of car backfiring echoes and amplifies:

Septimus looked. Boys and bicycles sprang off. Traffic accumulated. And there the motor car stood, with drawn blinds, and upon them a curious pattern like a tree, Septimus thought, and this gradual drawing together of everything to one centre before his eyes, as if some horror had come almost to the surface and was about to burst into flames, terrified him. The world wavered and quivered and threatened to burst into flames.(p. 15)

Septimus is a casualty of the Great War, a victim of the shell shock. Nevertheless, he does not imagine the car's backfiring to be a gunshot, like other normal people do. To him, the noise is the sound of whip cracking ('The world has raised its whip; where will it descend?'). Everyone else is only started; Septimus is terrified.

Furthermore, Clarissa Dalloway will be analyzed as a traumatic survivor. Peter Walsh explains: "To see your own sister killed by a falling tree...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 ." (p. 78) Although there is no detailed explanation about how Sylvia's accident brings effects to Clarissa's life at that time, but later Clarissa has been struggling in her life to find a way to rebel against the idiosyncratic cruelty of the God and concludes that:

Those ruffians, the Gods...who never lost a chance of hurting, thwarting, and spoiling human lives were seriously put if, all the same,

you behaved like a lady...Later she wasn't so positive perhaps; she thought there were no Gods; no one was to blame; and she evolved this atheist's religion of doing good for the sake of the goodness.(pp. 77-78)

Clarissa now has a new understanding in her life that the world is chaos with no inherent ordering principle or guiding force (the Gods), so she devotes herself to create a facade of order. Even though Clarissa admirably brings beauty and harmony to the disorder and isolation of the modern society, her assembling activities merely represent what she knows to be true about the evil inherent in human nature. Like Septimus, Clarissa recognizes its presence because to experience a traumatic event is to come across both with human vulnerability in the natural world and with the capacity of evil in human nature.

Now, it can be concluded that Septimus and Clarissa have experienced a great loss of someone important in their life. However, what makes them doppelgänger is not because they have a similar philosophy of life. Two persons may experience similar traumatic events, but their way of thinking and response to them naturally will be different. However, in the case of Septimus and Clarissa it is the opposite. They have similar way of thinking, but they have different responses to their traumatic experience.

The similarity in their way of thinking is their insistence on no one having power over them. Septimus refuses to let Holmes and Bradshaw use him for experience;

When the damned fool came again, Septimus refused to see him...Human nature, in short, was on him--the repulsive brute, with the blood-red nostrils. Holmes was on him...Once you stumble...human nature is on you. Holmes is on you. Their only chance was to escape,

without letting Holmes know, to Italy-anywhere, away from Dr. Holmes.(pp. 91-92)

Here, Septimus is struggling to be the master of his own destiny. He does not want those doctors to take over his life.

As for Clarissa, she defiantly refuses Mrs. Kilman's determination to dominate her. She also refuses Richard's and Peter's intimacy because her intense fear of domination. Although actually Clarissa loves Peter, but she refuses to marry him because both have a different idea dealing with the concept of sharing, or the concept of giving and taking. Clarissa rejects Peter equal return. On the other hand, Clarissa fears openness, total involvement with a man, because in Clarissa's perspective sharing means surrender. That is why she chooses to marry Richard. She thinks that she does not have to share all her life with Richard and to escape the 'heat of the sun' and the 'furious winter's rages'-extremes of passion and unhappiness. The next quotation shows what Clarissa thinks about marriage and the reason.

So she would still find herself arguing in St. James's Park, still making out that she had been right-and she had too-not to marry him (Peter). For in marriage 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, and she him. But with Peter everything had to be shared;...and then the horror of the moment when some one told her at a concert that he had married a woman met on the boat going to India!(pp. 7-8)

Although she is ruined and destroyed after she breaks up with Peter, the love of her life, but she prefers the liberty and independence she will get from marrying Richard to surrender to openness with man, which she thinks intolerable.

