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# Traces of a Tyger

The literary archetype of madness in Virginia Woolf's  
*Mrs Dalloway*

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## Dedicatoria

*Para todos los locos que incomprensidos vagan en las calles. To all those who love literature and are fascinated, enveloped by its texture. To Katrina Hoffman, in the distance, in the nearness.*

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## Epígrafe

*Once meek, and in a perilous path, The just man kept his course along  
The vale of death.*

— *William Blake, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*

*Un tercer tigre buscaremos. Éste Será como los otros una forma De mi sueño,  
un sistema de palabras Humanas y no el tigre vertebrado Que, más allá de  
las mitologías, Pisa la tierra. Bien lo sé, pero algo Me impone esta aventura  
indefinida, Insensata y antigua, y persevero En buscar por el tiempo de la tarde  
El otro tigre, el que no está en el verso.*

— *Jorge Luis Borges, "El otro tigre"*

*I am the poet of the Body and I am the poet of the Soul, The pleasures of heaven  
are with me and the pains of hell are with me, The first I graft and increase upon  
myself, the latter I translate into new tongue.*

— *Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself"*

*This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal  
and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer  
traditional.*

— *T.S Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent"*

*What does the brain matter," said Lady Rosseter, getting up, "compared with the  
heart?"*

— *Virginia Woolf, Mrs Dalloway*

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Virginia Woolf in *Mrs Dalloway*, through Clarissa Dalloway's and other parallel stories, presents us with the situation of Septimus Warren Smith, a war hero who suffers shell-shock and that due to his apparent madness is victim of constant threats from two physicians who want to put him away because of his mental crises. He, in an attempt to preserve his soul from the terrible embrace of human nature, decides to kill himself before he is arrested. Taking into account this information, the topic of this thesis will be the treatment of madness in *Mrs Dalloway*, understanding the figure of the mad person as a literary archetype which is repeated with some consistency in English Literature, from classical to contemporary texts.

The main focus will be the development of the figure of Septimus as a visionary poet, a modernist figure analogous to William Blake who, with his visionary poetic/pictorial work, drew the paths to the following romantic company. A comparison will be drawn between the two poets taking into account the evolution of the visionary poet from its pre-romantic sphere to the modernist shadow of a mad person, showing that madness suffers transformations from the ancient Greece to modernist times. One of the sub-topics will be the conception of nature in contrast to human nature, and how they seem to be components of a dichotomy that cannot be dissolved.

My intention is to work on madness as a literary archetype, along with an examination of the mad person within the context of a modernist novel where it is manifest in the figure of the visionary poet. I will try to see how this has changed from the Platonic perspective of divine madness to the segregation and punishment of the Classic Epoch, and finally to our modern(ist) sensibility. Tentatively, the social apprehension towards the mad person would affect its characterisation in *Mrs Dalloway*, in which a post-war fragmented society is presented.

## 1.1. Mrs Dalloway

*Mrs Dalloway* was Virginia Woolf's fourth novel and it was first published in 1925 in the Hogarth Press, London. It remains one of her most read and popular novels<sup>1</sup> which received wide critical acclaim<sup>2</sup>. When discussing the extent of her work, she said in her posthumous *A Writer's Diary*: "I want to give life and death, sanity and insanity; I want to criticise the social system and to show it at work, at its most intense" (quoted in Thakur 55). It also was thought of as a war elegy, as she questioned in another one of her diaries: "A new ——— by Virginia Woolf... Elegy?" (quoted in Froula 87). Her new interpretation of the classic elegy<sup>3</sup> led to the "discovery of the genre's deep resources for dramatizing and mediating violence both psychic and social" (ibid. 87). The recreation or modernisation of elegy in the form of a

<sup>1</sup> See, Goldman, Jane. *The Cambridge Introduction to Virginia Woolf*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. p. 53

<sup>2</sup> See the introductory note to Virginia Woolf in: Woolf, Virginia. *Mrs Dalloway*. London: Penguin Books, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> "From the English Renaissance, 'elegy' or 'elegie' referred to a poem mourning the death of a particular individual." (Childs and Fowler, *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms* 67)

novel is consequence of the innovative and artistic drive that followed Ezra Pound's 'make it new'<sup>4</sup> motto, to which authors like T.S. Eliot, Ernest Hemingway, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf subscribed. The use of "the [elegy's] deep resources" in a new meaningful context, namely the post-World War years, was what made *Mrs Dalloway* a testimony of the social milieu that included psychological and bodily fragmentation, in which "the violence of war and of everyday death; the violence of everyday life; and the violence intrinsic to mourning, the grief-driven rage that threatens to derail the mourner's progress toward acceptance and consolation" (ibid. 87) are present in most of the characters' thoughts and are the source of their inner tribulations, e.g. Septimus' madness, Clarissa's self-searching, and Peter Walsh's solitude.

Fragmentation is present in the structure and development of the novel in which parallel and dissimilar stories are grouped in an organised, subtle collage of differing perspectives on a single day in London that altogether comprise the entirety of the literary work. These are connected by a device that Virginia Woolf called the "tunnelling process". It gave her the chance to "dig out beautiful caves behind [her] characters' with the idea that 'the caves shall connect, & each comes to daylight at the present moment'" (quoted in Goldman 54).

This novel was chosen as the object of study because I have a present interest in researching madness and its development in the history of human kind. *Mrs Dalloway* presents an interesting point of view about this problem by means of the contrast between nature and human nature, and how people oppress others simply because of their social status or their status of knowledge. Due to this fact, the thesis proposal is that Virginia Woolf recreated the literary archetype of the mad person as both the denouncer and the scapegoat of this reality. In the present thesis, different perspectives about madness are woven and a definition based specifically on literature is proposed from a mixture of Woolf's moments of being, Plato's "Phaedrus", and Foucault's *History of Madness*. This can be seen as a contribution to the study of the novel as well as to literary criticism because it reinforces the value of the literary work of art over the different perspectives one can have to approach the same literary text.

## 1.2. Madness: Divine, feared, and visionary

Madness has been present in the history of human kind since its early beginnings, taking different lights and shadows according to the periods in which it was studied. Socrates, being one of the first to make almost an apologia of madness, described the different shapes it took, and let us know through Plato's words that in ancient Greek there is an etymological connection between madness and prophecy. Recalling the founders of the Greek language, he said that "[t]here will be more reason in appealing to the ancient inventors of names, who would never have connected prophecy (*μαντική*), which foretells the future and is the noblest of arts, with madness (*μανική*), or called them both by the same name, if they had deemed madness to be a disgrace or dishonour;—they must have thought that there was an inspired madness which was a noble thing" (Plato, "Phaedrus" 450). In Socrates' times it seemed to be that madness was not seen as a problem or an illness that required treatment, and was opposed to civilization. Indeed, it was equivalent to "the noblest of arts", considered from that point of view a prestigious skill, an ability almost desirable. In other words, there was not a feeling of otherness in respect to that mental state. The persecution or isolation

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<sup>4</sup> See, Childs, Peter. *Modernism*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. New York: Routledge, 2008. p. 15

from which mad people have been victims from centuries did not seem to exist in the mind of the ancient Greeks since there is neither a persecution nor a general feeling of exclusion. Actually, it was held in high esteem because it was considered “a divine gift, and the source of the chiefest blessings granted to men” (Plato, "Phaedrus" 449-450). Nevertheless, Socrates was completely conscious that insanity not only has a godly origin, but also a human one. “And of madness there were two kinds; one produced by human infirmity, the other was a divine release of the soul from the yoke of custom and convention.” (Plato, "Phaedrus" 473). The latter is the one that was praised and feared in many ages, because it has the hidden knowledge of nature, and goes against the establishment, leading its enterprise with the power of the gods that Socrates attributed to this four-fold lunacy. “[It] was subdivided into four kinds, prophetic, initiatory, poetic, erotic, having four gods presiding over them; the first was the inspiration of Apollo, the second that of Dionysus, the third that of the Muses, the fourth that of Aphrodite and Eros.” (Plato, "Phaedrus" 473). With these divine entities being in charge of madness, it could not have merely held a minor position in the life of the Greeks. Some of these characteristics, due to their importance, were inherited by the literary traditions that followed, creating a new archetypal figure of the mad person who was encircled by an obscure halo, but who also was and is used as a means of moral criticism of society.

Virginia Woolf’s understanding of madness is very similar to that of Plato. As Thakur says, “Virginia Woolf, [...], appears to share the classical viewpoint of Plato that ‘.....there is also a madness which is a divine gift.....’ She feels that the so-called insane, [...] sometimes have a better conception of reality, and have something useful to say” (62). By giving voice to Septimus, she could project this marginalised, undervalued discourse, and bestow him with the importance of a visionary poet, as well as his tragic death.

Inside the intricate pattern of the cloth of madness, some noticeable elements appear, which are ancient threads that belong to the Western literary tradition: namely, water, mirrors, and flowers. As Foucault states, “[t]he link between water and madness is deeply rooted in the dream of the Western man” (11). When he speaks of water, he is mainly referring to the sea and the connections that existed between these elements in the history of madness, such as the expulsion of the lunatics to an endless wandering life in the sea. In the so-called “Ship of Fools, a strange drunken boat that wound its way down the wide, slow-moving rivers of the Rhineland and round the canals of Flanders” (Foucault 8). It made infirmity an element constantly present in the quotidian Renaissance life, unifying the sea and the image of mad wanderers in searching of meaning in their sense-less existence. The dichotomy of the sane and the insane was already inserted in society<sup>5</sup>; it was an accepted custom and a valid social practice. Obviously opposed to the Greek vision of the problem, madness arises as the undesirable other that invades cities in their quest for destiny. This social event had its artistic correlation in the figure of the “*Narrenschiff* [ , which] was clearly a literary invention, [...]. Such ships were a literary commonplace, with a crew of [...] carefully defined social types set out on a great symbolic voyage that brought them, [...], the figure of their destiny or of their truth” (Foucault 8). The peregrination trip, together with water, created a symbolism of purification. Cleansing that was too far to be reached because the understanding of madness

<sup>5</sup> In *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault tells us that the source for the feeling of otherness in relation to madness is rooted in Western society since the apparition of leprosy in the Middle Ages, and its subsequent eradication from society. “But what lasted longer than leprosy, and persisted for years after the lazar houses had been emptied, were the values and images attached to the leper, and the importance for society of this insistent, fearsome figure, who was carefully excluded only after a magic circle had been drawn around him.” (5). The blank left by the leper had to be filled with a new infirmity, and madness played that role after the emergence of venereal diseases which followed leprosy, but were not that strong to occupy the whole role.

as an illness without treatment put it in a position of rejection more than of acceptance, and if it was not reincorporated into society then real solution was almost impossible.

