SUMMING UP

The personal element is never absent in Virginia Woolf’s novels. If it is not a re-cast of personal experience, the content of most novels are mostly part fact and part fiction. Like sculptures and painters opting for real life models, modern playwrights fashion their characters after persons they have known in a real life. In an autobiography the author writes the story of his/her own life and achievements. Their aim is a successful presentation of personality. Its congenial defect is that it can never be completes. From the psychological point of view; one can know what motives, prompted him at decisive movement. What his/her secret hopes and ambitions were and how far his careers fulfilled his real aspiration. Autobiographical dement is the product of first hand experience. Virginia Woolf is an aesthetic and her purpose is to convey her own joy in the beauty of life, her own sense the pleasure of living. Always she selects the beautiful aspects of life, and ugliness is brought in only by way contrast. The aspects same in it is Mrs. Dalloway and Doris Kilman in her novel Mrs. Dalloway.

Woolf experienced her personal, family and social life and she creates an aesthetic vision of these opposites as they co-exist in a state of tension in her novels. Because her imagination progressed
characteristically by contraries it is possible to find the contraries in her treatment.

The artist or the writer has the primary job of mastering craftsmanship and manipulating her skill in the presentation of the deep aspect of reality. The novelist, Virginia Woolf writes that it “has the chance to live more than other people in the presence of reality”. Virginia Woolf is a “pure artist,” and not a philosopher or moralist. Whereas Jenn Venn Stephen says about Leslie that there was “a bit of the moralist in him (Leslie Stephen) even as a young child. And Virginia’s works represent a shift from the outer to the liner. She was a ‘naturalist’ as well as a ‘contemplative.’ Bernard Blackstone says that, “she observes new fact and old facts in a new way; but she also combines them, through the contemplative act, into new and strange patterns is absorbed into the inner life” (166). Virginia Woolf is not a preacher but a pure artist and she makes it a point to see that the outer is not only related to it but it is absorbed into the inner life. It is interesting to recall that in one of her essays on the writings of E.M. Forster, Virginia Woolf has made a classification between the preachers and the pure artists.

Virginia Woolf is not simply an artist who can be viewed undimensionally but a manifold presence who continues to give rise to new impulses and interpretation and quite different responses.
Literature has been traditionally a male domain although it claims to be universal, for it describes mostly male perceptions, experiences and opinion. This one sidedness of literature gave rise to the need for women to speak for themselves and write their own literature which describes contrarily their own particular experiences and perceptions. Her chief aim had been to convey the female characters through monologue technique. Her technique had been altogether different and search is chiefly aimed at probing the levels of the feminine psyche.

Moody talks about Virginia Woolf, What Virginia Woolf achieves in her novels, at their deepest levels is the objectification of her experience as an artist. They are the transformation of an artistic personality into a personal work of art (78)

The novel has been described as the one bright book of life, a work of art that throbs with vitality. This aesthetic or artistic vitality pervades the entire work of Virginia Woolf, through the vitality of life as revealed in her works is more on the mental plane than on the physical plane of life. Virginia Woolf is one of the most original of women novelist, a skillful examiner of consciousness and a successful experimenter in techniques, who gives a poetic apprehension of life in a novelistic form of her own. Her novels are an attempt to achieve an artistic solution to life with emphasis on moods, tones and state of mind. There are the
traditionalists like H.G. Wells, Arnold Bennett and Galsworthy is interested in new ideas and opens out new vistas to the human mind. They are still following the Victorian tradition as far as the technique of the novel is concerned. Virginia Woolf, revolutionized the technique of the novel with their probing into the sub-conscious. Virginia tried to create a verbal vision of the life that transcends both time and space. Her novels reveal the changing rainbow living relationships between man and woman and man and nature. She worked out the myriad impressions of sensitive life and developed a network of poetic imagery and style to suggest the luminous halo of consciousness.

As Kelly says,

...her early novels tend to stress the isolation and aimlessness of modern people. The novels of the middle period put less emphasis on generalized separation and try to refine vision while defining the factual world. Her last three novels work towards final vision that in the face to facts can offer solace to a world threatened by chaos and disaster.

Virginia Woolf belongs to a great line of modern novelists who are also theoreticians of the novel such as Henry James, Marcel Proust, D.H. Lawrence, E.M. Forster and James Joyce. She wrote almost entirely by intuition though she was one of the most conscious and intellectual writers
of her time. Her novels attempt to reveal the silent regions of the human psyche, the inward history of man as opposed to the outward reality of man and society that was revealed by the Edwardian novelists. One can find the real actions of her novels are confined to the mental rather than physical plane.

