2.1 Virginia Woolf: Life, Vision and Art:

2.1.1 Introduction:

Virginia Woolf is one of the significant novelists of the twentieth century who contributed immensely to the development and revitalization of the novel as a form of literature. Readers, all along, have evinced interest in her life and works due to the universal appeal and the truth of her assertions about the novelistic art. Being a representative novelist of her times, alongside James Joyce and D. H. Lawrence, she developed a unique technique in her novels culminating in *The Waves* (1931) and *Between the Acts* (1941). The renewed interest in her life, literary ideas, politics, psychology, critical writings and novels began with Quentin Bell’s biography of Woolf in 1972, and the subsequent publication of her complete diaries, letters and collected essays opened new vistas for critical reinterpretation and re-evaluation of Woolf as a writer in the light of postmodern theories of knowledge, art and psychology.

If we look at the history of the novel, it is constantly perceived as though it were not art, but an immediate transcript of life, which by and large, concerned with real men and women and their daily lives. The ‘life-like’ materials of the genre have generally been viewed as somehow commensurate with the genre itself. Woolf was one of those few novelists who sought to change this perception by redefining the concepts of ‘life’ and ‘reality’ as materials of fiction and by emphasizing formal organization of the material in the form of a pure narrative, i.e. without the superimposition of life. In the process, she established the novel as a work of art, a crystal cut-to-size, meant for aesthetic contemplation. Her innovations in the art of fiction, in the accomplishment of her objectives in terms of structure, subject matter, techniques and language enriched the novelistic art. She evolved a new style commensurate with her artistic purposes. It replaced the traditional discursive style as used by her predecessors from Defoe to Galsworthy with the deliberate non-representational use of language and imagery. In this, she is indebted to Lawrence Sterne, Henry James and Marcel Proust, among others.
2.1.2 Life:

Virginia Leslie Stephen Woolf was born on 25 January, 1882 in the distinguished family of Sir Leslie Stephen, a man-of-letters. Her childhood was spent in writing for her own pleasure and amusement. She did not have formal education, but being a voracious reader, she cultivated her mind by reading from her father’s library. Nevertheless, she was able to learn Greek, Latin, German languages and history between 1897 and 1901. But a series of tragedies in her household: death of mother in 1895, followed by that of half-sister in 1897, her father in 1904 and brother in 1906 had profound impact on her sanity, personal life and creativity. She lived all her life in dreadful anxiety and suffered from several bouts of nervous breakdown. Her genius flowered under the shadow of insanity. Her marriage to Leonard Woolf in 1912 came as a blessing for her, as he tried to maintain conducive atmosphere for the fine-flowering of her genius.

However, the major contribution in the shaping of Woolf as a writer came from the Bloomsbury Group. Her brother, Thoby, brought Cambridge friends to Bloomsbury house and her brilliant conversations with them shaped her views on life and art. The most prominent among them were Lytton Strachey, Clive Bell, Duncan Grant, Roger Fry and Maynard Keynes—most of them artists, art critics, writers and philosophers. The philosophical ideas of G. E. Moore’s *Principia Ethica* (1903) and his quest for something that is valued as ‘good’ in itself rather than as a means to good, provided philosophical justification for the high value accorded to art. For Woolf, the search for significant form arose out of the Bloomsbury aesthetic. In addition, she shared with them a certain lack of respect for customary morals and traditional wisdom. Intellectual ideas became the main foci of her literary works. Writing, reading, publishing, conversing and observing—she led a life that was intellectually active in the highest degree.

Virginia and Leonard Woolf together founded Hogarth Press in 1917, which subsequently published her novels. Her fictional career began with *The Voyage Out* (1915), followed by *Night and Day* (1919), *Jacob’s Room* (1922), *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To The Lighthouse* (1927), *Orlando* (1928), *The Waves* (1931), *The Years* (1937) and *Between the Acts* (1941). She was a prolific writer and wrote short stories, essays, articles, diaries, letters, reviews, biographies and feminist treatises.

After completing the manuscript of her last (posthumously published) novel, *Between the Acts*, Woolf fell into depression from which she thought she would never
recover. On 28\textsuperscript{th} March, 1941, Woolf walked into the River Ouse near her home and drowned herself. A brilliant literary career came to an abrupt end.

2.1.3 Vision and Art:

Woolf inherited her father’s intellectual honesty and moral integrity in her search for truth as she saw it. The independence of mind enabled her to assert her own personal vision in all her fiction. Being one of the most articulate of literary writers, she expressed her views and ideas about life and art in innumerable non-fiction writings—essays, articles, diaries, reviews and letters, as well as in her novels. She was profoundly aware of herself as a ‘modern’ writer writing with ‘modern sensibility’, i.e. with a deep inward response to the existential dilemma of the contemporary world. In her essay, ‘How It Strikes a Contemporary’ (Collected Essays, hereafter CE, II, 1966:157), she characterized the modern world in these words: ‘… It is an age of fragments… It is an age incapable of sustained effort, littered with fragments… It is a barren and exhausted age, we repeat. … And modern literature, with all its imperfections, has the same hold on us and the same fascination… It has the same endearing quality of being that which we are’. Her modernity derives from the fundamental novelty of her conception of the art of fiction, a certain theory of fiction inspired by the new discoveries in art, philosophy and psychology. As a novelist, she was basically concerned with the nature of human life and with the definition and value of the human being and the society. She observes in ‘Phases of Fiction’ (CE, II, 1966:102), ‘Life is growing more complex. Our self-consciousness is becoming far more alert. We are aware of relations and subtleties, which have not yet been explored’. By radically questioning the relationships between surface and depth, inner and outer life, Woolf took upon herself the formidable responsibility of questioning the foundations of the traditional novel and providing an alternative art of fiction. Her landmark essay, ‘Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown’ (CE, II, 1966:331-337), became her literary manifesto which outlined her assumptions about fiction. In this essay, she provocatively declared,

‘In or about December, 1910, human character changed … . What I mean by character in itself … is the impression she [Mrs. Brown] made … Myriads of irrelevant and incongruous ideas crowd into one’s head on such occasions; one sees the person … in the centre of all sorts of different scenes … Edwardians have looked at factories, at Utopias … but never at her, never at life, never at human nature. And so they have developed a technique of novel-writing which suits their purpose; … For us those conventions are ruin, those tools are death’ … . … for she is, of course, the spirit we live by, life itself’.
For Woolf, ‘the centre’ of her fiction would be ‘character in itself’ whose ‘myriads of impressions and incongruous ideas’ would be recorded in her fiction not with the ‘conventions’ and ‘tools’ of the past masters, but with techniques of her own which will portray not the character in action but the spirit in action. This is the crux of the matter for Woolf.

In her another celebrated essay ‘Modern Fiction’ (CE, II, 1966:104-07), she formulated her aesthetic that drew the battle lines between the traditionalists and the moderns more clearly. This essay established the points at which she felt that the traditional requirements of narrative should be modified. She knew that English fiction, as represented by Defoe and Trollope, had sought to deal with character and action in their external aspects and broad temporal relations. Instead she sought to represent the essence of character and the quality of experience without indulging in superficialities.

‘Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions– trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old; … there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted style … Life is not a series of gig-lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. … Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however, disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness.’

This essay opened the door for the novel to fresh conventions and new artistic possibilities. Her desire to explore the inner life in fiction and to find new frameworks and forms for it required innovation and originality in her approach to fiction. Her experimentations in this direction in terms of structure, characterization and language constitute a definitive formal challenge to the idea of representational realism. The traditional photographic realism with its methods of description, analysis and exposition, are done away with. She abandons the fixed structures of narrative– with its linearity and materiality– and focuses on the way in which the human mind functions and constantly makes choices of perspective in the search for reality or truth. In this way, she signalled the inward turn of the narrative, expressing the language of ‘silence’ rather than the language of ‘speech’.
Ultimately, Woolf’s issue with the traditional novel boils down to the problem of conflict between the aesthetic view of fiction as against the materialistic view of it. She (CE, II, 1966:54-55) believes ‘fiction is treated as a parasite which draws sustenance from life and must in gratitude resemble it. … The novelist must be bolder to cut adrift from the external tea-table and the plausible and preposterous formulas. The story might wobble; the plot might crumble; ruin might seize upon the characters. The novel, in short, might become a work of art.’ She praises Flaubert and Henry James for creating patterns, which though beautiful in themselves, are hostile to humanity. But she is not a Paterian aesthete with the motto ‘art for art’s sake’. Her prime concern is to be more ‘real’ and true to the cause of the novel. She (WD, 1969:72) declared, ‘It’s life that matters’. Again she (WD, 1969:132) wrote, ‘Reality I call it. And I fancy sometimes this is the most necessary thing to me: that which I seek. But how difficult not to go making ‘reality’ this and that, whereas it is one thing. Now perhaps this is my gift: this perhaps is what distinguishes me from other people: I think it may be rare to have so acute a sense of something like that … I would like to express it too’ (italics supplied).

The ‘reality’ that she seeks consists of the world of the vision– ‘the world of the soul and the heart’ (CE, II, 1966:109), like the great Russian writers who endeavour to reach some goal worthy of the most exacting demands of the spirit. In this connection, she (CE, II, 1966:150) praises Jane Austen as being ‘the mistress of much deeper emotion’ than appears on the surface and a fine discrimination of human values. This certainly was Woolf’s purpose: to illumine the human mind about the enduring experiences of life.

Woolf’s position towards the ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ life is quite a nuanced one. She did not mean to reduce all external relations into symptoms of inner life or the external world into a function of her characters’ mental life, as has been the wont of many critics of Woolf. It is part of her aesthetic that novelists do build upon a substance of facts. But to obtain ‘liberation’ from facts, the writer must first focus on his relations with facts. When she set out to remodel her art in 1919, the relationship between consciousness and artistic form impressed itself upon her with great urgency. In her essay, ‘Modern Fiction’ (qtd. above), her comparison of life to a ‘luminous halo’, and a ‘semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end’, represents a serious attempt to examine the structure and conditions of consciousness itself and their effects on the novel. In her ‘Letter to a Young Poet’ (1932) (CE, II, 1966:191), Woolf defined the
writer’s problem in the analysis of the mental act. The writer’s task is ‘to find the right relationship … between the self you know and the world outside … Stand at the window and *let your rhythmical sense* open and shut, boldly and freely, until one thing melts in another, *until the taxis are dancing with the daffodils, until the whole has been made* from all these separate fragments’ (italics supplied). Facts and relations are brought together in the artist’s apprehension, in his/her ‘rhythmical’ or ‘formal’ recreation of life, which acquire the aspect of a symbolic vision.

As her thoughts crystallized during the 1920s, Woolf became quite specific about the way in which consciousness can be formally portrayed. The *moment* emerges as the key to her theory of apprehension as well as the concept of novel. She (WD, 1969:139) notes, ‘I think even externality is good; some combination of them ought to be possible. The idea has come to me that what I want now to do is *to saturate every atom*. I mean to eliminate all waste, deadness, superfluity: to give the moment whole; whatever it includes … Waste, deadness come from the inclusion of things that don’t belong to the moment; *this appalling narrative business of the realist: getting from lunch to dinner*’ (italics supplied). In her search for a form in which the ‘inner’ and the ‘outer’ life can be combined, Woolf conceived of the moment as a contraction of the manifold elements of life into significant images or scenes. From disparate elements combined by a consciousness, the movement of the moment moves to associations and memories. In its final stage, the moment obtains an independent existence of its own, combining both physical and mental worlds and heightening the self in brief, ecstatic recognition.

The problem of character-depiction is central to Woolf. The depiction of the consciousness or the inner life in fiction is an attempt to analyze human nature. Woolf believed that an important thing in human life is the individual’s search for meaning and identity. The fulfillment of her characters is accomplished, therefore, when they receive the vision in the final stage of the moment. Mrs. Dalloway, Mrs. Ramsay, Lily Briscoe and Bernard– her famous characters– all have moments of vision, not as mystics, but as intuitive insight into truth. For this purpose, Woolf chooses extraordinarily sensitive characters whose psyches would occasionally be occupied with the inward search for truth, for illumination. It is part of Woolf’s supreme belief that the fleeting recognition of truth could be expressed in a permanent form, making the moment into a work of art, requiring only words or scenes, colours or shapes, to endure in time.
Woolf, in order to find an enduring form for the subject matter of her novel, advocates the time-honoured poetic form or a combination of poetic and narrative forms for fiction. This is one way of sifting the gold from the dross of material world as the poet does and simultaneously conferring on it a permanent form. In her essay ‘Narrow Bridge of Art’ (CE, II, 1966:225), she explains the relationship between poetry and novel. ‘… It will express the feeling and ideas of the characters closely and vividly, but from a different angle. It will resemble poetry … it will give the relation of the mind to general ideas and its soliloquies in solitude. For under the dominion of the novel, scrutinized one part of the mind and another unexplored. … we long for ideas, for dreams, for imaginations, for poetry. … In these respects, then the novel or the variety of the novel will take on some of the attributes of poetry. It will give the relations of man to nature, to fate; his imagination, his dreams. But it will also give the sneer, the contrast, the question, the closeness and complexity of life. It will take the mould of that queer conglomeration of incongruous thing– the Modern Mind’ (italics supplied). These ideas reveal Woolf’s consistent concern for some shaping power, some form of patterning of the chaotic material of novel, some conception which lends harmony and force, some envelope that contains the novelist’s world– both the inner and outer world of the characters. David Daiches (1942:153), commenting on her method of combining prose and poetry, observes, ‘… distill a significance out of the data discovered by the personal sensibility and, by projecting that significance through the minds of others, to maintain an unstable equilibrium between lyrical and narrative art’.

Woolf is explicit in her view of the contents of inner life or consciousness. She was of the opinion that the novelist ought to be gifted with a sufficiently receptive temperament and a vocabulary rich enough to meet its demands and a different sensibility. She insisted on the novelist being stimulated by life. In ‘Life and the Novelist’ (CE, II, 1966:131), she notes, ‘He can no more cease to receive impressions than a fish in mid-ocean can cease to let the water rush through its gills … This sensibility is one of the conditions of the novelist’s life. In order to convert these myriad impressions into the fabric of art the process of selection is required. Life is subjected to a thousand disciplines and exercises …’ (italics supplied). In ‘Phases of Fiction’ (CE, II, 1966:85), Woolf talks about the dormant faculties of mind, which if pressed to service, will solve the puzzle ingeniously. … His mind has the power to make patterns, by its power to bring out relations in things
and disparities. The mind of the novelist shapes the abundant sensations’ (italics supplied).

The above discussion reveals Woolf’s urge to break the shackles of traditional novel which was one-sided and required infusion of new ideas and techniques to revitalize it. To bring in the equilibrium, she succeeded in telescoping the poet’s vision and the novelist’s world under the auspices of the novelist’s omniscient point of view.

2.1.3.1 Technique of Narration:

Two impulses appear to determine the direction of her fiction. The primary impulse is Woolf’s desire to depict life as she saw it. The other impulse is to experiment with the techniques of narration to replace the sequence of plot with the requirements of depiction of inner life. She develops a stream of associations which constantly plays off the external perception of characters against their inner awareness of themselves and each other. In this, she neither effaces the omniscient narrator nor presents him/her as a source of memory.

Woolf’s fictional art was very much influenced by the contemporary theories of Freud, Rutherford, Einstein and Jung, who revolutionized the knowledge of human mind and of the universe. The distinction between the psychological time and the clock time, the duree and temps of Bergson’s philosophy and Proust’s concept of mémoire involontaire underlie her modernist experiments with time and narrative form.

The Stream of Consciousness technique, which Woolf uses in her mature novels, contains human experiences in all their facets– sensations, memories, feelings, fancies, imaginations, intuitions and visions– both expressible and inexpressible. She traces the growth of psychic lives of her characters. In this she records uncensored observations by the characters of each other, as they reveal the character’s own psychological make-up. However, it is full of the impressionist’s sensitivity to colour, sound and shapes in her novels. Robert Humphrey (1954:21) observes, ‘Virginia Woolf saw stream-of-consciousness as metaphysically significant and her own predilections for the reality of visions led her to demonstrate the insight which the ordinary mind is capable of. For Woolf, the fleeting but vital visions of the human mind had to be expressed within the setting of that mind– and she was right; for she alone has been able to communicate precisely that sense of vision.’
For James Joyce, who also uses the Stream of Consciousness technique, existence amounts to comedy and man is satirized for his incongruous and pitiful role in this world. He uses Stream-of-Consciousness in his novels to depict daydreams, mental delusions and the prosaicness of things, but on different layers of consciousness. His Odyssey pattern in *Ulysses* (1922) is a means for equating the trivial with the profound. He presents life with its shortcomings and its inherent contradictions and the result is satire. He makes use of *interior monologue* to represent consciousness in its inchoate stage before it is formulated for deliberate speech. He presents the consciousness *directly* to the reader with negligible author interference. The meanderings of the consciousness of Molly Bloom in the last pages of *Ulysses* prove this point.

Woolf relies the most on the *indirect interior monologue*, which she uses with great skill. This kind of monologue is the one in which the omniscient author presents the unspoken material as if it were directly from the consciousness of a character, and with brief commentary and description, guides the reader through it. The author intervenes between the character’s psyche and the reader. Moreover, selection of the material of fiction is much more coherent in the case of Woolf than the selection from Joyce. But both of them share a studied element of incoherence and disunity. Hence, references and meanings are intentionally vague and unexplained.

The fundamental nature of consciousness is considered in its movement as fluid, a ‘stream’ and not bound by the arbitrary time concepts. The consciousness in Woolf’s fiction finds its own time sense. Her phrase ‘luminous halo’ is nothing else but those phases of mental processes which mark the merging of the past into the present, and the fading of the present into the future, thus making experience a continuum. The present loses its static nature. Furthermore, the present ‘moment’, no matter how much clock time it occupies, may be infinitely extended or it may be highly compressed into a flashback.

The chief technique in controlling the movement of stream of consciousness in fiction has been an application of the principles of free association—borrowed from Locke or Freud or Jung, not as ‘train’ of thought, but as ‘stream’ of thought. The activity of consciousness makes one thing suggest another through association—entities in common or in contrast, wholly or partially—as to the barest suggestion. Both Woolf and Joyce use the technique of free association.
But Woolf and Joyce use the technique differently for the movement of consciousness—back and forth, intermingling the past, the present and the imagined future. For Woolf, the character remains fixed in time and the consciousness of the character moves in space. This technique is also referred to as multiple-point-of-view, which she uses in *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To The Lighthouse* and *The Waves*. On the other hand, Joyce’s character remains fixed in space and his consciousness moves in time, superimposing ideas from one time on to those of another.

### 2.1.3.2 Language and Style:

Woolf’s purpose in writing fiction was to realize her individual vision through the medium of language. Being a conscious artist, she had to ensure that her style, form and subject matter form an indivisible whole. She experimented with language to mould it as a suitable medium for her fiction to embody her vision of complex modern experience. She formed her own theory, or at least, certain definitive notions about language in general, and the language of literature in particular. Criticizing the language of the traditional novel, Woolf (CE, II, 1966:54) says, ‘In poetry, in drama, words may excite and stimulate and deepen without allegiance; but in fiction, they must first and foremost hold themselves at the service of the teapot and the pug dog, and to be found wanting is to be found lacking’. Thus, words become a medium to express the lifeless and static representations of reality. Instead, as she says, ‘To survive, each sentence must have, at its heart, a little spark of fire, and this whatever the risk, the novelist must pluck with his own hands from the blaze’ (ibid:54) (italics supplied). Woolf suggests here that the novelist has to be bold enough, urged by a genuine creative impulse, to dissociate words and sentences, as far as possible, from their traditional content and to place them in new contexts to enable them to realize her vision.

Woolf gave a series of talks on the theme ‘Why Words Fail Us’ in which she talked about ‘words’ and the process of signification. In her essay ‘Craftsmanship’, she (CE, II, 1966:243) distinguishes between two kinds of words: words that are useful and ‘words that tell the truth, nothing but the truth. Therefore, to talk of craft in connection with words is to bring together two incongruous ideas’. The useful language is the language of signs, for instance, the language of train guide. Its purpose is to communicate facts. In short, it has utilitarian value. The traditional novelists use the language of facts. But the other quality,
‘their positive quality’ is their power to tell the truth. The test of truth is its length of life, the words which survive the ‘chops and changes of time’ are the truest.

But, as Woolf (CE, II, 1966:248-249) notes further, ‘Words combine, they combine unconsciously together … The Words possess diabolical power … the power that is to suggest … They do it without the writer’s will; often against his will … They are so stored with meanings, with memories that they have contracted so many famous marriages … Words live in the mind– variously and strangely, much as human beings live, by ranging hither and thither, by falling in love, and mating together. It is true that they are much less bound by ceremony and convention than we are … They are highly democratic too; they believe that one word is as good as another … They hang together, in sentences, in paragraphs, sometimes for whole pages at a time …’ (italics supplied).

Woolf emphasizes the power of words to suggest, to combine in multifarious ways with disparate words and associations to convey the truth: ‘things in themselves’ (WD, 1969:187), almost a mystical identification with the objects. She was essentially engaged with the attempt to crystallize her language with the mental processes of her characters. She needed to break through the confines of the conventional word and penetrate into the deeper aspects of experience. Her fundamental intention was to make words perform the function of ‘fluid concepts’ and thus, represent experience as a process. For this, she needed freedom and imagination to bring together a complicated association of ideas by means of words and sentences. Thus, Woolf asserts the free intuitive process of artistic creation against the more mechanistic theories of nineteenth century materialism.

Ordinary language and syntax expect a kind of empirical order and completeness. But the nature of consciousness has aspects of incoherence, discontinuity, private implications and associations. This calls for dislocation of language and syntax. The writer has to use various linguistic devices. Joyce completely disregards the normal syntax and coins a large number of new words and anagrams. Impelled by an urge to make words express his meaning, he ends up by using in Finnegans Wake (1939) an altogether new language of his own invention. In Ulysses (1922), the elements of incoherence and fluidity are emphasized by the complete absence of punctuation, of pronoun references, and introductions to the persons and events, etc.