Another thing between Septimus and Clarissa in the context of philosophy of life is what they think about life. Both really appreciate life, reason why Clarissa holds the party is because what she likes is simply life.

But suppose Peter said to her, "Yes, yes, but your parties-what the sense of your parties?" all she could say was (and nobody could be expected to understand): They're an offering...But to go deeper, beneath what people said (and these judgements, how superficial, how fragmentary they are!) in her mind now, what did it mean to her, this thing she called life. Oh, it was very queer. Here was so-and so in South Kensington; someone up in Bayswater; and somebody else, say, in Mayfair. ...and she felt if only they could be brought together; so she did it. And it as an offering; to combine, to create; but to whom? (pp. 121-122)

Clarissa comes to realize why her party is so important for her, that her party shows Clarissa's gift to the world around her. At her party people gather and talk this satisfies Clarissa. For herself, she has created a life-situation. She enjoys party situations with their observed, good-mannered, friendly condition although it is not natural or spontaneous because in a party everybody likes wearing a mask in order to show their best faces and best manners. Woolf once describes insanity as a form of death because its intense loneliness creates a human void for sufferer. In Clarissa's party, she fights this emptiness, this void. Clarissa brings people together and thus, creates a human dialogue. She creates life. What at first seems quite superficial and worthless becomes quite important and meaningful. Parties are Clarissa's gift, like what she says-her gift-which shows her special talent, and her special present to life.

For Septimus, life is also meaningful. He loves Shakespeare, great discovery and a lot of things about the beauty of the world, he wrote romantic

poetry, fell hopelessly in love with Miss Isabel Pole; “The table drawer was full of the those writing; about war; about Shakespeare; about great discoveries; how there is no death” (p. 140). However, this beauty of life is being destroyed by the evil that wants to drive the life out of man, which is symbolized by Dr. Holmes and Bradshaw. They want to separate him from to person who thinksthat life is so meaningful, Septimus feels that he must escape the grasp of Holmes and Bradshaw. Yet, Septimus does not want to die. Before jumping, he states, “But he would wait till the very last moment. He didn’t want to die. Life was good. The sun hot.” (p.149) As he jumps, he screams that he will “give it to Holmes”. Septimus feels pushed into a position where he must save himself from the overwhelming hold of conversion and proportion.

The last thing to show how they both are really doppelganger is when Clarissa hears about Septimus’ death. Clarissa notes, before returning to her party, “She felt somehow very like him-the young man who killed himself. She felt glad that he had done it; thrown it away.”(p.186) After hearing about Septimus’ death, Clarissa is no longer worried about making sure everyone is happy or leading around the prestigious members of the crowd. She retires to a small room in order to deal with the feeling of the death that has invaded the feelings of pain and death experienced by Septimus through her body. She identifies with the fall experiences and the rusty spikes piercing his body. She creates the moment of his fall and empathically identifies with Septimus as she thinks: “Always her body went through it first, when she was told,

suddenly, of an accident; her dress flamed, her body burnt. He had thrown himself from a window. Up had flashed the ground; through him, blundering him, bruising, went the rusty spikes.” (p. 184) She, then, realizes that his death is a sacrifice for her, and for the others at her party and everywhere, to allow them to continue living. Septimus’ role as a Christ figure, or “the scapegoat, the eternal sufferer”(p.25) becomes apparent. Woolf at first planned for Clarissa to commit suicide, or simply die at the end of the novel. Instead, she decided that a part of Clarissa, built in the form of a man destroyed by war and society, would take his own life in order for the rest of Clarissa’s being to appreciate the life she had. Clarissa believes, “A thing chatter, defaced, obscured...Death was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate;”(p.184) The Shakespeare’s words come to Clarissa, linking her undeniably to her young Septimus. The words tell her, “Fear no more the heat of the sun”(p.186). Septimus who had gone to war so that he could protect Shakespeare, stands in the heat of the sun immediately before jumping to his death. Septimus sacrifice his declaration of life’s inconstancy and immediacy, allows Clarissa to face her own fears and desires. His death permits her to feel the beauty and feel the fun. So, Clarissa can truly understand why Septimus kills himself, and she can gain a meaning for her life through the death of her doppelganger. She realizes that his death is a sacrifice for her, and for the others at her party and everywhere, to allow them to continue living.

