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Abstract:

Recent research in psychoanalytic criticism and therapeutic literary studies highlights the significant role of writing as a healing practice that enables individuals to externalize trauma, regulate emotions, and reconstruct meaning after psychologically distressing experiences. In Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway, writing serves as a subtle yet powerful narrative device that intertwines the novel's structure with the psychological wounds carried by its characters, particularly in relation to memory, consciousness, and inner fragmentation. Written in the aftermath of World War I, the novel depicts a world deeply marked by emotional scars, presenting writing as a central mechanism through which characters reassemble their identities and negotiate the passage of time.

This dynamic is evident in Clarissa Dalloway's reflective consciousness, where the stream-of-consciousness technique becomes a form of narrative self-writing that helps her reinterpret past events. It is also visible in the psychological turmoil of Septimus Warren Smith, who suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder; for him, writing attempts to impose order on his chaotic internal world, even though his trajectory ends tragically. Structurally, Woolf's modernist techniques-fragmented temporality, interior monologue, and fluid shifts in perspective-mirror the cognitive patterns of trauma survivors, thereby transforming the narrative itself into a therapeutic space.

This study examines writing in Mrs. Dalloway as a trauma therapy tool, drawing on insights from Writing Therapy, Trauma Studies, and modernist narrative theory. It explores how Woolf represents the interdependence between writing and healing, and how narrative expression enables characters to convert psychological distress into comprehensible meaning. The study concludes that the novel provides a pioneering model for understanding writing as a pathway to emotional recovery, while simultaneously acknowledging the limitations of this process for certain characters - positioning Mrs. Dalloway as a foundational text in the intersection between literature, trauma, and healing.

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الملخص:

تناولت الدراسات الحديثة في مجال النقد النفسي والأدب العلاجي الدور العميق الذي يمكن أن تؤديه الكتابة بوصفها ممارسة علاجية تساعد الأفراد على تفريغ الصدمات وتنظيم العواطف وبناء معنى جديد للتجربة المؤلمة. وفي رواية مسز دالوي لفرجينيا وولف، يشكل فعل الكتابة محورًا خفيًا يربط بين البنية السردية ومظاهر الصدمة التي تعيشها الشخصيات، لا سيما في علاقتها بالذاكرة والوعي والاضطراب الداخلي. فالرواية، التي كُتبت في سياق ما بعد الحرب العالمية الأولى، تعكس عالمًا مشبعًا بالندوب النفسية التي تعرضت لها الشخصيات نتيجة الصدمات الاجتماعية والعسكرية والجنسية، وتقدم الكتابة باعتبارها وسيلة لإعادة تشكيل الذات وإعادة بناء الزمن الشخصي.

وتظهر هذه الآلية بوضوح في الطريقة التي تستعيد بها كلاريسا دالوي ذاكرتها عبر تيار الوعي، وفي الصراع النفسي الذي يواجهه سبتيروس، الذي يعاني من اضطراب ما بعد الصدمة، حيث تصبح الكتابة عنده وسيلة لمقاومة الانهيار ومحاولة لترتيب الفوضى الداخلية رغم انتهائها بالفشل المأساوي. أما على المستوى البنائي، فتستثمر وولف تقنيات الكتابة الحديثة—مثل تيار الوعي، وتقطيع الزمن، والانتقالات الذهنية—لتقديم تجربة سردية تقوم ذاتها على محاكاة آلية التفكير لدى الأشخاص الذين يواجهون صدمات نفسية عميقة.

وتسعى هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل الكتابة في الرواية باعتبارها أداة علاجية للصدمة، من خلال ربط المظاهر السردية بالنظريات الحديثة في العلاج بالكتابة (Writing Therapy) ودراسات الصدمة (Trauma Studies) كما تناقش كيفية تجسيد وولف لثنائية الكتابة والشفاء، وتبين دور السرد في تحويل الألم النفسي إلى خطاب قابل للفهم وإعادة التأويل. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن الرواية تقدم نموذجًا مبكرًا لاستخدام الكتابة كمسار للتعافي، رغم حدود هذا المسار لدى بعض الشخصيات، مما يجعل مسز دالوي نصًا مركزيًا في فهم علاقة الأدب بالصدمة وآليات الشفاء.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الصدمة النفسية، العلاج بالكتابة، تيار الوعي، فرجينيا وولف، مسز دالوي.

