**ABSTRACT**

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Trauma, Death and War in *The Waste Land* and *Mrs Dalloway:* A Critical-Memoiristic Reflection (Under the direction of Professor Jon Thompson)

This project explores war, trauma, memory and representation. Through a close reading of T.S.Eliot’s *The Waste Land* and Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway*, and drawing from pertinent literary sources in relation to those, I argue how these texts are not only witnesses to the wreckage, bloodshed, and disintegration that wars leave behind but how they become testaments to the psychological struggles waged with oneself and others that lay bare the fallibilities of an individual’s existence, the cracks and holes in the interiorities of human beings. As I demonstrate, the sources of trauma in the texts exceed the experience of the First World War to include the weight of fading Imperialist impositions (in *Mrs Dalloway*), and corrosive individualistic values of modernist society (in the*Waste Land*). In examining the complex nature of this inner turmoil or trauma, this Capstone project elucidates the way in which trauma is experienced in concealed pasts, palpable internal monologues, silent reconciliations with the present, acute emotional disintegration, and hollow physical investments. In this context, this project also explores trauma through a memoiristic portrayal of a daughter—me—who engages in a war to remember and reconstruct a past which will perhaps allow her to reach an understanding of a relationship with her deceased father. However, the attempt to reconstruct a past does not help to cover the distance that exists between the narrator and the lost object. The endeavor to recompense for the loss thus becomes the war inside of the narrator, her trauma. I conclude, that trauma is inevitable, central to, and in fact synonymous with human existence. Existence is never without loss, death, and the complexities that form part of being an individual—the *unheimlich*, the trauma.