THE EARLIER AND LATER WORKS OF VIRGINIA WOOLF.

by

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A.B., College of Emporia, 1906

Submitted to the Department of English and the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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PREFACE

The idea of making a study of the works of Mrs. Virginia Stephen Woolf was suggested to me while I was doing graduate work in the University of Chicago. The fact that Mrs. Woolf is the daughter of the illustrious Sir Leslie Stephen, first editor of the Dictionary of National Biography, made Mrs. Woolf's work a more attractive field, because of her literary background. Originally it was planned that the study should cover but one of her early and one of her later novels, and that the investigation should be made wholly from the point of view of scientific analysis of style, to determine the changes evident in the style of her later novels; but as the investigation continued, it seemed best to deal with her novels, short stories, and essays of both the earlier and later periods. The study of style by mechanical analysis, then, became secondary, and appears in the appendix. I have attempted an appreciative and interpretative study of all the books Mrs. Woolf has published and of the essays that have appeared in magazines, in the hope of making an estimate of her methods of fiction, of her work as a critic, and of her style.

It is with sincere appreciation that I acknowledge the assistance of Professor E. M. Hopkins in the direction and revision of this investigation. To Professor Josephine
Burnham, I am indebted for valuable suggestions and for her kindly encouragement. To Professor R. D. O'Leary, I am grateful for information and for his interest in the progress of the work.
# THE EARLIER AND LATER WORKS OF VIRGINIA WOOLF.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Virginia Woolf's Background for Authorship</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. The Stephen Family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Leonard Sidney Woolf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. The Bloomsbury Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. The Criticism of Mrs. Woolf</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. The Fiction of Virginia Woolf</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Early Novels</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Short Stories</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Later Novels</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Conclusion</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Development of Method and Style in the Works of Virginia Woolf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Mrs. Woolf's Style Indicated by Analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE EARLIER AND LATER WORKS OF VIRGINIA WOOLF.
CHAPTER I

VIRGINIA WOOLF’S BACKGROUND FOR AUTHORSHIP

Heredity endowed Virginia Stephen Woolf with the spirit and the power of authorship; environment has stimulated and encouraged her; a vivid imagination and a desire to work out new methods have led her to create some of the most unusual novels of the present period, and a number of excellent short stories, sketches, and essays, both critical and personal, that teem with insight, wit, and satire.

A long line of Virginia Stephen’s ancestors have left their names in the literary, the legal, and the clerical history of England. Her great-great-great grandfather wrote *The Eternity of Hell Torments Asserted*. Her great-great grandfather, James Stephen, wrote a pamphlet entitled, *Consideration of Imprisonment for Debt*, the result of his own imprisonment after unfortunate speculations. In this he showed that such punishment was a violation of Magna Charta. Her great grandfather, James Stephen, began his literary career as a reporter for the *Morning Post*. He was connected with Wilberforce in his agitation against the slave trade, and wrote much about slavery. One of his noted pamphlets is *War in Disguise*. He was a man of "natural eloquence and spoke with much effect," says his biographer. ¹

¹. *Dictionary of National Biography* "James Stephen" vol LIV
Her grandfather, Sir James Stephen, was a man of political prominence in English Colonial history. As under-secretary of state for the colonies, it is said, he literally ruled the colonial empire and won, thereby, the title of "King Stephen." He, too, wrote against slavery, and prepared, with unusual rapidity and precision, the measure for abolition in 1833. He was interested in establishing a responsible government in Canada. As a journalist, he wrote for the Edinburgh Review. His chief writings are Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography and Lectures on the History of France.

To her father, Virginia Woolf owes much. Sir Leslie Stephen, K. C. B., ranks among the great contributors to English letters of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He is known most widely, perhaps, for his connection with the Dictionary of National Biography. Of the first twenty volumes he was sole editor, and with Sidney Lee was joint editor of five volumes. To it he contributed in all 378 articles of over one thousand pages. He is the author of Hours in a Library, begun after reading a copy of My Study Windows, by his friend, James Russell Lowell. Other noted works by Stephen are History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century; The Life of Sir

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James Fitz James Stephen (his brother); and for the English Men of Letters series, he wrote five notable biographies: Swift, Pope, Samuel Johnson, George Eliot, and Hobbes. The Playground of Europe, is a volume the popularity of which is evidenced by two editions, a reissue, and two reprints. This is, of course, only a partial list of Leslie Stephen's writings. As a journalist, he wrote for the Saturday Review, the Pall Mall Gazette, the Nation (New York), and was editor of the Cornhill Magazine for eleven years.

This by no means completes the list of family names in the field of British letters, for there was her uncle, Sir James Fitz James Stephen, who was connected with the Pall Mall Gazette, the Saturday Review, and Cornhill; and was secretary of the education committee, 1858-1861. To him is largely due the success of the commission in laying the foundation of popular education in England. It is interesting to note that he was Carlyle's executor. His son, James Kenneth Stephen, is author of two volumes of verse, "Lapus Calami." 6

There should also be added relationship to present day writers, the Diceys, the Darwins, the Maitlands, the Stracheyes; 7 in fact, "Mrs. Woolf," says Raymond Mortimer,

5. Dictionary of National Biography
6. Ibid
"is related to half the scholarly families of England." 8

More closely connected with Mrs. Woolf are her sister Vanessa Stephen Bell, the painter, and her husband Clive Bell, critic and author of Landmarks of the Nineteenth Century Paintings, and of a volume of poems. Her husband, Leonard Sidney Woolf, too, is a writer, editor, and publisher. He is the author of a novel "The Village in the Jungles; a book of essays, Hunting the Highbrow; of Imperialism and Civilization; and of other books dealing with government and economics, and of critical essays on literature, history, and politics. 9 For a time he was literary editor of the Athenaeum both before and after the merging of that paper with the Nation.

Not only are Virginia and Leonard Woolf interested in producing literature with their own pens, but the interest of the publisher prompted them to set up a press of their own at Richmond, London. This venture has been so successful that the Hogarth Press of Bloomsbury is the result.

Among their close friends of literary and artistic bent are Lytton Strachey, E. M. Forster, John Maynard Keynes, economist, and Duncan Grant, painter. These with the Woolfs and the Bells form what is known as the Bloomsbury group. To these friends, Mrs. Woolf read her first imaginative sketches which were her first efforts in the stream

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8. Hottimer, Raymond, Mrs. Woolf and Mr. Strachey, Bookman 68: 625 February 1929
9. Who's Who 1931
The childhood and girlhood home of Virginia Stephen was an interesting one. Her father, Sir Leslie Stephen, was never too busy to enjoy his children. Their mother was the early teacher of Virginia and her sister. At the death of Mrs. Stephen, the father took upon himself the work of tutor, and daily gave two valuable hours from his writing to their instruction. Later, with him they studied Greek and German.

One of Leslie Stephen's daughters writes this delightful impression of her father: "My impression as a child always was that my father was not much older than we were." He drew pictures for them, cut animals out of paper; he read to them Tom Brown, Treasure Island, Carlyle's French Revolution, Scott, Hawthorne, Austen, Shakespeare; and from the beginning he drew from them their opinions as to the merits of the work under consideration, and their ideas of the characters. Excellent training this, for the development of critical insight. He repeated from memory poems of Wordsworth, Tennyson, Arnold. "Thus," says the daughter, "many of the great English poems now seem to me inseparable from my father; I hear in them not only his voice, but in

10. Bell, Clive, Virginia Woolf Dial 77: 451
11. Virginia Woolf's mother was Julia Princep Jackson, (note continues on next page)
some sort his teaching and his belief."  

Steeped from childhood in the lore of letters, and living in a home of letters where other great authors came and where Virginia Stephen herself presided over the tea-

table, and heard critical discussions and other literary talk, it is no wonder Mrs. Woolf became a writer.

This background has been dwelt on at length because through all this may be seen certain tendencies and character-

istics of the author under consideration.

(Note 11 continued) -

daughter of Dr. John Jackson (who for a long time was a physician in Calcutta) and his wife Maria Pattle. Julia

Princep Jackson married Herbert Duckworth. He died in 1870.

Leslie Stephen's first wife was Marian Thackeray,
youngest daughter of William Makepeace Thackeray. They had

one daughter, Laura. Mrs. Marian Stephen died in 1874. In

1878 Mr. Stephen married Mrs. Duckworth, who was the mother

of Vanessa and Virginia and two sons. These facts are

found in the Dictionary of National Biography, 3 "Supplement

Volume 3; and Maitland, Frederick Wm, Life and Letters of


These facts should be noted because of the mistaken

idea that Virginia Woolf is the grand-daughter of Thackeray

as given (1) in the 1930 edition of Moody and Lovett's

History of English Literature, p 504; (2) in an article by

Matthew Josephson, "Virginia Woolf as Novelist", New

Republic, 66: 226, April 15, 1931. The writers in both of

these articles assert that Virginia Woolf's literary tendencies

are from Thackeray.

12. Maitland, Life and Letters of Leslie Stephen p 474

One of the chief convictions of the whole Stephen family has been in regard to freedom. They firmly believed in the right of personal freedom - physical, mental, spiritual. From the earliest days of the slave question in England and her colonies, this conviction lined them on the side of the slave, even down through the American struggle of 1861-'65, throughout which Leslie Stephen added his voice to the cause of freedom of the slave. In July of 1863 he came to America and spent three months studying the question, and later wrote *The Times* and the American War. There was, too, the desire for freedom from religious creed and dogma which led Leslie Stephen to renounce his father's hopes that his son should take clerical orders.

Freedom of the individual from the possibility of imprisonment for debt was advocated by her great-great-grandfather. And in Virginia Woolf, the Stephen love of freedom exhibits itself in her emancipation from the conventions and iron-bound rules that governed the form of the novel, and from the conventional methods of character portrayed by word and action. Life, says Mrs. Woolf, is not bound by plot, why should a novel be? Life is not broken into bits called chapters, why should the story of life be so dissected? Life is governed by thought, by the subconscious self; let the novel accept this. Thus, freeing herself from literary custom, Virginia Woolf has evolved a psychological
novel that has excited the interest of critics and readers. Like Christopher Marlowe, who dared break the rule of centuries, Virginia Woolf has even dared to break the bounds of time itself, of life itself, and carry a single character through centuries from the sixteenth to the present, and more audacious yet through change of sex and evolves a character strong, virile, to meet the exigencies of modern life. In another novel she has thrown Christopher Marlowe's plan to the winds and has chosen to follow the ancient rule as to unity of time, and through a period of one day's time, by the medium of a stream-of-consciousness has given the life history of her heroine. In defense of her method, Mrs. Woolf says,

If one begins to analyze consciousness, it will be found that it is stirred by thousands of small irrelevant ideas stuffed with odds and ends of knowledge. Perhaps sympathy is of more value than interference, and understanding than judgment. 14

and on these ideas Mrs. Woolf works out some of her best novels.