Woolf, on the contrary, uses immense elaboration and art to form a style in which to express her vision of life. She (CE, II, 1966:193) believes, ‘The art of writing, … the art
of having at one’s beck and call every word in the language, of knowing their weights, colours, sounds, associations, and thus making them, as is so necessary in English, suggest more than they can state …, so that if you want to satisfy all those senses that rise in a swarm– the reason, the imagination, the eyes, the ears, the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet, not to mention a million more that the psychologists have yet to name’ … . Through the suggestive power of words and language she wanted to write a prose capable of rising high from the common place and the mundane– like poetry. Again her observations come to our help. In ‘The Narrow Bridge of Art’ (1927), she (CE, II, 1966:218-229) observes, ‘… the closeness of complexity of life of the modern mind … will clasp to its breast the precious prerogatives of the democratic art of prose; its freedom, its fearlessness, its flexibility … Proust and Dostoevsky did it. … A book which though written in prose and by way of being called a novel, adopts a different attitude, a different rhythm, which stands back from life, and leads us to expect a different perspective is– Tristram Shandy. It is a book full of poetry … it is a book stained deep purple, yet never patchy. … There one sees poetry changing easily and naturally into prose, prose into poetry.’

In short, Woolf uses the kind of language that endures. It is a language that tells the truth: ‘How I should notice everything– the phrase for it coming the moment after and fitting like a glove’ (WD, 1969:39), … to convey the thing itself in its equivalent in language.

Woolf was aware of the dangers of using a uniform style in her fiction. Therefore, she always changed it from book to book. As she herself characterizes the styles of her different novels, Mrs. Dalloway is ‘close and terse effort’ (WD, 1969:66); while writing To The Lighthouse, ‘fertility and fluency are the things’ (WD, 1969:85); ‘The Waves– is my own style! To be noted, as curiosities of my literary history’ (WD, 1969:170). She characterizes the style of Between the Acts as ‘scraps, orts and fragments’ (WD, 1969:334).

In order to achieve the tone and texture of the consciousness, Woolf and Joyce use a welter of rhetorical devices such as figurative language (personification, parallelism, repetition, ellipses, etc.) and, most importantly, the devices of imagery and symbols to convey sense impressions. Images are figurative comparisons usually in the form of similes or metaphors and they help concretize the psychic processes. The poetic and richly wrought textures of Mrs. Dalloway, To The Lighthouse, for instance, are the products of
imagery and symbols. They achieve the effect of expressing an emotional attitude toward a thing and expand the meaning and atmosphere around them. Hence, Woolf is labeled as an impressionist in rendering her vision.

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2.2 Stylistic Analysis of *The Voyage Out* (1915)

2.2.1 Introduction:

*The Voyage Out* (1915) is Woolf’s first novel which demonstrates, though in archaic form, her individualistic aesthetic of the novel form and her flare for experimentation in terms of structure, point of view and style. She herself characterized the novel as ‘a gallant and inspiring spectacle’ (*WD*, 1969:24). For Woolf, the novel is, metaphorically, the beginning of ‘the voyage out’ of the confines of the orthodox novel with its Victorian high-minded realism, authoritarian omniscient narration and discursive style. Earlier, being the writer of long reviews to literary magazines, she started writing fiction in the era of great traditionalists like Arnold Bennett, Galsworthy and Wells and modernists like Joyce and Lawrence. She chose to reject Victorianism and write with ‘modern’ consciousness. She defined ‘reality’, which is an ideologically charged term in her critical lexicon, as ‘… reality dwells in what one saw and felt but did not talk about’ (*The Voyage Out*, 1992:29, hereafter *VO*). Rejection of surface realism in favour of the deeper reality of the psychic life of the characters which she repeatedly characterizes in the text as ‘the things people don’t say’ (17, 204) initiates the process for her innovative and radical programme for the dissolution of the conventional novel. Woolf’s aims as a writer are, to some extent, reflected in those of her fictional novelist, Terence Hewet, in the novel: ‘What I want to do in writing novels is very much what you want to do when you play the piano, … We want to find out what is behind things, don’t we? Look at the lights down there … scattered about anyhow. Things I feel come to me like lights. … I want to combine them. … Have you ever seen fireworks that make figures? … I want to make figures’ (206-7). Like Terence, Woolf wants to portray the incoherence of life and discover the underlying pattern, echoing her overwhelming sense that ‘There is significance’ in life (*Letters*, 1978:397). She was convinced of the inner significance of experience.

In the choice of themes for *VO*, as in the later novels, Woolf is guided by the deeper significance of things rather than the surface realism which manifests itself in the form of duality between order and chaos, life and death, fact and vision, the degradation of modern materialistic world and the inner cravings of human heart, the eternity of nature and the human insignificance. In short, she wanted the novel to reflect the nature of human existence. Several utterances are given here to illustrate this: ‘This reticence– this
isolation— that’s what’s the matter with modern life!’ (66); ‘a certain dryness of the soul’ (84); ‘bodies without souls’ (107); ‘the universal silence’ (114); ‘chaos triumphant, things happening for no reason at all’ (209); ‘why was it that relations between different people were so unsatisfactory, so fragmentary, so hazardous …’ (178); ‘would there ever be a time when the world was one and indivisible?’ (279).

In order to achieve her purposes, Woolf chooses to narrate the story of a twenty-four year old girl, Rachel Vinrace, who goes on a voyage on board her father’s ship, Euphrosyne, from London to South American island, Santa Marina. Soon she falls in love with the novelist-character, Terence Hewet, an Oxford don and a man of leisure, aged twenty seven. Soon after the expedition up a tropical river, she falls ill due to heat and dies, having become engaged to Terence just four weeks ago. Around these events, Woolf evokes the social-cultural milieu of early twentieth century, and, most importantly, she probes the depths of the psychic life of the protagonist, Rachel. In terms of Woolf’s success and achievement, the novel charts a new territory and achieves unprecedented depth in the presentation of the subject matter.

In matters of style, the novel exhibits different narrative styles— from conventional style to Woolf’s individualistic style— the language set on fire by unparalleled beauty and imagination. For the stylistician, it guarantees new experience in the exploration of the style of the text.

2.2.2 Structure and Technique:

2.2.2.1 Structure:

Traditionally, the narrative structure of a novel is defined as linear presentation of a sequence of events in their chronological order. Linguistically, the notion of structure was analyzed by Russian Formalists like Vladimir Propp (1968) (1.1.7.1.1) who spoke of fabula (the basic description of the fundamental events of a story with an equally skeletal inventory of the roles of the characters in that story) and sjuzhet (the artistic reworking of the story material to suit the author’s intentions in the distinctive style of the author). Terminology introduced by Chomsky (1957, 1965) to explain syntactic relations between simple sentences and complex ones and how the latter are derived from the former— deep structures and surface structures— is used to account for the narrative structure consisting of fabula, a chronologically ordered deep structure representing the primary and essential information concerning events, characters and settings and the surface structure
representing the treatment the basic story element is given in the interest of the central vision of the novel.

Labov (1967, 1972), the structuralist linguist (1.1.7.1.2), identifies and relates formal linguistic properties of the narrative to their functions—*referential function*, i.e. the function of a narrative as a means of recapitulating experience in an ordered set of clauses that matches the temporal sequence of the original experience, and *evaluative*, the use of the narrative events to prove a point. The referential and the evaluative functions roughly resemble Propp’s *fabula* and *sjuzhet* respectively, and, the latter, to a degree, is external and separable from the *fabula*. The Labovian thesis is that the true *narrative clauses*, the backbone of a narrative, are temporally ordered independent clauses that occur in a fixed presentational sequence. The fixity of sequence of narrative clauses is quite crucial for Labov. He (1972:361) defines the ‘minimal’ narrative as ‘a sequence of two clauses which are temporally ordered’ and also as ‘one containing a single temporal juncture’. By ‘temporal juncture’ is meant the non-reversibility of two narrative clauses without any change of the original semantic interpretation of the story.

On application of these parameters to the narrative structure of *VO*, the researcher locates the following *narrative clauses* as crucial in the narrative structure of the text:

1. Down in the saloon of her father’s ship, Miss Rachel Vinrace, aged twenty four, stood waiting for her uncle and aunt nervously (7).
2. Helen looked at her [Rachel] … denied beauty, now that she was sheltered indoors, … a hesitation in speaking, … made her seem more than normally incompetent for her years (13).
3. Richard took her in his arms and kissed her (66).
4. … Helen saw with real affection for his daughter, made her determined to have the girl stay with her [at Santa Marina], even if she had to promise a complete course of instruction in the feminine graces (77).
5. ‘I [Mrs. Flushing] want to go up there and see things for myself. … I want to go up the river and see the natives in their camps.’ (222)
6. After one of these glances, she murmured, ‘Yes, I’m in love. There is no doubt, I’m in love with you’ [Rachel to Terence] (266).
7. … it was that they [Rachel and Terence] had become engaged to marry each other (274).
8. But her [Rachel’s] head ached; it ached whichever way she turned it (309).
9. … she [Rachel] had ceased to breathe. So much the better—this was death (334).
These sentences acquire the status of ‘narrative clauses’ in the Labovian sense by virtue of their occurrence in their chronological order and their value in furthering the narrative sequence by providing essential information about the characters, events and settings. And hence, these constitute fabula or the bare story on which the sjuzhet or the discoursal elaboration of the narrative depends. The underlying logic or the cause and effect relationship between the narrative clauses could be noticed—beginning with the voyage of ‘Miss Rachel Vinrace, aged twenty four’ on ‘her father’s ship’ (1); her aunt, Helen finding her ‘incompetent’ (2); then the fatal ‘kiss’ by Richard (3); Helen’s decision to take Rachel to Santa Marina, for ‘a complete course of instruction in the feminine graces’ (4); the trip up a river as Mrs. Flushing wants to ‘see the natives in their camps’ (5); Rachel’s declaration of love for Terence (6); their subsequent engagement (7); Rachel falling ill soon after due to headache (8); and her death (9). These narrative clauses neatly represent the phases of Rachel’s ‘voyage out’ of England/London, out of life, out of love and marriage, out of bondage to the material world and the voyage into death or non-existence/nothingness. On the basis of these narrative clauses, the novel, VO, could be said to have a recognizable, conventional structure with a beginning, a middle and an end.

Many critics have found fault with the plot-structure as having ‘no complications’ (David Daiches, 1952:492) and as ‘woven with such slender threads’ (Jean Guiguet, 1965:197). From the discoursal point of view, the glitch appears to be with the narrative clauses (8) and (9)—Rachel’s sudden illness and death, which give the impression of a twist-in-the-tail ending and blatant manipulation of the events. Clive Bell (qtd. in Majumdar and McLaurin, 1975:65) observes, ‘VO … was a remarkable failure … partly because one felt some discrepancy between the comic and tragic parts’. Lytton Strachey (qtd. in Majumdar and McLaurin, 1975:65) remarks, ‘It [VO] lacked the cohesion of a dominant idea— in the action’. To this Woolf (qtd. in Majumdar and McLaurin, 1975:65) replied, ‘I suspect your criticism about the failure of conception is quite right. I think I had a conception, but I don’t think it made itself felt. What I wanted to do was to give the feeling of a vast tumult of life, as various and disorderly as possible, which should be cut short for a moment by the death, and go on again … The difficulty was to keep any sort of coherence, …’ (italics supplied). Woolf’s observation is well justified in the text.

With due respect to the scholarly views of the critics cited above, the researcher feels obliged to provide linguistic evidence in order to explain the tragic ending of the
novel. Three reasons, supported by linguistic details, may be given:

1. The conceptual framework or the central argument of the novel, as Woolf affirms, is articulated by many characters about the nature of human existence as chaotic, illogical and meaningless lacking the Efficient Cause, echoing the Nietzschean concept of Godless Universe. This appears to be the overriding factor in determining Rachel’s unexpected death: ‘How odd! How unspeakably odd! But she could not explain to herself … something quite unfamiliar and inexplicable, and themselves as chairs or umbrellas dropped about here and there without any reason’ (28); ‘… even so they could hardly clasp the billowy universe, …’ (98); ‘I believe there are things we don’t know about, and the world might change in a minute …’ (132); ‘She was … incredulous of the kindness of destiny, … Even this theory she was ready to discard in favour of one which made chaos triumphant, things happening for no reason at all … (209); ‘According to him, too, there was an order, a pattern, which made life reasonable, or … for sometimes it seemed possible to understand why things happened as they did’ (282); ‘There must be a reason’, she said, ‘It can’t only be an accident. For it was an accident– it need never have happened.’ (337)

These reflections on the laws governing the universe and the human life appear to have been strongly influenced by the sudden tragic events of Woolf’s own life: mother’s death (1895), half-sister Stella’s death (1897), father’s death (1904) and her brother Thoby’s death (1906), who had initiated her into the Bloomsbury Group. These incidents must have convinced her of the randomness of events and the pitiless fate which would hit her heroine Rachel, in VO, when she is on the threshold of complete happiness. However, the self-contradictory assertions about the logic or the illogic of life, for which Lytton Strachey appears to have taken objection, point at Woolf’s refusal to contain the narrative in any fixed conceptual schemata and, instead, to prefer ambiguity and obliquity, as life, in principle, cannot be explained by any rational argument.

2. Secondly, Woolf appears to have made the narrative structure of VO follow the logic of the inner being of the central character rather than the external coherence of facts. The following utterances reveal the inner being of Rachel which necessitated her death rather than union with her lover: ‘Inextricably mixed in dreamy confusion, her mind seemed to enter into communion, to be delightfully expanded and combined with the spirit of the whitish boards on deck, with the spirit of the sea, with the spirit of Beethoven, …
‘It seemed to her now that … she wanted many more things than the love of one human being— the sea, the sky (285); ‘For the moment she was so detached and disinterested as if she had no longer any lot in life, … Although they sat so close together, … ceased to struggle and desire one another’ (297-8); ‘She remembered their quarrels, … and she thought how often they would quarrel in the thirty, or forty, or fifty years in which they would be living in the same house together, … But all this was superficial, and had nothing to do with the life that went on beneath her eyes, … for that life was independent of her, and independent of everything else. … She was independent of him; she was independent of everything else … for she had never felt this independence, this calm, and this certainty until she fell in love with him, … She wanted nothing else’ (298).

Rachel’s autonomous spirit, which she eventually discovered after she fell in love, which is in contact with the primordial forces, necessitates her union with them through death rather than her romantic union with Terence, for it would mean compromising her autonomy, violating her inner integrity in favour of Freudean wish-fulfillment of the readers’ expectations. And also, the tragic ending appears to have been influenced by considerations of reversing the traditional Jane Austenean romantic closure of the plot in favour of the one which apparently wantonly overturns the plot on its head. This rupture is intentional, which connects Woolf with the modernists rather than the traditionalists.

3. Thirdly, Rachel’s death by fever is shown to be caused by the heat of the tropical sun in Santa Marina and Woolf prepares the reader for it throughout the text by frequent references to the increasing heat that would claim its victim: ‘The day increased in heat as they drove up the hill’ (81); ‘The midday sun … was beginning to beat down hotly. … Expeditions in such heat are perhaps a little unwise’ (119); ‘She went to the wash-stand and began sponging her cheeks with cold water; for they were burning hot’ (233); ‘The afternoon was very hot, so hot that the breaking of the waves on the shore sounded like the repeated sigh of some exhausted creature’ (308); ‘Ice-cold at first, it soon became as hot as the palm of her hand’ (310); ‘The heat was suffocating. At last the faces went farther away …’ (332).

The heat of the tropical sun becomes the heat of Rachel’s body and she succumbs to it. This naturalistic explanation of death by heat arguably justifies itself as no amount of love or passion could interfere and stop it.
In short, it could be said that the well-formed narrative structure with a sudden rupture at the climactic point highlights deliberate structural incoherence superseded by conceptual coherence and follows the iconic order of randomness of events in human life. This has profound consequences for the central vision of the novel, viz. the centrality of death in human life with reference to which life, particularly Rachel’s life, acquires its meaning and significance.

The narrative structure of VO exhibits spatio-temporal specificity as in a traditional novel. The action of the novel takes place during a period of few months– from October to less than the same month the next year. Besides, Woolf mentions the exact place and time of particular events through proximal or distal deictics, as given below:

1. By nine o’clock the Euphrosyne had taken up her position in the middle of a great bay; she dropped her anchor; … (78).
2. ‘Monte Rosa– that’s the mountain over there, isn’t it?’ said Helen (115).
3. They had been engaged for four weeks (328).
4. For six days indeed she had been oblivious of the world outside … (321).

Dialogue and description are used as a means of furthering the plot and for characterization as in a conventional novel, besides using letters, diary writing and poetry recitation as part of narration.

2.2.2.2 Technique:

Presentation of speech and thought has been the crucial factor in the depiction of the novelistic material. The traditional novels used dialogues or speech. In the twentieth century, for the novelists like Woolf who were deeply concerned with the portrayal of flow of thought, ‘thought presentation’ is common. Leech and Short (1981:337) observe, ‘It should always be remembered that the representation of the thoughts of characters, even in the extremely indirect form is ultimately an artifice, … but if the motivation for the actions and attitudes of characters is to be made clear to the reader, the representation of their thoughts, like the use of soliloquy on the stage, is a necessary licence’.

Leech and Short (1981:338) provide categories in presenting the thoughts of characters. They are the same as those for the presentation of speech and are distinguished from one another by similar means.
1. Does she still love me? (Free Direct Thought: FDT)
2. He wondered, ‘Does she still love me?’ (Direct Thought: DT)
3. Did she love him? (Free Indirect Thought: FIT)
4. He wondered if she loved him. (Indirect Thought: IT)
5. He wondered about her love for him. (Narrative Report of Thought Act: NRTA)

The difference between FDT and DT is that the DT has the introductory reporting clause. The FIT differs from the DT by virtue of the backward shift of the tense and the conversion of the first person pronoun to the third person pronoun (indirect features) and also by the absence of a reporting clause and the retention of the interrogative form and the question mark (direct features). The IT version has an introductory reporting clause, explicit subordination and a declarative form of the reported clause. The NRTA sentence incorporates what minimal report there is within the main clause by nominalizing the reported clause.

Leech and Short (1981:339) observe, the writer has a great deal of scope to vary these modes of thought presentation or combine them according to his or her needs. If a writer uses the thought act ‘reporting’, he invites us to see things from that character’s point of view. As he moves along the scale towards the ‘free’ end of the thought presentation continuum, he apparently gives us the ‘verbatim’ thoughts of the characters with less and less intervention on his part.

2.2.2.2.1 Thought Presentation:

Woolf, from her first novel itself, develops her individualistic technique of identificatory thought presentation, which merges the narrative reporting with the actual thoughts of the characters. Hence, the prominent mode of thought presentation in VO appears to be combination of NRTA with IT and FIT. Here, two examples are analyzed to illustrate this:

1 Willoughby’s selfishness, though consistent as Helen saw with real affection for his daughter, made her determined to have the girl to stay with her, even if she had to promise a complete course of instruction in the feminine graces (1). She could not help laughing at the notion of it– Rachel a Tory hostess!– and marveling as she left him at the astonishing ignorance of a father (2) (77).

The NRTA is used in sentence (1), which reports the thoughts of Helen. The NRTA in sentence (2) is abruptly broken by the parenthetical FIT with an exclamation attributing
the thought directly to Helen and then again quickly continuing the NRTA till the completion of the thought. The example highlights Woolf’s tendency to fragment the thought process of characters and intrusion of the omniscient narrator imperceptibly with a view to combine narration with self-narration of the characters.

2 He ran his mind over the things they had said, the random, unnecessary things, which had eddied round and round and used up all the time, and drawn them so close together and flung them so far apart, and left him in the end unsatisfied, ignorant still of what she felt and of what she was like (1). What was the use of talking, talking, merely talking? (2) (207).

The passage presents the thoughts of Terence as they occur in his mind and in his personal vocabulary (eddied round and round, flung them); but they are reported by the omniscient narrator with pronoun references ‘he’, ‘they’, ‘them’ and ‘she’ in sentence (1). Sentence (1) demonstrates the omniscient narrator’s total identification with the character espousing his feelings and sharing his irritation at not being able to gauge Rachel’s mysterious personality. In sentence (2), FIT is used wherein Terence irritated by the interminable talk, asks the rhetorical question. The retention of interrogative attributes the statement to the character.

2.2.2.2 Point of View and Thought Presentation:

The point of view is the angle or the perspective established by the author from which the events, characters and situations are revealed to the readers. The techniques of thought presentation outlined in the earlier section have direct relationship with the point of view or the angle of vision. In fiction, the NRTA, IT and FIT are the preferred modes as they allow the omniscient voice of the narrator to exercise control over the presentation of the novelistic material with a view to revealing the central vision of the novel. FDT and DT are context-bound and are preferred in spoken mode of thought presentation as a powerful means of evoking the character’s point of view.

In the context of linguistics, certain techniques have been evolved to study the point of view in terms of linguistic form. The formal distinctiveness of NRTA and, to some extent, of FIT, lies in the fact that they retain the pronominal reference and the sequence of tense that characterizes indirect discourse. Traditionally, such texts have been classified as ‘third-person narratives’. The narrator reports on the activities, thoughts and speech of the characters in the fictional world. The appropriate admixture of FIT in the narrative flow enables the narrator to identify himself/herself totally with the character in question in
viewing the events of the narrative. Thus, as Susan Ehlrich (1990:7) says, ‘the impersonal discourse’ of the omniscient narrator is merged with ‘the personal discourse’ of the characters.

Woolf, in *VO*, walks the less trodden path in the history of fiction by projecting the multi-angled vision on the events and the people through the use of NRTA predominantly, while allowing greater narrative space to the characters. This technique is crucial for the understanding of the complex characters like Rachel, Terence and Helen in the text. This technique, which Woolf perfected in her later novels, appears to be a deliberate discourse strategy with a view to unsettling and discouraging the conventional, rigid, unidirectional narrative perspective and emphasizing the relativistic approach to life.

A few passages are analyzed here to illustrate the shifting perspectives of the text:

1. One afternoon in the beginning of October when the traffic was becoming brisk a tall man strode along the edge of the pavement with a lady on his arm. Angry glances struck upon their backs (3).

2. The people in ships, however, took an equally singular view of England. Not only did it appear to them to be an island, … but it was a shrinking island in which people were imprisoned. One figured them first swarming about like aimless ants; … and then, … one figured them … into a brawl (24).

3. She was next overcome by the unspeakable queerness of the fact that she should be sitting in an arm-chair, in the morning, in the middle of the world (1). Who were the people moving, in the house– moving things …? (2) And life, what was that? (3) It was only a light passing over the surface and vanishing, as in time she would vanish, though the furniture in the room would remain (4) (114).