Section One: Writing as a Therapeutic Practice in Psychoanalytic and Literary Studies

In recent decades, interdisciplinary scholarship has increasingly drawn attention to the therapeutic potential of writing within both psychoanalytic theory and literary studies. Writing is no longer viewed solely as a creative or representational act, but rather as a complex psychological practice through which individuals engage with inner conflict, emotional distress, and traumatic experience. This shift reflects a broader critical movement that recognizes literature and narrative not only as cultural products, but also as sites of

psychological processing and healing (Pennebaker & Chung, 2011, pp. 418–420; Herman, 1997, pp. 175–177; Ricoeur, 1984, pp. 52–55).

Psychoanalytic theory has long emphasized the centrality of language in shaping human subjectivity, particularly in relation to repression, memory, and trauma. Traumatic experiences often resist direct articulation, remaining fragmented or silenced within the psyche. Writing, as a symbolic and narrative practice, offers a medium through which such experiences may be externalized, examined, and gradually integrated into conscious awareness. At the same time, literary studies have explored how narrative form, voice, and temporal structure can mirror psychological states and provide insight into processes of emotional regulation and identity reconstruction.

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Subsection One: Writing as a Means of Externalizing Psychological Trauma

In recent decades, psychoanalytic criticism and therapeutic literary studies have increasingly emphasized the role of writing as a healing practice capable of addressing psychological trauma. Trauma, by its very nature, resists direct representation, often remaining fragmented, suppressed, or inaccessible within conscious awareness. Writing provides a symbolic medium through which traumatic experiences can be externalized, transformed into language, and thereby rendered more manageable (Caruth, 1996, pp. 3–8; Herman, 1997, pp. 175–177; Pennebaker & Chung, 2011, pp. 418–420).

From a psychoanalytic perspective, trauma is frequently associated with repression and the failure of memory integration. Writing enables individuals to confront experiences that are otherwise silenced by fear, shame, or psychological overload. By translating trauma into narrative form, the individual creates distance

between the self and the distressing event, allowing for reflection rather than re-experiencing. This process aligns with therapeutic models that view narration as a means of reclaiming agency over one's psychological history (Freud, 1914/2001, pp. 147–148; Herman, 1997, pp. 175–177; White & Epston, 1990, pp. 12–15).

Moreover, writing allows trauma to move from the internal, subjective realm into a structured, communicable form. Once externalized, traumatic memories can be examined, reinterpreted, and gradually integrated into a broader life narrative. This transformation reduces the overwhelming immediacy of trauma and opens the possibility of emotional relief and psychological stabilization. In literary contexts, such narrative externalization becomes visible through fragmented narration, internal monologue, and symbolic representation of psychological pain (Caruth, 1996, pp. 4–7; Ricoeur, 1984, pp. 52–55; Humphrey, 1954, pp. 23–26).

In addition to enabling the externalization of traumatic experience, writing may be understood as a symbolic site where the psyche negotiates what cannot be fully mastered in direct recollection. Because trauma is often encoded through sensory fragments, affective residues, and disjointed impressions rather than integrated autobiographical memory, the act of composing a narrative can function as a mediated encounter with the traumatic past. Writing does not eliminate the rupture caused by trauma, but it can reconfigure the relationship between the subject and the event by transforming an involuntary intrusion into an intentional act of meaning-making. In psychoanalytic terms, such transformation resonates with the movement from compulsive repetition toward interpretive working-through, in which the subject gradually approaches traumatic material in forms that can be tolerated and symbolically elaborated (Freud, 1914/2001, pp. 147–148; Herman, 1997, pp. 175–177).