Mirrors entered into the imagery of madness from the application of the archetype of the mad person to convey social and moral critic. Erasmus, with his *Praise of Folly*, is one of the main authors who made use of madness to denounce social debasement. He argues that self-love is responsible for the other follies existent in the world (Flattery, Forgetfulness, Laziness, Pleasure, Sensuality, and Madness), because the people who hold themselves in high-esteem cannot admit their own errors and criticise the rest, as if they were a measure of perfection. "And indeed the whole proceedings of the world are nothing but one continued scene of Folly, all the actors being equally fools and madmen" (Erasmus 44). The world is seen as a theatre in which everyone takes a role, consequently hiding the real self behind a fool's mask. In this world of self-love "the symbol of madness was to be a mirror, which reflected nothing real, but secretly showed the presumptuous dreams of all who gazed into it to contemplate themselves. Madness here was not about truth or the world, but rather about man and the truth about himself that he can perceive" (Foucault 23). The mirror and the reflections of the self on it compose the reality of the world, where real people are transformed into personalities in a constant interplay of characterisations and plays.

The floral imagery is connected to madness by the delicate fibres of the hidden knowledge of nature which only mad people have access to because of their mental detachment. It is "the inaccessible, fearsome knowledge that the madman, in his innocent foolishness, already possesses" (Foucault 19) that most frightened people in the Classical Age. The divine property of madness no more produces awe, but terrifies. "While men of reason and wisdom see only fragmentary figures that are all the more frightening for their incompleteness, the madman sees a whole, unbroken sphere. For him, the crystal ball empty for others is filled with invisible knowledge" (Foucault 19). The doors of perception<sup>6</sup> which William Blake speaks about in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* are already opened, so that mad people can see the infinite reality that composes nature, transforming madness into a visionary element, the source of inspiration which guides the artistic process, as it had been in Ancient Greece where the poets found their poetic impulse thanks to the Muses.

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<sup>6</sup> "If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern."(Blake 120)

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

New Criticism or New American Criticism is going to remain as the primary literary theory in which the novel will be put under observation. The concept of work of literary art seems to be appropriate to define the object of study of literature, and this approach insists on the use of the text as the primary source of criticism, which gives literary criticism a solid base to begin constructing meaning. Northrop Frye, in his *Anatomy of Criticism*, stated that:

***What is now called "new criticism," [...] is largely criticism based on the conception of a poem as literally a poem. It studies the symbolism of a poem as an ambiguous structure of interlocking motifs; it sees the poetic pattern of meaning as a self-contained "texture," and it thinks of the external relations of a poem as being with the other arts, to be approached only with the Horatian warning of favete linguis, and not with the historical or the didactic. (82)***

The viewpoint of the poem or the work of literary art as a texture is very useful for the thesis' purposes. It takes intertextuality for granted, transforming literature into a vast fabric in which poems, novels, and plays (just naming the most outstanding genres) along with culture are the threads that give it form. Further, meaning is constructed from inside, from its constituent parts, because it is "self-contained". However, decontextualization can be one of its faults, Frye's proposal seems to be sensible in terms of the possibilities of multiple analyses, since he does not deny the existence of polysemous meanings.

An understanding of archetypes can also be promoted by following Frye's ideas. He explains them as "a typical or recurring image. [...] [A] symbol which connects one poem with another and thereby helps to unify and integrate our literary experience" (Frye 99). Again, the notion of intertextuality is suggested, although he does not mention the term. Frye went far in his definition of archetype saying that "[it] is the communicable symbol, [as a result] archetypal criticism is primarily concerned with literature as a social fact and as a mode of communication" (Ibid.). In Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, madness is a social fact. Its presence is frequent, and works as a vehicle from which to communicate desired messages.

The methodology will be close readings and analysis of symbols concerning madness, creating an intimate dialogue with the text. The symbol, under Frye's light, "means any unit of any literary structure that can be isolated for critical attention." It includes "[a] word, a phrase, or an image used with some kind of special reference (which is what a symbol is usually taken to mean) are all symbols when they are distinguishable elements in critical analysis" (71). Many of the symbols of madness are part of an imagery sub-divided into water, flowers, and mirrors.

Concerning critical studies, Michel Foucault's perspective of the segregation of madness since the Classical Age is akin to the present thesis. In his essay *History of Madness*, he suggests that madness has come to replace the empty space left by the disappearance of leprosy. "Once leprosy had gone, and the figure of the leper was no more than a distant memory, these structures still remained" (Foucault 6). This exclusion gave form to an Other that was always mutating in shape, but that in the Classical Age took the form of madness. This perspective has as its core the concept of biopower, i.e. "the technologies, knowledges, discourses, politics and practices used to bring about

the production and management of a state's human resources" (Danaher, Schirato and Webb). Moreover, "[b]iopower analyses, regulates, controls, explains and defines the human subject, its body and behaviour" (Ibid.). This power over the body constitutes Foucault's central idea of biopolitics, which can be seen indirectly in *The History of Madness* concerning the treatment of the insane<sup>7</sup>. Civilization or human nature has made use of its power to control people, punishing with exclusion and isolation the ones who disobey, denounce, and are capable of seeing farther than common people and what can be understood by reason; mad people being the seers, the clairvoyants, the prophets in a blind society.

In Foucault's as well as in Erasmus' analyses, insanity has a two-fold character. This notion will be paramount in the understanding of the problem throughout this thesis. This perspective says that "[t]he paths taken by the figure of the cosmic vision and the incisive movement that is moral reflection, between the *tragic* and the *critical* elements, now constantly diverge, creating a gap in the fabric of the experience of madness that will never be repaired" (Foucault, "Stultifera Navis" 26). It's common that the tragic and the critical are embodied by different characters in the same literary work, but in *Mrs Dalloway* a new turn is taken and the gap is mended, as it will be seen.

From philosophy, Plato's "Phaedrus" will work as the support for my understanding of madness. He conceived it not as an illness, but a divine skill which is acquired only by a select group; though this skill may be obtained by anyone, poets often possess it in literature. This madness allows people to apprehend reality as it is, without the quotidian veils that everyone uses in order to live in tranquillity. Madness or vision arrives at specific moments of life, which Virginia Woolf calls "moments of being". She says that: "[t]hese separate moments of being were however embedded in many more moments of non-being [...] in a kind of nondescript cotton-wool" (Woolf, *Moments of Being* 70). This instance in which reality is revealed coincides with one of Plato's categories of madness, actually "the fourth and last kind of madness, which is imputed to him who, when he sees the beauty of earth, is transported with the recollection of the true beauty" (Plato 456). Two similar perspectives in two different and distant times speak of something that is beyond the five senses, and only can be known with the expansion of the senses; the merging of the self with the world.

Although New Criticism leaves aside everything that is outside the work of literary art, the thesis will consider Foucault's and Plato's perspectives because they enrich the present analysis. Both points of view, along with New Criticism, help to understand the archetypal character of madness in *Mrs Dalloway* since they present different facets of the same problem, which together give a more complex and deeper understanding of a single phenomenon. Segregation seems to be such a reality when speaking of insanity, because of historical facts deeply rooted in our society, so that Plato's perspective of divine madness appears to be just a naïve idea, something impossible to consider. And people tend to forget that the latter approach is also based on the different appraisal of a society which perceived reality from a different angle, sometimes contrary to our own.

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<sup>7</sup> Many of the words which refer to madness implicate a relation of power over the mad person. For example, some of the commonest synonyms are insanity, mental illness, lunacy, and adjectives like senseless, mindless, or demented. They put madness in a lower position in our society that praises reason as a fundamental column, as a cornerstone from which any consideration about reality has to be based around. Henceforth, I am going to use these synonyms, but I do not pretend to discriminate against, they are going to be used just for the lack of more neutral words to name the mad person.

## 3. TRACES OF A TYGER

In the first section, different perspectives concerning the role Septimus and Clarissa play within the novel are going to be addressed. The classic perspective drawn from Virginia Woolf's introduction to the 1928 Modern Library edition of *Mrs Dalloway* is going to be presented, in which she establishes a relationship of mystical doubles between both characters. This perspective, validated by many critics, will be challenged by a different proposal, in which the characters remain as autonomous presences that even work in opposing directions.

The second section will deal with madness and the visionary poet. Madness is seen as a fourfold entity, idea extracted from Plato's "Phaedrus". Prophecy, inspiration, poetry and love are the threads that make up the cloth that becomes the visionary's clothes, a unique, complex tissue. In the novel, this tissue envelops different characters. With Clarissa, it transforms into the thread of inspiration; with Peter Walsh, it transforms into prophecy; with Richard Dalloway, into love; and finally with Septimus, it transforms into poetry; although he as a visionary poet wears them all. Foucault's idea of the unfixable gap between tragic and critical madness will be challenged by contrasting it with the literary archetype of madness incarnated in Septimus.

The third and final section will deal with nature, human nature, proportion and conversion. These concepts will be developed in relation to Septimus, his madness, and threats from Holmes and Bradshaw. Nature will be contrasted with human nature, and proportion and conversion will be developed in relation to the latter. This opposition creates the struggle in the novel that finally ends with Septimus' suicide; opposition that also represents one of the major conflicts felt also by Clarissa, Peter Walsh, and Sally Seton.