Example (1) presents features of NRTA and the distal deictics, narrative past tense and formal vocabulary– all features of indirect discourse– and creates a formal ‘speaker’, who is distinct from the characters in the text. It is an example of the pure omniscient narration. In example (2), the person ‘who sees’ and the person ‘who speaks’ are different. It is the people who ‘see’ London as a ‘shrinking island’ and its people as ‘ants’– a deliberate dig at the pride of English people, their worldliness and competitive capitalism and the ‘speaker’ ironically distances himself from the reported perception of London and its people. The ‘speaker’ or omniscient narrator is always an intermediary between the reader and the characters modulating their responses. Example (3) presents shifting perspectives of the narrator and the character, Rachel. Sentence (1) is obviously NRTA. But sentences (2), (3) and (4) emanate out of the consciousness of Rachel, who appears to be in the meditative mood reflecting on the nature of life and death. The linguistic clues as
to the transfer of thought from narrator to the character are the presence of expressive devices– interrogatives, which attribute the thought to the character. The root transformations such as interrogatives and embedded clauses ('What was that?'; ‘as in time she would vanish’) and subjective lexical items (‘light’, ‘furniture’) do the same job with respect to sentence (4). The absence of the character-oriented deictics or the parenthetical clauses or reporting clauses creates the sense of ambivalence as to the source of consciousness and creates a ‘dual-voice’ effect on the readers.

2.2.2.3 Paragraph Structure:

As VO is pervasive in the feminist ideology and the subversive anti-Victorian authoritarianism and as such it is reflected in the breaking down of the imposing paragraph structures handed down from the past. Woolf dismantles the traditional paragraph by broken endings and broken thoughts and the resultant incoherence between paragraphs which allow the readers to step in and make sense of the text. Among many, a few examples are:

1 ‘… I feel already worse that I did yesterday, but we’ve only ourselves to thank, and the children happily …’ (23).
2 ‘I wanted to know what he’d done. The women in Lancashire …’ (72).
3 ‘I had no notion that the peasants were so artistic– though of course in the past …’ (181).
4 We have him nothing but milk and arrow root … (321).

The high frequency of broken paragraph endings is highly motivated in the text suggestive of abrupt termination of the thought processes of the characters and their speech and this has direct relevance to the theme of ‘silence’ in the text.

2.2.3 Linguistic Style:

2.2.3.1 Lexical Analysis:

A linguistically oriented view of lexis is centred around the study of lexical patterns used in the text and their interrelationship with their meaning and aesthetic effect. Fowler (1981) emphasizes the importance of context in understanding the meaning of a word, and in the process widens the scope of context. Context is seen as operating on both the formal and the substance levels viewed as embracing all the surroundings of a lexical item, from the immediate linguistic surroundings, called co-text to the distant social and cultural surroundings, i.e. the context proper. Cummings and Simmons (1983) have enlarged the
concept from collocational, grammatical, phonological, graphological to dialectal, registral, historical, social and cultural contexts to the levels of language study.

2.2.3.1.1 Lexical Patterns/Sets:

In VO, Woolf generates the broad socio-cultural milieu in which the narrative is embedded with the help of lexical sets indicating a wide variety of themes– human relationships, relationship between man and nature, imperialism, feminism, the shallow modern materialistic world, love and death and existentialist problems of chaos and order, flux of time and life, etc. The following lexical sets suggest these thematic motifs:

1. Nature Set:

river, sea, mist, the Sun, rain, sea-gulls, pinnacles, smoke, hill, gale, trees, flowers, tropical suns, waves, earth, fish, great eels, heat, horizon, lighthouse (29), canaries, birds, storm (69), duck-weed (9), icebergs, fog, weeds, island, virgin land, heat, mules, Santa Marina, Monte Rosa mountain, bees, grasshoppers, glacier, shadows, earth, trees, moths, tiger moths (184), jelly fish, dolphins, etc.

2. Urban Set:

ladies, gentlemen, traffic, motor-cars, dispatch-boxes, postcards, flats, churches, hotels, vans, industries, hansoms, factory chimneys, carts, cab, officers, manufacturer, workers, the rich, the poor, streets, squares, public buildings, cannonballs, squadrons, wagons, Tower Bridge, Embankment Strand, electric bell, theatres, tapestries, dining-room, cigars, looking-glass, arm-chairs, great lamps, pamphlets, books, toast, butter, ornaments, photographs, education, profession, suffragist, music, hair-pin boxes, brushes, pins, frills, progress, telephones, sewers, wires, dust-carts, champagne, pills, etc.

Music: music, piano, violin, Beethoven, Wagner, Sonata, etc.

Dance: Mozart, Bach, Purcell, dance, quadrilles, waltz, polka, ball room, etc.

Books: Shelley, Ibsen, modern books, modern poetry, Gibbon, Pope, Balzac, Plato, Sophocles, Swift, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Austen, Pindar, Aristotle, Arnold, poets, Antigone, classics, Greek alphabet, Shakespeare, Hardy, Emerson, Spencer, Huxley, Cowper’s Letters, etc.

Empire: business, voyage, Bombay, coloured women of India (31), guns, natives, dominion (55), Secretary for India (55), warships (6), the Mediterranean Fleet (60), British Admirals (60), gold, Santa Marina, etc.

Politics: King (45), Law (45), protestant (45), Catholic (45), Popery (43), future state (55), General Election (89), Prime Minister (103), Austin Chamberlain (89) Asquith (89), Wellington (115), Garibaldi (118), party of patriots (119), revolution (119), armies (124), navies (124), political parties (124), Empire (145), local authorities (145), Protectionist (145), aristocrats (80), etc.
3. Death and Disintegration Set:

tears, sorrow, grief, tremble, awful, fear, dismal, malignant, gloomy, sinister, presentiments,
fierceness, tremor, moan, tumult, dead, atrocities, misery, melancholy, depression, gloom,
lonely, (horrid) mess, solitary, isolation, emptiness, catastrophe, suicide, dissolution, rage,
hell, damned, suffering, tortures, pessimistic, chaos, illusion, ignorance, despair, irrational,
unhappy, malignant, etc.

4. Mental Process Set:

malice, enchantment, painful, passion, unhappy, love, sentiments, emotions, vision,
exquisite, quaint, sprightly, irritation, valour, silence, listlessness, depression, joy, curiosity,
pleasure, gloom, numbness, etc.

[Note: Since these words are recurrent, page numbers are not given.]

5. Feminist Set:

girls, (nothing) hard, permanent, satisfactory (13); atrocities (17), bullying (17), sentimental
(16), complacently (29), good behavior (37), calling, music, play with children, domestic
duties (56), maternity, illusions (56), no political instinct (56), beautiful (66), prostitutes
(66), stupid (96), childless (105), masculine acquirements (141), lack of training, native
incapacity (142), simpler (191), thick-skinned (196), masculine conception of life (197),
feminine point of view (197), beastly passions and brute strength (238), finer (238), vainer
(275), lack of self-confidence (275), dislike of her own sex (275), no sense of honour (275),
no pursuit of truth, no respect for facts (278), essentially feminine (278), etc.

The ‘Nature Set’ is the most important lexical set, for it not only contextualizes the
narrative by providing geographical setting– the sea and the island for the action, but
contributing the central thematic concern of the novel– the existential need for the well-
being of Mother Earth in the context of the exploitative imperialism as nature is the cradle
of human civilization and interdependence of human and natural world, the vastness,
eternity and mystery of Nature in comparison with the smallness, insignificance and
evanescence of human life, and above all, the power of nature to influence the course of
events and even to strike a cruel blow indiscriminately to human life. We may consider the
following assertions: ‘The wind at night blowing over the hills and woods was purer and
fresher than the wind by day, and the earth, robbed of detail, more mysterious than the
earth coloured and divided by roads and fields’ (100); ‘Before them they beheld an
immense space– … A river ran across the plain, … They felt themselves very small …
(120); ‘Hewet and Rachel had long ago reached , … looking down into the sea, … the
vast expanse of land gave them a sensation …; here the view was one of infinite sun-dried
earth, earth pointed in pinnacles, heaped in vast barriers, … earth chequered by day and
night, and *partitioned into different lands, where famous cities were founded …*’ (194);
‘Does it ever seem to you, Terence, that the world is composed of *vast blocks of matter
and that we’re nothing but patches of light—* …?’ (276).

The main characters glimpse into the world of the South American jungle, the
setting for the declaration of love between Terence and Rachel and realize Nature’s
insensitivity towards and its interference with human life. As they go up the river, the
chaos of the jungle undermines their sense of the natural world as an ordered and
purposive setting for their own lives. St. John Hirst voices this concern when he says,
‘These trees get on one’s nerves— it’s all so crazy. God’s undoubtedly mad. What sane
person could have conceived a wilderness like this, and peopled it with apes and alligators’
(260). All the characters are overwhelmed by this sense of human vulnerability to the
hostile forces of nature. No wonder then, Rachel’s death by heat, soon after their sojourn
up the river, proves this thesis. The ‘Nature Set’, thus, emerges as a structural necessity in
the text.

Another instance of the cruel intrusion of nature into the life of Rachel is the storm
which causes the ship, *Euphrosyne*, to vacillate violently and causes the fateful collision
between Richard Dalloway and Rachel resulting in his kissing her. The tumult in nature
causes tumult within her. Soon she falls in love with Terence and this leads to inner
realization of truth— of her deep connection with the primordial forces of nature.
‘Inextricably mixed in dreamy confusion, her mind seemed to enter into communion, to be
delightfully expanded and combined with … *the spirit of the sea, …* Like a ball of
thistledown it *kissed the sea, rose, kissed it again*, and thus rising and kissing passed
finally out of sight’ (29). It was the storm and the sea that awaken her inner being to the
highest point, enabling her to undergo enlargement of her soul and spiritual powers, which,
in due course of time, alas, overshadow her love for Terence. Thus, Rachel’s character
becomes a symbol of unity and harmony between the human and the natural forces.

The ‘Urban Set’ is superimposed upon the ‘Nature Set’ to expose the modern world
and its materialistic civilization— its severance from nature, indulgence in power and pelf
as embodied in Mr. Dalloway, its material pursuit to the utter disregard of art, music,
beauty and cravings of human heart, and above all, its systems and institutions, instead of
fulfilling the needs of the individual, crush the human spirit and force it into acquiescence
and silence—echoing the theme of silence. The ‘Urban Set’ reveals Woolf’s genuine civilizational concerns and the urgent need to rectify and arrest its deterioration. Her scathing remarks on the world of London, the microcosm of modern civilization, illustrate this: ‘In the streets of London where beauty goes unregarded, eccentricity must pay the penalty’ (3); ‘The shooting motor cars, … the thundering trays, the jingling hansom, and little black broughams, made her think of the world she lived in’ (5); ‘… beholding it [London] as a circumscribed mound, eternally burnt, eternally scarred’ (11); ‘He [Mr. Dalloway] seemed to come from the humming oily centre of the machine where the polished rods are sliding, and the pistons thumping …’ (38); ‘This reticence—this isolation—that’s what the matter with modern life!’ (66); ‘Amiable and modest, … how mediocre they all were, and capable of insipid cruelty to one another!’ (123).

The sub-sets of ‘music’, ‘dance’ and ‘books’ add thematic motifs to the text. In the materialistic world, arts and beauty have no value: ‘… who cared for life or beauty’ (123); ‘I should like to stop all the painting and writing and music …’ (36). Rachel is an inspired musician whose talent goes unnoticed and even suppressed. Her music ‘just seems to say all the things one can’t say oneself’ (153), and, when alone, she gives vent to her pent up feelings by playing piano: ‘Absorbed by her music she accepted her lot very complacently, blazing into indignation perhaps once a fortnight, and subsiding …’ (29). The reference to books by authors of both classical and modern times pertaining to literature, history, philosophy, sciences and law not only throw light on the erudition and intellectual sophistication of the characters, but they are projected as the means of upliftment and progress of mankind. Rachel was nurtured on books like ‘Cowper’s Letters’ and Gibbon’s The History of Roman Empire. But it is Woolf’s postmodernist refutation of the Enlightenment project of progress through education, the grand narrative for the emancipation of mankind by inculcating virtues of reason and intellect at the cost of inner needs of the individual, which is expressed in these statements: ‘It’s not Gibbon exactly’, Helen pondered. ‘It’s the facts of life, I think– d’ you see what I mean?’ (150); ‘She groped for knowledge in old books, and found it in repulsive chunks, but she did not naturally care for books …’ (27). Woolf, as a modernist, appeals for a radically revised programme for human emancipation by complete overhaul of the systems and attitudes, including patriarchy.
But Woolf’s invective against the British Empire and its politics is most articulate in the text of VO: ‘… itching for gold’ (81); ‘As vision of English history, King following King, Prime Minister after Prime Minister and Law after Law had come over him. … He ran his mind along the line of conservative policy, … and gradually enclosed, … and caught things, enormous chunks of the habitable globe’ (41-42); ‘… how I’d have liked to be one of those colonists, to cut down trees and make laws and all that …’ (176). The theme of England’s colonization of the world, which, if taken to the metaphorical level, amounts, for Woolf, to colonization of human spirit by materialistic forces imprisoning and destroying it resulting in ‘certain dryness of the soul’ (84).

The ‘Death and Disintegration Set’ aptly captures the brooding mood of the text, which is in consonance with the tragic ending of the novel. And also, it portrays the world as hostile, full of strife and divisions, death and calamity: ‘The straw and the patch swam again and again behind the tremulous medium of a great welling tear, and the tear rose and fell and dropped into the river’ (4); ‘We are suffering the tortures of the damned’, said Helen’ (39); ‘… the hotel was inhabited by bodies without souls’ (107).

Though the novel has the journey motif, it does not deal with adventure, heroism or action on the part of the heroine or the other voyagers. Greater emphasis is laid on the psychic aspects of the heroine’s development from innocence to experience rather than on the social milieu. Rachel’s sensitivity, her innate powers of communion with the natural world, her capacity to feel pleasure and pain beyond normal proportions in moments of reverie, her soulful music which entrances all in the party, her intuitive understanding and her capacious sympathies, and above all, her capacity for transcendence and spiritual attainment through love– make her a formidable figure in comparison with the other characters in the novel. The ‘Mental Set’ emphasizes this aspect of inner being of the central character that elevates the discourse of the novel to a higher level and links Rachel and the text with Woolf’s later novels.

The ‘Feminist Set’ provides another streak of engagement with the contemporary issues when the ‘suffragette’ movement in England was at its peak at the time Woolf was writing the novel. Woolf never let herself be called a feminist, but feminist issues inform her novelistic art. In VO, the conventional ideas about women, their oppression and upbringing are dramatized through the central character. One of the main themes in the novel is the nature and aims of upbringing and education of women. (Helen thinks, ‘…
there must be something wrong in this confusion between politics and kissing politicians and that an elder person ought to be able to help’ (74)). This in turn leads Woolf to a consideration of larger questions about the structure of British society and the form of its politics. Rachel feels tremendously oppressed by the narrowness of her world (‘Absorbed by her music, she accepted her lot very complacently, blazing into indignation perhaps once a fortnight, and subsiding …’ (29); ‘No one feels— one does anything but hurt, I tell you, Helen, the world’s bad. It’s an agony living, wanting—’ (249.)) At its most extreme, the exploitation of women involves those ‘terrors and agonies … Prostitutes … Men kissing one …’ (202) which Rachel refers to Terence. Moreover, Terence Hewet, for all his claims to be a new and liberated kind of novelist, and Rachel’s lover who maintains that she will be ‘free, like the wind or the sea’ (231) after marriage, in a telling scene, shortly after their engagement, orders Rachel to stop playing piano and answer the letters of congratulations sent to them by friends and acquaintances in the hotel: I’ve no objection to nice simple tunes— indeed, I find them very helpful to my literary composition … (276); ‘… I ought to be writing my book, and you ought to be answering these’ (279.)– which amount to belittling her musical talent and assigning ‘feminine duty’ to her. Hence, Rachel’s death makes sense considering the compromise her autonomy of spirit would have had to make if she were united with Terence in marriage. Woolf, thus, rejects the conventional compromise formula– the heroine marrying the hero at the end as in Jane Austen’s novels– and prefers to frustrate the plot and also readers’ expectations, in favour of Rachel's feminist rejection of this world.

2.2.3.1.2 Collocations and Sets:

Meaning of a word is often modified by the context in which it is used. Leech (1983:7-23) identifies six ways in which the conceptual meaning of a word is modified by the contextual factors. He broke the general ‘sense’ of a term into seven types of meaning: conceptual, connotative, social, affective, reflective, collocative and thematic. Literary writers have exploited the vulnerability of a word to its context, creating a fertile area for stylistic exploration.

Collocation refers to the characteristic behavior of words to habitually co-occur with certain other words. The meaning of a lexical item is defined with reference to its neighbouring items, i.e. by its co-text. The target item can have contiguous (old+man (adj+N)) or associated collocates (‘herds of cows’). The span of collocates may extend to a
clause, sentence or even beyond. The expected and predictable collocates give the
denotative meaning of an item, whereas the less predictable and unexpected items produce
the connotative meaning.

Woolf exploits the multiplicity of meanings of lexical items by placing ordinary,
commonplace words in a variety of contexts. The words analyzed below acquire thematic
force underlying the text through their contextualization. They are: light, curtain and room.

1. Light/Darkness:

1 They were now moving steadily down the river, passing the dark shapes at anchor, and London was
a swarm of lights with a pale yellow canopy dropping above it. There were the lights of the great
theatres, the lights of the long streets, lights that indicated huge squares of domestic comfort, lights
that hung high in the air. … It seemed dreadful that the town should blaze for ever in the same spot,
… beholding it as a circumscribed mound, eternally burnt, eternally scarred (10-11).

2 A pair of wicker armchairs by the fireside invited one to warm one’s hands …; a great lamp swung
above the table– the kind of lamp which makes the light of civilization across dark fields to one
walking in the country (12).

3 One thinks of all we’ve done, and our navies, and the people in India and Africa, and how we’ve
gone on century after century, sending out boys from little country villages– and of men like you,
Dick, and it makes one feel as if one couldn’t bear not to be English! Think of the light burning over
the House, Dick! When I stood on deck just now I seemed to see it. It’s what one means by London
(42).

4 Helen’s words hewed down great blocks which had stood there always, and the light which came, it
was cold. … By this new light she saw her life for the first time a creeping hedged-in-thing, driven
cautiously between high walls, here turned aside, there plunged in darkness, made dull and crippled
for over– her life that was the only chance she had– a thousand words and actions became plain to
her (72).

5 Oh, something about bubbles– auras– what d’ you call ’em? You can’t see my bubble; I can’t see
yours; all we see of each other is a speck; like the wick in the middle of that flame. The flame goes
about with us everywhere; it’s not ourselves exactly, but what we feel; the world is short, or people
mainly; all kinds of people (198).

6 … the other people with their aimless movements and their unknown lives were disturbing, so that
he longed for the empty darkness. The first thing he looked for when he stepped out of the hall door
was the light of the Ambrose’s villa– a certain light apart from the others higher up the hill was
their light, he was considerably reassured. … There was no moon, but myriads of stars, and lights
were anchored up and down in the dark waves of earth all round him. He had meant to go back, but
the single light of the Ambrose’s villa had now become three separate lights; and he was tempted to go on. … He left the shadow and stepped into the radius of the light, and then … (169-70).

7 The time passed without her noticing it. When it was dark she was drawn to the window by the lights of the hotel. A light that went in and out was the light in Terence’s window; … (210).

8 ‘Does it ever seem to you, Terence, that the world is composed entirely of vast blocks of matter, and that we’re nothing but patches of light– she looked at the soft spots of the sun wavering over the carpet …– like that?’ (276).

In example (1), the word light refers to the glittering lights of London city– ‘a swarm of lights’ as if ‘the town should blaze forever in the same spot’, instantaneously connecting them to the burning Hell ‘a circumscribed mound, eternally burnt, eternally scarred’. The double contextualization of the word– one as the emblem of modern materialistic civilization, London, and the other, the Biblical myth of Inferno– instantly connect the two points of time– the past and the present– which bring out the meaning of the context forcefully and vividly. The unequivocal relation established between Hell and the modern world reflects Woolf’s indictment of the latter for its mindless indulgence in materialistic pursuit. This is an example of ‘lexical compression’ which Woolf uses in her novels, compressing multiple and profound meanings in a single word. Examples (2) and (3), again, evoke the context of imperialism in which ‘the light of civilization’– the white man’s burden– is carried to the dark corners of the world for illuminating them. Example (4) presents the word as the light of knowledge and awareness gained by Rachel about her constricted life after hearing Helen’s words. Example (5) equates the word flame with inner spirit which remains invisible to the bare eyes, but goes with the human being wherever he/she goes. Examples (6) and (7) present light in conjunction with love and happiness when Hewet and Rachel are drawn towards each other’s dwelling place instinctively distinguishing the places by the lights of love. Example (8) presents the word in the philosophical context, as a symbol of transience and instability of human life as against ‘the vast blocks of matter’ that remain forever, highlighting the preoccupation of Rachel about the nature of the universe and of human existence.

The density of the images of light and darkness in the text echo Conrad’s use of the same in Heart of Darkness with similar, multiple connotative associations.

2. Curtain/Veil:

1 Lights slid across the uncurtained window. … The chuckling and hissing of water … the steward … had to balance himself as he drew the curtain (9).
2. The misery of the poor and— (he hesitated and pitched over) “Love!”
Upon that word he lowered his voice; it was a word that seemed to unveil the skies for Rachel (59).

3. Half-drawn up upon the beach lay an equal number of Spanish galleons, unmanned, for the country was still a virgin land behind a veil (79).

4. They were very tired, and curtained from each other by the darkness (252).

5. ‘What’s so detestable in this country’, she exclaimed, ‘is the blue— always blue sky and blue sea. It’s like a curtain— all the things one wants are on the other side of it. I want to know what’s going on behind it. I hate these divisions, don’t you, Terence? One person all in the dark about another person (285).