Leslie Stephen says in Some Early Reminiscences, "I wrote with a certain happy audacity." 15 So it is with his daughter. Mrs. Woolf delights in young authors "who have not stiffened into attitudes and hardened into wrinkles." 16

15. Stephen, Leslie, Some Early Reminiscences
Thus has Mrs. Woolf disregarded all conventions, avoids certain "attitudes" and "wrinkles"; and this freedom has given her a high rank among her contemporaries.
CHAPTER II

THE CRITICISM OF MRS. WOOLF

It was in the field of criticism that Mrs. Woolf did her first work. For years before she published her first novel (1915), she had contributed anonymous reviews to The Times Literary Supplement. Her first book of criticism, a collection of essays, some of which had already appeared in The Times, and the Dial, some based on articles written for various newspapers, was published in 1925. The book is entitled The Common Reader, a phrase which she takes from Dr. Johnson's Life of Gray.

"I rejoice to concur with the common reader; for by the common sense of readers, uncorrupted by literary prejudices, after all the refinements of subtlety and the dogma of learning, must be finally decided all claim to poetical honours." 1

This common reader, says Mrs. Woolf, is neither critic nor scholar.

He reads for his own pleasure, rather than to impart knowledge or correct the opinions of others. Above all, he is guided by an instinct to create for himself, out of whatever odds and ends he can come by, some kind of a whole - a portrait of a man, a sketch of an age, a theory of the art of writing. (p 11)

Regardless of the fact that his reading may be hasty or superficial, his approval or disapproval has some share in forming the final estimate.

1. The Common Reader, New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co. 1925
From the Paston Letters she has reproduced a portrait of Chaucer

"grinning, malicious, in league with all foxes, donkeys, and hens, to mock the pomp and ceremonials of life — witty, intellectual, French, at the same time based upon a broad bottom of English humor."

The Paston Letters are written in the same homely terms about everyday English life about which Chaucer wrote — eating, drinking, fine weather, cocks, hens; and Sir John Paston, when at home, preferred to sit and read their prized volume of Chaucer rather than to assist his mother in the management of their estate.

Mrs. Woolf has given a sketch of an age in The Elizabethan Lumber Room in which she finds (1) Hakluyt's tales of distant lands which lured "apt young men lounging by the harbour-side to leave their nets and fish for gold" (p. 63); (2) the Elizabethan prose writers who "have the formlessness of youth," but the freshness of audacity" (p. 63); (3) its stage which was "the nursery where English prose learnt to use its feet" (p. 69); (4) its Thomas Browne whose "immense egotism paved the way for all psychological novelists, autobiographers, confession mongers, and dealers in curious shades of private life." (p. 70)

In several of the essays contained in this volume, Mrs. Woolf has stated the theory of writing which she has used in her own novels and short stories, and which other
authors are using today. She firmly believes that the novelist should be bound by no rules. The writer must be a free man, not a slave; he should write what he chooses, not what he must. Therefore, she says, there should be "no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted style," (p 312)

for

Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; but a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. (p 313)

It is, therefore, the duty of the novelist to keep as close to life as possible.

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. Let us not take it for granted that life exists more fully in what is commonly thought big than what is commonly thought small. (p 313)

But, says Mrs. Woolf,

Any method is right, every method is right, that expresses what we wish to express; (p 315)

therefore,

the problem before the novelist at present . . . is to constrive means of being free to set down what he chooses. . . . For the moderns, . . . the point of interest lies very likely in the dark places of psychology. (p 315)
Hence,

Everything is the proper stuff of fiction, every feeling, every thought; every quality of the brain and spirit is drawn upon; no perception comes amiss. (p 213)

In the essay on Montaigne, are similar statements which Mrs. Woolf gleaned from that great French writer, many of whose ideas she has incorporated in her theory of the novel; for example:

Rigidity is death; conformity is death; let us say what comes into our heads . . . and follow the most fantastic fancies without caring what the world does or thinks or says. For nothing matters except life. (Montaigne" p 94)

Montaigne wished "to communicate his soul." That the novel should communicate the soul of a hero or heroine is Mrs. Woolf's idea. This is what she has done in Jacob's Room, in Mrs. Dalloway, in Orlando, and in To the Lighthouse.

The novel should deal with the spiritual rather than with the material, says Mrs. Woolf, and herein lies the great difference between Mr. Welle, Mr. Bennett, and Mr. Galsworthy who deal with the material, the external, and writers like James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson, and Mrs. Woolf herself, who go to the spiritual, to the inner self, for their interpretation of life. The latter, therefore, come closer to life even though they do "discard most of the conventions which are commonly observed by the novelist. (p 213)
An article entitled "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" which Mrs. Woolf published in The Living Age in 1924, aroused much comment at the time as to Mrs. Woolf's attitude toward the Edwardians, and the stand she took for the Georgians. In this, Mrs. Woolf used some symbolism as she has in her novels. Mr. Bennett, of course, represents the Edwardian point of view, and Mrs. Brown the type of heroine the Georgians were attempting to capture. No Edwardian, says Mrs. Woolf, had given a single "man or woman we know." The effort of the Georgians is to bring back character to the novel. She prophesies:

The capture of Mrs. Brown is the title of the next chapter in the history of literature; and, let us prophesy again, that chapter will be the most important, the most illustrious, the most epoch making of them all. 2

In the essay, "The Elizabethan Lumber Room," Mrs. Woolf discusses Thomas Browne, who is another source of the inspiration of her idea that the "proper stuff" for fiction is anything, is everything.

In the brief essay, "The Patron and the Crocus," Mrs. Woolf falls back upon symbolism, a method she thoroughly enjoys. The crocus is the writer's blossom for which he must find a patron. The finding of a patron is the most important question for a young writer today, for upon that question depends the kind of crocus he will grow.

2. Woolf, Virginia, Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown Living Age 24: 233 F 2 '24
The Elizabethan patron was the aristocracy and the playhouse public. The eighteenth century patron was a combination coffee-house wit and Grub Street bookseller. In the nineteenth century the great writers wrote for the half-crown magazine and the leisured classes. (p 287)

Simple it was in those periods, but today the patronage is so varied that it behooves the young writer to make his choice carefully and to write accordingly. Patron and writer are bound together, they are twined indeed, one dying if the other dies, one flourishing if the other flourishes; that the fate of literature depends upon their happy alliance - all of which proves, . . . that the choice of a patron is of highest importance. But how to choose rightly? How to write well? Those are the questions. (p 288)

Mrs. Woolf wisely chose as her patrons that class of readers who like to be entertained and at the same time wish to receive some enlightenment as to values and qualities of literature. Thus she has answered her first question, "How to choose rightly?" - her instinct did that; and "How to write well?" - her sense of proportion, love of human nature, and an understanding heart answered that; and with all she has included criticism as just and as correct as can be found anywhere today.

Stuart P. Sherman says, "Her collection of essays has style and character." A mind fully awake, cultivated, eager, widely ranging from the sustenance of life both emotional

3. Sherman, Stuart P., New York Herald Tribune p 1 July 5, 1925
and intellectual."

Conrad Aiken proclaims, Mrs. Woolf is a brilliant critic, an extremely conscious and brilliant craftsman; she is intensely interested in the technique of fiction. 4

Clive Bell believes her critical essays have the quality, the individuality, and some intensities of works of art. 5

R. Ellis Roberts affirms that Mrs. Woolf has

Extraordinary talent as a critic. The Common Reader contained enough uncommon sense, more reasoned thinking and more aesthetic judgment to make Mrs. Woolf's reputation secure if she had never written a line of fiction. . . .

She never makes the mistake of confusing contemporaneity with importance; one half our modern aesthetic difficulties spring from that confusion. . . . She keeps her critical gift rich and personal and has the attitude of a genuine scholar. 6

If there is one thing Virginia Woolf enjoys doing, it is bringing to life forgotten or obscure figures. Upon reading a group of little essays entitled, Lives of the Obscure, one feels that Mrs. Woolf is truly an artist of rare ability, almost, it seems, she is a juggler with fact and fancy, a magician with words; a humorist and a psychologist.

5. Bell, Clive, "Mrs. Woolf" Dial 77:451 D '24
6. Roberts, R. Ellis, "Virginia Woolf" Bookman (Lond) 73: 220-1 Ja '38
She is an adept in the use of punctuation. Especially effective is her use of the dash for hinting at the unprintable that gives as much information as, or more than do the words themselves concerning the characters with whom she deals; and there is a breeziness which blows away the veils of time and reveals

an obscurity which was not empty but thick with star dust of innumerable lives, — men and women who have just missed fame,

There is Richard Lovell Edgeworth, "a portentous bore,"

Laetitia Pilkington with whom life had been all

bitterness and struggle, except that she had loved Shakespeare, known Swift, and kept through all the shifts and shades of an adventurous career a gay spirit, something of a lady's breeding, and a gallantry which, at the end of her short life, led her to crack a joke and enjoy her duck with death at her heart and duns at her pillow. (p 175)

There is Miss Ormerod and her mother and sister who hold whispered colloquies, lest they disturb the father who demanded peace and quiet in his own house, who died at the age of eighty-seven years, and, apostrophizes Mrs. Woolf,

Oh, graves in country church-yards — respectable burials — mature old gentlemen — D.C.L., L.L.D., F.R.S., F.S.A. — lots of letters come after your names, but lots of women are buried with you. (p 182)

But as for silencing his daughter, Eleanor, neither he nor the neighbors with their gossip, nor her brother who wouldn't let her learn anatomy, nor all the men who wouldn't "take a woman's word for it" could keep her from making discoveries
in the insect world which brought
upon her head the hood of Edinburgh . . . ;
pioneer of purity even worse than Paris
Green. (p 183)

And there follows the conversation with her physician —
what she has decided upon for her epitaph

"No need to think about epitaphs yet," said
Dr. Lipscomb.
"Our lives are in the hands of the Lord,"
said Miss Ormerod simply.

... 

"It's beginning to rain," said Dr. Lipscomb.
"How will your enemies like that, Miss Ormerod?"
"Hot or cold, wet or dry, insects always
flourish," cried Miss Ormerod, energetically
sitting up in bed.

"Old Miss Ormerod is dead," said Mr. Drummond,
opening The Times on Saturday, July 20th, 1901.
"Old Miss Ormerod?" asked Mrs. Drummond.
(pp 188, 189)

Could anyone have concluded Lives of the Obscure more
effectively than has Mrs. Woolf? Obscure, they were, but
she has turned upon them an incandescent light in which they
shine again in all the glory of delicious boredom, of shock-
ing impropriety, and that unmaidenly but triumphant pro-
fession — entomologist.