### 3.1. Septimus and Clarissa: Mystical Doubles?

The importance of Septimus Warren Smith to the novel is paramount. If there is another main character, besides Clarissa Dalloway, it is him, the shell-shocked war veteran, the visionary poet who wants to transmit his messages to the Prime Minister. In various sources, he is identified as the double of Clarissa. As a matter of fact, "Virginia Woolf, in the introduction to the Modern Library edition of *Mrs Dalloway* in 1928, offers a clue to the basic fantasy, the relationship between Clarissa Dalloway and the socially obscure Septimus Smith as mystical doubles of one another..." (Hoff 2). Following Woolf's clue, Froula states that "Clarissa herself "survives" [...] forth the "divine vitality" that the elegy seeks to recover, while her double, [...] Septimus, suffers a death that enacts a potentially redemptive "message" of witness to social violence" (88). Even, the novel is presented as "charting the parallel experiences of two figures, Clarissa Dalloway, [...], and Septimus Warren Smith, [...]" (Goldman 54), where "a double narrative unfolds in which we follow both Clarissa, [...], and Septimus [...]" (Ibid.). Indeed, both of them experience the same message, "Fear no more the heat o'the sun", taken from Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, which becomes their motto. It appears in different episodes of the novel, for example in Clarissa's case while walking

through London, and in Septimus' case before his suicide (Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* 12,154). This connection cannot only be traced back at the level of their performance in the *mythos*<sup>8</sup> but also at the level of the *ethos*. They share, for instance, a bird-like appearance; while Clarissa has "a ridiculous little face, beaked like a bird's", Septimus is "beak-nosed" (Ibid. 13,17). They also have a pale complexion, she has "grown very white since her illness" and he is described as "pale-faced" (Ibid. 6, 17). These facts not only transform them into "mystical doubles", but also create a physical resonance, a likeness in their bodies, sharing not only spiritual properties but also bodily characteristics.

There is, however, a series of other features that singularise Septimus Smith from Clarissa Dalloway. First of all, his mental state makes him live in a constant moment of being in which his sensitive perception of the environment makes everything bear a deep significance: the streets, the park, the birds, the sky, the people, and his house, are all transformed into objects that communicate the truth of life. For example, when he first appeared in the novel, there was an explosion that came from that conspicuous car in Mulberry street and inside his thought there was the statement: "[t]he world has raised its whip; where will it descend?" (17). In the same scene the noise was referred to as "the voice of authority" (Ibid.), fact that is interpreted in Septimus' mind as the world's whip. It means, a phallic weapon which symbolises the power to punish that male hegemonic groups have, the capacity of imposing their ideas and will over the rest of humanity; never knowing who will be the ones suffering its aftershocks.

On another occasion, when he was in Regent's Park he heard a sparrow "drawing its notes out, to sing freshly and piercingly in Greek words how there is no crime and, joined by another sparrow, they sang in voices prolonged and piercing in Greek words, from trees in the meadow of life beyond a river where the dead walk, how there is no death" (Ibid. 28). Here he is able to identify the singing of birds as Greek, suggesting a connection with ancient civilizations. A "meadow of life" is mentioned and can be related to the biblical Garden of Eden, a place in which no crime existed before Adam and Eve's fall, but it also makes reference to Greek mythology, because the "river where the dead walk" as Hoff states "refers to the Styx" (54), that is one of the rivers in Hades, the place of death or thanatos.

These allusions make his visions have a special quality because they are grounded in ancient traditions. This quality being a spiritual dialogue with former times in which madness was not punished. While Clarissa lives moments of being just on counted occasions, she experiments most of the time the commoner moments of non-being, i.e. plain life or a reality in disguise where our experiences have superficial meaning but no transcendental reality can be achieved or ever recognised.

Second of all, to establish a connection of "mystical doubles", or a channel of communication between them, a bridge would be necessary to unify their two different personalities. This communication, in the plot, is not reciprocal because Clarissa makes the linkage between Septimus and herself only after his death. In the Mulberry Street incident, when she was buying flowers, she did not notice Septimus' presence because for Clarissa he was part of the mass of people watching the car, one more of the passersby. "Mrs. Dalloway, coming to the window with her arms full of sweet peas, looked out with her little pink face pursed in enquiry. Every one looked at the motor car. Septimus looked" (Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* 18). His common appearance probably made him invisible, his plain outfit, i.e. just "brown shoes and a shabby overcoat" (Ibid. 17), maybe was not noticeable from the crowd

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<sup>8</sup> Frye uses the terms *mythos* to refer to the narrative or plot, and *ethos* to refer to the characterization, see Frye 73. Henceforth, either term to name those components is going to be used.

and the flower shop Clarissa was in. Therefore no channel is established, no communication produced. The basic reciprocity for any kind of relationship does not exist.

Now applying Frye's concept of centripetal and centrifugal<sup>9</sup> directions when reading literature, a third difference between Mrs Dalloway and Septimus can be drawn. Frye's concept is going to be enlarged to the function of the character in the novel. Following this, Septimus would be identified as a character with a centrifugal function, while Clarissa would have a centripetal function. He, as a visionary poet, wanted to communicate his ideas to the authorities because by doing that he would reveal the truth he discovered to society:

***Septimus, was alone, called forth in advance of the mass of men to hear the truth, to learn the meaning, which now at last, after all the toils of civilisation—Greeks, Romans, Shakespeare, Darwin, and now himself—was to be given whole to. . . . "To whom?" he asked aloud. "To the Prime Minister," the voices which rustled above his head replied. The supreme secret must be told to the Cabinet. (Ibid. 75)***

He was conjured by an external power in order to transmit the truth to human beings. The mention of "Greeks, Romans, Shakespeare, Darwin" ironically inscribes him in the tradition of our logocentric civilisation, giving a solid ground to his message because it belongs simultaneously to the basis of the modern ethnocentric culture, i.e. the Ancient civilizations, the Renaissance, and Naturalism, periods in the history of human beings characterised by a ruling rationalistic discourse. The irony is founded in the quality of his message, "first that trees are alive; next there is no crime; next love, universal love" (Ibid.), these principles are in the least rational, or capable of being scientifically proved, so they would not belong to the before said tradition. Then, as it is a "supreme secret", it has to be told to the most important spheres of power, the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, since it would change the world forever, and these politicians are supposed to transmit important messages to the rest of society. But they also obey a rationalistic perspective.

On the other hand, Clarissa does not have intentions of sharing her thoughts with anybody but herself. Accordingly, her function of playing the role of Mrs. Dalloway is not related with a large number of people, but more specifically with her husband. This fact can be noticed in the episode of Bond Street, when:

***She had the oddest sense of being herself invisible; unseen; unknown; there being no more marrying, no more having of 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. (Ibid. 13)***

Her being "invisible; unseen; unknown" makes her only noticeable to herself, not being recognised by anybody, losing, in the mass of people in the street, her own identity. It is in these moments, by these "solemn progress[es]" that she becomes just a name, she does not belong to herself, to Clarissa; on the contrary, she merely becomes a role, developing, from that perspective, herself as a character in the novel. As a result, her social critique has a centripetal function.

<sup>9</sup> "Whenever we read anything, we find our attention moving in two directions at once. One direction is outward or centrifugal, in which we keep going outside our reading, from the individual words to the things they mean, or, in practice, to our memory of the conventional association between them. The other direction is inward or centripetal, in which we try to develop from the words a sense of the larger verbal pattern they make. In both cases we deal with symbols, but when we attach an external meaning to a word we have, in addition to the verbal symbol, the thing represented or symbolized by it." (Frye 73)

In this sense Clarissa can be represented with the metaphor of the rose. In the novel roses are mentioned several times, sometimes giving qualities that can help to understand why Clarissa, in her centripetal function can be identified as a rose, i.e. that they are complex, ornamental, and that in a bunch they are all similar, but individually they have differences; also noticing that their petals go towards the centre in a spiral-like manner. For instance, in the following comparison “how fresh like frilled linen clean from a laundry laid in wicker trays the roses looked” (Woolf 16), roses have a “frilled” appearance, meaning that they are folded in intricate, complex patterns. On another occasion, “Clarissa thought the roses absolutely lovely; first bunched together; now of their own accord starting apart” (131). This quotation works as an analogy of Clarissa’s thinking of her being in the street and feeling invisible. In the context of a bunch, every rose is a component of it, disappearing in the mass; but as single flowers they are as significant as the others. The ornamental characteristic can be appreciated here, “[t]he plate of bananas; the engraving of Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort; at the mantelpiece, with the jar of roses” (156), within a set of decorations there is “the jar of roses”, their role is just to beautify the place. It also works as an analogy for Clarissa, because she said that she had the sensation in the crowd of being only Mrs. Richard Dalloway, a function deprived of all her complexity as a human being. Framed by the images of Queen Victoria and the Prince, she stays as the roses do: perfect, beautifying the place, “the perfect hostess” (Ibid. 10), an example of a Victorian woman. Consequently, Clarissa would be envisioned as the rose, both complex and ornamental, a person disguised in a role, but divested by her own thoughts.

On the other hand, Septimus can be represented as the solitary traveller. This figure is described only once in the whole novel, though its powerful symbolism makes it worth drawing an analogy. It is described in the episode when Peter Walsh was snoozing in Regent’s Park, “[t]he solitary traveller, haunter of lanes, disturber of ferns, and devastator of great hemlock plants” (Ibid. 63). The solitary traveller belongs to nature, travels across forests down its deeps; a wandering that is part of madness’ archetype, because “[a]n itinerant existence was often the lot of the mad” (Foucault, “Stultifera Navis” 9), a trip headed nowhere, because its performers were senseless.

The solitary traveller is not bound to the chains of civilization, to the norms or rules of society, or to an established religion or lifestyle. “By conviction an atheist perhaps, he is taken by surprise with moments of extraordinary exaltation” (Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* 63). His atheism makes him self-reliant to the extent of believing that “[n]othing exists outside us except a state of mind, [...] a desire for solace, for relief, for something outside these miserable pigmies, these feeble, these ugly, these craven men and women” (Ibid. 63-64). His detachment from society makes him see common people as “miserable pigmies” who are weak and coward, and are responsible for the fragmented state of society after the Great War. These same people incarnate the brute of blood-red nostrils of Septimus’ visions.

The “moments of extraordinary exaltation” can be identified as moments of being, the instants where visions arrive. These visions are very profuse, abundant in Septimus as well as the solitary traveller. They arrive at any moment, “proffer[ing] great cornucopias full of fruit” (Ibid. 64); fruits which are explanations to the milieu the visionary makes sense of, interprets and consequently communicates in poetical discourse. They “are dashed in his face like bunches of roses” (Ibid.), like truths you cannot avoid facing, otherwise they hit you. They also “rise to the surface like pales faces” (Ibid), remembering Ophelia’s death, who drowned herself for realising her social truth. In these moments madness takes the form of the Muses and provides a poetic momentum to Septimus, imbuing him in creativity. It is in this state that he sees the world from a transcendental, mystical perspective and

realises that it is no longer whole. He becomes conscious of the danger the soul is in, its fragile condition in the modernist world surrounded by war, the city, industrial development, fragmentation. "The death of the soul" (Ibid. 65) seems imminent, but there are Septimus' visions, his transcendental quest of totality and signification to preserve his own soul from the doctors' claws, from civilization and human nature, proportion and conversion.