3.2 The Transformation of Clarissa Ego

Basically, according to Freud, “within a man ‘s life, there will always be a confrontation between his three psyche agents namely, ide, ego, and superego”¹. Thus, whatever a person thinks or does through her action or her behavior will be the outcome of her ongoing series of the interplay, which is commonly, manifested in the form of internal conflicts. One will be able to sustain her conflictself as long as one’s id,ego, and superego (within one’s personality) remains in the equilibrium (a balanced state between the opposing forces and influences of three psyche agents within one’s self). In other words, to obtain a healthy personality the condition ‘f three psyche agents in one’s self must be in equilibrium. So what is the state of Clarissa’s personality? Some evidences that shows that Clarissa’s superego is too dominant among three psyche agents. Consequently, this condition creates too much severe oppression from the superego. According to Freud, a strong superego serves to inhibit the biological instinct of the id. In Clarissa’s case, this restraint of the id can be seen clearly in her lack of her sexual energy. Clarissa seemingly fails Richard at some crucial occasion in their marriage;

Lovely in girlhood, suddenly there came a moment-for example on the river beneath the woodsat Cliveden-when through some contraction of this cold spirit, she had failed failed him. And then at Constantinople, and again and again, She could see what see 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 the man and woman, or of women together. (p. 31)

¹ op. cit., p. 333.

Through some cold contraction of the spirit the nun-like Clarissa could not provide him with feminine warmth.

There is another explanation how Clarissa's superego dominates among three psyche agents. As we know that superego might be called as the moral agent. It becomes an embodiment of parental and social value. In her youth, it seems that Clarissa has a deep connection with her parents, especially her mother. When Clarissa gives her reason why she holds the party, she says that 'it was an offering; to combine; to create; but to whom?' The writer first assumes that Clarissa's question is rhetorical, since she herself never directly answers the question. However, her life is an offering to her parents, especially to her mother.

For she was a child, throwing bread to ducks, between her parents, and at the same time a grown woman coming to her parents who stood by the lake, holding her life in her arms which, as she neared them, grew larger and larger in her arms, until it became a whole life, a complete life, which she put down by them and said, This 'is what I have made of it! This!' And what had she made of it? What, indeed? (p. 43)

Here, Clarissa imagines herself in the dual aspects of child and woman, running down to her parents by the lake at Bourton and showing in her arms the gift of her own completed life. She longs to bring both parents back from the death. She wants to give them the complete present of her mature personality. "Clarissa's unique allusion to her dead mother suggests that she unconsciously offers the final gift of self actualization to the phantasmal image of her mother she remembers and her gatherings served as a perpetual

tribute to the absent mother creative acts of social artistry based on the primary model of family attachment.²

Now, will be discussed what Clarissa's values in her life. First of all, Clarissa believes that as a woman she has to be real woman. Although actually this idea is not going along with what she wants to be. Her idea about marriage is one example. She does not like the idea of sharing in marriage, but the woman in Victorian era, she has to be married. And, in a constitution like marriage, sharing is surely the most important thing. However, this is the opposites with her idea of marriage. I seems that she agrees with the society moral value that every woman has to be married, but she gives herself limitation so that in some part she can still be herself. Another moral value she has, which the writer already discussed in the previous sub-chapter, is about how she appreciates her life and others;

For Heaven only knows why onesloves it so, how one sees it so, making it up, building it round one, tumbling it, creating it every moment afresh; but the veriest frumps, the most dejected of misteries sitting on doorsteps (drink their downfall) do the same; can't be dealt with, she felt positive, by Acts of Parliament for that very reason: they love life. In people's eyes,...in the triumph and the jungle and the strang high singing of some aeroplane overhead was what she loved; life; London; this moment of June. (p. 4)

From the above quotation can be concluded that she values her soul so much that she doesn't want to give it to Peter. There is also another strong evidence which, shows Clarissa really loves her life. She states her reason why she holds the party simply because life is so meaningful for her.