From among the great literary artists, Mrs. Woolf has
chosen to discuss with the "common reader" Montaigne,
Chaucer, Defoe, Addison, Jane Austen, Charlotte and Emily
Brontë, George Eliot, and Joseph Conrad, a worthy group
representing the trend of English literature from the fourteenth century to the present time. In her essays on these authors, she has given her vivid aesthetic impressions of their work and some excellent judgments regarding their place in the development of English literature. Throughout these essays, the background for these judgments and her wide knowledge of literature is constantly evident. Her freshness of expression is delightful. One can do no more than accept Mrs. Woolf's classification of herself as an impressionist, but one feels, however, that Mrs. Woolf is not as she proclaimed herself in her preface "a common reader," but an uncommon reader with a fund of sympathy and common sense.
In 1929, Mrs. Woolf published *A Room of One's Own*, which is classed as a critical essay, but it has also the qualities of history and of fiction, for it is, primarily, a history of woman's place in English literature from the age of Elizabeth to the present time, and it is written in a flowing style which reads like fiction. Mrs. Woolf's wit, humor, and satire are evident on every page. As is true of everything else Mrs. Woolf has written, there are numerous passages of poetic beauty.

"The essay is based upon two papers originally read before the Arts Society at Newnham and at the Odetta at Gerton in 1928, but have since been altered and expanded." 1 It should be noted, too, that *A Room of One's Own* presents the same question which Mrs. Woolf produced in fictional form in *Orlando*; in fact, many of the same literary characters are also introduced here.

Mrs. Woolf's chief idea is that women can never become literary artists until they have an income of five hundred a year (that gives them the power to contemplate) and a room which can be devoted solely to writing. That this is just as true of men as of women, she proves by citing Coleridge, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Landor, Keats,

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1. Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, p 11
Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, Morris, Rossetti, and Swinburne, all of whom except Keats, Rossetti, and Browning were University men, and Keats the only one who was not well to do, and his career was brief. Until the nineteenth century neither an income nor a room of one's own was possible for women, nor is education within the reach of many now.

Mrs. Woolf shows the utter impossibility of a woman's having had a place in the literary history of England in the sixteenth century by imagining the story of a gifted sister of Shakespeare, who, like him, went to London, where she sought fame, but won degradation and death.

After the middle of the seventeenth century, there appeared several women, but their names are not widely known. There was Margaret of Newcastle, who, in a room of her own, wrote plays produced in London; but hers was "a wild, generous, untutored intelligence" and she was considered eccentric, therefore, she won no lasting recognition. There was Lady Wincilsea, with rare poetic ability, but she could not rid her writings of bitterness and resentment which narrows vision. There was Mrs. Aphra Behu, who made a living by her pen, and paved the way for Fanny Burney, Jane Austen, George Eliot, and the Brontë's. Why, Mrs. Woolf asks, were these all novelists rather than poets or histor-
ians? First, because circumstances forced them to write in a common sitting-room, and history and poetry requires seclusion and peace of mind; second, they had no education, for at that time the only education possible for women "was training in observation of character, and in the analysis of emotion, ... Personal relations were always before her eyes;" (p 116) hence, she became a novelist, for "the novel alone was young enough to be soft in her hands."

Mrs. Woolf suggests that women today should write of women as friends, not as jealous enemies; they should liberate themselves from biased points of view, and write, above all things, with the conviction of truth as did Jane Austen. "When one's writing reveals the recognition of the criticism with which it may be received, whether the author be man or woman, it is always evident that the writer is thinking of something other than the thing itself." (p 129)

The genius of both Jane Austen and Emily Brontë was above such notice. (p 130) Mrs. Woolf points out how literature would suffer if men were represented in literature only

as lovers of women, never as friends of men, soldiers, thinkers, dreamers; how few parts in the plays of Shakespeare could be allotted to them ... We might, perhaps, have most of Othello; and a good deal of Antony; but no Caesar, no Brutus, no Hamlet, no Lear, no Jacques - literature would be incredibly impoverished, as indeed literature is impoverished beyond our counting by the doors that have been shut upon women." (pp 144, 145)
Again, as in other essays and in her novels, Mrs. Woolf asserts that anything is the "proper stuff" for literature, the life history of the girl behind the counter, even; and that "the small things" perhaps, show that "they are not small after all for they may be the realities of the world." (p. 161)

Above all Mrs. Woolf insists that all truly great writers must possess an androgynous mind as did Shakespeare and Coleridge. Here again Mrs. Woolf enunciates the doctrine which is the basis of Orlando. She never permits the reader to lose sight of her main idea that a woman should be independent financially and have a room of her own if she would become a writer.

Few women have written as sanely and as justly on the question of women in literature as has Mrs. Woolf. The subtlety of her observations and the humor of her satire is nowhere more evident than in A Room of One's Own.

It is difficult to discuss Mrs. Woolf as an essayist. If one gives only the chief ideas which she sets forth, enumerates only her criticisms of books or authors, one misses the captivating humor of her favor or her frown, the magic of her graceful composition, the subtlety of her insight, and the joyousness of her impressionism, for it is
not facts alone that Mrs. Woolf gives us in her critical essays. She writes essays with much the same verve that she writes novels.

She delights in searching for the obscure, mayhap, even the "shelved" figures of literature and brings them to the notice of "the moderns", exposing their frailties and their failures with the racliness of a gossip, but with the sympathy of a saint who sees into the heart and finds there something to approve. So vivaciously has Mrs. Woolf expressed her vivid impressions of authors and books, that her critical works read with the same rapidity as do her novels, and one feels one is reading fiction rather than criticism.

To recapitulate, Mrs. Woolf lays no claim to the title of critic or scholar, but allies herself with "the common reader," who "reads for his own pleasure rather than to impart knowledge or correct the opinions of others;" who is "guided by an instinct to create for himself;" who "is hasty, inaccurate, superficial, but though his deficiencies as a critic are too obvious to be pointed out, he has some say in the final distribution of poetical honors." (The Common Reader pp 11, 12)

Mrs. Woolf has read widely in the fields of classic, continental, and English literatures, and this, with her critical insight inherited from and trained by her illustrious
father, Sir Leslie Stephen, gives her essays considerable value. She has a keen appreciation of beauty of expression and the presentation of truth. Her critical work includes a wide range, Greek, Russian, English, American; ancient and modern; the well-known and the obscure; in fact the latter with their hopes, their struggles, and their failures seem to have greater attraction for her, and she interprets their lives and their writings with unusual sympathy.

In essays written in 1919 and 1920, Mrs. Woolf boldly enunciates new theories of writing with which she had long been experimenting. These include her ideas relating both to the essay and to the novel. Concerning the purpose and the content of the essay she declares:

The principle which controls it is simply that it should give pleasure. . . . Everything in an essay should be subdued to that end. . . . We may pass through various experiences of amusement, surprise, interest, indignation; we may soar to the heights of fantasy with Lamb or plunge to the depths of wisdom with Bacon, but we must never be roused. (pp 293, 4)

She further avers,

She most proper but most dangerous and delicate tool (of the essay) is personality (301);

and when "personality permeates every word," "the triumph is a triumph of style" (p 301). To give pleasure, the essay must be exact, truthful, and imaginative. The idea presented must "be believed in or seen with precision"
must be something that catches "the indescribable inequality, stir, and final expressiveness which belongs to life, and to life alone." (p 302)

Mrs. Woolf's theories of the novel are also expressed in those essays which appeared before she wrote the first novel of her second period, and, therefore, paved the way for her final break with the novel of plot with its comedy, tragedy, love interest, catastrophe. In the essay "Modern Fiction," she definitely states her theory that the field of the novel is "the dark places of psychology" (p 215); that the novelist must examine the ordinary mind on an ordinary day and present every impression no matter how trivial, and thus catch life as it is, through a knowledge of the spirit rather than through externals and the material.
CHAPTER III

THE FICTION OF VIRGINIA WOOLF

A. FIRST PERIOD, EARLY NOVELS

The work of Virginia Woolf as a novelist very definitely divides into two periods. During the earlier period, she produced only two novels. The first, The Voyage Out, was published in 1915, but it had been written a number of years before while the author was still Virginia Stephen. During the interim between the first drafting of the story and the publication of it, the author had spent much time in revising the work, which, therefore, came forth a highly polished novel of the old school. Her second novel, Night and Day, was published in 1919. There is nothing startling in an output of two novels during a period of ten or twelve years, nor is there anything unusual in the form or content of either of these two novels. In both, Mrs. Woolf has adhered to the usual form of the novel of plot, with all the character portrayal, the action, the crisis, and the catastrophe required by the nineteenth century novelists, and lengthened into the "two and thirty chapters," which Mrs. Woolf now decries.

1. Mortimer, Raymond, "Mrs. Woolf and Mr. Strachey" Bookman 63: 635-9 Feb '29
2. Who's Who 1931
3. Woolf, V., Common Reader Modern Fiction p 211
Both of these books, however, prove Mrs. Woolf's ability, and had she done no other work, these would have given her a place among the first class writers of contemporary England. She presents her characters with clear-cut precision; she has examined each one of them carefully and moves them about with an ease that the fore-knowledge of plot manages; backgrounds are carefully considered; and though there is nothing unusual in the simple plots, they are of sufficient interest to hold attention.

In *The Voyage Out*, the plot divides into three parts. Mrs. Woolf devotes six chapters to the first part, the purpose of which is to transport her leading characters from London to the real scene of action, a village in South America. The story opens with a scene on the Embankment, London, where Mr. and Mrs. Ambrose are waiting for a taxi to convey them to the boat on which they are to be the guests of a brother-in-law and a niece during a trip to a South American settlement. The purpose of this long introduction is to give the reader a very definite knowledge of the niece, Rachel Vinrace, the heroine of the story. The author gives every possible opportunity for the reader to learn that the girl is versed in nothing except music, that she is shy, does not make friends readily, that she knows nothing about life. The aunt, Mrs. Ambrose,
determines that Rachel shall remain in South America with her, and she secures the father's permission. Six chapters to learn this, and four of the interesting characters in this section do not again appear in the story! But they are interesting chapters, and at least two of the characters which are dropped from the story have an important share in the awakening of the heroine. The ship becomes

an emblem of the loveliness of human life,
an occasion for queer confidences and sudden appeals for sympathy. (p 87)

After many interesting experiences, five of the ship's passengers land in South America.

The second section of the novel covers seventeen chapters and a period of three months, during which time many things happen in the little settlement. The chief of these events is a long boat trip inland, during which the hero and heroine find each other, and life becomes vastly different for Rachel.

Then follows the third part, the tragic denouement in three chapters covering a period of two weeks. The first chapter of this division gives the story of Rachel's illness and her death. The anxiety of the whole household during Rachel's illness is given with powerful reality. With an unusual deftness and a certain beauty of expression, Mrs. Woolf has carried forward the story of pain and sadness to the tragic point; then with considerable skill has given the picture of the lover at the bedside:
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. So much the better — this was death. It was nothing; it was to cease to breathe. It was happiness, it was perfect happiness. . . It seemed to him that their complete happiness filled the room with rings eddying more and more widely. He had no wish left unfulfilled. They possessed what could never be taken away from him. (p 353)

Then he passes to the window:

"Why," he said in his ordinary tone of voice, "look at the moon. There's a halo around the moon. We shall have rain tomorrow." (p 354)

He was led from the room, but

"Downstairs they could hear the thud of his feet on the floor, . . . and twice they heard him shout, 'Rachel, Rachel!' " (p 354)

In the next chapter, the news of Rachel's death reaches their friends at the hotel. Mrs. Woolf effectively shows the reaction of this tragic conclusion of the happy four weeks' romance upon each of the persons who had witnessed the progress of the romance with interest.