Accordingly, the rose remains separated from the solitary traveller. On the one hand, Clarissa starts from society and ends at herself. Her struggles are kept in her mind, in her heart, in her soul. These struggles are not communicated to the world, nor are they intended to be. On the other hand, Septimus starts from himself and ends confronting the world. His visions criticise, condemn, or communicate what is on the outside, in society, what is rooted in the establishment, people's behaviour, their actions, their inner drives.

### 3.2. Madness and the visionary poet: the literary archetype of the mad person.

In the present thesis, Plato's "Phaedrus" was the starting point for the consideration of madness. He described it as having four major fields of action: viz prophesy, inspiration, poetry, and love. The four were intermingled in their origin, so that they can be understood as composing different threads of the intricate fabric of madness. This fabric is the one that wears the visionary poet as a cloak, which floats around him like an aura, sheltering him from the common world, acting as a veil that allows him to see real world in bare terms.

In relation to prophesy, the magic of foretelling imbues the poet and leads him to a frenzy in which the future is presented in terms of visions. These visions, coded in the form of poems, are the offspring of the Muses' actions, the result of inspiration. Love is what provides inner movement to the poet, because "that which is moved from within has a soul, for such is the nature of the soul" (Plato, "Phaedrus" 452). The soul understood as the element that communicates with the spiritual world, with the transcendental reality created by poets. Because, as William Blake said in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, "The ancient Poets animated all sensible objects with Gods or Geniuses calling them by the names and adorning them with the properties of woods, rivers, mountains, lakes, cities, nations, and whatever their enlarged & numerous senses could perceive" (117). Therefore, poets are presented as nature's creators, as the ones who provided movement to the world, an *anima*, a soul. Nature is presented as being transcendental, a reality accessed by means of "enlarged and numerous senses", a reality that, due to those facts, may be hidden from the everyday life experiences of the majority of people.

In the novel, some characters could access this visionary reality when they experienced a moment of being. For example Clarissa, while walking towards Bond Street, and after some existential questioning, declared, "This late age of the world's experience had bred in them all, all men and women, a well of tears. Tears and sorrows; courage and endurance; a perfectly upright and stoical bearing" (12). Here she shares insight into the state of affairs after the Great War; the "late age of the world's experience" has left an immense fissure in the social tissue, a gap that is attempted to be mended with "courage and endurance". She realised that the world will never be the same; that people will have to bear the incredible weight of thousands of deaths, violence, and sadness. On another occasion, Clarissa had a clear notion of her common life:

***[S]he felt like a nun who has left the world and feels fold round her the familiar veils and the response to old devotions. The cook whistled in the kitchen. She heard the click of the typewriter. It was her life, and, bending her head over the hall table, she bowed beneath the influence, felt blessed and purified, saying to herself, as she took the pad with the telephone message on it, how moments like this are buds on the tree of life, flowers of darkness they are, she thought (as if some lovely rose had blossomed for her eyes only) (33).***

The image of a cloistered nun recalls the spiritual connection Clarissa has with her inner world. The “familiar veils” are like the roses’ petals, because she “feels [them] fold round her”, enveloping her womanhood. The “old devotions” represent her role as wife that continues haunting her even in seclusion. Some of the petals, of the objects or events that surround her, are the whistling cook and the sound of the typewriter. These matters are part of her common life events. But after realising it she understood the real importance of them, comparing the moment to “buds on the tree of life”, to a transcendental experience, a vision.

Peter Walsh experienced moments of being in different episodes of the narrative. They were usually coded in visions, like the one he had about the solitary traveller and the death of the soul in his afternoon nap in a bench at Regent’s Park. Or when, also at Regent’s park, he was thinking of the fact of becoming old. “The compensation of growing old, [...], was simply this; that the passions remain as strong as ever, but one has gained—at last!—the power which adds the supreme flavour to existence,—the power of taking hold of experience, of turning it round, slowly, in the light” (88). His feeling is very similar to what Bloom interprets of Blake’s Eden. The final state of organised innocence in which everything has sense, every anterior experience, every moment of life is explained in itself, because after the passing from Innocence (spring) to Experience (summer, Generation), and from Experience to Eden (autumn, harvest), a whole life was lived, and age in this case gives the answer to former, younger questions. As Bloom suggests, “[n]o longer can one move directly from spring to harvest. The only road from innocence to creativity and apocalypse lies through the realm of summer, through the hard world of experience” (25). Peter’s sensation of a new power is the fulfilment that gives experience to the self, a new understanding of life, of the world, an epoch of harvesting the fruits of the former cultivating process; putting it in Blakean concepts, he has walked from spring to autumn going through summer, reaching the state of organised innocence, of energetic creativity—at least within the context of this moment of being.

Richard Dalloway also lived an episode in which a truth was revealed. When he was buying roses for Clarissa he began thinking of love, of why it was difficult to say, “I love you”, of the shyness, of the old age. “The time comes when it can’t be said; one’s too shy to say it, he thought, [...], setting off with his great bunch held against his body to Westminster to say straight out in so many words (whatever she might think of him), holding out his flowers, “I love you.”” (Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* 127). By means of the realisation of his old age, Richard recalls the feeling of stillness, of inaction present in Eliot’s “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”. His questioning about daring to make his love explicit in words is similar to Prufrock’s pondering about daring disturb the universe. Both Prufrock and Dalloway seem to be of the same age, surrounded by the same social milieu, and also seem to have the same fear regarding life and about, at their age, challenging their own traditional behaviour. The following verses from Eliot’s poem concentrate these nuisances:

***Do I dare Disturb the universe? In a minute there is time For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse. (6-7)***

The uncertainty about life and their age is shown in the lyric speaker's hesitancy. Security about the present does not exist, since it can change from minute to minute. Time is the trigger and the reason why both of them doubt saying what they feel. Their middle age, their attachment to custom impedes them to face an uncertain future from the dilapidated basis of their recent social past.

Within Richard's stream of thought also came the war in relation to his present indecision. Because "[r]eally it was a miracle thinking of the war, and thousands of poor chaps, with all their lives before them, shovelled together, already half forgotten; it was a miracle. Here he was walking across London to say to Clarissa in so many words that he loved her. Which one never does say, he thought" (Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* 127). The proximity of the past makes every feeling, every action to acquire a miraculous property. After the awful, deplorable war and the death of young people, his comfortable, quiet life in London with Clarissa seems to be insignificant; his irresolution a folly of his age. Because in a war a minutes-time for a decision is a substantial moment, in which not love but life is the main worry.

The three examples, above explained, represent three different kinds of madness in the novel. Clarissa's inspiration lets her see her own reality. Peter's prophesy, his understanding of life in terms of organised experience, Blake's Eden. Richard's struggle with love is the source of the recognition of his past and present. But the fourth kind, poetry, is in Septimus the most representative, because he, as visionary poet, wears the whole cloth.

Septimus Warren Smith represents the literary archetype of the mad person, incarnated in the figure of the visionary poet. In the novel's characterisation, he is presented as a deranged person who sees the world differently from the rationalistic mainstream. He is haunted by his friend Evans' spirit. He claims that trees must not be cut, that love is universal, and that there is no crime. He has a disarrayed appearance, "aged about thirty, pale-faced, beak-nosed, wearing brown shoes and a shabby overcoat, with hazel eyes which had that look of apprehension in them which makes complete strangers apprehensive too" (Woolf 17). His external characteristics give light about his internal conflicts. His shabby overcoat can be equalled to clothing of madness, the piece of clothing that distinguishes him from the rest. His pale face also recalls illness, a state of infirmity, or a cadaveric aspect. As it was said before, his beaked nose is a characteristic that is shared with Clarissa, which gives them a bird-like appearance. His apprehensive eyes represent both a deep understanding of reality, and a worry and nervousness about the future. Thus, the apprehension that filled his eyes can be translated into fear and prophesy from the obscure knowledge he possessed.

In the narrative, the novel's texture presents him as an Other. Apart from the fact that he himself is alienated by his own madness, he is described and perceived as such by the people who are around them in Regent's Park. "Peter Walsh thought [...] both [...] look so desperate" (Ibid. 79). While Maisie Johnson thought "this couple on the chairs gave her quite a turn: the young woman seeming foreign, the man looking queer..." (Ibid. 30). Desperate is very similar to apprehensive, since it implicates certain a nervousness, an anxious state of mind. Being foreign and queer construct the couple's identity as Other. Both of them do not belong to the mainstream community. Rezia, as a foreigner, does not share the same national identity as the English, and Septimus in his queerness, in his craziness, can be individualised from the crowd of people in the street. He is a rare item in the collection of different, but "normal" personalities that populate London. As a result, Rezia is socially an other, while Septimus is it psychologically.

Septimus' sensibility makes him stand in awe before the most subtle events. For instance, when he was with his wife in Regent's Park, listening to a nurse that was repeating

the letters drawn in the air by a plane, he made “[a] marvellous discovery indeed—that the human voice in certain atmospheric conditions (for one must be scientific, above all scientific) can quicken trees into life!” (Ibid. 25-26). This vision is presented as having a scientific or rational background. The reason why he mentions atmospheric conditions is to give a basis to his argument, to provide probable and actual facts. The sentence in parentheses will be his motto when speaking of his visions, in this way always trying to give a more serious quality to them.

Septimus is a transcendental being. He is connected with nature and communicates with it. In the abovementioned scene, he became aware of this linkage. “But [the trees] beckoned; leaves were alive; trees were alive. And the leaves being connected by millions of fibres with his own body, there on the seat, fanned it up and down; when the branch stretched he, too, made that statement” (Ibid. 26). The trees work as a metonymy to establish the link between himself and nature. He recognises trees as being living entities capable of a communication of a transcendental kind. He is united with the leaves of every tree, making up a whole. Synchrony is also appreciated, because when the tree moved he also did. Thus, he is one with nature, vibrating in the same tune, moving in the same direction.

Within the same line, Septimus’ communication with the dead is part of the transcendental reality he lives. He can communicate with Evans, his friend that died in the war. Evans brings him messages, whispers him secrets about the world. In the same scene of the park, when Septimus was sitting on a bench, he began to see him. “There was his hand; there the dead. White things were assembling behind the railings opposite. But he dared not look. Evans was behind the railings!” (Ibid. 28). He is situated in opposition to the dead, as belonging to different realms. The naming of his hand and the dead reveals the proximity between them. It can be compared to God and Adam’s image by Michelangelo in the sense of the proximity and the relationship established between them, meaning the creation of parallel opposites. “White things” resemble phantasmagorical characteristics. Apart from the fact that they were moving, after joining up, they become Evans.