² S. A. Henke, *New Feminist Essays on Virginia Woolf*, (Nebraska : University of Nebraska Press, 1981), p. 127.

But suppose Peter said to her, “Yes, yes, but your parties-what sense of your parties?” all she could say was (and nobody could be expected to understand): They’re and offering...But could any man understand what she mean either? About life?...what did it mean to her, this thing she called life? (p. 121)

By bringing individuals together, Clarissa makes them immortal for one another. She creates a scene that drags away her guests from the dullness of habitual activity. For Clarissa, giving a party is like a victorious song or a hymn to continue the existence of life.

Apparently, Clarissa’s mother has put an important moral value to her that she later applies in her life. This can be seen when Clarissa faces a conflict with herself. Clarissa recognizes the vulnerability of her world as well as the ability for wickedness in human nature and even feels it stirring within herself;

It rasped her, though, to have stirring about in her this brutal monster! To hear twigs cracking and feel hooves planted don in the depth of that leaf encumbered forest, the soul; never to be content quite,...there were a monster grubbing at the roots, as if the whole panoply of content were nothings but self love! this hatred! (p. 12)

What she does in dealing with this inner conflict is by continuing to repress her understanding of the evil nature of man. She no longer “fears the heat o’ the sun”(p. 9). Not because it has lost its power, but because she uses her protective shields and strengthens her defenses. As stated below that,

Clarissa protects herself and her community from the evil by assembling people into harmonious social units that move about against a backdrop of beautiful flowers and dresses, well appointed tables, and significant observations about quite serious topics.³

³ John R. Maze, *Virginia Woolf: Feminism, Creativity, and the Unconscious*, (Westport: Green wood Press, 1997), Retrieved from: <http://lion.chadwyck.com>

Based on the fact that Clarissa's superego is dominant, next, will be discussed what are the effects of the dominant superego to her life that related to her response to her traumatic experience. As has been mentioned before, there is evidence that Clarissa's superego is dominant such as her low libido. It is not the life instinct that has the power, but the death instinct. However, in Clarissa's case, it can be seen later that it is not the death instinct, which is dominant, but the life instinct. The party, which she holds, is the most significant example of the manifestation of the life instinct. So, how come a dominant superego ends up in a strong life instinct? Actually, it is the ego—the intermediary between the id and the external world is the one which transforms the death instinct into the life instinct. The instincts exist in the id, but they come to expression by directing the processes of the ego and the superego.

What happens to Clarissa is actually the process of transformation. It is her ego, which converts her death wish into life instinct. Clarissa's ego as the executive of the personality neutralizes the two powers of the psyche agents which are opposite of each other. They are the superego, which can be seen in Clarissa's strong moral value about how she really appreciates life, and her id, which is shown by her frigidity or her weak libido. Clarissa's ego balances those two psyche agents so they can survive. Her ego has carried its role very well. In other words, Clarissa develops a superego which, plays the same

role in controlling her impulses as an external authority does. This explains how a dominant superego can serve the ends of life instead of those of death.