Virginia Woolf’s novels from *The Voyage Out* to *Between the Acts* reveal the fact that her way of seeing reality was dual and this contrariety of vision that she held. She represents through her themes, characters, structure and philosophical approach. Her novels reveal her many sided genius. Though her fictional world is small with intellectuals and sensitive artists and her characters limited, what she does with this small world is important. She succeeds in bringing various elements together and arranges beings in characteristic attitudes so as to weave thoughts and feelings into a firm recognizable poetic pattern that contains the contraries of life.

Blackstone remarks that: Her characters like her incidents and her intuitions are unfinished, spreading as the ripples of a lake spread in the sunlight, for personality is like that she thought.

Virginia Woolf wants a good status in the society. So she depicted her characters in her novels as a status lover in the society. Like Rachel
Vinrace (VO), Mrs. Dalloway (Mrs. D) and James Ramsay (LH). All these characters envisage a change in the social values. They are also conscious of their role in the society and so they actively take part in reshaping the society on the basis of their progressive ideas. The realistic approach of the novelist brings out the inherent nature of the society responding to the changes. They limit themselves to certain areas and within that limited arena they visualize the possibility of a change of attitude values. For example, Virginia Woolf’s novels are about upper middle class people, while the scenes of Virginia Woolf’s novels revolve around London. Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* takes place within a day in London.

Virginia Woolf speaks about the class division in her novel *Mrs. Dalloway*: There is a class of people who seems to be far removed from ordinary people like Septimus Warren Smith and Doris Kilman. Richard Dalloway moves along with people who wield power with the sole aim of getting a berth in the power structure. His friends include Lady Bruton, Hugh Whitbread, and Peter Walsh who are in one way or other associated with political life. Their chief concern is to keep themselves at the helm. Hence the casual dismissal of the news of the death of Septimus Warren Smith the kind of attitude is born of a life which is power – centered. The epiphany technique reveals the momentary glimpses of the individual. It
exposes one’s capabilities and comprehensive power. Virginia Woolf uses this in her major novels. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, the epiphanies of Clarrisa Dalloway reveal her innermost thoughts and the outer.

Virginia Woolf’s focus has been mainly on women who need more exposure and whose inherent talents are to be explored. The novelists succinctly place women with all their weaknesses and disadvantages which are made use of by men to exercise control over them. Tansley is of the view that “women can’t write, women can’t paint” and his general opinion on women shows his skewed thinking. He thinks that women “did nothing but talk, talk, talk, eat, eat, eat”. So also Mrs. Ramsay’s intellectual arrogance makes him incapable of understanding his own wife. In order to assert his superiority, he complains that Mrs. Ramsay is “heartless” and “she never told him that she loved him”. Further, woman characters like Clarrisa Dalloway and Mrs. Ramsay seen to submit themselves to their male counterparts. But in their innermost selves, they seek freedom by indulging in their private worlds. For instance, Mrs. Ramsay spends her time with her children, reading them fairy tales.

In real life, Virginia’s father, dominated his wife Julia Stephen. Virginia remembers the same in her novels, for example Willoughby dominated his wife Theresa, Mrs. Ramsay dominated his wife Mrs. Ramsay. Virginia Woolf’s focus is on women hemmed in by the wall of
male authority. So she envisages the need for a liberal attitude towards one another particularly towards women who all along led their limited existence in the shadow of their male counterparts. Virginia Woolf sees male authority taking its strength in exercising unlimited control over women. In this connection, it is worth citing of her own statement in *A Room of One’s Own* “the history of men’s opposition to women’s emancipation is more interesting perhaps than the story of that emancipation itself’. Leslie Stephen gave limited freedom to women in his family. Virginia echoed this restricted freedom in her novels, Mrs. Ramsay and Peter Walsh respectively. Man creates an environment with offers women limited role. Thus women remain solely under the control of men. This age-old conception of women is held with utmost sanctimony.

Kumar states that it is perhaps noteworthy to recall the fact that it is her female characters who can act as transparent media for transmitting the living spark of intuition. Her female protagonists make the most of every moment and their creative efforts which introduce the affirmative note from the thesis which has to encounter the facts which form the antithesis. On the contrary, most of her male characters are symbols of pure intellect – William Bankes, the Botanist, Charles Tansley who traces the influence of something on somebody, William Rodney who reads a
paper on Shakespeare’s imagery; William Pepper who knew a great many things about Mathematics, History, Greek, Zoology, Economics. Mr. Ridley Ambrose who “spends his life in digging up manuscripts which nobody wants,’ Prof. Brierly who knows everything in the world about Milton, and Mr. Ramsay, the greatest metaphysician of his time. She demonstrates the fact that women are more receptive to humanitarian appeals. The conflict between thesis and antithesis between creative illusions and fact is her major theme.

