OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Virginia Woolf presents an impressionistic view of society and human personality in her autobiographical novels. A biographic understanding of Virginia Woolf’s life is well in order for the study.

The objectives are:

1. Symbolic Interactions and world-view in the selected works of Virginia Woolf-A critical study.
2. Virginia Woolf’s disposition as a writer.
4. The stream-of-consciousness techniques used by the contemporaries of Virginia Woolf.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Virginia Woolf’s presentation of the characters in her novels represents the essence of her personal experiences in her major novels. Her knowledge is shown in the novels through how she depicted her characters. The theme of each novel is strong and she strongly deals with the theme in 1. *The Voyage Out*, 2. *Mrs. Dalloway* 3. *To the Lighthouse*; Love and death in *The Voyage Out*. Happiness versus Misery in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Joy and Sorrow in *To the Lighthouse*. These novels
have been chosen for study to find pattern in the making / shattering of characters and events to appreciate the theme of love between human beings. There are certain specific limitations (autobiographical elements only) with regard to her characters.

**METHODODOLOGY**

First, the technique of narration is dealt with. Then the objectives are subject to the mode of autobiographical assessing, through identifying references to Virginia Woolf’s personal life. The primary sources are guttered from various libraries, journals, books, magazines and websites.

**CHAPTERIZATION**

The opening chapter introduction, with background of the study, definition of autobiography and the statement on autobiographical element, scope of the study, objectives, limitations, methodology and organization of the thesis, all in one. Spread out in five chapters, the general introduction shows the condition of Britain at the time of Virginia Woolf’s birth. Her literary life is documented. How she started her writing with the help of her father and friends especially the members of Bloomsbury Group are put forth.
The second chapter explains how Virginia Woolf’s family incidents and personal life figure in her major novels. For example, Virginia Woolf used to go for a walk with her father. She recalled how he would take his hat and stick; called for his dog and his daughter. This habit of walking through the parks and squares of London remained one of the most persistent of Virginia Woolf’s occupation, borne in her work, in the background for her novels and as a subject in one of her most charming essays “Street haunting” (*A London Adventure*). She brought the same in *The Voyage Out*. Rachel Vinrace; who is the heroine of the novel, went on a voyage (in Euphrosyne) with her father, Willoughby Vinrace, which gave her more experiences to explore the world. Again Rachael Vinrace said to Mrs. Dalloway that, “I love walking in the Park alone; but not...with dogs.” She finished Virginia Woolf influenced her own personality of walking in Mrs. Dalloway. She said to Hugh Whit Bred, to go by walk in Bond Street; and she herself said, “I love walking in London, Really, it’s better than walking in the country”. Both Sir Leslie Stephen and Mr. Ramsay were tall and gaunt; both are walkers in the novel *To the Lighthouse*. The characters are mirror-image other family members and her close friends, to an impressionistic extent.

Virginia Woolf’s sickness and her family member’s illness are vividly described in third chapter. The definition of each illness is also
given in it. Virginia Woolf brings out the same through the characters in her major novels almost pathologically. Virginia Woolf’s mother Julia Stephen died due to influenza. In 1940; Virginia Woolf was affected by influenza and she spent three weeks in bed (http://www.literaturepage.com). She remembered same disease in the characters of Clarissa Dalloway in Mrs. Dalloway. Her doctors said that “her heart might have been affected by influenza” (8). Virginia’s stepsister Stella Duckworth married to John Waller in April 1897 (Virginia’s letter to Thoby in 1897). Stella went to Dr. Secton and her nurse looked after Stella, and said that she had been ill with peritonitis. She died in July 1897 (Sellers “Letters 1-7”) Virginia Woolf echoed the same incident in her novel. To the Lighthouse through the character of Prune, daughter of Mr. Ramsay. “Pure died that summer in some illness connected with childbirth (Peritonitis)” (180).

Chapter four deals with the suicide of Virginia Woolf; the reasons for her suicide and the evidences are explained if not fully analyzed in this chapter. Virginia Woolf’s brother Thoby, a brilliant scholar who died young, tried to throw himself from the window of his preparatory school in 1894. Virginia Woolf tried to commit suicide in the year 1913. In 1915, Virginia Woolf tried to jump out of the window by killing herself. Virginia Woolf echoed the same incident in her novel Mrs. Dalloway
through the character of Septimus Warren Smith. He was an ex-soldier of the army (took part in the First World War) also committed suicide by throwing himself out of the train window.

Finally, in the fifth chapter the researcher concludes that 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 fact packed in fiction. Like Sculptors and painters opting for real life models, modern playwrights fashion their characters after persons they have known in real life. In Virginia Woolf’s writing, “She expresses a desire for a freedom from the tyranny of sex.” When she was writing the novels, Virginia Woolf thought of her parents: how her father ill-treated her mother when she was in deathbed, she leaned on Leslie Stephen immediately he jumped from the bed. The author never forgot that moment and she called it up in all her major novels. In her first novel, Virginia Woolf depicted the character as follows; Willoughby Vinrace ill-treated his wife Theresa Vinrace. Helen Ambrose who was the sister of Willoughby said about him: “She (Helen) suspected him of nameless atrocities with regard to his daughter as indeed she had always suspected him of bullying his wife.” To the Lighthouse is Virginia Woolf’s most widely acclaimed novel. It stands, firmly and centrally, in her work and her life, shedding light on both her past and her future, as woman and as
writer. It is more directly autobiographical than most of her fiction, as she herself makes plain in her comments on it in her letters and diaries. This novel is indeed an elegy for both her parents, though, interestingly, it is her father that she mentions first. The centre is father’s character, sitting in a boat reciting like Mr. Ramsay. Virginia Woolf gives another example in the same novel. “As the family magazine recorded, after describing a voyage taken to Godrevy by Thoby and Virginia “with a perfect tide and wing, “Master Adrian Stephen was much disappointed at not being allowed to go” (Hyde Park Gate News (1892). Mr. Ramsay has a habit of saying disagreeable things, but James Ramsay wants to see the lighthouse as early as possible. “But, said his father, stopping in front of the drawing-room window, “it won’t be fine” (8).” Like Adrian Stephen, James Ramsay was also disappointed. Virginia Woolf recalls this incident in To the Lighthouse. Thus, it may be deduced that she was an autobiographical novelist. Her aim is a successful though inchoate presentation of personality. She is a ruminant writer not confessional or conventional and is an inspiration to the readers and writers modernist fiction.

If catalogued, the events of Virginia Woolf’s life and state in her novels side-by-side, discounting the chronology of occurrence in either time, the correspondences self-explain how depersonalization for an author of her kind is kept at bay and the personality never goes extinct nor
does escape; for the ultimate reason being the author’s getting extinguished in an artistic way through a literacy. This is a kind of euthenesy: the suicide in question, in Virginia Woolf’s case, defies its etymology but adduces a new meaning of accepting life at its other extreme.