In the last chapter, there is the fulfillment of the prophecy, "There will be rain tomorrow," and the storm serves as a counterpart of the struggle between life and death in the preceding chapter. At the dinner hour on the evening following Rachel's death, the storm breaks with fury of wind, thunder, lightning. The diners, in fear, rush into the hall. Then with the final crash, the electric
lights flash on again, and life goes on with its games, its chess, its embroidery.

This, Mrs. Woolf's first novel is excellent in many respects. The author has proved herself capable in the portrayal of character, excellent in point of description, and, without doubt, unrivalled in depicting depth of feeling and the working of mental processes. In the second novel, there are many hints of the stream-of-consciousness style which Mrs. Woolf develops in Jacob's Room and in Mrs. Dalloway. In her first novel, the author's purpose was to broaden Rachel Vinrace into the "rounded" character of which Mrs. Woolf often speaks in her critical works; to awaken within her a consciousness of life; to bring her into contact with the world. To accomplish this, the author made much of background and early environment. The sheltered home in London was responsible for her ignorance of life:

She had been educated as a majority of well-to-do girls in the last part of the nineteenth century were educated. Kindly doctors and gentle old professors had taught her the rudiments of about ten different branches of knowledge; (p 33)

and

she had abundant time for thinking. Why did they do the things they did, and what did they feel, and what was it all about? (p 36)

To broaden the heroine, Mrs. Woolf takes her across the ocean and reveals to her the gigness of a new world from

4. See p 52 Discussion of her later style.
whose mountain top she has new visions; and an unexplored river provides the setting for the heroine's exploration of depths of emotion unknown to her before, and the realization of the meaning of life.

In direct contrast to all the serious matters of life and death, Mrs. Woolf, constantly has given evidence of a rich humor. One passage illustrating this point and in which apt figures are found is the description of the effect of the storm at sea on the various passengers:

Their sensations were the sensations of potatoes in a sack on a galloping horse... Rachel had been just enough conscious to suppose herself a donkey on the summit of a moor in a hailstorm, with its coat blown into furrows by the salt Atlantic gale... (p 71)

Helen tried to pour Champagne into a tumbler with a tooth brush in it. "Champagne," she said (to Mrs. Dalloway), "There's a tooth-brush in it," murmured Clarissa and smiled; it might have been the contortion of one weeping. She drank. Relics of humor still played over her face like moonshine. "Want more?" Helen shouted. Speech was again beyond Clarissa's reach. The wind laid the shivering ship on her side. Pale agonies crossed Mrs. Dalloway in waves. (p 71)

Quite suddenly the storm relaxed its grasp. It happened at tea; the unexpected paroxym of the blast gave out just as it reached its climax and dwindled away, and the ship instead of taking its usual plunge went steadily. The monotonous order of plunging and rising, roaring and relaxing, was interfered with and every one at the table looked up and felt something loosen within them. The strain was loosened and human feelings began to peep again as they do when daylight shows at the end of a
tunnel. . . . Instantly the world dropped into shape; they were no longer atoms flying in a void. . . . Wind and space were banished; the world floated like an apple in a tub, and the mind of men, which had been unmoored also, once more attached itself to old beliefs. (p 73)

Another point of interest is the fact that Mrs. Woolf has chosen for her first novel a particularly fitting title, The Voyage Out, which in itself gives a unity and a definiteness of plot, connecting the three parts of the story, in each of which is a different interpretation of that title. Part one is the "voyage out" from England to South America; part two is the voyage on the river which gives opportunity for the chief romance in the story; and part three is the heroine's "voyage out" of life itself.

In this, her first novel, Mrs. Woolf accomplished a work worthy of placing her among the leading novelists of the day, and it proved her to be a master of a well-rounded plot, and excellent in forceful presentation of character; it also proved her ability to see the comic in life as well as the tragic; all of which is no small accomplishment for a first novel.
NIGHT AND DAY.

In her second novel, Mrs. Woolf, departing from the tradition of the triangular love story, has introduced a pentagonal affair encompassing the lives of three women and two men, all of whom show eccentricities and possess an unusual propensity for misunderstandings. In addition to these characters, there is an elderly aunt who believes that youth of the present should adhere to the conventions of the preceding generation, and who is pictured with a good deal of humor; a lenient father who only once attempts to interfere; and a mother, who despite her interest in literature and her absorption in the biography she is writing, believes conventions may be disregarded when the heart is concerned, and uses the most unconventional and amusing methods to bring the four principal characters together in the combination demanded by fate, thus all ends well even for Mary Dachet, the suffrage secretary, who finds happiness in her work.

Here is a much more highly involved plot than that found in The Voyage Out, but it is worked out in such detail that the story frequently loses interest for the reader. There is too much vacillating on the part of the four leading characters. But Mrs. Woolf has used an unusual and amusing method of disentangling the love plot, in that each of the five lovers in turn, learns the true
state of his affections from a third member of the group, and though that information makes it impossible for each to marry the first choice, it brings to each ultimate happiness.

The setting is London, in "the sophisticated drawing-room" of the Hilbery family, where many "disagreeables" meet at tea on Sunday; and where many disagreeable love scenes are enacted. This is the home of a literary family. Mr. Hilbery is editor of a review; Mrs. Hilbery, daughter of the great poet Alardyce, is writing a biography of that poet, in which work she is being assisted by her daughter, Katharine. The biography is never completed, but the relics of the poet are the possessions which make the home a shrine.

Other scenes in the story make it possible for Mrs. Woolf to give vivid pictures of various phases of English life. In the apartment of Mary Datchet, a suffragist, young people meet to hear lectures on social and political questions or about literature. William Rodney's apartment is the retreat of a well-to-do man with artistic desires and literary tendencies. Ralph Denham's home reveals the living conditions of a large family with little means. The home of Mary Datchet's father, in a village near Lincoln, gives a glimpse of rural life of the middle class, and the home of Lady Otway gives an excellent view of an aristocratic
family in rural England.

Mrs. Woolf treats her characters with unusual justice, with penetrating understanding, or with satiric amusement.

Katharine Hilbery is portrayed from every possible angle, much of the characterization being developed from her frequent abstractions in which we find hints of Mrs. Woolf's later style. The devotion of the mother and the daughters is presented with unusual feeling. Cassandra Otway with her childish, naive enjoyment of everything is admirably characterized with a joyousness that strongly contrasts with the more deliberate Katharine. Mrs. Woolf is especially forceful in the humor with which she has characterized Mrs. Hilbery in that it brings out the contrasting seriousness of the daughter, which is an unusual family situation.

Mrs. Woolf's kindly satire of English custom is occasionally evident as found in the following:

"But then Lady Otway was one of the people for whom the great make-believe game of English social life has been invented; she spent most of her time in pretending to herself and her neighbors that she was a dignified, important, much occupied person, of considerable social standing and sufficient wealth. In view of the actual state of things, this game needed a great deal of skill; and perhaps at the age she had reached - she was over sixty - she played far more to deceive herself than to deceive anyone else. Moreover the armor was wearing thin; she forgot to keep up appearances more and more." (p 208)
again,

English society being what it is, no merit is required once you bear a well-known name, to put you into a position where it is easier on the whole to be eminent than obscure. And if this is true of sons, even the daughters, even in the nineteenth century, are apt to become people of importance - philanthropists and educationalists if they are spinsters, and wives of distinguished men, if they marry.

... In the first years of the twentieth century, the Alardyces and their relations were keeping their heads well above water. One finds them on the top of professions, with letters after their names; they sit in luxurious offices, with private secretaries attached to them; they write solid books in dark covers, issued by the presses of two great universities, and when one of them dies the chances are that another one of them writes his biography. (Night and Day, p 37)

Recognizing the greatness of England, she also recognizes its defects:

"What is your ideal?" asked Rachel
"Well, how shall I reply? (Asked Richard)
In one word - Unity. Unity of aim, of dominion, of progress. The dispersion of the best ideas over the greatest area."
"The English?"
"I grant the English seem, on the whole, whiter than most men, their records cleaner. But, good Lord, don't run away with the idea that I don't see the drawbacks - horrors - unmentionable things done in our very midst! I'm under no illusions. Few people have fewer illusions than I have. Have you ever been in a factory, Miss Winrace? - No, I suppose not - I may say I hope not." (Voyage Out, p 64)

Too, she has not omitted the great Westminster:
The quality of her birth oozed into
Katharine's consciousness from a dozen
different sources as soon as she was able
to perceive anything. Above her nursery
fireplace hung a photograph of her grand-
father's tomb in Poet's Corner, and she
was told in one of those moments of grown
up confidence which are so tremendously
impressive to a child's mind that he was
buried there because he was a "good and
great man."

and when she went to lay flowers on his tomb

"The candles in the church, and the singing
and the booming of the organ, were all,
she thought, in his honor." (p 38)

Mrs. Woolf's figures of speech are particularly
apt and illuminating, as exampled in the following:

"Both ladies... had that look of heightened,
smooth, incarnadined existence which is proper
to elderly ladies paying calls in London about
five o'clock in the afternoon. Portraits by
Romney, seen through a glass, have something
of their pink, mellow look, their blooming
softness as of apricots hanging on a red wall
in the afternoon sun." (p 148)

Of Mrs. Hilbery she says:

"But Mrs. Hilbery was immediately sensitive
to any silence in the drawing-room, as of a
note in a sonorous scale, and leaning across
the table she observed, in the curiously
tentative detached manner which always gave
her phrases the likeness of butterflies
flaunting from one sunny spot to another." (p 14)

Again of the atmosphere of the Hilbery home she says:

"It seemed to Mr. Denham as if a thousand
softly padded doors had closed between him
and the street outside. A fine mist, the
etherealized essence of the fog, hung visibly
in the wide and rather empty spaces of the
drawing-room, all silver where the candles were grouped on the teatable, and ruddy again in the firelight." (p 10)

Many statements in these two early novels seem to voice Mrs. Woolf’s own thoughts:

"I have never met a bore yet," (p 55) says Mrs. Dalloway in The Voyage Out. One can readily believe this is the expression of Mrs. Woolf’s own feeling. She has found her characters in various walks of life and none of them are bores.

"I have planned out my life in sections every since I was a child to make it last longer. You see, I’m always afraid that I’m missing something — ," (p 15) says Ralph Denham, and one feels Mrs. Woolf is afraid she may miss some feeling, some thought.