Septimus is also presented as the scapegoat; a messianic, martyr-like function that in his case has to do with death, suffering and loneliness. Making reference to the spirits that surrounded him, he reinforces the idea of his importance.

***Look, the unseen bade him, the voice which now communicated with him who was the greatest of mankind, Septimus, lately taken from life to death, the Lord who had come to renew society, who lay like a coverlet, a snow blanket smitten only by the sun, for ever unwasted, suffering for ever, the scapegoat, the eternal sufferer, but he did not want it, he moaned, putting from him with a wave of his hand that eternal suffering, that eternal loneliness. (Ibid. 29)***

The unseen, the dead, his friend Evans greeted him, recognised him, welcomed him to the realm of dead. He thinks himself “the greatest of mankind”, a new species of Messiah, the “Lord” who has died but can still “renew society”. The idea of him as a tabula rasa arises from the image of the snowy, white coverlet, transforming him into an “unwasted” pure soul. This idea of purity exalts his condition of scapegoat, also making stronger his position as a sufferer. Although he can see himself as such, he rejects his role, he complains about his current status. Because, as will be seen later, his position, his mental illness is not something he wants for himself.

As a madman he is transformed into a scapegoat, as a visionary poet he is a communicator of universal truths. Although both characters can act separate from one another other, they seem to be united in the literary archetype of the mad person, because

the tragic and critical qualities of madness, as Foucault<sup>10</sup> and Erasmus<sup>11</sup> point out, go intrinsically together. When Septimus and Rezia refer to madness they feel it is an undesirable illness. On the one hand he declares, "...he would not go mad. He would shut his eyes; he would see no more" (Ibid. 26). Septimus tries to evade his visions by the shutting of his eyes. Although it is with his actual eyes that he sees the world, as any human does, it is via his metaphysical, visionary sight that he grasps the transcendental reality. Similarly, Rezia also strives to evade the subject of madness. "[S]he said how she was his wife, married years ago in Milan, his wife, and would never, never tell that he was mad!" (Ibid. 28). The fact that insanity is tried to be denied shows its social status. In a society governed by reason, the most undesirable problem is madness because it does not allow for the control of the person. He or she is managed by their enlarged senses, it has to be punished with imprisonment. However, this imprisonment is said to be a treatment, hence, a validated social practice, the general rule to cure insanity.

However, the creation of dichotomies that opposes the sane and the insane, civilization and nature, scientific and visionary perspectives allows Virginia Woolf to incorporate madness in the narrative. Her perspective, as it was said before, is akin to Plato's divine madness, but it also incorporates the tragic and critical paths; fact that transforms this insanity into a traditional<sup>12</sup> artefact. Even so, it is not only traditional because in Woolf's re-elaboration of divine madness it takes a modernist turn. In *Mrs Dalloway*, insanity is not denied, but merged with the deepest threads of the novel's texture; it is not punished, but praised as the best of the skills. It is this artistic and opposing movement the one that incorporates madness into a poetics of difference and otherness, in which Septimus has been transformed into the poet that embodies these characteristics.

Furthermore, the main and secondary characters of the novel can be classified in relation to these dichotomies. For example, Clarissa, Peter, Sally and Septimus belong to the artistic movement because of their personality. All of them are social critics, do not like the establishment, and are aware the existence of a superior reality connected with nature. Referring to the last three, Thakur says, "[they] are used symbolically to suggest the adventurous, the unconventional, and the visionary in society" (60). And of Clarissa, that she "is concerned with the physical show of life" (Ibid. 71). While to the social mainstream movement belongs Holmes, Bradshaw, Kilman and Whitbread. The first two "are symbols of such compensatory neatness, proportion and order" (Ibid. 58), the third "represents possessive love and corrupt religiosity" (Ibid. 56) and the fourth "becomes symbolic of mental servility to plumed authority, and of unnatural loyalties" (Ibid.). Taking these proposals into account, the formation of opposite pairs can be proposed. Clarissa and Sally would be opposed to Miss Kilman. Peter would be opposed to Hugh. Septimus, to Holmes and Bradshaw. Thus, the artistic movement would embody the insane, transcendental and the

<sup>10</sup> "On the one side is the ship of fools, where mad faces slowly slip away into the night of the world, in landscapes that speak of strange alchemies of knowledge, of the dark menace of bestiality, and the end of time. On the other is the ship of fools that is merely there for the instruction of the wise, an exemplary, didactic odyssey whose purpose is to highlight faults in the human character" (Foucault, "Stultifera Navis" 26)

<sup>11</sup> "And indeed there is a two-fold sort of madness; the one that which the furies bring from hell; those that are herewith possessed are hurried on to wars and contentions,...; or, finally, to be so pricked in conscience as to be lashed and stung with the whips and snakes of grief and remorse. But there is another sort of madness that proceeds from Folly, [...] it is thoroughly good and desirable; and this happens when by a harmless mistake in the judgment of things the mind is freed from those cares which would otherwise gratefully afflict it, and smoothed over with a content and satisfaction it could not under other circumstances so happily enjoy." (Erasmus 74-75)

<sup>12</sup> Traditional is here understood as T.S. Eliot explained it in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1920).

subversive force; whereas the social mainstream movement would embody the scientific, civilised and conventional force.

Following the opposite understanding of madness, Septimus gives a great value to his visions. When he proclaims “[m]en must not cut down trees. There is a God. (He noted such revelations on the backs of envelopes.) Change the world. No one kills from hatred. Make it known (he wrote it down). He waited. He listened.” (Ibid.), he bestows on his messages the worth of a universal avowal. The first message has to do with his union with nature because, as said before, he felt transcendently united to trees, so that cutting trees down would eliminate his medium for communication. The second message tries to re-establish the idea that there is a superior being, a higher reality that suggests the concept of the whole contained by this entity, the whole being the entity. It does not refer to the Christian God, since it says “there is a God” (*italics added*), and does not say, for example, God exists. The idea of a *God*, in a way, also implies that reality does not end where the sight ends, or where the five senses and perception end, but a reality that involves processes of diverse kinds, in short a metaphysical reality. The fact that these messages were written ‘on the back of envelopes’ resembles Emily Dickinson’s “private and subtle, [...] brief, tight and oblique” poetry (Ruland and Bradbury 173), because they represent a private dialogue with the self. “Change the world” and “No one kills from hatred” make reference to the socio-historical context, i.e. the end of World War one. The former is a claim to change the fragmented, dilapidated remains, the torn social tissue, the disenchanting, unhelpful minds, the ripped bodies. The latter, a social critique, a defence to the thousands of soldiers moved to kill not because of their own will but for the orders of their superiors. The last message, “make it known”, emphasises the communicative purpose his visions have. When the narrator says “he waited” “he listened”, another reference to the idea of superior or mystical forces is involved. Who or what did Septimus wait? Who or what was he listening to? If we think of Plato’s madness, Septimus would be waiting for inspiration, for the Muses to tell him more; listening to the Greek Gods<sup>13</sup> words transmitted by nature.

As Thakur suggests, “Septimus Smith uttering these messages of universal love becomes the symbol of a visionary, and because he is not willing to conform to the sense of proportion, and refuses to be converted to the ideas of Holmes and Bradshaw, is a rebel against society” (63). Extending Thakur’s viewpoint with Frye’s proposals, Septimus not only becomes “the symbol of a visionary”, but also the literary archetype of the mad person. A character in which converge the tragic, the critical, and the divine of madness; one who evokes and at the same time criticises the society in which he lives. Therefore, Septimus contradicts Foucault’s statement that “the paths taken by the figure of the cosmic vision and the incisive movement that is moral reflection, between the *tragic* and the *critical* elements, now constantly diverge, creating a gap in the fabric of the experience of madness that will never be repaired” (26, *italics in the original*); because his character includes the tragic and the critical. Furthermore, “the cosmic vision” and “moral reflection” that in Foucault create a gap are symbolically mended in the episode in which Rezia was sewing a hat for Mrs Peters. “Miracles, revelations, agonies, loneliness, falling through the sea, down, down into the flames, all were burnt out, for he had a sense, as he watched Rezia trimming the straw hat for Mrs. Peters, of a coverlet of flowers” (Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* 157). All his torments were over as she worked on the hat. The tormenting visions ended; giving way to a peaceful moment of being. In “Phaedo”, Plato states that “...thought is best when the mind is gathered

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<sup>13</sup> “The divine madness was subdivided into four kinds, prophetic, initiatory, poetic, erotic, having four gods presiding over them; the first was the inspiration of Apollo, the second that of Dionysus, the third that of the Muses, the fourth that of Aphrodite and Eros.” (Plato, “Phaedrus” 473)

into herself and none of these things trouble her—neither sounds nor sights nor pain nor any pleasure [...]” (Ibid. 204). As a result, Rezia works as the catalyst that soothes and alleviates Septimus’ mind. The very making of the hat is a delicate enterprise, Rezia “must stitch it together. But she must be very, very careful, he said, to keep it just as he had made it” (Ibid. 158). It was Mrs. Peter’s hat, but also Septimus’ mind what she was sewing. As a result of this craft, Septimus felt comfortable, because there was no more loneliness or torments, no more nightmares. In the end Rezia is transformed into the one that recollects or gathers his shattered, torn psyche, mending the “gap in the fabric of the experience of madness”.

### 3.3. Nature, Human Nature, Proportion and Conversion: Showing the contraries of the human soul

Now that the figure of Septimus has been validated as the embodiment of the literary archetype of the mad person, the struggles he went through before his tragic suicide will be presented. Nature was, without any doubt, the place where he searched for inspiration, tranquillity, and connection with the whole. Early in the novel, Clarissa states “Nature (who is invariably wise)...” (Woolf 36). Nature is personalised, transformed into a sensible being that never fails in her judgements. Nature is also composed of beauty, as it is shown in Regent’s Park where “[t]he trees waved, brandished. We welcome, the world seemed to say; we accept; we create. Beauty, the world seemed to say. And as if to prove it (scientifically) wherever he looked at the houses, at the railings, at the antelopes stretching over the palings, beauty sprang instantly” (Ibid 77). Nature’s beauty resides in its characteristics, in its democratic, tolerant, and creative quality. It becomes a social critique if we think of the war because in that case human beings were totalitarian, intolerant, destructive. These two forces that rule the world seem to oppose once more.