This therapeutic dimension is reinforced by the fact that writing offers a “container” for overwhelming affect. The page becomes a bounded space in which distressing material can be held, revisited, and revised, allowing emotional intensity to be regulated through distance, pacing, and narrative control. Rather than being flooded by intrusive memories, the writer may return to the experience selectively, structuring its details and determining how it will be represented. Such control is particularly significant when trauma has been accompanied by feelings of helplessness, because writing can provide a counter-experience of agency—an opportunity to decide what will be spoken, how it will be framed, and what

meanings will be attached to it (White & Epston, 1990, pp. 12–15). In this sense, writing functions not simply as a record of suffering but as a practice through which the traumatized subject reclaims authorship over personal history.

Furthermore, writing frequently operates through indirection—metaphor, fragmentation, temporal shifts, and symbolic substitution—strategies that are not merely aesthetic but psychologically functional. When trauma resists direct articulation, literary and narrative devices can express what is otherwise unsayable. Fragmented narration, for example, may mirror the discontinuities of traumatic memory, while internal monologue can dramatize the persistence of unresolved affect and the tension between repression and return. In literary studies, these formal features are often treated as textual correlates of psychic conflict, revealing how the structure of narrative may replicate the psychic structure of trauma itself (Caruth, 1996, pp. 4–7; Humphrey, 1954, pp. 23–26). The interpretive value of such forms lies in their capacity to render psychological rupture visible—not by resolving it, but by giving it a communicable shape.

At the level of meaning reconstruction, writing also facilitates the reorganization of time. Trauma often disrupts temporal continuity, producing a sense that the past remains unfinished and continuously present. Narrative, however, can rearrange temporal relations by placing traumatic fragments within a sequence—however partial—and by connecting past and present through reflective framing. This does not imply that narrative imposes a simplistic coherence on trauma; rather, it suggests that narrative offers a structure in which coherence may be approached asymptotically, through repeated re-tellings, revisions, and re-interpretations. As narrative theory indicates, the articulation of experience in time is fundamental to how identity is sustained, since the self is intelligible through the stories it can tell about continuity, rupture, and change (Ricoeur, 1984, pp. 52–55). Writing thus becomes a means of restoring temporal intelligibility, allowing traumatic experience to be situated within a broader life narrative without denying its disruptive force.

Finally, the therapeutic promise of writing is amplified by its capacity to move trauma from private isolation into a potentially shared symbolic space. Even when writing remains personal and unpublished, it assumes the possibility of an audience—real or imagined—and thereby shifts traumatic experience from solitude toward communicability. This movement matters because trauma frequently involves secrecy, shame, and disconnection. By providing a linguistic form that can be addressed, read, or responded to, writing opens a pathway—

however tentative—toward relational recognition. The result is not necessarily catharsis, but a gradual expansion of psychological capacity: the subject becomes increasingly able to hold distressing memory, name emotional states, and negotiate meaning through narrative representation (Pennebaker & Chung, 2011, pp. 418–420; Herman, 1997, pp. 175–177).

Subsection Two: Writing, Emotional Regulation, and Meaning Reconstruction

Beyond the externalization of trauma, writing plays a crucial role in emotional regulation and the reconstruction of meaning following psychologically distressing experiences. Emotional dysregulation is a common consequence of trauma, often manifesting as anxiety, detachment, intrusive memories, or emotional numbness. Writing functions as a regulatory mechanism by organizing chaotic emotional states into coherent linguistic structures (Herman, 1997, pp. 33–35; Pennebaker & Chung, 2011, pp. 419–421).

Through the act of writing, individuals impose order on internal disorder. Feelings that were once diffuse and overwhelming become articulated and categorized, enabling a greater sense of control. This process supports emotional processing by allowing individuals to revisit painful experiences gradually, at their own pace, rather than being involuntarily overwhelmed by them. Writing thus facilitates a safer engagement with emotional content, transforming raw affect into reflective understanding (Freud, 1914/2001, pp. 147–148; Greenberg, 2015, pp. 64–67).