"What was the good, after all, of being a woman if one didn't keep fresh, and cram one's life with all sorts of views and experiments?" says Mary Datchet. (p 79)

Mrs. Woolf’s purpose throughout all her work is to catch life and present it as she finds it.

"It's life that matters, nothing but life — the process of discovering — the everlast-ing and perpetual process, not the discovery itself." (p 130)
These two novels *The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day*, representing the work of ten or twelve years, and published within a period of four years (1915 and 1919) comprise the fictional work of Mrs. Woolf's first period. They conform to the rules of the nineteenth century novelists in nearly every respect. Throughout both, however, are hints of what Mrs. Woolf really wishes to do, and what she accomplishes in her later works.

"Why don't people write about the things they feel?" (asked Rachel)
"Ah, that's the difficulty," he sighed, tossing the book away.
... "What are the things people do feel?"
(*Voyage Out*, p 297)

"I want to write a novel about Silence," he said; "the things people don't say. But the difficulty is immense."
(*Voyage Out*, p 216)

"What's so detestable in this country," she exclaimed, "is the blue — always the blue sky and the blue sea. It's like a curtain—all the things one wants are on the other side of that. I want to know what's going on behind it." (*Voyage Out*, p 302)

Human beings as they are behind the curtain, the ideas "inextricably mixed in dreamy confusion," "the things people don't say" — these become Mrs. Woolf's themes in the novels of her second period; and even though the difficulties were immense, she found a way to present the mental processes of human beings "leaping from moment to
moment as from world to world." (Voyage Out, p 127)

Throughout these two novels, Mrs. Woolf's joy in life is evident in remarks made by her characters. Of Rachel Vinrace she says:

Reality dwelling in what one saw and felt, but did not talk about, one could accept a system in which things went round and round quite satisfactorily to other people, without often troubling to think about it, except as something superficially strange. . . . 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 Op. III, even with the spirit of poor William Cowper there at Olney. (Voyage Out, p 37)

In her first and second novels, it is apparent that Mrs. Woolf consciously conformed to the rule of the novel of plot with the usual method of characterization by means of conversation and action. But there is also apparent, in these two novels, her feeling that this is not the only method for the novel, and that she is seeking another method. In The Voyage Out, as already noted, one of her characters says: "I want to write a novel about Silence; the things people don't say" (p 216); of the "Reality dwelling in what one saw and felt, but did not talk about" (p 37); and "I want to know what is going on behind" (the curtain)."

These statements imply her desire to depart from the plot novel and show also her tendency toward the novel which
depends upon the revelation of "the dark places of psychology." 5 A more definite statement of her idea for the novel occurs in "The Mark on the Wall":

I want to sink deeper and deeper away from the surface with its hard separate facts. . . . The novelists of the future will realize more and more the importance of these reflections (from the souls of other people) those are the depths they will explore, those are the phantoms they will pursue, leaving the description of reality more and more out of the question. (pp 104, 106)

During the time she was writing these early novels, as will be discussed in the next chapter, Mrs. Woolf was experimenting with another method which would, she hoped, be the medium for her future novels.

In her first novels, then, Mrs. Woolf has proved her ability to follow the accustomed method of the novel and at the same time has hinted that there is another method. In both these early novels, it should be noted that Mrs. Woolf has proved an artist and that many passages are written in the best poetic prose style.

5. Woolf, Virginia, The Common Reader, p 215
B. SHORT STORIES.

Mrs. Woolf's first attempts at fiction had been in the field of the short story and the sketch. However, she published no collection of short stories until 1931, six years after her first novel had appeared. The caption of this collection, *Monday or Tuesday*, is the title of the shortest sketch in the book. In these sketches, which are purely imaginative, the author has used the stream of consciousness method, and there are hints of the style which Mrs. Woolf later adopted for her novels, and which has made her one of the great names among present day writers.

Here is imagination, fancy, humor, satire; she suggests, she expresses the intangible, at which the reader's mind grasps, then goes on and on with the author, for though the author may digress there is no time for the reader's mind to lose the author's train of thought. Mrs. Woolf's is a consciousness that is above everything she presents, that is master of everything; she is outside of it all herself, but she feels it and expresses it objectively in

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1. Mrs. Woolf is classed frequently as a member of the James Joyce school. This apparently applies solely to the method used. A study of his work reveals nothing else in common. Wilbur L. Cross classes them both as descendants of Henry James, but says she stands apart from all others of that school in that she has gone almost to the "threshold of being." Cross, W. L., *The Modern Novel*, pp 22, 23
figures that catch the mind. And with all this is the lyric quality of the poet in choice of word and phrase, and frequently there is the rhythm of poetry. One feels that Mrs. Woolf has caught the spirit of Keats as he expressed it in "Realm of Fancy"

"Then let the winged Fancy wander
Through the thought still spread before her;
Open wide the mind's cage-door,
She'll dart forth and cloud-ward soar.
O sweet Fancy! let her loose."

It should be remembered that Mrs. Woolf's later work did not present a sudden change of literary style. She achieved it through years of practice. While she had been writing anonymous reviews for the "Times Supplement," she had been experimenting. To her friends she read these efforts, but they did not highly approve of them; but after a number of years she wrote "The Mark on the Wall."
"At last," says Clive Bell, "by purely feminine means she had created something which takes its place with the great tradition of English letters." 2

In Monday or Tuesday,3 the sketch that gives its name to the collection, is that lyric quality which is so often found in Mrs. Woolf's later novels.

"Lazy and indifferent, shaking space easily from his wings, knowing his way, the heron

3. Bell, Clive, Virginia Woolf, Dial 77:451
3. Woolf, Virginia, Monday or Tuesday, New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1921
passes over the church beneath the sky. 
White and distant, absorbed in itself,
endlessly the sky covers and uncovers,
moves and remains. A lake? Blot the
shores of it out! A mountain? Oh,
perfect - the sun on its slopes. Down
that falls. Forns then, or white feathers,
for ever and ever - (p 41)

Desiring the truth, awaiting it, labor-
iously distilling a few words, for ever
desiring - (p 41)

But into this reverie comes the sound of wheels, omni-
buses, a clock striking mid-day, children; the sight of
a dome, smoke of chimneys; "hark, shout, cry 'Iron for
sale' - and truth?" (p 42) Then the consciousness of some
one speaking, yet the sub-conscious is seeking "truth?"
And the conclusion:

"Now to recollect by the fireside on the
white square of marble. From ivory depths
words rising shed their blackness, blossom
and penetrate. Fallen the book; in the
flame, in the smoke, in the momentary spark
- or now voyaging, the marble square pendant,
minarets beneath the Indian sea, while space
rushes blue and stars glint - truth? or now,
content with closeness?

Lazy and indifferent the heron returns; the
sky veils her stars; then bares them. (p 43)

Here is Mrs. Woolf's method. Her consciousness is
attracted by the heron, and like the heron she is carried on
wings of the sub-conscious to seek truth, but that search
is hindered by a hundred things of earth, and like the
heron, she returns - "content with closeness; content with
life; intrigued with "the mystery" of life; the inaccuracy of thought!" (p 43) The lyric quality and the mystery of this sketch reminds one of the melody of Lafcadio Hearn's "Fantastica."

The masterpiece of this collection of short stories, and the one in which the style of her later novels breaks into full bloom is *The Mark on the Wall*. 4

A mark on the wall, six or seven inches above the mantlepiece, sets the mind at work -

> How readily our thoughts swarm upon a new object, lifting it a little way, as ants do a blade of straw so feverishly, and then leave it.

So the mark on the wall - what is it? asks Mrs. Woolf. Made by a nail for a picture - and the word picture carries the mind off to miniatures that may have hung on that nail, to the people who had previously lived in that house to whom the miniature belonged, and so on. But the mark on the wall is not a hole, - dust, perhaps, left by a careless housewife, and dust reminds one that Troy was buried by dust. Then trees outside tap on the windows. Everything - rules for everything - Whitaker's Table of Precedency, everybody follows somebody, but the war has changed that and left

us all with an intoxicating sense of illegitimate freedom - if freedom exists . . .

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This is Mrs. Woolf's freedom — "if it is freedom"
"illegitimate freedom" if it is illegitimate for a writer
to let

thoughts swarm upon some new object, lifting
it a little way, as ants carry a blade of
straw so feverishly, and then leave it.

But legitimate or illegitimate from the point of view of
former writers, it is the way the mind works; and though
there is no precedent among the rules of authors, she has
captured the mind as it works, and has evolved a story that
has a freshness, a rhythm and a lyric quality that former
methods could not compass.

Mrs. Woolf's method is the thing that happens many
times in everyday conversation. One idea suggests another,
that in turn suggests another, and so on. Suddenly the
conversationalists wonder how they could have arrived at
a topic so far removed from the one with which they began.
Checking back they are able to trace the links in the
meandering stream of thoughts. Mrs. Woolf, however, never
needs to check, for invariably she returns to the original
idea which shows she is master of the situation and the
threads and never permits them to get away from her. This
is well illustrated in "The Mark on the Wall."

Mrs. Woolf catches the spirit of the haunted house
and by means of hints, unfinished questions, unfinished
statements and an oft repeated refrain, leads the reader's
imagination to a very definite realization of the secret of the haunted house.

A moment later the light had faded. Out in the garden then? But the trees spun darkness for a wandering beam of sun. So fine, so rare, coolly sunk beneath the surface the beam I sought always burnt behind the glass; death was between us; coming to the woman first hundreds of years ago, leaving the house, sealing all the windows; the rooms were darkened. He left it, left her, saw the stars turned in the Southern sky; sought the house, found it dropped beneath the Downs. "Safe, safe, safe," the pulse of the house beat gladly. "The Treasure yours." . . . Wandering through the house, whispering not to wake us, the ghostly couple seek their joy.

. . .

"Upstairs — " "In the garden — " "When summer came — " "In winter snowtime — "
The doors go shutting far in the distance, gently knocking like the pulse of a heart."

Again and again the refrain of the "heart of the house" and "Safe, safe, safe" on to the conclusion which might as well have been written in verse form:

"Waking, I cry, Oh is this your buried treasure? The light in the heart."

"Kew Gardens" (pp 83-98) is not a short story, is not a sketch, but a series of sketches including that of the thoughtful, the reasoning snail; the reminescent husband who questions the equally reminescent wife; the garrulous old man "his eccentricity betokening a disordered
brain," two elderly women - one interested in sights, the other in flowers and tea; the young man and the young woman with short sentences and long pauses, thinking that no one knew the secret of their hand press, and then to tea like other people. Over all, the color - red, blue, yellow - stirred by the breeze and "flashing into the eyes of men and women who walk in the Kew Gardens in July."

(p 84) Everywhere voices breaking the silence - but no silence - but hum of motor buses, voices of children, the murmur of the city.

Thus Mrs. Woolf with numerous little strokes and suggestions has given the picture of Kew Gardens on a summer day.

Mrs. Woolf's satire and humor are evident in "A Society" (pp 9-43) a story of a group of women who seek to know just what the world is like. If men have civilized the world, how have they done it?