Peter Walsh, another character that has been proved to be in connection with the sensitive world, also seems to hear the Earth’s voice. When he was leaving Regent’s Park, after witnessing Septimus and Rezia’s “squabbl[e] under a tree” (Ibid. 79), he heard

***A sound [that] interrupted him; a frail quivering sound, a voice bubbling up without direction, vigour, beginning or end, running weakly and shrilly and with an absence of all human meaning into ee um fah um so foo swee too eem oo — the voice of no age or sex, the voice of an ancient spring spouting from the earth.” (Ibid. 90)***

This is the voice of a homeless person, a vagabond, a vagrant singing in the street, though it belongs to earth, to all-embracing nature, Mother Nature. The mumbling represents nature’s voice. Its “absence of all human meaning” makes the sounds a codified message, the same as the bird’s singing in Greek that revealed secrets to Septimus. The voice without age or sex makes its possessor a transcendental being, belonging to the spiritual world, to the elemental world.

Similarly, Septimus also acknowledges nature’s beauty, as well as its willingness to communicate. “He was not afraid. At every moment Nature signified by some laughing hint like that gold spot which went round the wall—there, there, there—her determination to show, [...], beautifully, always beautifully, [...], her meaning” (Ibid. 154). Beauty dwells in the

natural world. It exists in a singing vagabond's fragile voice, in the sun beams' reflection on the wall, on a young shell-shocked soldier.

Contrarily, civilization is presented as a disabling, fragmenting and killing force. It is driven by human nature, a concept that Septimus uses when referring to Doctor Holmes, civilisation's representative. In one of his visions, Septimus declares, "[f]or the truth is (let her ignore it) that human beings have neither kindness, nor faith, nor charity beyond what serves to increase the pleasure of the moment. They hunt in packs. [...]. They desert the fallen. They are plastered over with grimaces" (Ibid. 99). It recalls Freud's doctrines about the nature of human beings, "the pleasure principle"<sup>14</sup>, i.e. that we act only to get pleasure. I am not going to further develop this idea because that would divert from the current topic. The last two sentences evoke warfare, so that the casualties are part of the expected events. Therefore, the high principles named in the beginning: kindness, faith, charity, are just instruments; they are used just if they provide pleasure. Some of civilisation's offspring are listed by Septimus, who after hearing a roaring car evokes the criminal history of humanity. "In the street, vans roared past him; brutality blared out on placards; men were trapped in mines; women burnt alive; and once a maimed file of lunatics being exercised or displayed for the diversion of the populace (who laughed aloud)..." (Ibid. 100). Roars give the idea of wild animals, in order that roaring vans suggest the idea of wild machines, threatening in the street. Brutality on placards suggests war propaganda; trapped miners, poor working conditions as a result of the big companies' greediness. Burning women evokes the contemporary (1911) Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire<sup>15</sup> in New York, due also to poor working conditions. But it also hints at the burning of women declared witches that took place in Europe during the middle ages and the United States in their colonial times. The display of lunatics makes reference to the occasions in the Renaissance, in which the insane were publicly whipped, or beaten with sticks (Foucault, "Stultifera Navis" 10). The laughing populace remains as the symbol of the unconscious of human nature, as the hunting packs that desert the fallen of the above quotation.

Septimus, when thinking of his post-war condition of alienation recognized that human nature has already judged him. He said, "his brain was perfect; it must be the fault of the world then—that he could not feel" (Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* 98). Bodily speaking, there was no matter of discussion, so then it is the social critique; what the world, the war, society has done to him that was the main problem. "So there was no excuse; nothing whatever the matter, except the sin for which human nature had condemned him to death; that he did not feel" (Ibid. 101). His awareness leads him to the consideration that it would be a sin. This thought comes from his perception of the world. As a visionary poet, as a sensitive being, he would be able to feel, to understand the world from the realm of the expanded senses; it was a priority, a duty. But in his shell shocked state, he could not execute such basic task for a poet. Then human nature, unconscious force, condemned Septimus, because it cannot accept difference. As a matter of fact, "[t]he verdict of human nature on such a wretch was death" (Ibid.). His suicide is anticipated. It is one more of the effects of the post-war on the English society. He insisted on this idea, developing it little by little, "Human nature, in short, was on him—the repulsive brute, with the blood-red nostrils. Holmes was on him. [...]. Once you stumble, Septimus wrote on the back of a postcard, human nature is on you" (Ibid. 102). Human nature is personalised here in the figure of the brute with blood-red nostrils,

<sup>14</sup> For a brief review of Freud's psychoanalysis see: Eagleton, Terry. "Psychoanalysis". *Literary Theory: an Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1996.

<sup>15</sup> "141 Men and Girls Die in Waist Factory Fire". 26 March 1911. *The New York Times*. 31 December 2010 <<http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=980CE1D61331E233A25755C2A9659C946096D6CF>>

a semi-human, mandrill-like, savage image that is identified in the novel with Holmes and Bradshaw, science's agents.

This image of the doctors of the novel is very similar to what Foucault identified Bosch's doctor. "Bosch's famous doctor is far more insane than the patient he is attempting to cure, and his false knowledge does nothing more than reveal the worst excesses of a madness immediately apparent to all but himself" (25). The doctor's figure, praised in our rational, logocentric society, is validated by his or her knowledge, acquired by means of extensive study. Here, the doctor's word holds incredible power and an unquestionable truth status. But this image, in Bosch, is shown as an insane person, a cruel figure that uses his power against the patient, causing more damage than good. In the same manner, the doctors of the novel are also portrayed, by Septimus, as such. "Once you fall, Septimus repeated to himself, human nature is on you. Holmes and Bradshaw are on you. They scour the desert. They fly screaming into the wilderness. The rack and the thumbscrew are applied. Human nature is remorseless" (Woolf 108). Holmes and Bradshaw are presented as having ferocious drives. They are similar to vultures, prey-birds searching for the fallen and the defenceless to swallow them. They are also seen as ruthless torturers; fact that increases the idea of sinister excesses in Foucault's analysis.

In the novel, Clarissa has similar conclusions about it after acknowledging Septimus suicide.

***Or there were the poets and thinkers. Suppose he had had that passion, and had gone to Sir William Bradshaw, a great doctor yet to her obscurely evil, without sex or lust, extremely polite to women, but capable of some indescribable outrage—forcing your soul, that was it—if this young man had gone to him, and Sir William had impressed him, like that, with his power, might he not then have said (indeed she felt it now), Life is made intolerable; they make life intolerable, men like that? (Ibid. 203)***

Clarissa's portrayal of Bradshaw is akin to Bosch's doctor, to the evil force they represent. The idea of their power over people, authority about their judgments is explicit here in the use of the words "great doctor", "indescribable outrage", "forcing", "impressed". Also, the responsibility he bears in Septimus suicide is implied, in the doctor's "mak[ing] life intolerable". Even though, the question mark in the end denotes some doubt about this fact. It can be because of her not really knowing about what happened with Septimus, but also because of Clarissa's insecurities about the world.

Another one of civilisation's fragmenting forces is time. It is envisioned by Septimus as a bomb, "The word "time" split its husk; poured its riches over him; and from his lips fell like shells, like shavings from a plane, without his making them, hard, white, imperishable words, and flew to attach themselves to their places in an ode to Time; an immortal ode to Time" (Ibid. 78). A bomb, whose husk is ironically full of resources, is what attaches him and Rezia to London, to Italy. The shells are said to be shavings, transforming completely their solid, metallic, harmful constitution to that of wood, indeed, to one of the residues of wood. The word "plane" remains ambiguous, because in first instance it can be an aircraft, a bomber if it is collocated with shells, but if it is collocated with shavings it takes the meaning of a carpenter's tool. On another occasion, when Septimus and Rezia were coming back from Sir William Bradshaw's office, time is perceived more violently. "Shredding and slicing, dividing and subdividing, the clocks of Harley Street nibbled at the June day, counselled submission, upheld authority, and pointed out in chorus the supreme advantages of a sense of proportion..." (Ibid. 113). Time here, in the clocks' image, is a fragmenting force. It not

only divides, but also subdivides. The clocks devour the day by taking small bits each time, gnawing small amounts of it, as termites with wood, or ants with any piece of food; destroying the integrity of the whole. The clocks suggest obedience to Septimus; they support authority, suggest him leaving aside ideals and to enrol for society.

The sense of proportion mentioned in the above quotation has a particular development in the novel. Along with conversion, they compose the action principles of human nature. On one of Bradshaw's interior monologues, he says, "Health we must have; and health is proportion; so that when a man comes into your room and says he is Christ (a common delusion), and has a message, as they mostly have, and threatens, as they often do, to kill himself, you invoke proportion... (Ibid. 110). Health is proportion in the sense that most common people are supposed to be healthy, to have a "normal", mainstream condition. The visionary's existence is reduced to a deranged mental state, to eccentricity, and his or her messages are just the same. In this scientific perspective, visionaries are not special people but rather part of the common mental illnesses after the war. Proportion is to Sir William what nature is to Septimus.

***Proportion, divine proportion, Sir William's goddess, [...]. Worshipping proportion, Sir William not only prospered himself but made England prosper, secluded her lunatics, forbade childbirth, penalised despair, made it impossible for the unfit to propagate their views until they, too, shared his sense of proportion—[...] Sir William with his thirty years' experience of these kinds of cases, and his infallible instinct, this is madness, this sense; in fact, his sense of proportion. (Ibid.)***

Since its divine character, it is held by Sir William in the highest state. It is, in his words, what makes society work perfectly, what orders the world, what creates the sense of normality. Proportion is the power that creates the image of the other, imposes on and punishes them. It is also a regulative force, what permits him to decide on who is sane, who is insane, measuring by his own rational, logocentric perception.

Proportion's counterpart is referred to as conversion. It is the hypocritical kindness, faith and charity observed by religious people.