Equally important is the role of writing in meaning reconstruction. Trauma frequently disrupts fundamental assumptions about the self, others, and the world. Writing enables individuals to reinterpret traumatic experiences within new narrative frameworks, allowing for the restoration of coherence and purpose. Through narrative reconstruction, individuals can redefine their identities, acknowledge loss, and create continuity between past, present, and future selves. In this sense, writing serves not only as expression but as a process of psychological rebuilding (Janoff-Bulman, 1992, pp. 50–54; White & Epston, 1990, pp. 12–15; Ricoeur, 1984, pp. 52–55). In addition to organizing emotional states into language, writing may be conceptualized as an active form of affect modulation that bridges bodily arousal and cognitive appraisal. Trauma-related dysregulation often involves oscillation between hyperarousal (e.g., agitation, panic, intrusive recollections) and hypoarousal (e.g., numbness, detachment,

emotional shutdown). Writing can intervene in this oscillation by providing a structured activity that slows emotional escalation and converts undifferentiated affect into discrete, nameable emotions. This linguistic differentiation matters because the capacity to name and describe emotion is closely tied to the capacity to tolerate and process it; when emotions remain vague, they are more likely to be experienced as overwhelming and uncontrollable. By encouraging gradual attention to inner states, writing supports a more regulated engagement with distress and reduces the likelihood of being involuntarily flooded by traumatic material (Herman, 1997, pp. 33–35; Pennebaker & Chung, 2011, pp. 419–421).

Moreover, writing promotes a form of “metacognitive distance,” enabling individuals to step back from immediate affective reactions and observe them as psychological phenomena rather than absolute realities. This shift parallels psychoanalytic notions of working-through, in which repeated, contained encounters with distressing material allow for increased insight and reduced compulsive repetition. When individuals write about painful experiences, they often move from raw description to reflective interpretation, gradually shifting from the position of passive victimhood toward active meaning-making. Such reflective movement is consistent with therapeutic processes that emphasize emotional processing rather than avoidance, and it can foster more adaptive emotion regulation strategies over time (Freud, 1914/2001, pp. 147–148; Greenberg, 2015, pp. 64–67).

Writing also offers a unique advantage by permitting revision. Unlike spoken disclosure, which unfolds in real time and may intensify distress, writing can be paused, edited, and revisited. This revisability enables individuals to regulate their exposure to painful content, titrating emotional intensity according to tolerance. In trauma contexts, where uncontrolled exposure may be destabilizing, the ability to return to the narrative incrementally can be psychologically protective. The writer can choose how much to disclose, which details to foreground, and which meanings to attach, thereby maintaining a sense of agency while engaging with distress. Such agency is central to recovery because traumatic experiences often involve a collapse of control and a shattering of safety; writing can provide a counter-experience in which the individual controls the pace and shape of engagement with the traumatic past (Herman, 1997, pp. 175–177; White & Epston, 1990, pp. 12–15).

At the level of meaning reconstruction, writing can be understood as a process through which shattered assumptions are renegotiated rather than simply

restored. Trauma frequently disrupts beliefs about personal invulnerability, moral order, predictability, and trust. The aftermath is not merely emotional pain but a cognitive-existential rupture in which the world becomes unfamiliar and the self becomes difficult to recognize. Narrative writing helps address this rupture by enabling individuals to articulate how their assumptions were broken and to explore alternative frameworks of understanding. This reconstruction is not necessarily optimistic or linear; it may involve ambiguity, contradiction, and unresolved questions. However, even partial narrative coherence can restore a sense of purpose by placing traumatic experience within a broader interpretive horizon—one in which loss can be acknowledged without erasing the possibility of continuity (Janoff-Bulman, 1992, pp. 50–54; Ricoeur, 1984, pp. 52–55).

Crucially, meaning reconstruction through writing is also an identity project. Trauma can fragment identity by producing a disjunction between “who I was” and “who I have become.” Through narrative reconstruction, individuals can integrate traumatic experience into a renewed sense of self that recognizes rupture while preserving continuity. The self, in this view, is sustained through narrative practices that connect memory, interpretation, and future orientation. Writing therefore functions as psychological rebuilding not because it removes pain, but because it helps transform pain into a narrative element that can be carried, interpreted, and incorporated into the evolving story of the self (White & Epston, 1990, pp. 12–15; Ricoeur, 1984, pp. 52–55).