6. The curtain which had been drawn between them for so long vanished immediately (333).

7. The windows were uncurtained, and showed the moon, and a long silver pathway upon the surface of the waves (334).

The word curtain is made to reverberate with the profound meaning of unity and disunity, by using it metaphorically in different contexts. In example (1), the word is used in its literal, denotative sense of windows without curtains. But in example (2), the word unveil is used metaphorically for opening the door of freedom of spirit for Rachel, who, hitherto, was feeling suffocated in her circumscribed world. Example (3) presents the island, Santa Marina, as a virgin land still uncorrupted and unexploited by imperialism—the word ‘curtain’ distinguishing the ‘pure land’ from the ‘impure’ hands of imperialism. Example (4) presents darkness as a curtain separating the two lovers—Rachel and Hewet. In example (5), the curtain becomes a symbol for division or disunity between man and man, man and woman and Rachel’s longing for the other side of the curtain— for harmony and oneness. Example (6) presents the unity achieved between Rachel and Hewet after her death, impossible when she was alive, by metaphorically drawing the curtain apart and example (7) poetically presents the uncurtained windows, and the sight of the moon and the silver pathway on the waves suggesting liberation or Rachel’s voyage out from the confinement of this world into a world beautiful and free from misery.

3. Room:

1. By virtue of the piano, and a mess of books on the floor, Rachel considered it her room, and there she would sit for hours playing very difficult music, reading a little German, or a little English when the mood took her, and doing— as at this moment— absolutely nothing (25).

2. Rooms, she knew, became more like worlds than rooms at the age of twenty four. Her judgment was correct, and when we shut the door Rachel entered an enchanted place, where the poets sang and
things fell into their right proportions (112).

3 She called up before her eyes a vision of the drawing-room at home; it was a large oblong room. … It was a room without definite character, being neither typically and openly hideous, nor strenuously artistic, nor really comfortable (198).

4 I want to see England there– London there– all sorts of people– why shouldn’t one? Why should one be shut up all by oneself in a room? (285).

5 Oh, it was absurd, when one thought of it, to sit here in a little room suffering and caring. What did anything matter? Rachel, a tiny creature, lay ill beneath him, and here in his little room he suffered on her account (326).

6 It was true that she saw Helen and saw her room, but everything had become very pale and semi-transparent. … The room also had an odd power of expanding and though she pushed her voice out– it became a bird and flew away … (328).

7 He saw the room and the garden, and the trees moving in the air, they could go on without her; she could die (328).

The word room also has profound implications for the central theme– the voyage out of life of a young girl, Rachel, for societal reasons which constrict the life of a woman in the patriarchal society. The room is a symbol for loss of freedom and identity for Rachel. Example (1) presents Rachel’s powerful inner spirit confined to the room– to playing piano and reading books and to doing nothing else. In example (2), the room for Rachel becomes an enchanted place where her spirit finds consolation and comfort. Example (3) describes Rachel’s drawing-room at Richmond where she lived with her spinster aunts, which had no definite character. Example (4) directly presents the room as confinement or prison. Example (5) converts Rachel’s room into a little sick room full of suffering for both the lovers. Example (6) presents the room, after Rachel’s death, as melting and becoming semi-transparent– the solid losing its shape and colour, and metaphorically, life disappearing from it– symbol of Rachel’s voyage out of life, raising Woolf’s concern about ‘Now is life very solid or shifting? I am haunted by the two … forever; will last forever… Also it is transitory, flying, diaphanous. I shall pass like a cloud on the waves’ (WD, 1969, 141). In example (7), the room becomes a symbol of eternity, whereas its inhabitant, Rachel, dies and disappears into non-existence.

2.2.3.1.3 Word Structure:

Woolf appears to have consciously chosen a combination of monosyllabic words with capital investment of profound meanings and polysyllabic, Latinate words which give
the impression of deliberately cultivated intellectuality in her novels. Woolf, the writer of long reviews for magazines on a range of issues, must have been aware of her felicity with the large range of vocabulary at her disposal and must have discovered the stylistic value of these in her fiction. Since she was a conscious artist, she uses polysyllabic words to blend with the atmosphere of intellectual sophistication and erudition of her characters in her texts. This section illustrates different kinds of polysyllabic words used in the text of VO with their morphological make-up.

A) Nouns:

unpopularity (3), eccentricity (4), embarrassment (8), conciseness (8), fierceness (9), accumulations (10), atrocities (17), reflections (17), correspondents (31), rearrangements (32), probability (33), cleanliness (40), contrariness (46), earnestness (50), untidiness (109), amiability (113), insincerity (113), literalness (113), neatness (125), assiduity (216), kindliness (216), forgetfulness (323), etc.

The morphological structure of the nouns may be shown as:

un-pop-ular-ity, literal-ness, kind-li-ness

B) Adjectives:

unfriendly (3), unreflecting (14), unplumbed (15), unspeakable (23), unexampled (25), inexplicable (28), unconventional (31), untidy (33), imperceptible (34), invisible (60), unmoored (63), inestimable (66), inscrutable (84), flirtatious (87), uncurtained (90), unselfishness (113), indistinguishable (125), indescribable (123), unintellectual (185), inexpressive (216), etc.

The morphological structure of these could be illustrated as:

un-friend-ly, in-estim-able, un-curtain-ed

C) Adverbs:

gloomily (7), fastidiously (9), instinctively (8), peevishly (15), emphatically (16), irreproachably (18), compassionately (23), irretrievably (28), confidentially (32), punctually (33), marvellously (33), sententiously (43), enthusiastically (45), splendidly (49), impulsively (51), inexplicably (51), convulsively (60), ingeniously (71), authoritatively (75), obsequiously (86), voraciously (90), solicitously (103), laboriously (139), ostentatiously (177), etc.

The morphological divisions of some of these are:

Instinct-ive-ly, ir-reproach-able-ly
D) The Verb **seemed**:

Another kind of verb, which recurs in the text, is *seemed*—the quasi-modal verb which contributes to the mood of mystery and strangeness the characters experience on a strange, exotic island. The non-committal attitude of both the narrator and the characters towards the things described keeps the meaning patterns fluid and open-ended. A few examples are:

1. Rachel **seemed** to get on very well with her father—much better … (25).
2. Life **seemed** to hold infinite possibilities she had never guessed at (67).
3. These small and worthless objects **seemed** to her to represent human lives (245).
4. But the shadow and the woman **seemed** to be eternally fixed above her (313).

E) Compound Words:

Compounding as a form of word formation is stylistically exploited by Woolf in *VO*, as in other novels. These are, in fact, word-complexes, which make for compact semantic texture. These add to the nominalization of the syntax. A few examples are:

- mud-coloured (4), egg-shells (6), carefully-finished (6), plate-glass (6), large-eyed (7),
- yellow-lighted (11), green-sided (20), long-tailed (24), sea-sick (25), hen-like (28),
- duck-weed (35), brass-bound (45), ring-doves (47), square-tipped (47), thimble-pated (73),
- sea-voyaging (79), wax-like (82), heavy-petalled (85), weather-beaten (102), bread-crums (122), scissor-like (129), coat-scuttles (137), figure-skating (152), canary-coloured (182),
- square-tipped (191), thick-skinned (196), claret-coloured (215), slate-grey (242), half-hearing (28)
- half-seeing (28), half-written (43), half-raised (62), half-conceding (79), half-drawn (79),
- half-moved (84), half-choked (274), half-closed (297), half-stifled (323), half-voluntary (332), etc.

The compounds made out of *half-* as the first particle also add to the sense of incomprehensibility of the situation, like the verb *seemed*.

F) Lexical Experimentation:

Woolf expresses her dissatisfaction with conventional language by experimenting with them by way of conversion, affixation or odd formation as shown below:

- stonily (3), courteseyed (v) (7), mournfully (adv) (7), uncurtained (9), heartiness (13),
- unlicked (adj) (16), confidences (16), unpacking (22), horridly (22), harshness (23),
cheapening (adj) (38), contrariness (46), moonrises (83), vainest (88), houseless (adj) (103),
untwirled (115), behindhand (122), gingerly (125), benignantly (132), whirlers (145),
galloped (152), unbordered (154), meaningly (adv) (177)

2.2.3.1.4 Grammatical Words as Style Markers:

The lexical and motif patterning that is so important in the larger design of the text of VO is not restricted, however, to items that are lexical in the narrower linguistic sense. Even items from relatively closed grammatical classes are a possible source for exploitation in creating subtle effects. Woolf is one of the writers who use both open-class and closed-system lexical items such as pronouns, articles and conjunctions creatively—that makes a difference in her texts. Woolf (CE, II, 1966:249) remarks about ‘words’, ‘It is true that they are much less bound by ceremony and convention than we are… They are highly democratic too; they believe that one word is as good as another… They hang together in sentences, in paragraphs, sometimes for whole pages at a time…’

In VO, Woolf makes use of two classes of pronouns– the generic one and thing to carry not only the thematic burden of the text alongside the lexical sets and collocations, but to involve the readers and make them an integral part of the narrative transmission, thus fulfilling Halliday’s (1981) ‘interpersonal function’.

A) Indefinite Pronoun One:

The use of one in the text generalizes or universalizes the feelings and the experiences of the characters and the narrator as if the world is one unified whole and certain experiences are common to all. However, the theme of chaos and disunity in the human world nullifies these assumptions and the characters, to their dismay, discover this truth in the course of events as, for instance, Rachel discovers a ‘curtain’ between her and Terence: ‘It’s like a curtain– all the things one wants are on the other side of it. I want to know what’s going on behind it. I hate these divisions. Don’t you, Terence?’; ‘One person all in the dark about another person’ (285). The preponderance of one in the text, from discoursal perspective, represents Woolf’s aspiration for oneness and unity in the universe. A few examples are cited below:

1 Why, if one sewed one’s finger to the bone, one would have one’s work undone the next time they went to the laundry (21).

2 ‘Love’s an odd thing, isn’t it, making one’s heart beat’ (128).
3 That was the strange thing, that one did not know where one was going, or what one wanted, and followed blindly … (297).

However, Woolf does not appear to have acquired control over the use of one in VO, as she does so in other novels (MD, TL, Ws).

B) Indefinite Pronoun Thing:

The fact that Woolf was convinced of the immense meaning-potential of the generic term thing is clear when the voyage out of London was to unravel ‘The sense of untapped resources, things to say as yet unsaid’ and Terence declares, ‘I want to write a novel about Silence’, he said, ‘the things people don’t say’ (204). The word, despite its preponderance, is used in thematically important positions and it gives rise to multiple meanings in its contexts of use. A few important utterances where the generic term thing occupies the central place are:

1 ‘We politicians doubtless seem to you (…), a gross commonplace set of people; but we see both sides; … we do our best to get a grass of things. Now you artists find things in a mess, shrug aside their shoulders, turn aside to their visions, … and leave things in a mess (36).

2 She was overcome with awe that things should exist at all … She forgot that she had any fingers to raise. The things that existed were so immense and so desolate … (115).

3 He cursed himself for making believe for a minute that things were different from what they are (324).

For instance, in example (1), the politician, Richard Dalloway, talks about the difference between politicians and artists and how the former understand and serve the world and thus, have utilitarian value, whereas the latter are an irresponsible lot living in their world of illusions abdicating their fundamental duty as citizens of their country. If the world is given in the hands of the artists, they would leave it in a mess. Thus, the artists have no utilitarian value in the scheme of the modern materialistic world and are parasites living off the benevolence of the State. In this way, enormous amount of meaning is incorporated in the generic pronoun thing in the text and the reader is compelled to extract the presuppositions and implications based on the linguistic environment surrounding the word.

2.2.3.1.5 Proper Nouns as Style Markers:

Woolf appears to have inherited Swiftian tone and Dickens' method of naming the characters with non-human attributes in order to express her disgust at the human nature
gone pervert and dehumanized behind the veneer of civilization. In Woolf’s scale of values, the deterioration of human beings appears to be in direct proportion to the rise of materialistic civilization. We may consider the statement: ‘The insect-like figures of Dalloways, Ambroses and Vinraces were also derided both from the extreme smallness of their persons and the doubt … as to whether they were really live creatures or only lumps on the rigging’ (78). The following names with titles of Mr. and Mrs. attached to them appear queer figures in the world of VO:

Mr. Pepper, Mrs. Chailey, Mr. Vinrace, Mr. Hunt, Mr. Sprules, Mr. Grabb, Lord Gleanaway, Mr. Grice, Lady Ditchling, Sir Broadly, Captain Cobbold, Miss Warrington, Arthur Venning, Perrott, Mrs. Paley, Mary Umpleby, Sir Harley Lethbridge, Dakyns, Truefit, Pinwells, Lady Maud, Lady Barborough, Mr. Flushing, Mr. Parry, Arthur Balfour, Nethermost Pit, Mr. Carter, Mrs. Macquoid, Hodgkin, van Eyck, Mr. Forrest, Bailey, Lee, Morley, etc.

2.2.3.2 Syntactic Analysis:

The syntax of VO exhibits Woolf’s dissatisfaction with conventional syntax and her spirit of adventurism, which eventually came to characterize her experimental fiction in the variations and modifications she brings about in the conventional linear structures with repetitive, parallelistic structures, parentheticals, structures with thematic focus, use of modality and so on in order to give herself the flexibility to portray ‘Reality dwelling in what one saw and felt, but did not talk about …’ (29). The syntactic structures she evolved for the deceptively traditional novel, VO, become the tour de force of her fiction in general.

Some of the highly motivated syntactic structures are discussed below.

2.2.3.2.1 Nominal Groups (NGs):

Woolf builds syntactic structures in her novels on an elaboration of Nominal Groups (NGs, for short). Traditionally, they are called Noun Phrases (NPs) which realize the S, O, C and A elements in the sentence. Since the syntax of the novel is one of complexity, the NGs contribute to it to a great extent. Because more than single lexical elements, Woolf uses NGs, that too, complex, elaborate NGs that provide a rich linguistic texture to the text. The elaboration of NGs is done through left-branching and right-branching modification of the Head word. The characteristic internal structure of an NG is: the obligatory Head Element (H) and the optional element of modifier (Modifier (M)) before the H and Qualifier (Q) after it. The modifier elements constitute left-branching of
NG and the qualifier elements constitute right-branching.

Woolf makes use of compact syntactic structures deliberately and the compactness in them is achieved by long NGs with numerous pre-modifier and qualifier elements. The following table illustrates this point:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>P. No.</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>Q</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>the tremulous</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>of a great welling tear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>the</td>
<td>ghost</td>
<td>of a roar of laughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>48-49</td>
<td>a queer remote</td>
<td>expression</td>
<td>of complete absorption and anxious</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>impersonal</td>
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<td>satisfaction</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>the extreme</td>
<td>strangeness</td>
<td>of what had happened</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>intense</td>
<td>contemplation</td>
<td>of the immaculate Gibbon</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>imitation</td>
<td>of the voluptuous dreamy dance of</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>an Indian maiden dancing before her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rajah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>an unusually vivid</td>
<td>consciousness</td>
<td>of herself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>the motionless</td>
<td>gaze</td>
<td>of those removed from each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>inexpressive</td>
<td>folds</td>
<td>of the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>the mysterious</td>
<td>voices</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>whispering</td>
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[M – modifier, H – Head Word, Q – Qualifier]

These examples illustrate the heavy embedding within an NG and they carry the heavy semantic burden in the syntax. They make for extreme compactness of meaning and prolonged syntactic elaboration simultaneously. Linguistically, the constituents of NGs are reduced clauses as in example (1) (((the medium is tremulous), (it is great), (it is welling), (it is a tear))), which make for extreme compression of meaning and tight texture of the text.

The structure of the NGs can be analyzed by using Halliday’s (1994) rank and delicacy scale as below:

1 intense contemplation of the immaculate Gibbon
   H : N
   M : epithet
   Q : [PP (preposition+determiner+epithet+N)]

This example illustrates the recursiveness of NGs and clauses within each other resulting in extreme complexity of syntax and sense. These also illustrate the nominalization process used in which the lexical elements serve as modifiers and qualifiers.
2.2.3.2.2 Clause Structures:

Woolf makes use of the conventional, linear narrative sentence in the text of VO maintaining the word order and the grace of well-formed sentences. She makes use of the narrative past tense which is in consonance with the dominant omniscient point of view of the narrator. However, the researcher finds a sense of hesitation about and criticism of the conventional sentence in the text, as may be seen in this sentence:

‘Of course, one sees all that’, she thought, meaning that one sees that he is big and burly, and has a great booming voice, and a fist and a will of his own; ‘but …’ here she slipped into a fine analysis of him which is best represented by one word, ‘sentimental’, by which she meant that he was never simple and honest about his feelings’ (17).

The passage which presents the thoughts of Helen about her brother-in-law, Rachel’s father, is wantonly tampered with by the narrator in placing the actually continuous direct speech/utterances at great distances– ‘Of course, one sees all that’, ‘but …’, and ‘sentimental’, interfered with by the flat and uninspiring reporting by the omniscient narrator. In the later novels, she would discard such a syntactic style and would write ‘one of those sentences which gives me intense pleasure’ (Diary5:357).

In VO, the most common type of sentence structure is the paratactic sentence as superordinate clause with embedded paratactic and hypotactic structures, which, in common parlance, are known as compound and complex sentences respectively. Such sentences are flexible enough to bring in complexities and qualifications of meaning required for the presentation of characters’ thoughts, ideas or nuances of description and argumentation by the narrator.

Here, one sentence is analyzed to illustrate Woolf’s syntax as used in VO:

1 The morning was hot, and the exercise of reading left her mind contracting and expanding like the mainspring of a clock (114).

The sentence contains a paratactic superordinate structure in which finite and non-finite clauses are embedded. It can be shown diagrammatically as:

```
A

a1          a2

b1          b2
```
[Where A is a paratactical superordinate clause; a are paratactical clauses embedded within it and b are hypotactic clauses.]

a₁ – exhibits SVC structure,
a₂ – exhibits SVOA structure,
b₁ – exhibits non-finite V-ing clause in A position in a₂
b₂ – exhibits non-finite V-ing clause in A position in a₂

The syntax is obviously straightforward, with the SVC and SVOA structures conjoined by and. But the typical Woolfian aspect can be seen in the choice of lexis and imagery– in which reading is conceived as an exercise of mind and Rachel’s mind, which disliked reading, responded to reading and the heat like the spring of a clock, expanding and contracting. Woolf, as she matured as an artist, self-consciously cultivated and developed such ‘live’ sentences which capture, in addition to providing information, the mood and tone of the character’s mind.

2.2.3.2.3 Non-finite Present Participle Clauses:

Woolf’s preference for present participle clauses particularly in adverbial positions in all her novels is noticeable in VO. She appears to have discovered the virtues of these for the purposes of brevity, fluidity, spontaneity and iconicity in narrative syntax. However, the present participle constructions can not be said to possess values inherent in them, unlike, for instance, passive constructions. But Woolf’s use of these in their contexts of use makes enormous sense in the portrayal of mental states and considering her techniques of narration.

In VO, as in the later novels, Woolf tends to use them specifically in two contexts: to dramatize the thoughts of the characters or of the narrator, i.e. as part of the narrative technique, and as spatial deictics indicating the place or position of the characters. Moreover, she tends to use them in close proximity, and hence, their stronger appeal.

A few examples which dramatize the thoughts of the characters/narrator are:

1 The embankment juts out in angles here and there, like pulpits; instead of preachers, however, small boys occupy them, dangling strings, dropping pebbles, or launching wads of paper for a cruise (3-4).
2 He glanced at them all, stooping and swaying and gesticulating round the table-cloth (123).
3 … and then again the profound and reasonless law asserted itself, moulding them all to its liking, making and destroying (249).
A few non-finite present participles which function as deictics are:

1. ‘What a dear little room!’ she said, looking round (49).

2. ‘I’d like awfully to lend you books’, he said, buttoning his gloves, and rising from his seat (141).

3. *Raising* herself and *sitting up*, she too realized Helen’s soft body … (268).

The critics like David Daiches (1942) and David Lodge (1966) have commented on her use of participles. Daiches (1942:72) observes, ‘Her persistent use of present participles of action … are used to allow the author to remind the reader of the character’s position, without interrupting the thought stream’. David Lodge (1960:86) is very critical of this aspect when he observes, ‘The verb-participle construction establishes a divorce between cerebration and physical action which is not as normative as Virginia Woolf’s fiction implies. We do not always think of eternity, while serving potatoes; sometimes we just think of serving potatoes. Virginia Woolf’s characters never do’. He finds it an important limitation of her art. In this event, Lodge opines, the very frequency of occurrence would be seen as damaging, contributing to an overall effect of monotonous sameness in the syntax of the text.

With due respect to their scholarly views, the researcher feels that while the views of David Daiches might be accepted, that of David Lodge’s appear out of context for the simple reason that, like T. S. Eliot and James Joyce, Woolf brings together the trivial and the profound in moments of epiphany and reveals the potential of the trivial to become noble and transcendental. So, there is no divorce between ‘cerebration and physical action’, nor the effect of them in the syntax creates monotony in her novels. On the contrary, they inject freshness, dynamism and vivacity, like sprung rhythm, in the otherwise lifeless conventional language of the past.

### 2.2.3.2.4 Use of for and Its Implications:

Woolf appears to have consciously chosen, like the present participle clauses, the causative *for* instead of *because, due to* etc. in all her novels in order to reveal her worldview. In her novels, the universe as such is the object of observation and the interdependence of nature and human world and the changing dynamics of time form the subject matter in her novels. In the text of *VO*, inexplicable universe, unexpected fatality and meek submission of humans to their fate– ‘… this theory … which made chaos triumphant, things happening for no reason at all and everyone groping about in illusion
and ignorance’ (209)– are expressed through the semi-causative ‘for’, since it also is made to appear redundant by its conspicuous presence. A few examples are:

1. For so, too, would they be forgotten (70).
2. Rachel followed, for it seemed possible that each new person might remove the mystery which burdened her (239).
3. There were immense intervals or chasms, for things still had the power to appear visibly before her … (327).

2.2.3.2.5 Repetitive/Parallelistic Structures:

Verbal repetition is a kind of parallelism or ‘obtrusive regularity’ as Leech (1969:73) terms it. Verbal repetition in conjunction with grammatical repetition in the broader context of syntax forms the basis of its categorization in the schemes of rhetoric. Besides lexical repetition, Leech (1969) mentions a kind of irregular repetition which he calls free repetition. Leech (1969:77) defines ‘free repetition’ as ‘the exact copying of some previous part of text whether word, phrase or even sentence’. Traditional rhetoric distinguishes between two categories of free repetition: that of immediate repetition or epizeuxis and intermittent repetition called ploce.

2.2.3.2.5.1 Verbal Repetition:

Woolf makes use of free repetition of both types– immediate and intermittent– for the expressive purposes of emphasis, emotional intensity and espousal of character perspective on the issues concerning them. The multiple repetitions of expressions in the text contribute to the insistent or persuasive style of the text. A few examples are cited here:

1. ‘Lies! Lies! Lies!’ exclaimed the mistress indignantly as she ran up to the deck (22).
2. ‘I’m happy, I’m happy, I’m happy’, she repeated, ‘I love everyone. I’m happy’ (136).
3. … it did not matter whether they were apart or together; nothing mattered– nothing mattered (324).