"Off we went then, some to the British Museum, others to the King's Navy; some to Oxford; others to Cambridge; we visited the Royal Academy and Tate; heard modern music in concert rooms, went to Law Courts, and saw new plays. No one dined without asking her partner certain questions and carefully noting his replies." (14)

Many of their questions were not answered. But the majority received a reply something like this:

"I accepted my peerage," said Lord Bunkum, "because my wife wished it." (p 33)
The women discover that the whole trouble with the world is that they "have insisted on intellect," that "it's intellect that's at the bottom" of all their trouble.

In "An Unwritten Novel," (pp 45-70) Mrs. Woolf shows that a novel may be based upon observations of life anywhere, and that she finds material everywhere:

"Wherever I go, mysterious figures, I see you. . . . I hasten, I follow. . . . It's you unknown figures, you I adore; if I open my arms, it's you I embrace, you I draw to me - adorable world." (p 70)

In "The String Quartet," (pp 77-83) is the excellent description showing Mrs. Woolf's careful handling of details:

Here they come; four black figures, carrying instruments, and seat themselves facing the white squares under the downpour of light; rest the tips of their bows on the music stand; with a simultaneous movement lift them; lightly poise them, and looking across at the opposite player, the first violin counts one, two, three - Flourish, spring, surgeon, burst!

. . . What are you whispering? Sorrow, sorrow. Joy, joy. Woven together like reeds in moonlight. Woven together, inextricably commingled, bound in pain and stream in sorrow - crash! " (pp 73, 74)

This little book of short stories, Monday or Tuesday, is delightfully varied in subject matter ranging from common place experiences of every day life to the things of the
spirit, rich with figures, humor, satire, mystery, all treated with a lyric touch that few modern authors possess.

The sketches in *Monday or Tuesday* were experiments with the thing Mrs. Woolf had, in her first novels, suggested she wished to do. That they were deliberate attempts is related by Clive Bell. 5

If one begins to analyze consciousness, it will be found that it is stirred by a thousand small, irrelevant ideas stuffed with odds and ends of knowledge.

This is the principle Mrs. Woolf worked on. She wanted to show the mind at work and this is the thing she accomplished first in her sketches. "The Haunted House" is her analysis of consciousness, in the process of a day-dream which is a combination of realism and vision. These stories show the painstaking work of an artist to reproduce the rhythm of thought processes.

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5. Bell, Clive, *Virginia Woolf*, Dial 77:452
C. SECOND PERIOD. LATER NOVELS.

1. Jacob's Room

Having given hints in her first novels of a new method of writing and having evolved that method in her sketches, "A Haunted House" and perfected it in "The Mark on the Mall," Mrs. Woolf launched upon a novel in the same type, and Jacob's Room was the result. Mrs. Woolf still used the old device of breaking the story into chapters, which in a measure correspond to the periods of Jacob's life. There is little else to remind one of the novels of her early period. She begins:

"So of course," wrote Betty Flanders, pressing her heels rather deeper in the sand, "there was nothing for it but to leave."

Slowly welling from the point of her gold nib, pale blue ink dissolved the full stop; for the pen stuck; her eyes fixed; and tears slowly filled them. The entire bay quivered; the lighthouse wobbled; and she had the illusion that the mast of Mr. Connor's yacht was bending like a wax candle in the sun. She winked quickly. Accidents were awful things. She winked again. The mast was straight; the waves were regular; the lighthouse was upright; but the blot had spread.

"... nothing for it but to leave," she said.

"Well, if Jacob doesn't want to play" (the shadow of Archer, her eldest son fell across the notepaper and locked blue on the sand, and she felt chilly - it was the third of September already), "if Jacob doesn't want to play" - what a horrid blot! It must be getting late.
"Where is that tiresome little boy?" she said. "I don't see him. Run and find him. Tell him to come at once."

...but mercifully," she scribbled, ignoring the full stop, "everything seems satisfactorily arranged, packed though we are like herrings in a barrel, and forced to stand the perambulator which the landlady quite naturally won't allow . . . ."

(pp 1, 2)

Thus the story begins in the midst of the letter during the writing of which Betty Flanders is conscious of many other impressions. They come to her through sight, through sound, through tears, through shadows on the sand, through the words of her son, and even through the blot on the paper. She has been conscious of many things in rapid succession, and Mrs. Woolf has caught them in short sentences, in broken sentences, in exclamations, in parenthetical phrases as they came to Betty Flanders. Thus the first chapter gives us glimpses of Betty Flanders, and of the childhood of her son, Jacob

"the tiresome little boy;" "Jacob ... such a handful; so obstinate already;" "Jacob fast asleep, profoundly unconscious."

In the second chapter, more of Betty Flanders' history is related in broken sentences by the neighbors who give information of Captain Barfoot, the family chickens; of the Rev. Jasper Floyd, Jacob's tutor; of Jacob choosing a copy of Byron as a parting gift from his tutor; Jacob drawing his dirty pocket handkerchief across his face; of Jacob going to his room; of Jacob going up to Cambridge.
In succeeding chapters, impressions of Jacob accumulate. Only occasionally does Jacob say anything or do anything as a part of the action of the story. But what he does, and what he says, and how he looks are all reported and interpreted by those who see him or hear him, and through these impressions of Jacob as a college student, of his social contacts, of his loves, of his journey to Paris and to Greece, of his death on the battle field, and the empty room he has left, give a more intimate history of Jacob than is found of any character in Mrs. Woolf's earlier works.

She has reeled off the story of Jacob's life with greater rapidity than a moving picture could do it, and surely with a greater amount of information, for there are frequent hints that lure the thoughts on little side tracks just as the blot on Mrs. Flanders' letter led her thoughts to storms at sea. This is impressionistic writing that jogs the mind into unusual rapidity of action and reaction.

A discussion of Jacob's Room would be incomplete without some reference to that last two-page chapter haunted with memories of Jacob.

"He left everything just as it was," Bonamy marvelled. "Nothing arranged. All his letters strewn about for anyone to read. What did he expect? Did he think he would come back?" he mused, standing in the middle of Jacob's room.

Bonamy took up a bill for a hunting-crop.
"That seems to be paid," he said.
There were Sandra’s letters.
Mrs. Durrant was taking a party to Greenwich.
Lady Rocksbiier hoped for the pleasure . . .
Listless is the air of an empty room, just
swelling the curtain; the flowers in the jar
shift. One fiber in the wicker arm-chair
creaks, though no one sits there.

"Jacob! Jacob!" cried Bonamy, standing by
the window. The leaves sank down again.
"Such confusion everywhere!" exclaimed
Betty Flanders, bursting open the bed-room door.
"What am I to do with these, Mr. Bonamy?"
She held out a pair of Jacob’s old shoes.

If so vivid a picture of him can be given in thirteen
short chapters, why use thirty? If Jacob can be made a
vital character through impressions rather than through
plot and action, why not present him thus, is Mrs. Woolf’s
contention, and she has succeeded with her own devices, in
creating an unusual novel.
2. Mrs. Dalloway

Mrs. Woolf's innovations in the novel were not to end with Jacob's Room. In 1925, she published Mrs. Dalloway in which she discarded every vestage of the chapter, and from page one to page 296 there is no break. Another innovation in her method is that she reinstated the rule discarded by Marlowe in the sixteenth century, unity of time. The novel covers a period of one day. Every page is crowded with events, memories, feelings, impressions, anything that comes into Clarissa Dalloway's mind from the moment she opens her window that June morning until the last guest leaves her party that night, contributes its part in giving the complete history of Mrs. Dalloway's life.

"Life is a thing one must love to the last fiber of it," said Mary Datchet in The Voyage Out, and this, too, is Clarissa Dalloway's idea: "life; London; this moment in June" which she enjoys to the limit.

"Three great emotions bowled over him; understanding; a vast philosophy; and finally, as if the result of the others, an irrepressible, exquisite delight; as if inside his brain by another hand strings were pulled, shutters moved, and he, having nothing to do with it, yet stood at the opening of many avenues, down which if he chose, he might wander." (p 78)

These words of Peter Walsh most fittingly express the effect Mrs. Woolf has upon her readers.
Every page is crowded with fitting figures:

"It was as if the five acts of a play that had been very exciting and moving were now over and she had lived a lifetime in them. (p 70)

Laying her brooch on the table, she had a sudden spasm, as if, while she mused, the icy claws had had a chance to fix in her. (p 54)

"The shock of Lady Bruton asking Richard to lunch without her made the moment in which she had stood shiver, as a plant on the river-bed feels the shock of a passing car and shivers; so she rocked; so she shivered. (p 44)

Like a nun withdrawing, or a child exploring a tower, she went upstairs. (p 45)

Away and away the aeroplane shot till it was nothing but a bright spark; an aspiration; a concentration; a symbol of man's soul; of his determination. (p 41)

As a child, she had had a perfect sense of humor; but now at seventeen, why, Clarissa could not in the least understand, she had become very serious; like a hyacinth, sheathed in glossy green, with buds just tinted, a hyacinth which has had no sun. (p 186)

Of Mrs. Dalloway, Mrs. Woolf says:

She sliced like a knife through everything; at the same time was outside looking on. . . . Her only gift was knowing people almost by instinct. (p 11)

Both of these statements are as true of Mrs. Woolf as they are of the character of whom she writes. She re-
produces the characters inner self and is at the same time looking at them from the outside, thus her double point of view gives an intimate picture of Clarissa, Peter Walsh, Richard Dalloway, Elizabeth Dalloway, of the shell-shocked soldier and his Italian wife, and numerous other characters.

In the introduction to the Modern Library editions of Mrs. Dalloway, Mrs. Woolf says that critics have accused her of deliberately attempting "to beg, borrow, steal or even create" a method of her own. She says: the style of Mrs. Dalloway was accomplished

without any conscious direction. The little notebook in which an attempt was made to forecast a plan was soon abandoned, and the book grew day by day, week by week, without any plan at all, except that which was dictated each morning in the act of writing. The other way to make a house and inhabit it, to develop a theory and then apply it, as did Wordsworth and Coleridge, is, it need not be said, equally good and much more philosophic. But in the present case it was necessary to write the book first and to invent the theory afterwards. 1

She says that the reader should never be concerned with the method or the lack of it, but only with the total effect of the book as a whole on the mind. So "odds and ends" of thought, gathered together as Mrs. Woolf has gathered them are to be considered in total, as Mrs. Woolf suggests, and in total one finds a Mrs. Dalloway sensitive to every phase of life, enjoying life to the limit, and

honest with herself. Thus Mrs. Woolf has accomplished that desire she wrote of in her first novel The Voyage Out (p 216)

"I want to write a novel about silence," he said, "the things people don't say. But the difficulty is immense."

She has surmounted the difficulties by presenting her characters not by the old method of action and conversation, but by mental monologues which reveal the heart and, therefore, life, and truth.