Section Two: Therapeutic Dimensions of Writing in Mrs. Dalloway

Building on the theoretical framework established in the previous section, this section turns to a literary application of writing as a therapeutic practice through an analysis of Mrs. Dalloway by Virginia Woolf. The novel occupies a central position in modernist literature due to its innovative narrative techniques and its profound engagement with psychological interiority, trauma, and emotional fragmentation (Woolf, 1925/2005, pp. 3–5; Bradshaw, 2006, pp. 15–18). Rather than presenting trauma through overt narration or linear plot development, Woolf embeds psychological suffering within the very structure of the text, allowing writing and narrative form to function as mechanisms of emotional expression and psychological processing (Humphrey, 1954, pp. 23–26).

This section examines how Mrs. Dalloway exemplifies the therapeutic dimensions of writing by portraying the inner lives of its characters through

stream of consciousness, interior monologue, and fluid temporal movement. These techniques reflect the disrupted nature of traumatic memory and provide a narrative space in which psychological distress can be articulated indirectly (Caruth, 1996, pp. 4–7; Ricoeur, 1984, pp. 52–55). Writing, in this context, does not merely represent mental suffering but actively participates in its exploration, containment, and partial resolution (Herman, 1997, pp. 175–177).

By focusing on the relationship between narrative form and psychological experience, this section argues that Woolf's novel demonstrates how writing can serve as a means of externalizing trauma, regulating emotional states, and reconstructing the self after distressing experiences. The analysis highlights the ways in which narrative becomes a therapeutic space—one that allows characters to negotiate memory, loss, and identity—thereby reinforcing the idea that literature itself can function as a site of psychological healing (White & Epston, 1990, pp. 12–15; Herman, 1997, pp. 181–183).

Subsection One: Narrative Techniques and the Representation of Psychological Distress

In Mrs. Dalloway, Virginia Woolf offers a profound literary exploration of psychological distress through innovative narrative techniques that mirror the workings of the traumatized mind. The novel's use of stream of consciousness, free indirect discourse, and temporal fluidity allows readers to access the inner lives of characters in ways that conventional narrative forms cannot achieve. These techniques reflect the fragmented, nonlinear nature of traumatic memory and emotional disturbance (Humphrey, 1954, pp. 23–26; Bradshaw, 2006, pp. 17–19).

Characters in the novel experience intrusive thoughts, sudden emotional shifts, and persistent memories that interrupt their present consciousness. Such narrative disruptions parallel psychoanalytic understandings of trauma as an unresolved psychological event that continuously intrudes upon the present (Caruth, 1996, pp. 4–7; Freud, 1915/2001, pp. 181–183). Woolf's narrative structure does not merely depict psychological suffering; it formally enacts it, embedding trauma within the very fabric of the text (Ricoeur, 1984, pp. 52–55).

The narrative also creates a shared psychological space in which multiple perspectives coexist, suggesting that trauma is not solely an individual experience but one shaped by social, historical, and cultural contexts. Through its internal

monologues, the novel allows suffering to be expressed indirectly, avoiding explicit confession while still revealing profound emotional pain. In this way, the narrative itself functions as a therapeutic medium, enabling representation without retraumatization (Herman, 1997, pp. 175–177; White & Epston, 1990, pp. 12–15).

Beyond mirroring the fragmented operations of the traumatized mind, Woolf's narrative techniques also foreground the ethical and experiential complexity of representing psychological suffering. By dispersing consciousness across multiple characters and perspectives, Mrs. Dalloway resists a singular or authoritative account of trauma. This polyphonic structure underscores the idea that psychological distress is not confined to isolated individuals but circulates within a shared social environment shaped by war, loss, gendered expectations, and historical rupture. In this sense, trauma is rendered as both personal and collective, embedded within the rhythms of everyday life and the social fabric of postwar Britain (Bradshaw, 2006, pp. 20–22; Herman, 1997, pp. 28–32).