***...she [conversion] feasts on the wills of the weakly, loving to impress, to impose, adoring her own features stamped on the face of the populace. [...]. [...] offers help, but desires power; smites out of her way roughly the dissentient, or dissatisfied; bestows her blessing on those who, looking upward, catch submissively from her eyes the light of their own. (Ibid. 111)***

Conversion has the capacity to control masses of people. Dressed with kind clothes, she evokes great values but acts greedily and she convinces the common people with mild discourses to have control over their lives. It is the social complement of proportion, helping it to reinforce its power. It is what perpetuates the dynamics of dominance, castrating people, violently punishing, captivating the non-self-reliant, offering mendacious advice in order to obtain pleasure. "This lady too [...] had her dwelling in Sir William's heart, though concealed, [...], under some plausible disguise; some venerable name; love, duty, self sacrifice. [...] But conversion, fastidious Goddess, loves blood better than brick, and feasts most subtly on the human will" (Ibid.). Deeply embedded in Bradshaw, it is the energy that drives his actions; what manages his soul-devouring impulses. Masks are conversion's preferred tactics, they represent the construction of a public persona that hides the wearer's concealed, malicious intentions.

Proportion and conversion are the inner form of human nature, manifested in the minds of their worshippers. Time is what regulates them. They can be understood as a lifestyle, as a philosophy, or a faith. Human nature is, therefore, validated in society because of these three principles. That is why Bradshaw's persona is so powerful. "Naked, defenceless, the exhausted, the friendless received the impress of Sir William's will. He swooped; he devoured. He shut people up. It was this combination of decision and humanity that endeared Sir William so greatly to the relations of his victims" (Ibid. 113). His patients had no power to confront him, because he rested on a social apparatus that upheld his status. And also, he made use of his persona, presented in a mild, witty, good-natured mask that was impossible to contradict. But if one did so, he immediately invoked the law. "There was no alternative. It was a question of law (Ibid. 107)", he would say to Rezia when he advised resting to Septimus, leaving them defenceless against the established power.

Proportion and conversion's outer form can be seen in the elements that give social status. One can notice this mixture of Science and Modernity in the typical product of the epoch, i.e., cars. For example, "Sir William Bradshaw's motor car; low, powerful, grey with plain initials' interlocked on the panel, [...]; and, as the motor car was grey, so to match its sober suavity, grey furs, silver grey rugs were heaped in it, [...]" (Ibid. 104). The artefact is like Bradshaw himself, "low, powerful, grey", characteristics appreciated by the high class. It recalls that mysterious car of the beginning of the novel, its "dove-grey upholstery" (Ibid. 17), resembling its sobriety and bourgeois origin. Sobriety and greyness seem to be symbols that suggest proportion and conversion; this one dimensional vision of the world that human nature possesses.

One of these so-called Goddesses' main worshippers is Hugh Whitbread. In the novel, it is said that "he represented all that was most detestable in British middle-class life" (Ibid. 81), and also that "He's read nothing, thought nothing, felt nothing..." (ibid.), and finally that "He was a perfect specimen of the public school type, [...]. No country but England could have produced him" (Ibid. 82). Hugh is presented here as a social product, permeated by proportion and conversion's discourses. His cultural background is just that of the basic public school, it implies that he does not have intellectual interests apart from his work at Court. He is one of those "damnable humbugs" (Ibid. 212) that Peter criticised at Clarissa's party who do not question anything, and instead take everything for granted. "Hugh was the greatest snob—the most obsequious" (Ibid. 82), in order to preserve his social position and have some contact with the upper class, he was always ready to make a compliment to everyone he met.

Another of conversion and proportion's representatives is Miss Kilman. For Clarissa, these two forces are embodied in Kilman's mackintosh coat, "The cruelest things in the world, she thought, seeing them clumsy, hot, domineering, hypocritical, eavesdropping, jealous, infinitely cruel and unscrupulous, dressed in a mackintosh coat, [...]" (Ibid. 139). Her coat, as Thakur suggests, "portrays, perhaps, the closed condition of her mind that does not allow any rain of grace to reach her parched heart" (58). It is the impermeable coat that does not allow the aquatic element of divine madness to enter her soul. It also becomes a uniform, a religious habit. As another one of the worshippers of conversion, she comes to represent love and religion, as Clarissa thought after meeting her, "Love and religion! [...]. How detestable, how detestable they are!" (Woolf 139). These two forces destroy what she calls "the privacy of the soul" (Ibid. 140). The institution behind it is the church, in which love and religion (or faith) are cornerstones. Conversion works under the name of both of them; although, they are hypocritical because neither of them is observed properly. Love is egotistic, as it is shown in Kilman's words, "The agony was so terrific. If she could grasp her,

if she could clasp her, if she could make her hers absolutely and forever and then die; that was all she wanted” (Ibid. 145). The agony, or restraint of desires, suggests that religion is based on the repressive taming of the inner drives of the soul. Doris Kilman's name also suggests this power. Kilman or Kill-man can be interpreted as the killer of the human kind, its destroyer. With her egotistic love, she wanted to keep Elizabeth to herself forever; catching her in the restraining fetters of religion. In this way, Clarissa's former critique reinforces Septimus' opinion on human nature; although this concept is only used by him, in many of Clarissa's and Peter's commentaries there is present the same underlying critical principle: the opposition to the existence, and social approval of a rational, logocentric philosophy that has brought the world to the Great War.

This critical principle can be observed also in Blake's poem “The voice of the Devil”, in which he criticised religion, especially the bible.

***All Bibles or sacred codes. have been the causes of the following Errors. 1. That Man has two real existing principles Viz: a Body & a Soul. 2. That Energy. calld Evil. is alone from the Body. & that Reason. calld Good. is alone from the Soul. 3. That God will torment Man in Eternity for following his Energies. But the following Contraries to these are True 1. Man has no Body distinct from his Soul for that calld Body is a portion of Soul discern'd by the five Senses. the chief inlets of Soul in this age 2. Energy is the only life and is from the Body and Reason is the bound or outward circumference of Energy. Energy is Eternal Delight (110)***

Here Blake questions what in the novel can be understood as proportion and conversion. Human nature's understanding is in both that of a fragmented subject, differentiating body and soul in Blake's epoch, and body and mind in Woolf's. The “Energy” that the lyric speaker mentions can be understood as the madness present in the novel, because both of them are condemned, and thus, thought of as “Evil”, or an undesirable illness. Reason, in the poem as well as in the novel, are conceived as worthy, and are also praised and worshipped. God's figure, however, is replaced in the narrative by the doctor's figure, though maintaining the torment, or punishment. The “Contraries” mentioned in the poem are analogous to the visions Septimus has and his undetermined god recalls the sense of cohesion present in the human being's composition of the poem—the mixture of body and soul. As I said before, “Energy” can be compared to madness, as a result, this visionary drive would be considered as real life. Although “Reason” is the “outward circumference of Energy” this time, it is what gives sense to madness—the inspiration, prophesy, poetry and love from Plato's “Phaedrus”. The “Eternal Delight” or “delighted exuberance is the outward mark of a healthy imagination, and is definitive of beauty and identifiable with it” (Bloom, “William Blake” 67), the beauty that Septimus embraces when being at Regent's Park, the eternal delight of realising moment by moment reality in naked terms, a divested existence.

Ironically, it is this divested existence, this naked reality that makes Septimus suffer. His visions are about this problem, the consequences of human nature. “He would argue with [Rezia] about killing themselves; and explain how wicked people were; how he could see them making up lies as they passed in the street. He knew all their thoughts, he said; he knew everything. He knew the meaning of the world, he said” (Woolf 74). Within his continuous moment of being, he could perceive and realise other people's moments of non-being, how they had to create and believe a false existence in order to live at ease. Looking at their thoughts he realised the meaning of the world. But this meaning is far from being a concrete perception, something permanent, unchanging. Because, as he once thought, “it might be possible that the world itself is without meaning” (Ibid. 98); so that what creates the

meaning of the world is a mixture of different events, but mostly in his case, nature, which always signifies.

There are many opportunities in which Septimus refers to watery imagery when speaking about his current state. He mainly uses references to ships and sailors, which is in concordance with what Foucault said about the imagery of madness. For example, in this quotation, "But he himself remained high on his rock, like a drowned sailor on a rock. I leant over the edge of the boat and fell down, he thought. I went under the sea. I have been dead, and yet am now alive..." (Ibid. 77). The boat from which Septimus fell can be thought of as being the *Narrenschiiff*, the ship of fools, madness' barque. His isolated position is due to his sensitivity; he is alone in a vast ocean of unconsciousness, distant from the masses of people, yet from his rock, looking at the whole of humanity. "The death's head showed itself to be a vessel already empty, for madness was the being-already-there of death" (Foucault 14). For Septimus, death is already a reality, haunting from the past, threatening in the present. In his solitude, obscure messages arrived to him from human nature. "So he was deserted. The whole world was clamouring: Kill yourself, kill yourself, for our sakes. But why should he kill himself for their sakes?" (Woolf 102-103). The idea of isolation is mentioned again, and it is reinforced by the fact that he was being demanded death, the whole world condemned him, make him face his destiny. Although, he reveals against it questioning the demand, demonstrating that it is not his will to die.

He is also portrayed as "...this last relic straying on the edge of the world, this outcast, who gazed back at the inhabited regions, who lay, like a drowned sailor, on the shore of the world" (ibid. 103). He is considered to be a rare specimen in society. Segregated, isolated, a social exile within his own country, he is forced to find a place in his memories, in his thoughts, these "inhabited regions" haunted by the past, wandering about the future, analysing the present. As Foucault said, "[t]he madman on his crazy boat sets sail for the other world, and it is from the other world that he comes when he disembarks" (11). The "crazy boat" can be seen as Septimus' imagination; "the other world", his past, present and future, and his shore as the world ruled by the rational mainstream in which he would not be able to find leisure. Although he felt alone, it is in this detached state that some company comes: the ethereal company of the deceased. "It was at that moment (Rezia gone shopping) that the great revelation took place. A voice spoke from behind the screen. Evans was speaking. The dead were with him" (Woolf 103). His only company was an eerie one, the haunting, obscure company of the dead. When he was alone, the voice came to him as a revelation, showing him the transcendental reality in which the dead trespass the limits. In this company of the dead, he also became one of them, enlarging the list of deceased soldiers.

His self image is that of a decayed, half-dead man, a poet, a crumbly messiah. "So they returned to the most exalted of mankind; the criminal who faced his judges; the victim exposed on the heights; the fugitive; the drowned sailor; the poet of the immortal ode; the Lord who had gone from life to death; to Septimus Warren Smith, [...]" (ibid. 107). In a way it is his self image, but in another these different characterisations are what the war did to him; the pervasion of his soul. The "drowned sailor", so frequent in his descriptions, may imply a frustrated voyage, a shipwreck, a storm, an outer force that caused the ship not to harbour; this voyage being life itself as he said "he felt himself drawing towards life" (Ibid. 77). Thus the "drowned sailor" implies a frustrated life, in which a violent event happened, or "something tremendous about to happen" (Ibid.). The outer force that torments Septimus' life is human nature, which ended up metaphorically drowning him.