To convey the actual process of thinking is a creative feat, and I know of no one except Virginia Woolf who has accomplished it. 2

Many consider Mrs. Dalloway Mrs. Woolf's masterpiece. R. Ellis Roberts writes of it: "that perfect and heart-rending translation of a moment of time into an eternity." 3 Edwin Muir says, "There is nothing in contemporary fiction to rival it .... It is an indisputable artistic triumph." 4

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2. Forster, E. M., Yale Review, ns 15:505
3. To The Lighthouse

To the Lighthouse (1927), the third novel of Mrs. Woolf's second period, is developed by much the same method the author used in Jacob's Room and in Mrs. Dalloway. But To the Lighthouse shows, in several ways, a decided advance over the other two, because of a much more definite use of symbolism than in Jacob's Room, and in the fact that the stream of consciousness is developed by more characters than in Mrs. Dalloway, hence the conflict of various personalities complicates the progress of the story. Fewer direct quotations appear, and nearly the whole of the story is told in the third person.

One of the chief characteristics of this story is the fact that the most important events are presented in bracketed statements. In the reverie of the deserted house, the reader comes with startling suddenness upon the information:

(Mr. Ramsey, stumbling along a passage one dark morning, stretched his arms out, but Mrs. Ramsey having died rather suddenly in the night before, his arms, though stretched out, remained empty.)

Mrs. Woolf has made frequent use of parentheses before, but always to enclose the almost irrelevant material which the fringe of the mind has dragged in. But here she has bracketed the event that effected the conclusion of the story.
This is an unusual but forceful presentation of a crisis. As in all of Mrs. Woolf’s work, the theme here is life. For Mrs. Dalloway, it was “London; this one day in June;” for Mrs. Ramsey, it presented itself as “a little strip” of fifty years,

"something real, something private which she shared neither with her children nor with her husband. A sort of transaction went on between them, in which she sat on one side, and life on another, and she was always trying to get the better of it.”

(p 91, 92)

Life is deep, but

Now and again we rise to the surface that is what you see us by. (p 96)

Mrs. Ramsey felt that

Losing personality, one lost the fret, the hurry, the stir; and there rose to her lips always some exclamation of triumph over life when things came together in this peace, this eternity; and pausing there she looked out to meet the stroke of the Lighthouse. (p 96)

The Lighthouse is the symbol of the desires of life, the vision toward which one struggles. The title of part one, “The Window,” symbolized the window through which the soul glimpses that vision, and through which the flickerings of that light casts both its shadows and its beckoning gleams. This section covers but the period of one day during the Ramsey’s vacation in the Hebrides. The story begins with that one great longing of the child, encouraged by the mother, who symbolizes hope; and discouraged by the father, who symbolizes the facts of life.
"Yes, of course, if it's fine tomorrow," said Mrs. Ramsey. "But you'll have to be up with the lark," she added.

To her son these words conveyed extraordinary joy, as if it were settled, the expedition were bound to take place, and the wonder to which he had looked forward for years and years it seemed, was, after a night's darkness and a day's sail, within touch. Since he belonged, even at the age of six, to that great clan which cannot keep this feeling separate from that, but must let future prospects, with their joys and sorrows, cloud what is actually at hand, since to such people even in earliest childhood any turn in the wheel of sensation has the power to crystallize and transfix the moment upon which its gloom or its radiance rests, James Ramsey, sitting on the flower cutting out pictures... endowed the picture as his mother spoke, with heavenly bliss.

"But," said his father... "it won't be fine."

Had there been an axe handy, or a poker, any weapon that would have gnashed a hole in his father's breast and killed him, there and then, James would have seized it. Such were the emotions that Mr. Ramsey excited in his children's breasts by his mere presence... What he said was true. It was always true. He was incapable of an untruth; never tampered with a fact; never altered a disagreeable word to suit the pleasure or the convenience of any mortal being, least of all of his own children, who... should be aware from childhood that life is difficult; facts uncompromising; and the passage to the fabled land where our brightest hopes are extinguished, our frail barks founder in darkness... one that needs, above all, courage, truth, and the power to endure.

"But it may be fine - I expect it will be fine," said Mrs. Ramsey; (pp 9, 10, 11) and she continues her knitting, thinking all the while of the needs of the family of the keeper of the lighthouse and her plans to alleviate those needs.

All of part one symbolizes, then, the eternal conflict
between hope and fact. Throughout the day every imaginable impression is recorded upon the mind of Mrs. Ramsey: impressions of nature, impressions made by her husband, her children, her guests, her servants. Then there are the impressions of one character upon another -

"Strife, divisions, differences of opinion, prejudices twisted into the very fibre of being, oh, that they should begin so early, Mrs. Ramsey deplored. . . . It seemed such nonsense inventing differences, when people, heaven knows, were different enough without that." (p 17)

Mrs. Woolf characterizes Mrs. Ramsey most vividly by her little exaggerations, her humor, and her desire to make everyone around her happy, and by her consciousness of her power and her beauty.

The characters are numerous; the old poet, the young scientist, the spinster artist, the youthful lovers, and the eight Ramsey children, the servants, Mr. Ramsey, and it is Mrs. Ramsey's duty to keep all these personalities harmonious. The task presents many humorous situations.

The day passes but the journey to the lighthouse is not made.

Part two is really an Interlude entitled "Time Passes," which covers a period of ten years. In it are some of the most beautiful passages of all Mrs. Woolf's work. It is a reverie poetic with rhythm and imagery: a symphony of time with dashes of sunlight, a song of bird, whisper of
breezes, moaning of winds, washing of waves, decay, death, peace. The first day of the story has drawn to a close, the lights in the Ramsey house go out one by one.

Nothing, it seemed, could survive the flood, the profusion of darkness, which creeping in at keyholes and crevices, stole round window blinds, came into bedrooms, swallowed up here a jug and basin, there a bowl of red and yellow dahlias, ... there was scarcely anything left of body or mind by which one could say, "This is he" or "This is she." Sometimes a hand was raised as if to clutch something, or somebody groaned, or somebody laughed aloud as if sharing a joke with nothingness. (pp 189, 190)

But what after all is one night? A short space, especially when the darkness dims so soon, and so soon a bird sings, a cock crows, or a faint green quickness, like a turning leaf, in the hollow of the waves. Night, however, succeeds to night. The winter holds a pack of them in store and deals them equally, evenly, with indefatigable fingers. They lengthen; they darken. Some of them hold aloft clear planets, plates of brightness. The autumn trees, ravaged as they are, take on the flash of tattered flags kindling in the gloom of cool cathedral caves where gold letters on marble pages describe death in battle and how bones bleach and burn far away in Indian sands. The autumn trees gleam in the yellow moonlight, in the light of harvest moons, the light which mellows the energy of labour, and smooths the stubble, and brings the waves lapping blue to the shore. (192)

... .

So with the house empty and the doors locked ... those stray airs, advance guards of great armies, blustered in, brushed bare boards, nibbled and fanned, met nothing in bedroom or drawing-room that wholly resisted them but only hangings that flapped, wood that creaked, the bare legs of tables, saucepans and china already furred, tarnished, cracked.
Now, day after day, light turned, like a flower reflected in water, its sharp image on the wall opposite. Only the shadows of the trees, flourishing in the wind, made obelisk on the wall, and for a moment darkened the pool in which light reflected itself. (p 194)

So loveliness reigned and stillness, and together made the shape of loveliness itself, a form from which life had parted, solitary like a pool at evening, far distant... Loveliness and stillness clasped hands in the bedroom, and among the shrrouded jugs and sheeted chairs even the prying of the wind, and the soft nose of the clammy sea airs, rubbing, snuffling, iterating and reiterating their questions—"Will you fade? Will you perish?"—scarcely disturbed the peace, the indifference, the air of pure integrity, as if the question they asked scarcely needed that they answer: we remain. (p 195)

Again the Lighthouse dominates the story:

When darkness fell, the stroke of the Lighthouse, which had laid itself with such authority upon the carpet in the darkness, tracing its pattern, came now in the softer light of spring mixed with moonlight gliding gently as if it laid its caress and lingered stealthily and looked and came lovingly again. (pp 199, 200)

The house was deserted, it was left like a shell on a sandhill to fill with dry salt grains now that life had left it. The long night seemed to have set in; the trifling airs, nibbling, the clammy breaths, scuffling, seemed to have triumphed. (p 206)

Finally, even Mrs. Mc Nab, the caretaker, refused to go back. She locked the door.

Only the Lighthouse beam entered the rooms for a moment. (p 207)

Then came the message that the family was returning; servants attempted to bring order out of chaos. At last,
Mr. Ramsey, James, and Cam, and two of the former guests return. Not only has the house changed during those ten years, but Mrs. Ramsey and the oldest daughter have died, and the oldest son has been killed in war. These facts are not a part of the story but are presented in brackets. The house will never be the same, the lawn will never be the same, the guests will never be the same without Mrs. Ramsey.

Part three bears as its subject the title of the book, "To the Lighthouse," for it is the fulfillment of the old plan to visit that objective. The children do not now want to go, but they can not refuse the tyrant, their father. Mr. Ramsey feels it his duty, even at this late day, to carry out his wife's wish, and to him the Lighthouse becomes a shrine at whose altar he humbles himself. On that journey each of the three, unassisted by one another and unknown to each other realizes the purpose of life is, after all, to assist others by giving a little praise, a little sympathy, and to have a vision of one's very own.

The criticism has been made that Part two is completely out of harmony with part one and part three, that lacking human qualities, the story of the house during

5. Muir, Edwin, Nation and Athenaeum, July 3, 1927 p 45
the ten year interlude between part one and part three is not an appropriate transitional section. But Mrs. Woolf’s idea undoubtedly is that through the window of that house, the lighthouse still casts its nightly beams, making itself felt in the home, even though its occupants are not there. Just so the memory of that shadow through the window has unconsciously worked upon the mind of Mr. Ramsey who had always frustrated the plans for the trip to the Lighthouse. Part three, then, logically and naturally follows, for the trip is accomplished when that memory flashes upon Mr. Ramsey’s consciousness and leads him, ten years later, to perform the journey as a sacred rite in memory of his wife. Therefore, the ultimate fruition of a desire is accomplished with much greater emphasis by a transition which deals with the impersonal than with the personal, for the impersonal flickerings of the lighthouse casting its shadow upon an impersonal house going to decay, has at the same time its counterpart in its effect on the mind of the man who had always frustrated the great hope in part one. The symbolism is, therefore, increased and the effect heightened. To omit this would ruin the ellusion, and to insert the personal would call for such an increase of detail that the reader’s interest would be lost.