The novel's temporal fluidity further intensifies this representation by collapsing boundaries between past and present. Memories do not appear as distant recollections but erupt unexpectedly into present consciousness, destabilizing linear time. Such temporal disruption reflects psychoanalytic accounts of trauma as an experience that has not been fully assimilated and therefore remains perpetually active in the present. Woolf's narrative strategy allows the reader to inhabit this temporal dislocation, experiencing the intrusive return of memory alongside the characters rather than observing it from a detached perspective. In doing so, the novel formalizes trauma as a disturbance of time itself, rather than merely an event located in the past (Caruth, 1996, pp. 6–8; Ricoeur, 1984, pp. 55–57).

Importantly, Woolf's indirect mode of representation avoids sensationalizing psychological pain. Instead of explicit description or confessional disclosure, suffering is conveyed through fleeting thoughts, sensory impressions, and subtle shifts in tone. This restraint is significant from a therapeutic standpoint, as it aligns with contemporary understandings of trauma representation that caution against excessive exposure or graphic narration, which may risk retraumatization. By maintaining a degree of narrative distance, Mrs. Dalloway allows traumatic experience to be acknowledged and expressed without overwhelming either the characters or the reader (Herman, 1997, pp. 175–177).

The use of internal monologue also facilitates a form of psychological containment. Characters are granted a private narrative space in which conflicting

emotions—grief, fear, desire, and regret—can coexist without immediate resolution. This internal space mirrors the therapeutic setting in which emotional material is held and explored rather than forced into premature coherence. Through such containment, Woolf's narrative allows psychological pain to be endured, articulated, and partially integrated, even in the absence of explicit healing or closure (White & Epston, 1990, pp. 12–15).

Furthermore, the shared narrative field created by Woolf's shifting perspectives encourages an empathic mode of reading. As readers move fluidly between consciousnesses, they are invited to recognize parallels between different forms of suffering, thereby dissolving rigid distinctions between "normal" and "pathological" states of mind. This narrative empathy reinforces the therapeutic dimension of the text by fostering understanding rather than judgment, and by situating trauma within a continuum of human experience shaped by vulnerability and resilience (Humphrey, 1954, pp. 27–29; Bradshaw, 2006, pp. 23–25).

Taken together, these narrative strategies suggest that Mrs. Dalloway does more than represent trauma; it offers a model of how narrative form itself can engage psychological distress in a manner that is reflective, ethically attentive, and emotionally containing. By embedding trauma within a complex aesthetic structure, Woolf transforms narrative into a therapeutic medium—one that does not promise resolution, but sustains the possibility of meaning, connection, and psychological survival amid enduring fragmentation (Herman, 1997, pp. 181–183; Ricoeur, 1984, pp. 57–60).

Subsection Two: Narrative as a Means of Reconstructing the Self

While Mrs. Dalloway powerfully represents psychological distress, it also demonstrates how narrative can function as a mechanism for reconstructing the self after trauma. The novel's emphasis on memory, reflection, and interior narration illustrates how characters attempt to integrate past experiences into their present identities. Through internal storytelling, characters negotiate loss, regret, and unresolved emotional conflicts (Woolf, 1925/2005, pp. 30–33; Ricoeur, 1984, pp. 52–55).

Narrative reconstruction allows characters to reframe their experiences and restore a sense of personal continuity. Rather than presenting identity as fixed or unified, Virginia Woolf portrays the self as fluid and evolving, shaped through ongoing narrative processes. This aligns with psychoanalytic theories that view

identity as constructed through memory and symbolic representation (Freud, 1914/2001, pp. 147–148; Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973, pp. 210–213).

Importantly, the novel suggests that healing does not require complete resolution or closure. Instead, narrative offers a means of psychological survival, allowing individuals to live with trauma by giving it form and meaning. The act of narrating—whether through thought, memory, or language—becomes a strategy for maintaining coherence in the face of psychological fragmentation. Thus, Mrs. Dalloway presents narrative as a therapeutic practice that sustains identity even amid unresolved suffering (Herman, 1997, pp. 181–183; White & Epston, 1990, pp. 12–15).