In the scene of the suicide, there is again watery imagery. Everything starts with the apparition of a glow, then come images from the sea, the sound of the water, waves, the shore.

***[He was] watching the watery gold glow and fade with the astonishing sensibility of some live creature on the roses, on the wall-paper. [...] the sound of water was in the room and through the waves came the voices of birds singing. Every power poured its treasures on his head, and his hand lay there on the back of the sofa, as he had seen his hand lie when he was bathing, floating, on the top of the waves, while far away on shore he heard dogs barking and barking far away. Fear no more, says the heart in the body; fear no more. (Ibid. 153-154)***

Septimus appears here as if he had a strong connection with water. He feels empowered by the waves and the singing of the birds. He felt himself resting, not drown, but living a moment of leisure, floating in the sea, where the message is “fear no more”. However, this peace contradicts with his image of the drowned sailor, which seems to be more powerful than the image of the sea as a calm, gentle force.

As a result, it can be said that the sea is an image of human nature, because of its violence and hostile power. The drowned sailor, Septimus, is the one who receives the ravages of human nature, its corrosive constitution. “He was drowned, he used to say, and lying on a cliff with the gulls screaming over him” (Ibid. 155). The seagulls are Holmes and Bradshaw, hovering over his collapsed body exposed to human nature. Now it was inevitable, “he was in their power! Holmes and Bradshaw were on him! The brute with the red nostrils was snuffing into every secret place! “Must” it could say!” (Ibid. 162). The savage, blood-thirsty, mandrill-like creature, “the priest[s] of science” (Ibid. 104) were enforcing their authority. They were condemning him to seclusion, to physical isolation, but worse, to become one more of proportion and conversion’s worshippers. The only alternative to avoid that situation, which implies the death of the soul that Peter Walsh once mentioned, was “... the tiresome, the troublesome, and rather melodramatic business of opening the window and throwing himself out” (Ibid. 164). Septimus’ suicide, an ending that was ironically the only way to free himself, and that at the same time, “it was their idea of tragedy, not his or Rezia’s (for she was with him). Holmes and Bradshaw like that sort of thing. (He sat on the sill.) But he would wait till the very last moment. He did not want to die. Life was good. The sun hot. Only human beings—what did THEY want?” (Ibid.). Septimus resists until the last moment, although he admitted he wanted to kill himself in the beginning of the novel after his awakening from the tortuous state in which human nature had left him, he wanted to live. But in human nature’s realm his life was not permitted. As a visionary poet, he had to be put under observation, forced to believe in proportion and conversion, to live under those principles, and, if possible, to become one more punisher, one more of the laughing crowd staring at war, death, looking impassive in front of human suffering.

As Thakur states, “this suicide of the shell shocked brilliant young man, Septimus, becomes an indictment of inhuman war” (64). In other words, quoting from the novel, “the brute with the red nostrils had won” (Woolf 103), human nature, proportion and conversion had demonstrated that they held the power, that anything can be done against them. The misunderstanding of a tormented soul has turned to be the death of an innocent man. In the narrative it is said that “London has swallowed up many millions of young men called Smith; thought nothing of fantastic Christian names like Septimus with which their parents have thought to distinguish them” (Ibid. 94). The city works here as another one of the offspring of human nature; an element of devastation—a hungry and oblivious animal. Septimus’ suicide is indirectly acknowledged as “[o]ne of the triumphs of civilisation, Peter Walsh thought. It is

one of the triumphs of civilisation, as the light high bell of the ambulance sounded” (Ibid. 166). It is, to some extent, the triumph of civilisation over Septimus, but it is also his subversive act against the control of society. Septimus’ body goes in the boisterous ambulance, so it is civilisation’s conquest of that territory. It is, however, as a visionary poet, as a transcendental being, that he manages to have his soul’s control, because for him “there is no death” (Ibid. 154).

There is recognition of this fact in Clarissa’s thoughts when she acknowledged Septimus death. “This he had preserved. Death was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate; people feeling the impossibility of reaching the centre which, mystically, evaded them; closeness drew apart; rapture faded, one was alone. There was an embrace in death” (Ibid. 202). By “this” Clarissa means the soul. He has preserved it from “corruption, lies, chatter” (Ibid.), the everyday, meaningless events of life, that in the end make the soul, or the real self, to conceal from common experiences and only to come out when one experiences a moment of being. As Clarissa said, “death was a defiance”, “an attempt to communicate”, and Septimus achieved that; his death was transformed in a social event, first in the ambulance when it reached Peter, and then in the party when it reached Clarissa. It was his final attempt to communicate his visions, to share with the world his poetic messages. In the embrace of death, he found the final shore of his mad voyage, of his crazy shipwreck, and the peace needed for his dilapidated mind.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

This section will begin with some references to a subtle detail, the thesis' title: "Traces of a tyger". With this title, it was meant to invoke William Blake's presence, his poetry, his ideas, and philosophy. "A tyger" make reference to "The Tyger", one of his most well-known poems, and also one of the most codified. A mysterious animal that walks, burning in a shadowy forest; a ferocious, symmetrically crafted feline whose artisan is unknown, evokes the core idea of the mad person's literary archetype. This person, both transcendental and visionary, comes from shadowy forests, and has also an unknown crafter. William Blake was a tyger himself, and in *Mrs Dalloway*, Septimus embodies this idea. The traces we find are those moments in which the visionary is at work, for example, when Septimus listens to the birds singing in Greek, or when he saw human nature at its most intense in Holmes and Bradshaw. There were hints of William Blake's message in the denouncing of reason and science's hegemony, its overwhelming power over human beings, their life, behaviour, and thinking. The fibres of his poetry mixed with Woolf's narrative, Plato's madness, and Foucault's critical view give birth to the archetype; the communicable symbol of the mad person, a burning tyger walking in literature's shadowy forest, an intricate fabric is woven.

There is a shift from the treatment of madness during classical to modernist times. Having in mind what Foucault said about the unfixable gap that was formed between the tragic and critical paths of madness, it has been proved that this is not true in *Mrs Dalloway*. First, because Septimus represents the embodiment of both paths; he is a tragic character who suffers the cruel ravages of human nature, has visions about the past, about England's current state of affairs, their citizens, and perennial truths about existence. He also criticises the social system, the war, and people's behaviour. From the current understanding of madness as an illness, Virginia Woolf diverged it to the status of a visionary skill; a viewpoint shared with Plato. His divine madness can be compared to Woolf's characterisation of her moments of being.

Septimus represents not only the point in which converge the tragic and critical paths, but also he is transformed into the mad person's literary archetype. He is the tyger that glows in the night, whose burning garment is madness. He wears the crazed cloak that is composed by prophesy, poetry, love and inspiration. At different moments he experiences the narrative of all these elements, which make him write poetry, messages in envelopes, drawings, and to talk to himself (the reason why he was thought to be mad by the rationalistic Holmes and Bradshaw). This event creates one of the novel's major struggles between nature and human nature.

The dichotomy between nature and human nature is an overwhelming force in the novel. In the beginning, it made Clarissa feel submerged in the crowd of people, losing her identity as a woman to become Mrs. Richard Dalloway, an ornamental social role, while internally she continued being Clarissa, the complex rose of the inward dismay. In Peter's case, he is also a social critic. He can see human nature acting everywhere, in the street, in the face of young soldiers, and of course in Clarissa's party. But it is Septimus' case which remains as the most representative of the effects of human nature over people. He feels a close connection with nature, a fact that is manifested in his vision about not cutting trees down; that were his portal to nature. He believes in a transcendental world, he can see the dead,

he communicates with birds, and he is capable of bursting with emotion with the sound of the leaves in his ears. Nevertheless, he is the tormented poet that is threatened to be enclosed in a sanatorium; he is the one who sees himself as a drowned sailor, an outcast of civilization. He also sees in Bradshaw and Holmes the personification of human nature, the brute with blood-red nostrils, the priests of science, and devourers of souls. It is Septimus who identifies and characterises proportion and conversion; the action principles of human nature.

But in the end he is the poet, the outward communicator, the solitary traveller. His suicide will be regarded as having a double significance. On the one hand, it is one of the triumphs of human nature over a deranged soul. It is the manifestation of the intolerant power of science over the transgressive Other, it is also the appropriation of Septimus body when he is carried in the ambulance. But on the other hand, it is his final attempt to communicate his transcendental message, to subvert medicine's power dynamics. He left his body but gained his soul, which managed to haunt Peter and Clarissa, achieving his role as a visionary poet.

Finally, it can be said that there is an articulation in Septimus suicide. Because its meaning is a chain of meanings united, it marks the end of a process, taking an important signification in the novel. It does not stay as an isolated event, but is rapidly spread, ironically thanks to the progress of civilization, and reaches the other characters, making them also make realisations about their current lives. Therefore, Septimus Warren Smith transforms himself into the literary archetype of the mad person, which in the context of *Mrs Dalloway* manifests itself in the figure of a visionary poet. Dressed in divine madness, Septimus is imbued by the sinews the Tyger's fearful symmetry.

Some projections of the present research would be to translate the archetype of the mad person to other literary or artistic works, and also, to prove its efficiency in new contexts, to see in what new forms the tyger appears. For example, in the case of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and the present novel, some intertextual relationships can be drawn between Hamlet, Ophelia, Clarissa and Septimus, in relation to the development of madness within them. Some of the questions would be: is Plato's divine madness present in Shakespeare's play? Or, is it tragic and critical? And, if it is true, does Foucault's unfixable gap between them work? These questions would be answered by applying the characteristics of the archetype to *Hamlet*. On another occasion, it would be Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. In this case, some of the questions would be: is Bertha Mason a tyger? Or, to what extent is the madwoman in the attic another form of the mad person's literary archetype?

These analyses would be very useful to discover intertextual relationships between texts that develop similar topics. The mad person's literary archetype is just one example of what can be done if this proposal is applied. But there would be new archetypes to discover, and their scope to be proved. Finally, this would help to the creation of new, challenging proposals, to the discovery of the haunting presences in the vast forest of literature, and to the understanding of them in relation to their literary traditions.

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