2.2.3.2.5.2 Verbal Parallelism:

Verbal parallelism refers to ‘verbal repetition in equivalent positions’ (Leech, 1969:79). Words or sentence fragments are repeated at the beginning of the ‘relevant unit’ of a text which may range from a nominal group or prepositional group to a clause or sentence or paragraph level. The verbal repetition and the equivalent pieces of language at the beginning of which it occurs together create a parallelistic pattern of invariables (the
verbal repetition itself) and the variables (the rest of the unit). This kind of parallelism is a distinctive feature of Woolf’s novels not only at the grammatical level but also at the morphological level. Following Palmer (1983), morphology is considered as a category of grammar.

In VO, Woolf uses parallelistic structures sparingly, in patches, apparently for the purposes of adding variety to the syntax of the text. Progressively, Woolf discovers the discoursal potential of these in later novels as part of her experimental repertoire to challenge the linear syntax and as an encompassing vision of the novel as in The Waves.

A) Morphological Level:

Woolf’s parallelistic syntax at the morphological level includes the recurrence of bound morphemes at parallel situations in contiguous positions which bind the diverse free morphemes attached to them in one semantic field. She makes use of plurals, adverbials, compounds, participles and genitives in such situations which also add dramatic effect to the utterances. A few examples are cited below:

1 Her mind was working very quickly, inconsistently and painfully (72).
2 Suddenly a chicken came floundering, half-flying, half-running into the space … (239).
3 For this reason, the faces, – Helen’s face, the nurse’s, Terence’s, the doctor’s – which occasionally forced themselves … (322).

B) Group Level:

Parallelistic structures at group level are part repetitive and part parallelistic and two or more lexical items are interwoven within similar grammatical structures, and thus, greater lexico-semantic unity is achieved in contiguous positions. Some examples are:

1 Under the streets, in the sewers, in the wires, in the telephones, there is something alive; (58)
2 He went on, stimulated by this comparison, to liken some to hippopotamuses, some to canary birds, some to swine, some to parrots, and some to loathsome reptiles … (162).
3 His confidence in the man vanished as he looked at him and saw his insignificance, his dirty appearance, his shiftiness, and his unintelligent, hairy face (310).

2.2.3.2.6 Parenthetical Structures:

The recurrent use of parenthetical structures in the text achieves a variety of purposes as shown below:
Very little was visible— a few masts, a shadow of land here, a line of brilliant windows there (11).

‘They’re not half bad-looking, really — only — they’re so odd!’ (42)

‘But I didn’t mind till afterwards; when— she paused, and saw the figure of the bloated little man again— ‘I become terrified’

Chitter-chatter-chitter-chatter-fish and the Greek alphabet— never listened to a word any one said— chock-full of idiotic theories about the way to bring up children— I’d far rather talk to him one day (73).

We don’t even know in fact I think it most unlikely— that she caught her illness there (335).

The strongest wish in her being at this moment was to be able to do something for the unhappy people— to see them— to assure them— to help them (338).

Example (1) serves the purpose of elaboration by listing the elements indicated by the complement, ‘visible’; example (2) is an eccentric parenthesis used for emphasis, which contains one word, ‘only’; example (3) is a broken sentence due to the parenthetical structure which presents the authorial point of view and the enveloping clauses present the perspective of the characters concerned; example (4) is also eccentric due to the incoherent cluttering of desperate ideas within parenthesis; example (5) presents the conversational disjoint between the two enveloping parts interrupted by the parenthesis; and example (6) presents the parenthesis as a technique of insistence used for emphatic purpose.

2.2.3.2.7 Theme, Focus and Emphasis:

Sentences are built from various phrase types which serve a range of constructional functions within the grammar of syntax (SVOAC). These elements of the sentence can be manipulated within the structure of sentences for different kinds of prominence. Quirk and Greenbaum (1987) have identified three kinds of prominence— focus, theme and emphasis. In English language, which is a sequentially organized communication system, manipulating the order and placing of the emphasis are important for achieving the intended effect and implications.

A) End Focus:

Since the syntax of VO is convention-bound, it provides sentence perspective with the thematic weight at the end of the sentence. However, the semantically/thematically loaded sentences are ordered in the ascending order of importance to reach the climax at the end parts in a style typical of Woolf— in clauses, and occasionally in phrases, as the following examples illustrate:
1 I can conceive no more exalted aim– to be the citizen of the Empire (57).

2 ‘Cows’, he reflected, ‘draw together in a field; ships in a calm; … which is, on the whole, the view I incline to’ (116).

3 Once he held his breath and listened acutely; she was still breathing; he went on thinking for some time; they seemed to be thinking together; he seemed to be Rachel as well as himself; and then he listened again; no, she had ceased to breathe (334-35).

2.2.3.2.8 Modality and Tenses:

VO is a novel written in conventional narrative syntax with past tense as the dominant tense of the text. However, two forms of modality are used, which have thematic bearing on the text. They are the passives and the progressives. Some examples are:

A) Passives:

1 Here a settlement was made; women were imported; children grew (80).

2 Helen was appealed to. She was made to look at a brooch … (270).

3 Terence was filled with resentment, not against her, but against the force outside them … (313).

B) Progressives:

1 Sailors were shouldering the luggage, and people were beginning to congregate (69).

2 The ants were pouring down a glacier of loose earth heaped between the stones of the ruin … (212).

3 … she was still breathing; he went on thinking for some time … (333).

The preponderance of the passives, by virtue of their construction, point significantly towards the utter lack of human agency or lack of control over the randomness of events, over human destiny, over the materialistic forces which govern the human world, and also, control over death. The passives, along with for and seemed, express the world-view of the novelist by highlighting the helplessness of human beings in the anti-human universe. The progressives, on the contrary, create the immediacy of effect and force the readers to visualize the action unfolding in front of them. The density of progressives modulates the temporal dimension of the text in such a way that they appear to hasten or accelerate, by some unknown hands, the course of events towards Rachel’s untimely death.

2.2.3.3 Phonological Analysis:

Woolf is known to be a conscious artist and this shows in her sense of sound as an integral part of the expressive mechanism of her language in her novels. She seems to have
a natural feeling for sound and rhythm. The texts of Woolf’s novels have their own sound texture and rhythm. The sound texture is the result of the organization of sounds in various patterns. The most obvious patterns that help us characterize the sound texture are—repetitions of individual sounds (vowels and consonants) which could be seen in recognizable categories like alliteration, assonance and consonance and other sound echoes like consonant clusters, onomatopoeia and sound symbolism. We have to bear in mind that all these phenomena operate in terms of the vicinity of the linguistic items to one another, since it is the ear that recognizes these various phenomena within the bounds of auditory memory. The intensity of effect is proportionate to the nearness of sounds to one another.

The phonological analysis of the texts consists of two levels of phonetic features: segmental features and suprasegmental features. The segmental features consist of sound patterns such as alliteration, assonance and consonant clusters, and onomatopoeia and phonaesthesia or sound symbolism. The suprasegmental features deal with rhythm and intonation in the text.

Woolf’s aesthetic of language, though not articulated clearly when she wrote VO, consisted of, like the poets, exploitation of phonetic aspect of language for aesthetic as well as for communicative, and most importantly, for thematic purposes. Though the attempt appears low key and used in patches, the following phonetic features function as significant rhetorical devices in the text.

2.2.3.3.1 Segmental Features:

Segmental features consist of repetitive sound patterns—both free and parallelistic (alliteration), which enact the sense of the context in which they are used.

A) Free Repetition of Sounds:

1 Faster and faster they walked; simultaneously they stopped, clasped each other in their arms, then releasing themselves, dropped to the earth. They sat side by side. Sounds stood out from the background making a bridge across their silence; they heard the swish of the trees and some beast croaking in a remote world (257).

The passage enacts the moment of intense love as experienced by Rachel and Terence, not in sensuous terms, but in the externalities of their actions and sounds emanating from the external sources—‘for the purpose of making a bridge across their silence’. The silence of their souls caused by intense happiness becomes overshadowed by the harsh sounds of nature with a sense of mystery and foreboding suggestive of imminent
death and cruelty of nature. This alternation of silence and sound is recreated with the careful manipulation of short and long vowels, fricatives, plosives and consonant clusters—\(|\alpha:|, |i:|, |\varepsilon:|, |\omega|, |\epsilon|, |\varepsilon\|, |\alpha:|, |\epsilon|, |\iota|, |\lambda|, |\rho|, |\pi|, |\upsilon|, |\theta|, |\phi|; |\theta|, |\kappa|, |\sigma|, |\varphi|, |\varsigma|, |\zeta|, |\eta|, |\theta|, |\omega|, |\rho|, |\nu|, |\omicron|, |\rho|, |\nu|, |\theta|, |\omega|, |\rho|, |\nu|, |\theta|, |\omega|, |\rho|, |\nu|, |\theta|, |\omega|—. While the short vowels, fricatives and plosives enact the quick movement of the lovers’ actions—walking, stopping, clapping, releasing and dropping, the long vowels, diphthongs and consonant clusters, along with the onomatopoeic swish and croaking sounds, orchestrate the scene suggesting, ironically, the imminent silence of the lovers by death.

B) Parallelistic Sound Patterns (Alliteration):

Alliterative patterns are used to draw attention to the utterances in which they are used and dramatize the emotionality of the characters or the narrator. However, unlike in the later novels, the use of alliteration appears as part of word-play and not a foregrounded feature in the text of VO. Some examples are:

1. Rachel’s obvious languor and listlessness made her an easy prey … (70).
2. Susan Warrington … was conscious of the sweetest sense of sisterhood, as she covered her face … (214).
3. … trailing very slowly and gracefully across the grass and the gravel, and talking all the time … (306).

C) Onomatopoeia and Sound Symbolism:

The potential of the phonology of literary language is not only to provide musical effects, but also to symbolize directly the meaning it represents. The most iconic of such effects is normally referred to as ‘onomatopoeia’ and concerns the direct echoing of the sounds in certain contexts. Reinforcement of meaning by sound takes the form of ‘resemblance between what a piece of language sounds like, and what it refers to’ (Leech, 1969:96). Ullmann (1973) makes a distinction between two kinds of onomatopoeia: primary and secondary. Primary onomatopoeia occurs when a word imitates the sound it symbolizes. The referent itself is an acoustic experience, which is more or less echoed by the phonetic structure of the word such as buzz, crack. Secondary onomatopoeia is the sound while providing an acoustic experience, also evokes a movement or a feeling or some physical or mental quality such as gloom, sluggish, which evokes unpleasant feeling. The expressive use of sound which forms secondary onomatopoeia is variously known as phonaesthesia, protosemanticism and sound symbolism.
The use of onomatopoeia and sound symbolism in the text of \textit{VO} acquire, in addition to iconicity, the status of thematic motifs by virtue of their antithetical relation to the central theme– \textit{silence}. The density of these features throughout the text punctuates the profound inner silence of the central character, Rachel, with constant evocation of meaningless sounds from the external world, both natural and human.

A few examples of onomatopoeia are:

1. I never heard such nonsense!
   
   \textit{Chitter-chatter-chitter-chatter-fish} and the Greek alphabet– never listened to a word any one said– cholk-full of idiotic theories … (73).

2. ‘It goes \textit{round, round, round} like a roll of oil cloth’ (184).

3. Downstairs they could hear the \textit{thud} of his feet on the floor … (334).

A few examples of sound symbolism are:

1. A bell \textit{chimed} behind them, and Richard raised his head (54).

2. The rhythmic \textit{swish} of the dancers sounded like a \textit{swirling} pool (139).

3. ‘They’ve hoofed out the prostitute, one night … Thornbury was \textit{doddering} about the passages very late (290).

2.2.3.3.2 Suprasegmental Features:

2.2.3.3.2.1 Rhythm:

Derived from the Greek ‘rhythms’– which meant ‘flow’, the word ‘rhythm’ is associated both in prosody and phonology with a pattern of stressed/accented and unstressed/unaccented syllables. The English language owes its highly rhythmic nature to the ‘peaks of prominence’ or beats at regular intervals of time in spite of the varying number of unstressed syllables occurring between two beats. It is the stronger tendency to regularity in the distribution of the unstressed syllables that distinguishes verse from prose or the rhythm of spoken English.

Northrop Frye (1986:425) observes, ‘The unity of a work of art, the basis of structural analysis, has not been produced solely by the unconditioned will of the artist, for the artist is only its efficient cause: it has form, and consequently a formal cause.’ Further, Frye identifies the formal cause in nature. He (1986:428) says,’Rhythm, or recurrent movement, is deeply founded on the natural cycle, and everything in nature that we think of as having some analogy with works of art, like the flower or the bird’s song, grows out
of a profound synchronization between an organism and the rhythms of its environment, especially that of the solar year’ (428). Frye goes on to apply the universal principle of rhythm of Nature to literary works. He (1986:428) observes, ‘Some arts move in time, like music, others are presented in space, like painting. In both cases, the organizing principle is recurrence, which is called rhythm when it is temporal and pattern when it is spatial. Thus, we speak of rhythm of music and the pattern of painting; … Literature seems to be intermediate between music and painting: its words form rhythms which approach a musical sequence of sounds at one of its boundaries, and form patterns which approach the hieroglyphic— or pictorial image at the other. … The attempts to get as near these boundaries as possible form the main body of what is called experimental writing’ (428).

Long before Frye conceived his archetypal theory based on rhythm, Woolf used rhythm as the fundamental principle of her novelistic art. She conceived the nature and the movement of the universe, of human life, of time and of human consciousness in the form of the rhythmic flow, which finds its reflection in her novelistic art. Hence, the sense of rhythm is innate and an integral part of her novels. In the rise and fall of emotions and feelings of the characters, of rooks and aeroplanes, of linguistic patterns, and, of course, of waves, rhythm is the shaping factor of the novelistic material. Rhythm becomes organic and is responsible for the peculiar ‘music’ in her novels. However, it is not the mechanical regularity of rise and fall— the phonological alteration of stressed syllable followed by the unstressed syllable, but the free, variable, natural rhythm which seems to originate solely in the fluctuations of the emotions and thoughts of characters and in the writer’s attitude towards the subject or character under consideration which give the rhythm its particular quality in her novels. Consequently, it is the rhythmic variety which becomes a norm in her prose.

Woolf had become aware of rhythm or recurrence as an integral part of the meaning of a literary text quite early in her career as a reviewer. In an essay on Thomas De Quincey, ‘The English Mail Coach’ (1906), Woolf identifies the expanding and the contracting movement of De Quincey’s mind and writing, which strikingly anticipate her later comments and practice of the same in her own writing. Woolf (qtd. in Susan Dick, 1989:7) observes, ‘But if his mind is thus painfully contracted by the action of certain foreign substances upon it, … the condition in which it dwells habitually allow it to expand to its naturally majestic circumference … [De Quincey’s writing] has the effect of rings of
sound which … widen out and out to the verge of everything where speech melts into silence … beautiful sights and strange emotions created waves of sound in the brain; before they shaped themselves into articulate words.’ Woolf’s fiction is permeated by this theory of rhythm which she uses for the ideological and the experimental purposes.

Woolf started writing VO in 1907 and incorporated her vision of rhythm in the text not only at the linguistic level, but also as part of the central vision or world-view of the novel— the rhythmic tension between chaos and order, silence and speech, transience and eternity, the natural and human world, life and art, consciousness and external reality— the concerns which were extended to her later fiction as well.

In VO, the rhythmical processes of life and the mind are recreated in concrete set of images in the text, particularly of the human body: ‘Screening her face she sobbed more steadily than she had yet done, her shoulders rising and falling with great regularity’ (4); ‘Raising herself and sitting up, she too realized Helen’s soft body … swelling and breaking in one vast wave’ (268); ‘She looks at once up and down, up and down, as if one were a horse’ (278); ‘As she walked, they could see her breast slowly rise and slowly fall’ (338); ‘In this profound silence … continuous breathing which never ceased, although it never rose and never fell’ (335). These utterances illustrate the fact that the sense of rhythm is innate and an integral part of the text.

But, at the phonetic level, the aesthetic of rhythm is visible in patches of texts. Here, two examples are analyzed, one exhibiting the natural rhythm of speech, and the other, a passage carefully crafted on rhythmic structure:

1 As the little boat sidled up to the steamër, and the old man shipped his oars, he ‘marked once more pointing above, that ships all the world over flew that flag the day they sailed’ (7).

The passage exhibits the natural or irregular rhythmic pattern of alternating [xx], [II], [I] and [x] stress patterns, whereas at the end of the passage the concentration of iambic [x] beat lends regularity to the flow of rhythm.

2 In’extricablymixed in drearily confusion her mind seemed to enter into communion, to be de’lightfully ex’panded and combin’d with the sp’irit of the whirlish boards on deck, with the sp’irit of the sea, with the sp’irit of Beethoven Op. 112, ev’en with the sp’irit of poor Willi’am Cowper there at Omény. ‘Like a ball of thistledown it kissed the sea, ‘rose, ‘kissed it again and thus ‘rising and kissing passed ‘fin’ally out of sight (29).
The passage enacts the unusual rhythmic expansion and contraction of Rachel’s mind with a view to merging it with the non-human objects around (boards on deck, the spirit of the sea and of Beethoven and of the poet). The action of Rachel’s spirit kissing other spirits is realized in the form of wave-like rise and fall of stressed and unstressed beats. The thirty-nine stressed syllables juxtaposed between sixty four unstressed syllables enact the spiritual scene in concrete rhythmic language and the preponderance of unstressed syllables suggest the lightness of her heart at the moment and the ease and fluidity with which her spirit meets other spirits. The rhythmic structure and verbal echoes (‘expanded and combined’, ‘rising and kissing’) clearly indicate that Rachel is innately spiritual and more inclined towards primordial spirits rather than towards the worldly ones. Hence, she could not be united with the worldly and ambitious Terence, as both of them represent two opposite principles. The rhythm of the passage suggests her early realization of the transience of worldly love and passion and the eternity of unity between the human and natural energies.

2.2.3.3.2.2 Intonation Patterns:

In the ordinary usage, ‘tone’ refers to a particular quality of sound associated with particular emotions or feelings, as is found in phrases like ‘harsh tone’ or ‘rude tone’. In phonetics, intonation or ‘tune’ refers to the distinctive prosodic patterns of rise and fall in the speaker’s ‘pitch’ or tone in an utterance. Tone, thus, refers to the pitch level of a syllable, or the syllable on which a significant pitch change takes place is marked as the ‘tonic syllable’ or the nucleus which is always stressed. The tune may be confined to the tonic syllable or may stretch over several following syllables. Phoneticians have recognized types of pitch change generally found in spoken discourse and also evolved a notational system to signify them. Intonational choices are generally semantically motivated. A change in intonation often changes the meaning of an utterance. The intonational patterns have, thus, come to be regarded as having a functional value. They are associated with certain grammatical structures (statements and questions), attitudes (incredulity and astonishment) and illocutionary force (command or request). Halliday (1994) attaches informational value to them by relating the nucleus with the ‘new’ element in an informative unit as against the ‘given’. The major types of pitch change or ‘tone’ as given by phoneticians are as follows:
1. **Fall:** The fall is generally associated with statements, questions beginning with a wh-word, commands, exclamations and rhetorical questions, one-word answers to questions or words uttered in isolation.

2. **Rise:** The rise is used in incomplete, unfinished, inconclusive utterances, subordinate clauses, verbal or yes/no questions, sympathetic questions, echo and alternative questions, in enunciation of things, after-thoughts and hesitant expressions, requests, apologies, encouragements, polite commands, greetings and partings.

3. **Fall-Rise:** Popularly known as a ‘but’ tone, it is generally used to imply reservations, apprehensions, veiled insults, insinuations and doubts. This tune can spread over a number of syllables.

4. **Rise-Fall:** This tune is a pervasive variant of the falling tone, used to express a genuine or sarcastic warmth or on the other hand, a feeling of surprise or shock.

Woolf conveniently uses the *falling tone* prominently in the text of *VO* for the purposes of attributing truth-value to the statements since the falling tone is assertive and emphatic in impact. The repetition of this tone, in close vicinity and in conjunction with natural speech rhythms, ensures a spontaneous and natural flow of thought or narration. A few examples are presented below:

1. The ship `lurched.` Rachel fell slightly `forward.` Richard took her in his `arms` and `kissed her. I` Holding her `tight,` he kissed her `passionately,` so that she felt the hardness of his `body` and the roughness of his cheek printed upon `hers.` She fell back in her `chair,` with tremendous beats of the `heart,` each of which sent black waves across her `eyes. `(66-67).

2. On and on she `went,` by day and `night,` following her `path,` until one morning `broke` and she showed the `land.` (78).

Example (1) presents the scene of Richard Dalloway kissing Rachel and its impact on her. Though the act is caused by the storm by making Rachel fall forward which makes it appear spontaneous and in the fit of passion caused by the moment, it appears a premeditated and calculated move by the wily politician. The intent and clever execution of it is manifest in the brisk syntax, the racy rhythms and falling intonation in quick succession enacting the breathless speed with which the act is achieved. The itinerant falling tone captures the purposiveness and the finality of its consequences, ‘black waves across her eyes’, on Rachel. Example (2), with the emphatic falling tone, suggests the brisk
and relentless movement of the ship, *Euphrosyne*, as if it is the movement of Rachel’s fate, towards the tropical island, Santa Marina, where Rachel would die in a matter of few months.

### 2.2.3.4 Semantic Analysis:

Deriving its name from the Greek root ‘Sema’, which means *sign*, the discipline of **Semantics** is specifically related to the study of the linguistic meaning of words and sentences. Meaning is central to the study of all kinds of communication. Semantics overlaps with lexis and syntax, because a part of the meaning is conveyed through the choices of vocabulary and sentence construction. If phonology and syntax study sounds and sentence constructions of literary language respectively, semantics studies the ‘visions’ that are enclosed in the linguistic performance of the writers.

In spite of the controversies involved in the study of semantics, linguists have developed certain semantic categories for the description of the meaning of language. Many of these categories have direct stylistic corollaries which are very useful in the semantic description of literary discourse. In the following paragraphs, some of the semantic concepts and methods developed by linguists over the years, which can be used by stylisticians as effective tools for describing and analyzing the meaning/s of literary texts are discussed.