*To the Lighthouse* had a tripartite structure: part one presented the Victorian family life, the second part covers a ten-year period, and the third part is a long account of morning in which ghosts are laid to rest. The central figure in the novel, Mrs. Ramsay, was based on Woolf’s mother. Also other characters in the book were drawn from Woolf’s family memories. The important another character Lily Briscoe thought that a man and a woman looking at a girl throwing a ball.

In *To the Lighthouse*, James Ramsay outbursts against his father wanes with the lapse of time and his boyhood hope materializes bringing him close to his father and cementing a bond of strong filial relationship. In *The Waves*, all the six characters draw sustenance from the central character Percival. Bernard, the phrase-maker acknowledges Percival as
his leader. But after Percival’s death, he consoles himself with the birth of his son which coincides with Percival’s death. Even his incessant effort at phrase-making symbolizes his incorrigible optimism.

Virginia Woolf in her three novels, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*, has taken care to see that the story does not obtrude at all, thus implementing the Bloomsbury idea that the novel should not be weighed down by the story. E.M. Forster suggests that it is the function of the novelist to reveal the hidden life at its source. Regarding characters, they have been given too much prominence because the story has dominated. A story is always the story of a character, his relationship with others.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, the whole external duration is from 8.00 a.m. to about 8.00 p.m., an interval of twelve hours, but during this day time, Peter Walsh, Clarissa Dalloway Sally Seton, Hugh Whitbread, Septimus Warren Smith and Rezia Smith, Elizabeth Dalloway, Doris Kilman and even the Prime Minister of England have been brought into focus. The minds of the principal human beings move easily back and forth on the time scale stretching even the mythical times, bringing out extraordinary impressions of past life and the life humanity general. Within this “day-time, there is and Kaleidoscopic variety of human experience and
passion—the gruesome tragedy of Septimus Warren Smith and Rezia Smith. The irony of Sir William Bradshaw’s specialization on human suffering and his affluence built on callousness, the superficiality of the upper socialist like Lady Bruton. All these different streams of reality are knitting together the incongruous separating friends, and making nonsense of emotions. In a single day, a lifetime may be lived through.

The professional class, which speaks light of human values, is yet another force to be fought against. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Dr. Holmes treats Septimus Warren Smith without making the least attempt to understand the root cause of his ‘madness’ when Septimus Warren Smith needs human understanding. Dr. Holmes simply dismisses his case as one of madness without taking into account his mental anguish. Septimus Warren Smith the ex-soldier has borne the shock of seeking his close friend die before his eyes. The doctors instead of treating his illness have aggravated it. In this novel the novelist has succeeded in rendering the inner life, the very shimmerness of experience and has yet retained order, clarity and discipline. According to Bernard Blackstone, for technical mastery, the novel is unparallel in English fiction.

According to Quentin Bell, Virginia was the gayest human being he had known. Her talk was scintillating and she delighted in flights of
imagination and fancy. Her company is described by David Garnet, in the following words: Virginia holding a cigarette would lean forward before speaking and clear her throat with a motion like that of a noble bird of prey. Virginia Woolf has frequent emotional outburst due to her fiery temper and emotional irresponsibility. Leonard Woolf expresses herself very directly and honestly and no one has to guess what her true feelings are. However, Virginia Woolf dislikes showing any personal weakness or her need for support, comfort and development. She is often impatient with herself and others Virginia abhors emotional dependency and dislikes “complainers.”

Virginia Woolf wants to write throughout her life who expresses this ambition to her friend as follows: “In a letter to Madge Vaughan in June 1906,” Virginia, speaking of her dream-like world, professes that she would like to “write of the things I do feel, than to dabble in things I frankly don’t understand in the least.” Virginia wrote *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Common Reader First Series* simultaneously: “my fiction before lunch and then essays after tea, when she got tired of the novel, or when she came to a difficulty that she could not immediately resolve.”

To conclude this chapter, it is interesting to recall that in one of Virginia’s essays on the writings of E.M. Forster. Virginia Woolf has
made a classification between the preachers and pure artists. Blackstone remarks, it is easy to see that Virginia Woolf is not a preacher, and that she is a pure artist and a very good autobiographical artist.

The researcher has selected only three novels of Virginia Woolf namely *The Voyage Out, Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*. In these novels Virginia’s own personal life is brought through the characters of the novels. She also influenced and included her family members in many of the occasions. Again the researcher gives special respect and reverence to Virginia Woolf, who is a devotee of English Literature and pays homage to her immortal Literature. Virginia Woolf is the greatest visionary of the cosmos and the biggest source of inspiration to the readers and the writers of the world.