Moreover, Woolf's representation of selfhood in Mrs. Dalloway suggests that identity reconstruction after trauma is not achieved through a single act of recollection, but through repeated narrative attempts to reconfigure memory into an inhabitable present. The novel repeatedly stages moments in which memory resurfaces in fragments—often triggered by sensory cues, social encounters, or passing objects—and these returns function as narrative opportunities for re-interpretation. Rather than treating memory as a stable archive, Woolf depicts it as an active, shifting process that continuously reshapes the self. This aligns with the view that identity is maintained through narrative continuity, even when that continuity must incorporate rupture, contradiction, and loss (Ricoeur, 1984, pp. 55–57).

In this framework, interior narration becomes a psychological technology of survival. Characters do not simply remember; they narrate themselves into coherence by selecting, arranging, and assigning meaning to experience. Such narration is rarely explicit or orderly. It often unfolds as internal questioning, fleeting self-appraisals, or associative movement between past and present. Yet these seemingly disjointed movements are precisely how the novel depicts the labor of self-reconstruction: the self is not restored as a unified essence but sustained as an ongoing interpretive practice. Psychoanalytic theory supports this view by emphasizing that subjectivity is constituted within symbolic structures rather than given as a finished entity; the self emerges through processes of representation and re-representation (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973, pp. 210–213; Freud, 1914/2001, pp. 147–148).

The novel also implies that narrative reconstruction is relational, not purely internal. Identity in Mrs. Dalloway is shaped in response to social recognition, perceived judgment, and the pressures of public performance. Even when

characters engage in private reflection, their self-understanding remains entangled with others—what has been said, withheld, remembered, or lost in relationships. This relational dimension is crucial to trauma recovery, since trauma frequently disrupts connection and trust. Narrative becomes a means of re-establishing a livable relation to others by rendering experience communicable, even if only internally, and by imagining a self that can persist within a shared world (Herman, 1997, pp. 182–183).

Finally, Woolf's refusal to offer definitive closure can be read as a psychologically realistic account of healing after trauma. The novel suggests that recovery is not synonymous with forgetting or resolution, but with a renewed capacity to carry experience without being destroyed by it. Narrative form—through reflection, re-framing, and the steady reworking of memory—enables characters to inhabit the present while acknowledging the persistence of the past. This emphasis resonates with therapeutic models in which healing involves re-authoring one's relationship to traumatic experience, restoring agency through the act of narration rather than erasing pain altogether (White & Epston, 1990, pp. 12–15; Herman, 1997, pp. 181–183).

Conclusion:

This study demonstrates that writing, as conceptualized within psychoanalytic criticism and therapeutic literary studies, functions as a powerful healing practice. Writing enables individuals to externalize trauma, regulate emotional responses, and reconstruct meaning after psychologically distressing experiences. Through its innovative narrative techniques and deep psychological insight, Mrs. Dalloway exemplifies how literature can serve as a therapeutic space in which trauma is not only represented but also processed.

The novel reveals that narrative itself possesses therapeutic potential, offering a means of emotional expression, psychological integration, and identity reconstruction. By engaging with trauma indirectly through language and form, Woolf's work illustrates the profound relationship between writing, mental health, and human resilience.

Findings:

1. Writing plays a central role in externalizing psychological trauma and reducing its emotional intensity.

2. Narrative organization supports emotional regulation and psychological stability.
3. Modernist narrative techniques effectively mirror the structure of traumatic experience.
4. Mrs. Dalloway demonstrates how narrative can function as a therapeutic mechanism for identity reconstruction.
5. Literary texts can operate as symbolic spaces of healing alongside clinical therapeutic practices.

Recommendations:

- a. Further interdisciplinary research should explore writing as a therapeutic practice within literary studies and psychology.
- b. Modernist literature should be examined more extensively for its contributions to trauma theory and narrative healing.
- c. Writing-based interventions should be incorporated into therapeutic and educational contexts to support emotional well-being.
- d. Psychoanalytic literary criticism should continue to integrate insights from trauma studies and narrative therapy.

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