**A) Sense and Meaning:**

Meaning being a controversial and ambiguous term, there have been continued efforts by linguists to arrive at a definitive meaning of meaning. The efforts by literary scholars and linguists like Richards (1925), Ullman (1973), Leech (1983) and Widdowson (1975) to mention a few, have pointed only to the futility of having one single definition of meaning. Nevertheless, there is a general consensus about making a distinction between the referential (sense) and the contextual meanings of words. This distinction has a special relevance in the stylistic studies of literary works. An awareness of the distinction is a precondition for approaching literature from a linguistic point of view. Leech (1983) breaks the ‘sense’ of a word into seven types of meaning: conceptual meaning; connotative meaning; stylistic meaning; affective meaning; reflective meaning; collocative meaning and thematic meaning.
B) Semantic Components:

Lexical meaning can be specified in terms of its semantic components or semantic features which are similar in function to the distinctive phonological features. The process of breaking down the sense of a word into its minimal components has proved to be by far the most effective method of giving the semantic description of a word. The term ‘componential analysis’ is used for the method of reducing the meaning of a word to its ultimate contrastive elements or binary features. It reduces the meaning of a word to a formula in which the dimensions of meaning are represented by the symbols for semantic universals like HUMAN, ADULT and MALE. The meaning of an individual item is then represented in terms of the combination of these semantic features. For example,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Man} &: [+ \text{Human}] \\
&: [+ \text{Adult}] \\
&: [+ \text{Male}]
\end{align*}
\quad \quad \quad
\begin{align*}
\text{Woman} &: [+ \text{Human}] \\
&: [+ \text{Adult}] \\
&: [- \text{Male}]
\end{align*}
\]

It should be noted, however, that the semantic features are not always necessarily binary. However, the application of componential analysis is very useful in explaining certain semantic relations like synonymy, polysemy, hyponymy and incompatibility.

C) Selectional Restrictions and Transference of Meaning:

Selectional restriction rules form an important part of the procedure of describing the semantic structure of a sentence. The realization that the meaning of a sentence cannot always be described in terms of syntactic categories like verb and noun led the linguists to look for units and structures, which can operate at the semantic level. This kind of semantic approach to a sentence brought to the fore an aspect of the meaning of a sentence: the meaning was found to ‘flow sideways’ from one part of a sentence to another. The selection and the insertion of a lexical item in the deep structure of a sentence are determined not only by its own semantic features but also by the features of those in the neighbourhood. The semantic features of a lexical item are predictable from its semantic environment. Any contradiction of such features results in an unacceptable, ‘ungrammatical’ sentence. The constraints working on the selection of a lexical item in a sentence came to be known as ‘selection restriction rules’. The phenomenon of selectional restrictions assumed a special importance for the grammarians who, in the process of investigating the forces behind the creativity of language, came across very valuable data in the poetic language which was full of ungrammatical yet interpretable sentences.
Semantically deviant expressions or ‘tropes’ like ‘Green ideas sleep furiously’ obviously resulting from an improper collocation of lexical items generated considerable theoretical discussion on the nature of the language of poetry.

A few types of semantic deviations are analyzed below:

2.2.3.4.1 Unusual Collocations:

Unusual collocations impart new values and new significance to the utterances by unpredictable syntactic conjugation of disparate lexical items belonging to different experiential fields. These invariably break the selection restriction rules (Chomsky, 1965). Woolf, in all her novels, makes use of this technique to frustrate or disrupt the logical view of meaning in the narrow sense of communicating ‘cognitive information’ or ‘cognition transfer’– the normal, information-bearing function of language. The unusual colligations of lexical items create new avenues of communication by breaking the straight-jacket of ‘conceptual bonds’ (Leech, 1983) and creating new conceptual fusions. Woolf’s linguistic creativity lies in her attempts to break through the anti-creative forces of jargonization or stereotypification by unusual collocations. Some examples are analyzed below by applying the method of componential analysis:

1. *an armful of sad volumes* (23)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>volumes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sad</td>
<td>volumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ human</td>
<td>- human</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. *a certain dryness of soul* (84)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>soul</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dryness</td>
<td>soul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ concrete</td>
<td>- concrete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- human</td>
<td>+ human</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. *a certain innocent craftiness* (218)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>craftiness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>innocent</td>
<td>craftiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ positive</td>
<td>- positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- cunning</td>
<td>+ cunning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two examples are analyzed a bit elaborately here. The phrases ‘an armful of sad volumes’ and ‘a certain dryness of soul’ both of which are attributed to Helen, Rachel’s aunt, make a scathing indictment of the materialistic world which is premised on bookish knowledge as the key to progress: ‘It’s books’, sighed Helen, carrying an *armful of sad volumes*, … Greek from morning to night’ (23); William Pepper [a passenger on board the ship], ‘with all his knowledge, his microscope, his notebooks, his genuine kindliness and good sense, *but a certain dryness of soul* …’ (84). Both the phrases have significant bearing on the thematic motifs of the novel– the neglect or suppression of the natural cravings of human heart in the materialistic society to which Rachel falls a victim. The
phrases, if analyzed through componential analysis method, reveal the inherent ‘vision’ in them:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sad</td>
<td>dryness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>volumes</td>
<td>soul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ human</td>
<td>- human</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ feelings/</td>
<td>- feelings/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sensitivity</td>
<td>sensitivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ pessimism</td>
<td>- pessimism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- concrete</td>
<td>+ concrete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- knowledge</td>
<td>+ knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ suffering</td>
<td>- suffering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>etc.</td>
<td>etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The *semes* in columns (1) and (2) clearly indicate how the volumes of books, the so-called achievements of civilization, negatively impact the human heart and soul, in the one the books inevitably causing suffering and pessimism in human heart and in the other causing the death of the soul/spirit. The natural instincts and intuitions which have nurtured the human heart and soul all along are destroyed or materialized to the extent that ‘the hotel was inhabited by bodies without souls’ (107). In short, in the modern materialistic world, the death of the soul/spirit is complete. Human beings cease to be humans but ‘bodies’ walking the earth.

2.2.3.4.2 Semantically Deviant Sentences:

The semantic oddities of another kind which violate the selection restriction rules and are grammatically ‘unacceptable’ (Chomsky, 1965), and yet are meaningful in their contexts of use are observed in the following sentences, which are suggestive of the incoherence and unreasonableness of human life (for quotations from the text, 2.2.2.1). Since semantics studies the ‘visions’ enclosed within the linguistic structures, these sentences, alongside other features in this section, also express the ‘vision’ of the text:

1. Now *a tremor ran through the table*, and a light outside swerved (8).

2. October was well advanced, but steadily *burning with a warmth* that made the early months of the summer appear very *young and capricious* (23).

3. The garden was *sprinkled* with the white shapes of *couples* sitting out (144).

4. The longer he sat there the more profoundly was he conscious of the *peace invading every corner of his soul* (333).

These occur as subjective impressions of the omniscient narrator presumed to be objective in his observations of the world.
Semantically, these examples establish irrational conjugation of lexico-semantic relations within the sentences. They also exhibit the illogical humanization of objects or ideas, and thus, blatant deautomization of them. It may be illustrated in the tabular form as below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>+ Abstract</th>
<th>+ Concrete</th>
<th>+ Human</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ex. 1</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>table</td>
<td>tremor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex. 2</td>
<td>October</td>
<td>burning</td>
<td>warmth, young capricious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex. 3</td>
<td>silence</td>
<td>fallen</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex. 4</td>
<td>peace</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>invading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>corner of the soul</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2.3.4.3 Lexis as a Device of Deautomization:

The text of VO displays another kind of semantic aberration throughout— the deautomization of human beings in which human characters are described with reference to animals and objects. Linguistically, it amounts to meaning transfer from non-congruent lexical items— from non-human plane to human plane— resulting in satire, irony and innuendo, ‘an allusive remark concerning a person or thing, especially of a depreciatory kind’ (Leech, 1969:174). A few examples are cited below:

1 ‘No; and some people are dogs; aren’t they?’ said Clarissa … (51).
2 In sleep he looked like a coat hanging at the end of a bed; there were all the wrinkles, and the sleeves and trousers kept their shape though no longer filled out by legs and arms (54).
3 ‘She had the face of an impertinent but jolly little pig, mottled red under a dusting of powder (147).
4 They had the appearance of crocodiles so fully gorged by their last meal that the future of the world gives them no anxiety whatever (168).
5 Vaguely seeing that there were people down in the garden beneath, she represented them as aimless masses of matter, floating hither and thither, without aim except to impede her (244).
6 … that the ordinary person had so little emotion in his own life that the scent of it in the lives of others was like the scent of blood in the nostrils of a bloodhound (292).

An unequivocal relation is established between the human, animal and inanimate world dismantling the traditional hierarchical Great Chain of Being upheld by the Enlightenment era. The absurd blurring of the division between the three levels of beings may be illustrated in the tabular form as below:
### 2.2.3.4.4 Periphrasis or Circumlocution:

A kind of semantic oddity, traditionally termed as *periphrasis*, is an expression which is redundant or of unnecessary length in that meaning could have been expressed in a word or two. In literary jargon, it may be called *euphemism*. Woolf tends to use this feature in her texts intentionally to achieve multifarious purposes. In VO, Woolf uses them for the purposes of exaggeration and satire, and also for rhetorical purposes as in the examples below:

1. *A loud nasal breath* announced that he no longer considered appearances, that he was sound asleep (54). (= snoring)

2. … and the physical pain of the emotion was so great that she could only keep herself moving above the great leaps of the heart (67). (= palpitation)

3. As she walked, they could see her breast slowly rise and slowly fall (338). (= breathe)

### 2.2.3.4.5 Ambiguous Expressions:

Sometimes words defy an unequivocal interpretation. The complex experiences are not translatable into exact analytical terms, nor can their content be rendered into an accurate paraphrase. This feature of semantic ambiguity needs to be distinguished from ‘obscurity’ or vagueness of meaning, which is a result of an arbitrary use of lexis or syntax, and therefore, regarded as a flaw in literature. Here, the term ‘ambiguity’ is used in its Empsonian (1961) positive sense of semantic open-endedness which is deliberate and generally associated with literary discourse. Following Nowottny (1962) and Cummings *et al* (1983), the semantic ambiguity can be traced to certain lexical features:

1. **Multidimensionality of Reference:**

   From lexical point of view, the ambiguity consists in the use of polysemantic vocabulary or words with multiple implications. The multi-dimensionality of reference
reveals a degree of subtlety which renders it impossible for a reader to ascertain that ‘one certain thing or one certain kind of thing is meant, to the effective exclusion of all other things’ (Nowottny, 1962:155). This kind of ambiguity is aptly defined by Nowottny as an equivocal relation between a given expression and its context. A word or expression is not a single meaning unit but a vast potential of meanings which results in creating a diffuse sense of its pertinence in the immediate or obvious context.

2. Intertextuality:

What traditionally the critics called ‘allusion’, the poststructuralist theorists, with appropriate theoretical framework, call intertextuality. Julia Kristeva (1980:36), who is credited to have used the term for the first time, thinks that a text is ‘a permutation of texts, an intertextuality in the space of a given text’, in which ‘several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another’. However, the term originated in linguistics, in the seminal work of Ferdinand de Saussure. His emphasis on the systematic features of language establishes the relational nature of meaning and thus of texts. Bakhtin’s (1984a) term, ‘Dialogism’ refers to similar effects to stress the notions of relationality, interconnectedness and interdependence of all cultural forms. A literary text is viewed not merely as the container of meaning, but as a space in which a potentially vast number of relations coalesce. It is a site of words and sentences shadowed by multiple potentialities of meaning, and therefore, a literary work may be understood in a comparative way.

Woolf’s texts generate their meaning/s out of their relation to literature and cultural systems to a large extent rather than out of direct representation of the physical world. The numerous quotations from the literature of the past and the modern times in her texts are deliberate evocation of a literary context in relation to which the meaning of her texts is made to resonate. These add another dimension to her texts in terms of a context establishing direct semantic relationship with other texts, drawing parallels and contrasts between them, and thus providing depth to the text. Woolf seems to have appropriated Eliot’s plea for ‘the pastness of the past, and also its present’ for a talented literary writer. For the researcher, intertextuality appears as the most visible presence of the novelist in the very fabric of the texts, standing like a lamp-post or the light house, to use her own metaphor, guiding the readers as to the significance of her texts.
The text of VO is full of references and quotations from across the ages and cultures– from ancient Greece to modern times, translated pieces from Tristan (27) and Antigone (37), lines from Shakespeare’s Tempest (46), Shelley’s Adonais (50), Hardy’s poem (100), Walt Whitman’s Leaves of Grass (253), Milton’s Camus (309), etc. From among these, a few extracts are mentioned below:

1. Wonders are many; yet than Man …
   He that over the frothing sea
   Voyages, blown by the stormy South, …
   In threatening surges tower (37).

2. He has outsoared the shadow of our night,
   Envy and calumny and hate and pain –
   Can touch him not and torture not again
   From the contagion of the world’s slow stain (50).

3. She dreamt that she was walking down a long tunnel, which grew so narrow by degrees that she could touch the damp bricks on either side. At length the tunnel opened and became a vault; she found herself trapped in it, bricks meeting her wherever she turned, alone with a little deformed man who squatted on the floor gibbering, with long nails. His face was pitted like the face of an animal.
   The wall behind him oozed with damp, which collected into drops and slid down … (68).

Example (1) is an extract from Sophocles’ Antigone where the heroine is a social rebel and dies a heroic death at a young age. The extract refers to a heroic Man who dares to voyage in the stormy seas. Rachel’s character and her destiny is brought in conjunction with Antigone, by forcing the stark differences and close similarities between the two–Rachel’s failure to be a social rebel, and hence her defeat in the voyage of life; and her premature death resembling that of her counterpart in Antigone. Example (2) is from Shelley’s Adonais, which laments Keats’ untimely death and his escape from the worldly woes. Rachel’s untimely death and her escape from the ordinary cares and worries of married life resemble that of Keats. Example (3) appears to establish close links with the dream-fantasy as used in Tolstoy’s Anna Karenina with its explicit sexual symbolism– the displacement of desire caused by immense suppression by the social norms and moral conscience. The ‘long tunnel’, ‘damp bricks on either side’, ‘vault’, ‘the wall … oozed with damp’– Rachel’s inner terrors appear to have expressed themselves in dream-reverie.

Woolf’s skill in integrating literary allusions into her narrative is manifest when these contribute subtle nuances at the level of interpretation, carrying us beyond the confines of Rachel’s story and building up links and echoes with other works, other times
and places and other cultures. Thus, all these universalize the text of VO by placing it in the broader historical context.

2.2.3.5 Cohesion:

Halliday and Hasan (1976) have contributed immensely in establishing the fact that a text is not a mere string of sentences, but a cohesive unit of meaning and have developed techniques and a model to identify and analyze cohesiveness of texts, including long texts like novels. They (1976:2) define a text as ‘a semantic unit: a unit not of form but of meaning. It is related to a clause or sentence by realization, the coding of one symbolic system in another; it is realized by and encoded in sentences’. For example,

‘Wash the six cooking apples. Put them into a dish.’

Here, them in the second sentence refers back to the six cooking apples. This anaphoric function of them gives cohesion to the two sentences so that we interpret them as a whole text. It is this cohesion that attributes textuality to the text. A text has a texture and it functions as a unity with respect to its environment. Cohesion is nothing but the resources the language has for creating texture. Certain linguistic features present in the text contribute to its total unity, giving it texture. The five cohesive processes, according to Halliday and Hasan (1976) are: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and cohesion.

The text of VO exhibits features of cohesion as any other text would do, ensuring the smooth flow of thought and meaning fulfilling Halliday’s textual and interpersonal functions at the macro as well as the micro levels of the text. At the macro level, the text is connected by distant yet recurrent lexical items. Repetition of certain structurally and thematically significant expressions such as reference to Rachel’s age as twenty four (7, 29, 71, 73, … 201, etc.); the voyage (17, 19, …, 165, etc.); kiss (20, 29, 66, 72, 73, …, 327, etc.); heat (81, 106, 125, …, 311, 313, 322); and silence (… 69, 78, 127, …, 317, 323, 332, 335, etc.), etc. semantically connect the whole text and make it function as one semantic unit. The semantic cohesion makes for structural integration among parts of the text as the recurrent mention of the age of the protagonist, the voyage, the kiss, the heat and silence contribute to the development of the narrative.

The absence of sentence connectors and paragraph links such as because and due to are remarkable, but it does not affect the cohesion or coherence of the text, since cohesive
relations are achieved by pronoun references, conjunctions and lexical elements at the micro level of the text.

Here, two passages are analyzed to reveal the extent of cohesiveness of the text of VO:

1 *The* morning was hot, and the exercise of reading left *her* mind contracting and expanding like the mainspring of a clock (1). *The* sounds in the garden outside joined with *the clock*, and the small noises of midday, which one can ascribe to no definite cause, in a regular rhythm (2). *It* was all very red, very big, very impersonal, and after a moment or two, *she* began to raise *her* first finger and to let it fall on the arm of *her* chair so as to bring back to *herself* some consciousness of her own existence (3). (114)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence Number</th>
<th>No. of ties</th>
<th>Cohesive Item</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Presupposed Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>The morning</td>
<td>R-23</td>
<td>N(n)</td>
<td>of a particular day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>her</td>
<td>R-12</td>
<td>M(n)</td>
<td>Rachel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>The sounds</td>
<td>L.5</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>small noises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the clock</td>
<td>L.1</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>a clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>It</td>
<td>R-13</td>
<td>M[n]</td>
<td>the morning and sounds, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>she</td>
<td>R-12</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Rachel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>her</td>
<td>R-12</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Rachel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>her</td>
<td>R-12</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Rachel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>herself</td>
<td>R-12</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Rachel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Where N(n) stands for remote, non-mediated reference, M(n) stands for mediated reference and K stands for cataphoric reference.)

The passage illustrates a large number of pronoun references at O distance which are also substitutions. Along with lexical repetitions, the passage exhibits a great amount of grammatical as well as lexical cohesion.

2 Then, as if to make *him* look at the scene, *she* swept *her* hand round the immense circumference of the view (1). From the sea, over the roofs of the town, across the crests of the mountains, over the river and the plain, and again across the crests of the mountains *it* swept until *it* reached the villa, *the* garden, *the* magnolia-tree, and the figures of Hirst and herself standing together, when *it* dropped to her side (2). (192-93)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence Number</th>
<th>No. of ties</th>
<th>Cohesive Item</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Presupposed Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>she</td>
<td>R-12</td>
<td>M[n]</td>
<td>Helen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>her</td>
<td>R-12</td>
<td>M[n]</td>
<td>Helen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the immense circumference of the view</td>
<td>L.5</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>sea, town, mountains, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The passage illustrates both lexical and grammatical cohesion.

2.2.4 Literary Style:

2.2.4.1 Imagery:

A) Imagery in Literature:

*Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (1979:363) defines the image: ‘An image is the production of a sensation produced by a physical perception. More specifically in the literal usage, imagery refers to images produced in the mind by language, whose words and statements may refer either to experiences which could produce physical perceptions where the reader to have those experiences, or to the sense-impressions themselves’.

*Cambridge Encyclopedia* (1992) defines the ‘image’ as ‘the illustration and emphasis of an idea by analogies and parallels of different kinds, to make it more concrete and objective. Images may be explicit as in the form of a *simile* or implicit as in the form of a *metaphor*. They may be incidental or a part of a system of imagery running through a work; organized images may also function as *symbols*. Imagery is often thought of as mainly *visual*, but this is far from being the case, images often *invoke other senses* (*smell, taste, touch, hearing*) *individually or combined* and may operate on an abstract level. Imagery is a recognized grace of poetry, but [it] also plays an important part in much prose writing’ (italics supplied).

The literary writers use images with certain purposes in mind, or sometimes they come to mind spontaneously, or may be the result of his meditation or past experiences and associations. Imagery is richly evocative and various in its implications of meaning. It is always complex and broader in scope. It tends to evoke the indescribable and the intangible. It enhances clarity. They concretize the abstract or emotional experiences.
B) Linguistic Approach to Imagery:

Geoffrey Leech (1969) and Cummings and Simmons (1983) have effectively demonstrated that it is possible to redefine and reformulate the literary concepts in terms of modern lexical theories. Leech (1969) has provided models for analysis of metaphors and similes, paradox, oxymoron, etc. In linguistic terms, diction of a text consists of lexical items which are present in the linguistic contexts associated with the said author or situation. As the literary term, ‘image’ may be redefined as a lexical set in which various items however dispersed in grammatical structure share a range, and thus, suggest a context which can be visualized. Thus, the predominance of ‘animal’ imagery in *Macbeth* is suggestive of animal contexts throughout the play.

From the lexical point of view, metaphor consists in certain colligations (syntactic unions) of items of different meanings, for example, the Homeric term ‘wine-dark-sea’. Poetry largely depends on metaphoric expressions, the ‘interpersonal’ function consists mainly in activating the reader’s mind to recognize a tie that justifies the colligation of unexpected items and willingly accept them as members of the same set.

The linguistic notion of imagery or tropes in general is considered in terms of ‘semantic deviance’ and this idea was developed through works of Katz and Foder (1964), Chomsky (1965), Katz (1964), Zift (1964) and Weinreich (1966). Over the years, attempts were made to evolve an adequate theory of grammar which could incorporate and explain the deviant yet meaningful poetic expressions. The metaphor was no longer discarded as ‘ungrammatical’; but it came to be regarded as a powerful device for creating new areas of meaning. The creativity involved in it was brought within the analytical fold of linguistics by developing a process called ‘transference of meaning’ (Leech, 1969). The application of componential analysis has been used to explain the linguistic realities underlying the figures of speech like paradox, oxymoron and tautology in a precise way (Leech, 1969; Traugott *et al*., 1980). A purely linguistic view of metaphor in particular and of ‘imagery’ in general was established by the generative grammarians who held the view that all tropes are basically semantic deviations resulting from the violation of selection restriction rules.