There is evidence showing Clarissa's hostility toward other people. Clarissa calls Walsh's love and Kilman's love "the cruelest thing in the world...clumsy, hot domineering, hypocritical, eavasdropping, jealous, infinitely cruel and unscrupulous."(p. 126) She also says,

It rasped her, though, to have stirring about in her this brutal monster! To hear twigs cracking and feel hooves planted don in the depth of that leaf encumbered forest, the soul; never to be content quite,...there were a monster grubbing at the roots, as if the whole panoply of content were nothings but self love! this hatred! (p. 12)

Here, Clarissa is sick and now feels a deep, intense anger inside which never seems to completely disappear. Due to that condition, Clarissa becomes dejected, "due to Richard;she had never been so happy" (p. 185). Although she recommits herself to life (to her party), but it makes her have the feeling of invisible, unseen, unknown. She says,

She had the oddest sense of being invisible; unseen; unknown;there being no more marrying, no more having of the children now, but only this astonishing and rather solemn progress with the rest of them, up Bond street, this being Mrs. Dalloway; not even Clarissa any more; this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway. (pp. 10-11)

Although Clarissa's reaffirmation of life at the end of the novel seems to be a victory, it becomes less impressive when one realizes that she is recommitting herself to a life in which even her creativity is harnessed for the purpose of preserving the order she finds so oppressive. Throughout the novel Woolf includes references to the meaninglessness of Clarissa's life and her coldness and

frigidity. Peter thinks what Clarissa says, “It was her manner that annoyed him; timid; hard; something arrogant; unimaginative prudish. The death of the soul. He had said that instinctively, ticketing the moment as he used to do—death of the soul.” (p. 59)

Another reference from Peter that shows Clarissa’s meaningless life, “...she frittered her time away, launching, dining, giving these incessant parties of hers, talking not sense, saying things she didn’t mean, blunting the edge of her mind, losing her discrimination.” (p. 78)

She remains on the edge of life, walking the porch at Bourton (her hometown), watching the woman from her window, standing at the edge of Serpentine, and even dying through another. This is a very ironic thing, as Clarissa’s effort to suppress mother within her is what condemns her to a superficial, unfulfilling life. Even though Clarissa recommits herself to life and returns to her party, her life lacks meaning and vitality.

3.3 The Manipulation of Septimus’ Id toward His Superego

In this part of analysis will be closely examined how Septimus responds to his traumatic experience. This response clearly happens in the unconsciousness level in which the three psyche agents take part. From the previous discussion, it is concluded that Clarissa’s ego transforms her death instinct into life instinct so that she does not commit suicide. It is caused by her ego has played its role very well. Why Septimus has different outcome

with Clarissa is the question because Septimus and Clarissa are doppelganger, and they share the same philosophy of life.

Septimus' personality shows his superego is the dominant part of his personality. He believes that being alive is better than being dead. The writer discovers that, before jumping from the window to end his life, he says that he actually does not want to die since life is good and the sun is hot. However, because he feels that he is hunted down by human nature, that repulsive brute with blood-red nostrils, Septimus feels like a trapped animal that has no choice but to sacrifice his body to save the privacy of his soul. He refuses to let Holmes and Bradshaw use him for experiment. Apparently privacy or individuality is a significant value Septimus has in his life;

When the damned fool came again, Septimus refused to see him...Human nature, in short, as on him-the repulsive brute, with the blood-red nostrils. Holmes was on him...Once you stumble...human nature is on you. Holmes is on you. Their only chance was to escape, without letting Holmes know, to Italy-anywhere, anywhere, away from Dr. Holmes.(pp. 91-92)

This matter is a very crucial point in Septimus' life because the command from the doctors to take him to the sanitarium leads him to his decision to commit suicide. Holmes and Bradshaw illustrate the dominant power in society. And, although Septimus has a hallucination, he has a clear recognition of the enemies that restrict his freedom and want to lock him up as a prisoner down in Surrey. Holmes' advice to Rezia to get Septimus to look at "real things, go to a music hall, play cricket" (p. 25) suggests that such conventional activities are more representative of reality and truth than what

Septimus experience and learns in war. Holmes and Bradshaw encourage Septimus to revise and repress the understanding and knowledge gained during the war. Bradshaw represents the social and political forces of a community that does want to reveal “profound truths which needed...an immense effort to speak out, but the world was entirely changed by them forever” (p. 67). Bradshaw’s goal is to protect and perpetuate the world of proportion that his life represents:

Proportion, divine proportion, Sir William’s goddess, was acquired by Sir William walking hospitals, catching salmon, begetting one son in Harley Street by Lady Bradshaw, who caught salmon herself and took photographs scarcely to be distinguished from the work of professionals. Worshipping proportion, Sir William not only prospered himself but made England prosper, secluded her lunatics, forbade childbirth, penalized despair, made it impossible for the unfit to propagate their views until they, too, shared his sense of proportion. (p. 99)

Before jumping, he states, “But he would wait till the very last moment. He did not want to die . Life was good . The sun hot.”(p. 149) As he jumps, he screams that he will give it to Holmes. Septimus feespushed into a position where he must save himself from the overwhelming hold of conversion and proportion. Septimus preserves his autonomy in a final, willful act of self-destruction.

In a sense, that is odd because although Septimus has positive values in life, he still commits suicides. At first, the writer assumes that it could be the superego that becomes so over whelming and demands Septimus to fight till the end for his individuality value. The domination of the superego causes Septimus’ ego to obey the superego’s demand to make him think that death is the last way to preserve his privacy, as “there was an embrace in death” (p.

184). Afterward, facing death will not be a problem at all as Weiten says, “the superego of a moralistic person can become very aggressive against the ego. The ego is made to feel unworthy and wicked. A person who feels this way even do himself bodily harm or commit suicide.”⁴

However, superego does not have the kind of instinct to force a person to kill himself since as Weiten says, “the acts of self-aggression satisfy the aggressive impulses of id”⁵. It means that Septimus’ suicide is driven by id, instead of his superego. As we know that the id is the source psychic energy and the set of the all instincts, including the instinct to die (death instinct). It seems that the death instinct motivated to be present as the ego fails and stops to channel and satisfy Septimus’s sex instinct as a part of life instinct. At the same time the ego fails to meet the demands of Septimus’ sex instinct, there has been a sort of transformation of instincts within Septimus’ personality, especially in his id.

Apparently the id is being corruptive towards Septimus’ personality. It uses Septimus’ superego to channel and satisfy its death instinct. Hence, when Septimus’ ego has been forced to confront the superego’ strong demand to defend its value about individuality, it is actually the death instinct uses the superego to meet its demand. Weiten says that this is caused by “the fact that superego is said to be the agent of the death instincts”⁶. In this case, the superego is considered being corrupted (or manipulated) by the id. Superego instinct. By doing so, it is able to destroy the life itself, and fulfill id’s demand

⁴ op. cit., p. 48.

⁵ ibid., p. 26.

⁶ ibid., p. 61.

of the death instinct. In the novel, this mechanism of superego is clearly shown as Septimus always thinks that his privacy of the soul can not be interrupted by anyone because he rejects conformity and refuses to bow to the pressure, especially to a monster such as the doctors: “You brute! You brute!” cried Septimus, seeing human nature, that is Dr. Holmes, enter the room”(p. 93). This pressure of the superego forces the ego into a great frustration that leads Septimus’ ego to submit id’s death instinct. In such distressing condition, passing death to him will not be a difficult task at all.

Septimus’ committing suicide is aimed not only for the reason of restoring Septimus’ sense of innocence but also for the sake of fulfilling the demand of his superego that his privacy of soul has to be preserved by any means. In terms of the demand of superego, it is nothing else but the demand of the id to fulfill its death instinct. In this case, superego is only acting as a tool. Due to this condition, Septimus ‘ suicide seems to resolve his conflict. However, it is not a solution at all because his suicide will never solve the conflicts taking place within him, instead it just ends them. To the end of his life, Septimus has never been successful to recover the balanced state of the three psyche agents operating underneath. Septimus’ suicide should not be covered as a way out. In fact, his suicide cannot help him solve his problem. Clarissa, by continuing her life can learn new thing. And hopefully, she can gain a new, positive meaning for her life. She still has the chance for a good and meaningful life because she is still alive, but not for Septimus.