Woolf, even in the first novel, is committed to create a work of *literature* and not a mere transcript of life. She reveals her intent and talent to do so by interlacing her acute observations and experiences of life with metaphors and similes of which the title, *The Voyage Out*, is the most obvious example. These not only enliven and enrich the narrative
of Rachel’s life and her tragedy, but also they reveal something significant about human situation in general. However, the use of imagery in the text of VO is very controlled and does not appear to be as complex, varied and evocative as in later novels. A few examples of imagery are analyzed here in accordance with Leech’s (1969) model: tenor, vehicle and ground:

2.2.4.1.1 Metaphors and Similes:

1. The colourless October sky was thinly clouded as if by the trail of wood-fire smoke (20).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenor</th>
<th>Vehicle</th>
<th>Ground</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October sky</td>
<td>trail of wood-fire smoke</td>
<td>colourless, cloudy, dull</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. The sound spread through the chapel as the rings of water spread from a fallen stone (214).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenor</th>
<th>Vehicle</th>
<th>Ground</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the sound</td>
<td>rings of water</td>
<td>dispersed, dissipated, not making desired impact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. The afternoon was very hot, so hot that the breaking of the waves on the shore sounded like the repeated sigh of some exhausted creature … (308).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenor</th>
<th>Vehicle</th>
<th>Ground</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>breaking of the waves</td>
<td>some exhausted creature</td>
<td>energy sucked out of heat, troubled movement, lifeless</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The imagery in example (3) could be elaborated in the following way:

Tenor: the waves breaking on the shore in the afternoon sun

Vehicle: the repeated sigh of some exhausted creature

The heat of the tropical sun in Santa Marina was so high that the waves, instead of energetically and rhythmically breaking on the shore, were sighing repeatedly like some exhausted creature. The tenor and the vehicle are compared on the grounds of the energy of the waves being sucked out, and thus, deenervated and in imminent danger of being reduced to the helpless state of stasis, instead of roaring in youthful force. The metaphorical animation of the waves– ‘some exhausted creature’– unlike the deceptively naturalistic description, requires figurative interpretation, by discoursal implicature, in the context of Rachel’s death by heat.

Since Rachel’s spirit habitually ‘kisses the spirit of the sea’ (20), and thus, is closer to natural forces, she also feels the heat of the tropical sun as in ‘… her cheeks … for they
were burning hot’ (233). By metaphorical extension of meaning, Rachel was also sighing ‘like some exhausted creature’, thus, her life-energies being drained out and in danger of being in the motionless, life-less state of stasis. It is no wonder then that Rachel dies by the same heat a few pages later (334). In the context of Rachel’s narrative, the imagery could be figuratively represented as:

| 1. The Waves |
| 2. Repeated sighing, deenervated, lifeless |
| 3. Rachel |

1. The Waves
2. Repeated sighing, deenervated, lifeless
3. Rachel

The example reveals Woolf’s skill and art in integrating even the naturalistic, descriptive details into the central narrative. One significant aspect of Woolf’s novelistic art appears, as in this case, to involve the reader imaginatively into the situation and, by supporting him/her through other details scattered throughout the text, to encourage to make sense of the text.

2.2.4.1.2 Modern Imagery:

Woolf excels in the use of ‘modern’ imagery as well, which exhibit features of incoherent collocations, strikingly incongruent features resulting in semantic aberrations as, for instance, ‘a prayer’ juxtaposed with ‘a torch applied to fuel’ in example (2) below:

1. It goes round, round, round like a roll of oilcloth, she hazarded (184).
2. As if the prayer were a torch applied to fuel, a smoke seemed to rise automatically … (214).
3. … and his chin was so small, and his nose curved like a switchback with a knob at the end (298).

Unlike the conventional imagery as mentioned above, the ‘modern’ images have localized effects in their contexts of use. For instance, as in example (3), a character’s nose was compared to ‘a switchback with a knob at the end’. The imagery here appears funny and expresses the pithy attitude of the narrator towards the personage.

2.2.4.1.3 Extended Metaphors and Similes:

Woolf uses multiple imagery– metaphors, similes, personification embedded within each other– extended over longer stretches of the text. The tenor and the vehicle invoked at the beginning are continued and elaborated throughout the length of the text. Together they
illuminate the context and evoke a conceptual framework for the ideas or feelings presented. An example is analyzed here:

1. If I may pick holes in your philosophy, Miss Vinrace, which has its merits, I would point out that a human being is not a set of compartments, but an organism. Imagination, Miss Vinrace; use your imagination; … Consider the world as a whole. … Look at it in this way, Miss Vinrace; conceive the state as a complicated machine; we citizens are parts of the machine; some fulfill more important duties, others (…) serve only to connect some obscure parts of the mechanism, concealed from the public eye. Yet if the meanest screw fails in its task, the proper working of the whole is imperiled’ (57).

The passage is Richard Dalloway’s reply to Rachel’s query about his concept of ‘unity’ (‘Unity of aim, of dominion, of progress’ (55)). Mr. Dalloway, the pompous politician, preaches about the unity of the world as hinging upon the unity of the State and its efficient functioning in which citizens are called upon to perform their duties. He uses the imagery of a machine to illustrate his point. In the text of the passage, two lexical sets corresponding to each other may be discerned:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lexical set with the nodal item ‘State’</th>
<th>Lexical set with the nodal item ‘Machine’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>a complicated machine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>citizens</td>
<td>parts of the machine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>some citizens fulfill more important duties</td>
<td>(by implication) connect vital parts of the machine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>some citizens fulfill less important duties</td>
<td>connect obscure parts of the mechanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less important citizens</td>
<td>the meanest screw fails in its task, the proper working of the whole is imperiled</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The lexical items listed under the nodal item ‘State’ are the tenor which are illuminated, in concrete terms, by the lexical items listed under the nodal item ‘machine’ for the better understanding and benefit, by implied meaning, of ‘innocent’ Rachel. In the context of the passage, which calls forth a consideration of ‘the world as a whole’, the State is postulated as supreme, controlling agency to which the citizens must pay obeisance– an impersonal system with intricate and rigid net-work of sub-systems. In this inflexible system– ‘complicated machine’– ‘we citizens’ are called upon to do the assigned duties, or else, ‘the proper working of the whole is imperiled’. Mr. Dalloway, *reductio ad absurdam*, reduces the concept of ‘the whole’ and ‘unity’ to the mechanical unity of a single entity– the State, which instead of existing for the service of mankind, paradoxically, enforces the same on the citizens to perpetuate its existence and functioning.
Woolf, through the extended metaphors, expresses her apparently Marxist concerns about the contemporary ideology of the State— with its absolute sovereignty over the individuals, over the colonies of the British Empire and over the natural resources of the world. In this State-centric system, cravings of the human heart, art and culture have no place: ‘I should like to stop all the painting and writing and music until this kind of thing exists no longer’ (36). Modern world’s dehumanized systems and codes of behavior are subjected to sharp criticism in the passage.

2.2.4.1.4 Conceptual Metaphors:

The concept of ‘conceptual metaphor’, developed as part of cognitive stylistic theory by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Turner (1987), Semino et al (2002), etc. (1.1.6.8) may be applied to discover whether a conceptual framework has been used permeating the entire text of VO. The theory makes use of terms ‘target domain’, and ‘source domain’, and in practice, it consists of mapping ideas from source domain to target domain. In the text of VO, the following conceptual metaphors may be found to exist:

Life is a battle.

Human beings, despite platitudes, fail to fight.

Here, life is the target domain and battle is the source domain. When the ideas from the source domain are applied to the target domain as from the examples given below, certain conclusions may be drawn about the relevance of these in the text:

1 ‘Don’t you feel’, she [Mrs. Dalloway] wound up, addressing Helen, ‘that life’s a perpetual conflict?’ (36)

2 This made him [Richard Dalloway] appear a battered martyr, parting everyday with some of the finest gold, in the service of mankind (56).

3 ‘Now, Miss Vinrace, are we enemies for life?’ (58).

4 The ship lurched. Rachel fell slightly forward. Richard took her in his arms and kissed her. Holding her tight, he kissed her passionately … She fell back in her chair, with tremendous beats of the heart …

‘You tempt me’, he said. The tone of his voice was terrifying. He seemed choked in fight (67).

5 … but the horror did not go at once. She felt herself pursued, so that she got up and actually locked her door (68).

6 ‘What do you call life?’ said St. John.
‘Fighting-revolution’, she said, still gazing at the doomed city … and she turned to another kind of warfare (119).

7 The ants were pouring down a glacier of loose earth heaped between the stones of the ruin … At Hewet’s suggestion it was decided to adopt the methods of modern warfare against an invading army. The table-cloth represented the invading country, and round it they built barricades of baskets, set up the wine bottles in a rampart, made fortifications of bread and dug fosses of salt… for it was discovered that a long line of ants had found their way on to the table-cloth by a back entrance … (122).

8 ‘What is it to be in love?’ she [Rachel] demanded, after a long silence; each word as it came into being seemed to shove itself out into an unknown sea. Hypnotized by the wings of the butterfly, awed by the discovery of a terrible possibility in life, she sat for some time longer. When the butterfly flew away, she rose, … returned home again, much as a soldier prepared for battle (161).

9 After one of these glances she murmured, ‘Yes, I’m in love. There’s no doubt; I’m in love with you.’

Nevertheless, they remained uncomfortably apart; drawn so close together, as she spoke, that there seemed no division between them, and the next moment separate and far away again. Feeling this painfully, she exclaimed, ‘It will be a fight’ (266).

10 On this day indeed Rachel was conscious of what went on round her. She had come to the surface of the dark, sticky pool, and a wave seemed to bear her up and down with it; she had ceased to have any will of her own; she lay on top of the wave conscious of some pain, but chiefly weakness (327).

In these numerous examples, life is construed as a battle, ‘a perpetual conflict’ (example 1) ‘fighting-revolution’ (example 6), in which Richard Dalloway is, satirically, portrayed as ‘a battered martyr’ (example 2) in the service of mankind as a politician; and there are ‘enemies’ (example 3) in life; life ‘pursues’ (example 5) sending human beings to locked doors; and most importantly, love is construed as fight– ‘He seemed choked in fight’ (example 4), ‘It will be a fight’ (example 8) and as a lover, Rachel feels she needs to brace for love ‘as a soldier prepared for battle’ (example 8) – echoing Lawrentian concept of love. Lawrence’s concept of love as love-hate relationship, a fight between lovers, mixed with pleasure and pain, is clear in example (9). Example (7) is Lawrence Sterne’s Shandean description of a warfare, a mock-heroic battle, between ants and human beings in which, despite solid fortifications by the humans, the ants succeed in entering their citadel by the back entrance. Through this scene, Woolf reveals that in the battle between nature and humans, ultimately the nature overrules human attempts in securing themselves against the forces of nature. This concept underlies the narrative framework of the novel in
which Rachel succumbs to the heat of the tropical sun and dies: ‘she had ceased to have any will of her own’ (example 10), giving up her fight for love and for life in the face of death.

The conceptual metaphor, thus, exposes human vulnerability and underlines the supremacy of Nature— one of the chief preoccupations of Woolf as a novelist.

2.2.4.1.5 Post-Impressionistic Imagery:

An integral part of Woolf’s innovative programme for the novel form was to introduce insights of Post-Impressionism to counter the ‘photographic’ representation of the traditional novel. Roger Fry, the Post-Impressionistic artist and critic, who had organized the first exhibition of Post-Impressionist Group in 1910 with which Woolf was also associated, championed a ‘purer’ approach to art which focused upon colour and form in painting. And also, he felt that art should never be representational nor be a mere vehicle for ideas. Woolf shared Fry’s views on art and incorporated them in her vision of the novelistic art. Thus, prose fiction, which had proven its link to life so far, delinked and entered the realm of art with Henry James’ Impressionism and Woolf’s Post-Impressionism. Based on the prevalent theory of primary sense impressions or ‘impression conveyed through the senses’ (Conrad, qtd. elsewhere) which make a concrete and vivid impact on the minds of the readers, Woolf evokes multiple images— of colour, movement, touch, sound and smell— to produce a multi-dimensional sensation known as synaesthesia in her texts.

In the text of VO, Woolf makes use of such post-impressionistic imagery abundantly. But the effect of these on the readers appears to be diffused and their use appears out of place at times, which defect she arrests in her later novels.

1. Visual Imagery:

1. The earth, instead of being brown, was red, purple, green (85).

2. … and they bore large blossoms among glossy leaves with petals of a thick wax-like substance coloured with an exquisite cream or pink or deep crimson (159).

3. The sun was going down, and the water was dark and crimson (260).

2. Auditory Imagery:

1. … Richard crackled a sheet of paper (43).

2. The booming of the sun was audible (170).
3 So strange were the lights and the silence that the busy hum of voices ... had distinct gaps in it, and during these silences the clatter of the knives upon plates became audible (347).

3. Tactile/Olfactory Imagery:
1 ... they scarcely spoke, but breathed in the delicious fresh air ... (154).
2 ... and twinkle on her bare arms and in the delicious curve of her breast ... (280).
3 The quiet and peace seemed to lap his body in a fine cool sheet, soothing every nerve; ... (324).

4. Kinetic Imagery:
1 Darkness fell as sharply as a knife in this climate, and the town then sprang out in circles and lines of bright dots beneath them (83).
2 But as the dark descended, the words of the others seemed to curl up and vanish as the ashes of burnt paper ... (261).
3 To be flung into the sea, to be washed hither and thither, and driven about the roots of the world ... (281).

5. Synaesthetic Imagery
1 ... the ghost of a roar of laughter came out to them and was drowned at once in the wind (11). (visual + auditory + kinetic)
2 Long thin clouds of flamingo red, with edges like the edges of curled ostrich feathers, lay up and down the sea at different altitudes (192). (visual + tactile + kinetic)
3 For two or three hours longer the moon poured its light through the empty air unbroken by clouds, it fell straightly, and lay almost like a chill white frost over the sea and the earth (335). (kinetic + tactile + visual)

2.2.4.2 Symbols:

The term symbol has widely different meanings, and is used for different purposes. In semantics, it is defined as a recurrent use of an image in the text. Woolf was very serious about the nature and the scope of symbols in literature, as evident in her critical essays and diaries, where we find a well-thought-out theory of the symbol. In her essays, ‘On Not Knowing Greek’ (1925) (CE, I, 1966:7), while comparing Aeschylus and Sophocles she feels that Aeschylus has ‘in some mysterious way a general force, a symbolic power’. Explaining his method of achieving this power, she says: ‘By the bold and running use of metaphor, he will amplify and give us, not the thing itself, but the reverberation and reflection, which taken into his mind, the thing has made, close enough to the original to illustrate it, remote enough to heighten, enlarge, and make splendid.’
Thus, she points out that a symbol should have some similarity to the thing symbolized, which it should make splendid.

Woolf not only has stated the nature of the symbol, but also has tried to explain how it works and affects our minds, how it gives us insight into things and reveals in a flash the depths of its meaning. In her essay ‘De Quincey’s Autobiography’, she writes: ‘If we try to analyze our sensations, we shall find that we are worked upon as if by music – the senses are stirred rather than the brain. – The emotion is never stated; it is suggested and brought slowly by repeated images before us until it stays, in all its complexity, complete’ (The Common Reader, Second Series, 133–4). Thus, she explains how repeated images, working on our senses by suggesting emotions and ideas, become symbolic. She also explains why we need symbols. According to her, we need symbols, because words are meager in comparison with ideas. Woolf, as can now be deduced, is of the view that when a writer desires to express some genuinely new ideas or states of mind, which she cannot adequately convey through the stiff and conventional medium of language in its literal capacity, she uses images to ‘evoke’ and suggest them, and these images, acquiring added significance, become symbols.

Woolf organizes her texts around symbols, of which the most spectacular in VO being the symbol of voyage itself. In addition, some of the characters and objects also function as symbols. For instance, Mr. Ambrose and Mr. Hirst stand for intellect; Mrs. Ambrose comes across as the person shaping Rachel’s destiny: ‘A hand dropped abrupt as iron on Rachel’s shoulder; it might have been a bolt from heaven. She fell beneath it, and … Through the waving stems she saw a figure, large and shapeless against the sky’ (268); and Rachel, the protagonist, appears a complex of symbols, symbolizing femininity, primordial forces and innocence: ‘An uncomfortable sensation kept Rachel silent; on the one hand, she wished to whirl high and strike a spark out of the cool pink flesh; on the other she perceived there was nothing to be done but to drift past each other in silence’ (242); ‘Like a ball of thistledown it [Rachel’s spirit] kissed the sea, rose, kissed it again …’ (29); ‘I can’t think’, Rachel exclaimed, ‘how any one does it!’ (57).

In addition, natural elements such as storm, birds and trees acquire symbolic value in their contexts of use. Storm occurs twice in the narrative at key narrative points— one to arouse passion in Rachel’s heart by her first contact as a woman with a man: ‘Next morning the storm was on them … let the ship bounce and tumble. Their sensations were
the sensations of potatoes in a sack on a galloping horse. The world outside was merely a violent grey tumult’ (61); another storm soon after Rachel’s death: ‘People had just begun to eat again, when a gust of cold air came through the open windows, lifting table-cloths and skirts, a light flashed, and was instantly followed by a clap of thunder right over the hotel’ (347). Bird imagery is used intermittently, for instance, as in ‘He led her off to his own quarters, and, sitting … looking uncommonly like a sea-gull, with her white tapering body and thin alert face, Mrs. Dalloway had to listen to the tirade of a fanatical man’ (45). The tree symbol is significant, since it is used to symbolize eternity in contrast to human impermanence: ‘She [Rachel] might have walked until …, had it not been for the interruption of a tree … It was an ordinary tree, but to her it appeared so strange that it might have been the only tree in the world. … Having seen a sight that would last her for a lifetime … the tree once more sank into the ordinary ranks of trees …’ (159-60).

However, the significant symbols having a bearing on narrative structure and thematic structure are *the voyage* and *the sea/waves*. They are analyzed below in terms of lexical sets and collocations and/or semantico-syntactic relations:

1. The Voyage:

i) *The voyage had begun*, and had begun happily with a soft blue sky, and a calm sea. The sense of untapped resources, things to say as yet unsaid, made the hour significant, so that in future years the entire journey perhaps would be represented by this one scene (17).

ii) They followed her on to the deck. All the smoke and the houses had disappeared, and the ship was out in a wide space of sea, very fresh and clear though pale in the early light. They had left London sitting on its mud. … They were free of roads, free of mankind, and the same exhilaration at their freedom ran through them all (20).

iii) But, on the other hand, an immense dignity had descended upon her [the ship]; she was an inhabitant of the great world, … travelling all day across the empty universe, with the veils drawn before her and behind. She was more lonely than the caravan crossing the desert; she was infinitely more mysterious, moving by her own power and sustained by her own resources. The sea might give her death or some unexampled joy, and none would know it. She was a bride going forth to her husband, a virgin unknown of men; in her vigour and purity she might be likened to all beautiful things, for as a ship she had a life of her own (25).

iv) Next morning the storm was on them, and no politeness could ignore it. … For comfort they retreated to their cabins, where with tightly wedged feet they let the ship bounce and tumble. Their sensations were the sensations of potatoes in a sack on a galloping horse. The world outside was merely a violent grey tumult (61).
v) At night, indeed, … the little ship– shrunk to a few beads of light out among the dark waves, … – seemed something mysterious and impressive to heated partners resting from the dance. She became a ship passing in the night– an emblem of the loneliness of human life, an occasion for queer confidences and sudden appeals for sympathy (78).

vi) By nine o’clock the Euphrosyne had taken up her position in the middle of a great bay; she dropped her anchor; immediately, as if she were a recumbent giant requiring examination, small boats came swarming about her. She rang with cries; men jumped on to her; her deck was thumped by feet (78).

vii) Rachel, to whom the end of the voyage meant a complete change of perspective, was too much bewildered by the approach of the shore … (79).

The actual voyage or the ship, Euphrosyne, embodies the ‘symbolic vision’ of the novel– of Rachel’s life and death– at once merging the ‘fact’ and ‘vision’ in an ideal form, which illustrates Woolf’s theory of symbols. The voyage functions on multiple levels– on the literal level, the journey from England to South American island, Santa Marina and the trip up the river from Santa Marina into the native wilderness, echoing Conrad’s Heart of Darkness where the journey of Marlow starts from the sick civilized world to sinister and evil wilderness; secondly, on the metaphorical level, the voyage has been interpreted variously by many critics. Thakur (1965:12) observes, ‘… it was a voyage out into the world of experience and comprehension of life’. McDowell, F. P. W. (1980:76) remarks, ‘… as a result of voyage that takes her not only outward, away from England, but inward into the deepest reaches of the spirit.’

For the researcher, the symbol of voyage encompasses the whole narrative and the centrality of the symbol is manifest when everything– from structure, character, setting and the multiple themes from the existentialist to the feminist issues– can be deduced from it. In example (i), ‘the voyage had begun’ and ‘had begun happily’ and in example (vii) ‘the end of the voyage’ for Rachel with ‘a complete change of perspective’ and ‘much bewildered’ – the voyage of her life, in a matter of 79 pages in the novel of 352 pages, is symbolically over for Rachel. The voyage had a purpose: ‘The sense of untapped resources, things to say as yet unsaid’ (example i) and the things that happen to Rachel on board the ship (Richard Dalloway’s kiss, for instance) make her ‘bewildered’ (example vii). The course of the voyage was marked by ‘happily with a soft blue sky, and a calm sea’ (example i), ‘a wide space of sea, very fresh and clear … free of roads, free of mankind, … exhilaration at their freedom (example ii), but soon ‘the storm was on them, … let the ship to bounce and tumble … the world a violent grey tumult’ (example iv), and
'the little ship– shrunk …– an emblem of the loneliness of human life’ (example v) and the ship ‘rang with cries; men jumped on to her; her deck was thumped by feet, (example vi). The journey which begins with happiness, peace and freedom ends with cries and thumping– the course of events closely made to resemble Rachel’s journey of life and death. Example (iii) personifies the ship with human attributes, particularly with feminine graces, characterizing Rachel herself as if she is a vessel traversing the ‘empty universe, with the veils drawn before her and behind. She was more lonely … more mysterious …, moving by her own power and sustained by her own resources.’ Reference to death and ‘unexampled joy’ and the ship’s comparison with ‘a bride going forth to her husband, a virgin unknown of men; in her vigour and purity’ aptly characterize Rachel and her imminent destiny. Just one symbol is made to stand for multiple things in the narrative, ultimately foregrounding death, as Rachel’s ‘voyage out’ of life and voyage into nothingness/death.

2. Sea/Waves:

   i) They [Mr. and Mrs. Ambrose] went a few places and Rachel saw them kiss. Down she looked into the depth of the sea. While it was slightly disturbed by the passage of the Euphrosyne, beneath it was green and dim, and it grew dimmer and dimmer until the sand at the bottom was only a pale blue (20).

   ii) Did she [Mrs. Dalloway] realize, … what a very small part of the world the land was? How peaceful, how beautiful, how benignant in comparison the sea? The deep waters could sustain Europe unaided if every earthly animal died of the plague tomorrow … … Here were the treasures which the great ocean had bestowed upon him– pale fish in greenish liquids, blobs of jelly with streaming tresses, fish with lights in their heads, they lived so deep (45).

   iii) They were both trembling. Rachel stood up and went. Her head was cold, her knees shaking; … She leant upon the rail of the ship, and gradually ceased to feel for a chill of the body and mind crept over her. Far out between the waves little black and white sea-birds were riding. Rising and falling with smooth and graceful movements in the hollows of the waves they seemed singularly detached and unconcerned (67).

   iv) Hewet and Rachel reached the edge of the cliff, looking down into the sea. … Rachel lay down on her elbow. … The water was very calm; rocking up and down at the base of the cliff, and so clear. … So it had been at the birth of the world, and so it had remained ever since. … Obeying some impulse, she determined to mar that eternity of peace, and threw the largest pebble she could find. It struck the water, and the ripples spread out and out (194).
v) Voices crying behind them never reached through the waters in which they were sunk … Raising herself and sitting up, she too realized Helen’s soft body, the strong and hospitable arms, and happiness swelling and breaking in one vast wave (268).

vi) It seemed to her now that what he was saying was perfectly true, and that she wanted many more things than the love of one human being— the sea, the sky. She turned again and looked at the distant blue, which was so smooth and serene— where the sky met the sea; she could not possibly want only one human being (285).

vii) The heat was suffocating. At last the faces went further away; she fell into a pool of sticky water, which eventually closed over her head. She saw nothing and heard nothing— but a faint booming sound, which was the sound of the sea rolling over her head. While all her tormentors thought that she was dead, she was not dead but curled up at the bottom of the sea. There she lay, sometimes seeing darkness, sometimes light, while every now and then someone turned here over at the bottom of the sea (322).

The sea/waves acquire symbolic value by their use in different contexts in the passages above. In all the examples, the sea/wave acquires meaning and significance with reference to Rachel’s relationship with them. In example (i), Rachel’s emotions on seeing a couple kiss each other, are reflected in the sea, who became, metaphorically, ‘slightly disturbed’ and ‘grew dimmer and dimmer’, signifying her ignorance or dislike of what she saw. Example (ii) presents the sea as an image of benevolent nature bestowing its riches on the human world. Example (iii) presents the agonizing reactions of Rachel after Richard Dalloway kissed her. She looked at the sea and the waves, rising and falling rhythmically, and she felt them insensitive and unconcerned about her plight. Example (iv) presents, once again, Rachel looking into the sea and ‘its eternity of peace’ and comparing her own disturbance by the passion of love. In vengeance, she threw a pebble and disturbed the calm waters. Example (v) presents the love of Rachel and Terence in the form of swelling waves. Example (vi) reverses the context by presenting Rachel desire the sea and the sky rather than Terence, her rejection of the human world for the natural world. Example (vii) presents Rachel’s death bed and her consciousness floating away and herself lying dead at the bottom of the sea. Rachel’s voyage of life, thus, begins and ends with the sea— the eternal emblem of spiritual forces.

In her later novels, the sea/waves would assume enormous proportions in the vision of Woolf’s novelistic art.
2.2.4.3 Poetic Style:

Linguistically, poetic style consists in new and deviant forms of expression. As noted earlier in Ch. I (1.1.6.3), the two schools of Russian Formalism and the Prague Linguistic Circle developed a theory of poetic language and put forward some significant notions regarding the nature of poetic language. The central argument was that the characteristic poetic function of language consists in foregrounding and estranging language consciously and creatively against the background of non-literary language by devices of deviation, repetition and parallelism. According to Jakobson (1960:356), the focus on the message for its own sake becomes the poetic function. The basic characteristic that he finds in the poetic function lies in the fact that the poetic use of language ‘projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection onto the axis of combination’ (ibid:358). The particular language patterns work to establish connections (the principle of equivalence) between the words he chooses from the pool of possible words (the axis of selection) and the words that are combined across the poetic line (the axis of combination). According to Leech (1969), poetic style consists in linguistic foregrounding of irregularity, that of deviation and of regularity, that of parallelism.

According to William Baker (1967:32), dislocation, elaboration, fragmentation and regularity are four syntactic types which are characteristic of poetic language. The syntactic dislocation– syntactic inversion is defined as an alternation in the normal location of words or word-groups although radical dislocation may also introduce ambiguity about the character of some sentence element. Elaboration is a quantitative change in character, in that on extraordinary number of word groups with the same character function together in one sentence and often, though not necessarily in the same location. Fragmentation is an unusual alteration in location; it occurs when a word or word group is without an orthodox location with respect to other words. ‘And a regular sentence is, of course, a string of words of appropriate character in their customary relations.’ (Baker, 1967:32)

Though Woolf’s novels have been called ‘poetic novels’, VO may not be called so, because the pull of the narrative is greater than that of the poetic rendering of life in the novel. However, within the solid narrative structure of the novel, Woolf has incorporated the poet’s vision in her preference for the essence of experience rather than facts of life, since it is Rachel’s inner voyage into love and then death which is foregrounded rather than imperialism or feminism– the facts of life. A close reading of the novel reveals the
deliberate patterning of VO at all levels—structure, thematic complexity and style. Though in a scattered manner, the devices generally associated with verse such as syntactic inversion, deviation and parallelism, allusions, verbal echo and metaphorical processes are used in the text. Following Baker (1967), the poetic style of the text is analyzed as below:

A) Deviation and Parallelism:

i) Sick they were not; but the wind propelled them hastily … (61). (inversion and dislocation)

ii) On and on it went in the distance, the senseless and cruel churning of the water (257). (inversion)

iii) They’re gross, they’re absurd, they’re utterly intolerable! (309). (parallelism)

B) Figurative Language:

1. Happily the tropical suns had bleached the tapestries to a faded blue-green colour, and the mirror with its frame of shells, the work of the steward’s love, when the time hung heavily in the southern seas, was quaint rather than ugly. Twisted shells with red lips like unicorn’s horns ornamented the mantelpiece, which was draped by a pall of purple plush from which depended a certain number of balls (12).

The imaginative rendering of a room on board the ship, Euphrosyne, with the tropical sun’s bleaching, time hanging away, shells with red lips and the alliteration underlined above amount to figurative rendering of the scene.

2.2.4.4 Mind Style:

Since Halliday’s (1981) discussion of transitivity patterns in William Golding’s novel The Inheritors, the concept of ‘mind style’ has become an important stylistic preoccupation with stylisticians. Because the transitivity patterns reveal the world-view, a structuring of experience, that is significant in the text under consideration. Halliday considers these as an expression of the overall point of view of the novelist. Halliday (1981:350) observes, ‘Particular syntactic options have been selected with a greater than expected frequency– taken in the context of the ideational function of language as a whole, related to an interpretation of the meaning of the work, they are relevant both as subject matter and as underlying theme.’

Roger Fowler (1977:76) defines ‘mind style’: ‘Cumulatively, consistent structural options, agreeing in cutting the presented world to one pattern or another, give rise to an impression of a world view, what I shall call a ‘mind-style’.’ Leech and Short (1981:187) remark, ‘Mind style is particularly appropriate where the choices made are consistent
throughout a text or part of a text. Such a consistent choice of a particular stylistic variable might be on the part of a novelist, a narrative or a character.’ They cite the example of Henry James that abstractness and complexity of syntactic embedding are the well-known characteristics of the style of Henry James; but these characteristics give rise to the complex social vision which James creates.

Since the novel VO deals with the modern materialistic world and its oppressive mechanism of the State, imperialism, capitalism and patriarchy, it justifiably deals with its impact on individuality and inner cravings of human heart which Woolf sums up in one word– silence. ‘This reticence– this isolation– that’s what’s the matter with modern life!’ (66). The sense of isolation breeds the problem of communication and profound silence: ‘What solitary icebergs we are, Miss Vinrace! How little we can communicate!’ (66). Woolf makes silence speak, in giving expression to the complex inner world of feeling and desire. Silence, as the symbol of the chaos of soul– disturbing, inexpressible and yet profoundly real– ‘the dryness of soul’ (84) is articulated in the text through fragmented speeches of the characters– both male and female, ‘the universal silence’ (114): ‘Silence fell upon one and then upon another, until they were all silent, their mind spilling out into the deep blue air’ (135); ‘An uncomfortable sensation kept Rachel silent; … she wished to whirl high and strike a spark out of the cool pink flesh; on the other she perceived there was nothing to be done but to drift past each other in silence’ (242).

In addition to the culture of oppression and suppression caused by the modern materialistic civilization, Woolf considers ‘silence’ as an existential condition confronting mankind with the hostile Nature, unreasonableness of fate and randomness of events. All the major characters in the novel feel the overpowering sense of chaotic world beyond the control of human agency and interference. Speech becomes apparently meaningless and subordinate to the silence– the silence which is oppressive. Woolf provides a compelling reading of the troubled emotions of characters, particularly of Rachel and Hewet, with the apocalyptic tone in some passages as in: ‘Why was it that relations between different people were so unsatisfactory, so fragmentary, so hazardous, and words so dangerous that the instinct to sympathize with another human being was an instinct to be examined carefully and probably crushed’ (178); ‘There had always been something imperfect in their happenings, something they had wanted and had not been able to get. It had been fragmentary and incomplete, because they were so young and had not known what they
were doing’ (326).

In the search for non-verbal reality, the language becomes fragmentary, with abrupt endings, sometimes without clues as to the unspoken words. The fragmented expressions are the foregrounded features in the text, which draw attention to their significance by their prominence as well as relevance in the text. Silence, or fragmented speech, linguistically, is a gap in expression, ellipsis of semantic content only to be retrieved, at places, from the contextual and the cotextual features. Some examples highlighting the problem of communication are:

1 ‘You have an inestimable power– for good or for evil. What couldn’t you d–’, he broke off (66).

2 ‘But I do envy those clever chaps sometimes’, Arthur remarked. ‘I don’t suppose they ever …’ He did not finish his sentence (126).

3 If I were to die tomorrow …’, she began. The broken sentences had an extraordinary beauty and detachment in Hewet’s ears (171).

4 ‘Oh, you’re free Rachel. To you, time will make no difference, or marriage or …’ (265).

5 ‘What’s the use of talking? What’s the use …?’ she ceased (338).

6 Broken words formed themselves at last among Evelyn’s sobs … (337).

These examples, with fragmented syntax at the end part, suggest the overpowering agony of the speakers and the inexpressibility of the same in terms of language. Conversely, Woolf demonstrates how ‘language’ itself can be repressive, which blocks the free flow of thought and emotion, and thus, calls into question the so-called expressiveness of language. Hence, silence or fragmentation is Woolf’s discursive and subversive strategy to counter the authoritarian, rigid, conventional structures and her plea to liberate language to make it expressive and liberating for the characters, which she achieves in her later novels.

For Rachel, living in the patriarchal system, who is brought up in a severely constricted family atmosphere with only a piano for her diversion and books for her edification, language becomes problematic. Rachel stammers– ‘I’m going out to t-t-triumph in the wind’ (16), and throughout the text, her difficulty in expressing herself is highlighted: ‘It blows– it blows!’ gasped Rachel, the words rammed down her throat.’ (11); ‘In solitude they could express those beautiful but too vast desires… desires for a world, such as their own world which contained two people seemed them to be …’ (274). Thus, for Woolf, the ellipsis or textual gap in the text of VO is a feminist strategy to expose
the unsuitability of the man-made language for women, which she explores in more detail in *A Room of One’s Own* (1945 [1929], *ROO*, hereafter).

### 2.2.4.5 Feminist Stylistics: The Female Sentence:

Woolf was a pioneer modernist and a pioneer feminist who sought to challenge the traditional novel by experimenting with its formal features such as plot, characterization and technique, and also by incorporating in the hitherto male bastion, a woman’s vision of life. Living in the era of competitive modernism alongside Joyce and Proust, her experimentation acquired a unique, distinctive quality informed by her feminist concerns. Bernard Blackstone (1956:12-13) rightly observes, ‘Virginia Woolf was, from first to last, intensely making a different thing out of the novel. As a woman novelist, she wanted to create her own form. So, she experiments ceaselessly in new forms, new techniques, always trying to get nearer to an integral expression of life’.

In her landmark feminist treatise, *ROO* (1976 [1929]), Woolf problematizes the hitherto comfortable relationship between reality and the novel form. Her purpose was to expose the traditional representationalism—its exclusivity and lope-sidedness in dealing with subject matter which deals with, by and large, male values and male culture, and in what she calls, the masculine structure of the novel. She observes (*ROO*, 1976:72), ‘Novel as a whole seems to be a creation owing to a certain looking-glass-likeness to life—though, of course, with simplifications and distortions. Shape is made by the relation of human being to human being. And since a novel has this correspondence to real life, its values are those of real life…. . It is the masculine values that prevail…. . These values are inevitably transferred from life to fiction’. As to the structure of the novel form, she observes (ibid:74), ‘A book is not made up of sentences laid from end to end, but sentences built, if an image helps, into arcades or domes. And this shape too has been made by men out of their own needs for their own use.’ Hence, according to Woolf, women writers cannot be at ease with the novel form. The masculine values have permeated it for so long that they have become the norm. She believed it to be the gift of the woman novelist to rejuvenate it by providing a corrective to the lope-sidedness by incorporating female vision of life into it.

Woolf, throughout her literary career, was concerned with dismantling the traditional discursive style of the novel— the language of the novel and its lowest common denominator, the sentence structure. For her, language is literally ‘man-made’ and that
women cannot fit their ideas and expressions into a language which has been constructed according to their needs. She observes (qtd. in Cameron, 1990a:37), ‘A woman has many difficulties to face. The very form of the sentence does not fit her. It is a sentence made by men: it is too loose, too heavy, too, pompous for a woman’s use. Yet in a novel, it covers so wide a stretch of ground, an ordinary and usual type of sentence has to be found to carry the reader on easily and naturally from one end of the book to the other. And this a woman must make for herself, altering and adapting the current sentence until she writes one that takes the natural shape of her thought without crushing or distorting it’ (italics supplied). This was her clarion call to the women writers to free themselves from the man-made sentence in order to express themselves freely.

In ROO (77), Woolf gives one example of male sentence handed down to her from 19th century:

‘The grandeur of their works was an argument with them, not to stop short, but to proceed. They could have no higher excitement or satisfaction than in the exercise of their art and endless generation of truth and beauty. Success prompts to exertion; and habit facilitates success.’ That is a man’s sentence; behind it one can see Johnson, Gibbon, and the rest. It was a sentence unsuited for a woman’s use.’

Woolf was one of the first woman writers to notice and understand the relationship between ideology and language and to locate ideological messages at the level of sentence structure. She metaphorically sees the above quoted ‘male’ sentence as an imposing architecture, an instrument of oppression, an institutionalized and archaic entity which should be resisted and challenged at all costs.

Woolf does not analyze the sentence cited above or pinpoint the linguistic components that make it a gendered sentence. However, one can draw several inferences from it which reveal its gendered nature: firstly, on the level of content, it expresses male experiences and flatters male achievements couched in bombastic or pompous vocabulary (grandeur, argument, satisfaction, excitement, truth, beauty, success, exertion); secondly, the masculine, the undisputed voice of the narrator– the authoritarian idea of omniscience– who takes the centralized moral standpoint to assert the grandiose values of truth and beauty and male exertion as key to their success; thirdly, at the grammatical level, the clarity and precision in the choice of vocabulary, the linear and logical progression of syntactic structure– indicating the rigid code, aggressive, concise and purposive style; and lastly, but most importantly, it illustrates how language is the medium for construction of
human ‘self’ and which shapes the way we think about the world– language as constitutive of ‘self’ or ‘subject’. Woolf observes (ROO, 1976:98-99), ‘Man’s writing so direct, so straightforward … . It indicated such freedom of mind… such confidence in himself … . But a shadow seemed to lie across the page … the letter ‘I’ … to catch a glimpse of the landscape behind it … . One began to be tired of ‘I’; honest and logical; as hard as a nut, and polished for centuries by good teaching and good feeding. Turn another page … in the shadow of the letter ‘I’, all is shapeless as mist. Is that a tree? No, it is a woman. But, … she has not a bone in her body.’

Therefore, Woolf launches a stylistic programme in her writings to counter the male sentence and provide an alternative to it. In this connection, she praises Dorothy Richardson whom she credits with inventing a ‘female sentence’. In her 1923 review of Richardson’s Revolving Lights, Woolf applauds her exploration of a unique feminine thought. She observes (qtd. in Cameron, 1990, 72),

‘Miss Richardson has invented, or if she has not invented, developed and applied to her own uses, a sentence which we might call the psychological sentence of the feminine gender. It is a more elastic fiber than the old, capable of stretching to the extreme, of suspending the frailest particles, of enveloping the vaguest shapes’ (italics supplied).

Thus, Woolf is the first to define the female sentence in positive terms. It is subversive in orientation, the purpose being to dismantle the rigid, authoritarian framework of the sentence structure and to make it flexible, inclusive and supple instrument at the hands of women writers.

It is this ‘psychological sentence of the feminine gender’– the free, amorphous, open-ended sentence structure– which constitutes her aesthetic of language. This is her antidote, her modernist, ideological counterblast to the well-entrenched man-made systems and values. Modernism glorifies and celebrates such odd, disconnected, fragmented structures which represent a digression from societal strictures and propriety, because ‘these generate moments of greater humanity, than the straight and narrow conventional ‘unified’ narrative path’ (Randy Malamud:37).

The sentence is one of the linguistic structures that modernism challenges and reworks. James Joyce perhaps is the most flagrant modernist sentence-tamperer, with his final forty-five page episode of Ulysses (1922) broken down into eight sentences. Finnegans Wake (1939), of course, begins and ends in mid-sentence. Joyce shows one way
in which the linguistic revolution may take place: he destroys the most integral and accepted units of discourse, simply to show that it can be done, and that he can continue writing without depending on the structures that have been imposed on the literary tradition. He seems to assert that the destruction has been cathartic for the modern age.

Woolf experiments with the sentence structure and also demonstrates how one must interrupt and destroy the sentence as it stands. Susan J. Leonardi (1986:151) argues that Woolf feels the need to reject specifically ‘the man’s sentence, the hierarchical sentence of the literary tradition she inherited— that is, the sentence which privileges facts, subordination, and objective judgment, instead of the interior of things. Woolf makes this rejection of the hierarchical sentence specifically feminine. The lack of clear distinction, and fragmentation, characteristic of the modern world, has always been characteristic of women’s world’.

Woolf’s rebellion against the male sentence and her preference for the female sentence influenced the French feminists. Irigary and Helen Cixous developed the theory of ‘écriture feminine’ and Julia Kristeva developed the semiotic theory which refers to the pre-linguistic stage of the child, an area of rhythm, colour and play in language as against the symbolic form (the Law of Father) of language.

However, a number of feminist critics have rejected Woolf’s formulation of ‘female sentence’. Sara Mills (1995) argues that there is confusion between gender difference and writing. Defining a female sentence is not defining a sentence at all, but defining females as lacking something in relation to the male or masculine. To consider the female sentence as deviant form of male counterpart leads to a consideration of male sentence as the implicit norm, which could be termed phallocentric.

Deborah Cameron (1985) and Jennifer Coates (1986) criticized the ‘difference theory’ by stating that it is based on preconceptions and ignored contrary evidence. Sara Mills (1995:52) observes, ‘We might be able to find examples of female sentence full of subordination, where the subordination could be interpreted as refusing closure, endlessly deferring an authoritative statement, and therefore, it is clearly not sentence structure which is really at issue here, but interpretative schemata’. Montique Wittig (1983:2) remarks there is no ‘feminine writing’. It stands for women, thus merging a practice with a myth of woman. ‘Feminine writing’ is the naturalizing metaphor of the brutal fact of the
domination of women by men, and it is something to do with the assertions of power. The ‘third wave’ feminists have challenged the binary opposition between male values and female values and are interested in the multiplicity of gendered identities and associated linguistic behaviours.

Woolf, from her first novel itself, was out to dismantle the traditional authoritarian sentence structure and take liberties with it. Since VO has the feminist content, the language also exhibits the tendency to reject authoritarian structures of the past.

A few examples which are uncharacteristic of the conventional ‘male’ language are:

1. Accumulation of details in a sentence:
   i) … were now anxious to name the places beneath them and to hang them upon stores of information about navies and armies, political parties, natives and mineral products– all of which combined, they said, to prove that South America was the country of the future (124).

2. Postponement or deferment of completion of sentence:
   i) It appeared that this was a great manufacturing place, where the people were making things, as though the West End, with its electric lamps, its vast plate-glass windows all shining yellow, its carefully-finished houses, and tiny live figures trotting on the pavement, or bowled along on wheels in the road, was the finished work (6).

3. Co-ordination/Parataxis as characteristic sentence structure:
   i) In the minds of both the passengers the blue flag appeared a sinister token, and this the moment for presentiments, but nevertheless they rose, gathered their things together, and climbed on deck (7).

4. Incomplete sentences and abrupt endings:
   i) ‘That is the type of lady with whom I find myself distinctly out of sympathy. She – ’ (43).
   ii) ‘It’s insolent to – ’ said Rachel, and stopped (142).

5. Interrupted sentences which indicate author-interference in the middle of the sentence reminding the style of Lawrence Sterne in Tristram Shandy:
   i) ‘We go on year after year without talking about these things – . He broke off (76).
   ii) ‘But I do envy those clever chaps sometimes’, Arthur remarked. ‘I don’t suppose they ever …’. He did not finish his sentence (126).
   iii) ‘She’s young, you’re both young; and marriage – ’. Here she ceased (275).
To sum up the discussion on Woolf’s style in *VO*, it could be said that the rupture in the structure, the shared point of view, the lexical experimentation, the conscious choice of certain types of syntax, the use of phonological aspects as thematic echo, the apparently violent semantic deviations, the interiorization of the narrative and the preferred thematic concerns reveal Woolf as a genius even in her first novel. Though in a tentative way, Woolf’s determined efforts at dismantling the traditional novel are clearly visible and laudable. Her use of language and style in the novel is substantially subversive and ideologically charged in the context of her modernist and feminist concerns.

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