To the Lighthouse differs from Mrs. Dalloway in the fact that there are divisions and subdivisions which give
evidence of a pre-arrangement or the suggestion of plot that Mrs. Woolf admits was lacking in the writing of *Mrs. Dalloway*. It differs also from the latter in that the whole story is motivated by a definite objective (the trip to the Lighthouse) which serves to unify the whole narrative. In addition to this, the author’s use of symbolism gives unity to this novel.
4. Orlando

Time and Life are the themes which Mrs. Woolf always chooses. In *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, the time of one and two days, respectively, has been extended to a lifetime in that an extremely short period has been sufficient for the stream-of-consciousness method to reveal the history of a lifetime. In *Orlando*, however, Mrs. Woolf has reversed her former order, and the life history of one person who is both hero and heroine, and, therefore, might be called a "him-er" in the term of Ella Flagg Young, covers a period of 350 years, and therein gives the history of England and the history of English literature from the age of Elizabeth to October 11, 1928. Just where it should be classified is hard to determine. The author labels it "biography," thereby relieving herself of the responsibility of the novelist; but it may be classified a literary fantasy, an allegory, or a poetic history, of all of which it partakes, interspersed with delicious humor and subtle satire; it might even be "clept" an epic, were it not for the "her" of him; and were it not for the wielding of pens instead of armor.

The hero-heroin, whose fathers had come "out of the northern mists with coronets on their heads," (p 14) was therefore, heir to large estates, by virtue of which and his good looks, he became a favorite of Elizabeth, At
twenty-five, he had written "forty-seven books - plays, histories, romances, poems; some in prose, some in verse; some in French, some in Italian; he had had innumerable love affairs and intrigues; had been exiled by King James; had fallen into a trance which obliterated from his memory much of the tragedy of his affair with the Russian princess; secured an ambassadorship to Constantinople, where, after a marriage with a Russian dancer, another trance rescued him from further difficulty and from which he emerged a woman. Then, after some months with a gipsy band and nature, she returns at thirty-six to England to experience lawsuits over titles to lands, and finally there comes to her love and marriage; and after three and a half centuries of apprenticeship attains poetic fame and the Hawthornden prize in 1927.

Thus Mrs. Woolf has returned to a plot novel, which becomes at the same time a history of England, a history of English literature, and a criticism of English literature from the time of Thomas Browne and "Nick" Greene to Virginia Sackville-West and other Edwardians. The whole story is said to be based on the Sackville-West family history and their connections with English literature, and the setting to be the Sackville-West estate, Knole; and Orlando, it is claimed, is Virginia Sackville-West, who in 1927 won the Hawthornden Prize for her poem "Land" which is quoted in
To begin with, Mrs. Woolf asserts:

The age was Elizabethan; their morals were not ours; nor their poets; nor their climate; nor their vegetables even. Everything was different. (pp 26, 27)

There follows, then, the metamorphoses of the period of James, and the big Frost; of Charles and Nell Guinn; of George; of Victoria and the Victorians; of Edward and the Edwardians, who are heirs of all their predecessors in the field of literature, and can, therefore, do as they please in the way of writing and yet produce good literature.

Nick Greene is first pictured as the critic with no good word for any Elizabethan writer, but is willing to accept a pension from one of them; and in the end reappears as Sir Nicholas Greene, Litt. D., Professor, and "the most influential critic of the Victorian age."

Shakespeare, Marlowe, Ben Jonson, Browne, Donne, Spencer, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Swift, Johnson, and Mrs. Williams, all make their contributions to this biography and this literary history, with the mere mention of Tennyson and Browning as representatives of the Victorian age.

One recognizes quotations which have become so much a part of English speech that they need no quotations mark: "on such a night as this;" and characters from the

6. Mortimer, Raymond, "Mrs. Woolf and Mr. Strachey" Bookman 68: 625-9
writings of the greatest authors: "She was never without a whippet or a spaniel at her knee; fed them white bread from her own plate; sang sweetly to the virginals."

Mrs. Woolf has satirized Evelyn's diary, the king's court; social customs and style of dress; the medical profession, past and present; kings, queens, nobles of every period are played upon by her wit.

The story is projected through time, Time which

...unfortunately, though it makes animals and vegetables bloom and fade with amazing punctuality has no such simple effect upon the mind of man. The mind of man, moreover, works with equal strangeness upon the body of time. An hour, once it lodges in the queer element of the human spirit, may be stretched to fifty or a hundred times its clock length; on the other hand, an hour may be accurately represented on the time piece of the mind by a second. This extraordinary discrepancy between time on the clock and time in the mind is less known than it should be and deserves fuller investigation. But the biographer must confine himself to one simple statement: when a man has reached the age of thirty, as Orlando had, time when he is thinking becomes inordinately long; time when he is doing becomes inordinately short.

Thus

Some weeks added a century to his age, others no more than three seconds at most. (pp 98, 99)

Throughout these periods of Time, Orlando revises and polishes this one book he has saved and in the present time produces a prize-winner.
In connection with the literary allegory which is found in *Orlando*, Mrs. Woolf has, without doubt, intended to show the metamorphosis of woman, and especially of the woman writer throughout the period 1530-1938. The woman writer of the present has learned through the experiences of this long period, having been a man first, to interpret life with the understanding and the feeling of a man as well as that of a woman, and can, therefore, both as a writer and as a woman meet man on a common ground. This is the same question Mrs. Woolf hinted at in the first and second novels of her first period:

I must retract some of the things I have said about them (girls). If they were properly educated, I don't see why they shouldn't be much the same as men — as satisfactory I mean; though, of course, very different. *(Voyage Out* p 96)

It'll take at least six generations before you're sufficiently thick-skinned to go into law courts and business affairs. *(Voyage Out* p 213)

Where Katharine was simple, Cassandra was complex; where Katharine was solid and direct, Cassandra was vague and evasive. In short, they represented very well the manly and the womanly sides of feminine nature, and for foundation, there was the profound unity of common blood between them. *(Night and Day* p 341)

This last quotation, especially, shows Mrs. Woolf's idea in the character of Orlando, who represents the literary genius of the past, descending through the male
line beginning to flower in the seventeenth century and blossoming into novelist and essayist, and prize-winning poet of the present day in Virginia Sackville-West, descendant of the illustrious Thomas Sackville who immortalized his name in Garboeduc.

In Orlando

Mrs. Woolf has broken tradition and convention and has set out to explore still another fourth dimension of writing. She has not abandoned the stream-of-consciousness method ... but has combined with it the Einstein theory of relativity, therefore, is largely preoccupied with the time element in character and human relationships, a combination of time, past, present, future, of objective reality and subjective consciousness, which we refer to as the present. 7

In Orlando there appear many anachronisms which any allegory admits. Among these are the Turkish and gypsy periods of Orlando's existence in the eighteenth century. These are doubtless significant of the Russian influence evident in English literature at a much later period.

In Orlando one sees devices used by former English authors and ideas used in Greek literature; in fact, even the metamorphosis of Orlando may be traced to Greek influence.

It should be noted that a Room of One's Own deals

with the same subject found in Orlando - woman's place in literature.

In Orlando, Mrs. Woolf has proved that not only may her method serve the purpose of one or two day's time, but it may be used to capture time itself and thereby show the effects of literary inheritance upon a human being.

Mrs. Woolf has, then, attempted not only the history literature, but the evolution of a literary character which is debtor to every age; to time itself. The scope of this novel is, therefore, greater than any of her preceding works, and the allegory is more extended than that of To the Lighthouse.
CHAPTER IV
CONCLUSION
THE DEVELOPMENT OF METHOD AND STYLE
IN THE WORKS OF VIRGINIA WOOLF.

Mrs. Woolf's earliest published works were, as previously noted, anonymous reviews contributed chiefly to The Times Supplement. At the time she was writing them, she was experimenting with purely imaginative stories and sketches using the impressionistic method. She had, in the meantime, written a novel conforming to all the rules of the nineteenth century novel of plot. It remained unpolished for a number of years, during which time it received much revising and polishing. This was The Voyage Out, which was finally published in 1915. Her second novel, Night and Day, appeared in 1919. These two novels constitute the work of what, in this investigation, is termed Mrs. Woolf's early period. In these though she had complied with all the requirements of the English novel of the period, she gave definite hints as to her belief that the novel should be other than custom had decreed. At the same time, her critical essays of the years 1919 and 1920 set forth her complete statement of her break with the novel of plot and her belief that the novel should exhibit life as it presents itself every day to the mind, which registers every impression, no matter how trivial, and thus reflects the soul as no prearranged plot, developed with
definite consideration to tragedy, comedy, love plot, and catastrophe, could possibly do. The novel of plot, in Mrs. Woolf's words is a "magnificent apparatus for catching life just an inch or two on the wrong side." Therefore, "Life escapes and perhaps without life nothing else is worthwhile." 1

In 1931, Mrs. Woolf published a book of those sketches and short stories with which she had long experimented. In these, three, at least, are especially worthy of attention because of the fact that she had, with unusual success, pictured the mind at work, and had, therefore, caught the spirit. These are "The Haunted House," "Kew Gardens," and "The Mark on the Wall." The latter especially fulfills the requirements she had laid down for herself, in reproducing the mind as it reacts to all stimuli in the order in which they present themselves. These sketches mark the beginning of the second period of Mrs. Woolf's fiction.

There followed, in 1922, Jacob's Room, the first novel following her new method, the plotless, psychological novel. In this, the hero is known by the impressions he makes upon his friends and others who meet him; he is not revealed by his words nor directly by his actions, but by his effect on others. It is, then, chiefly a series of sketches of the mental attitudes of other people as they are affected by the

1. Woolf, Virginia, The Common Reader, "Modern Fiction" p 311
actions of the hero. Following this, in 1925, came Mrs. Dalloway, which was so much more definitely a break with tradition that Mrs. Woolf and her innovations became the subject of many critical reviews; and this book placed her, according to the opinion of the majority of critics, in the front rank of contemporary novelists. This novel covers the story of one day's time in the life of the heroine, and, like her most successful sketch, "The Mark on the Wall," reveals the mind of central character affected by all stimuli, trivial or important, in the order in which they imprinted themselves on the mind, and, thereby, reveals the whole history of her life.

In the year 1925, too, there was published The Common Reader, a collection of her essays in which her theories of the essay and of the novel are stated, and in which one sees the influences which had led her to break with custom. Among these influences are Montaigne, Sir Thomas Browne, and Russian writers, especially Tolstoy.

In her later works, Mrs. Woolf has with certain innovations of style, successfully continued her stream of consciousness method in To the Lighthouse and Orlando. In these two, she has effectively introduced allegory.

In all her novels of the second period, Mrs. Woolf has shown marked development in style. She is more sensi-

2. See Appendix the contrast of the style of her earlier and later works.
tive than in her early works to sense impressions, especially to color and form, and the effect of these on the mind of the characters is reported in such a way as to give much more vivid impressions of background than does the earlier use of description. An innovation in style is the use of greater variety of sentence length, with a far greater number of short sentences and broken sentences, which give greater rapidity than do the longer sentences of her earlier novels. Most striking of all, however, is the accentuation of rhythm, which is especially noticeable and effective in To the Lighthouse, passages of which rank among the most exquisite prose in contemporary literature.
APPENDIX

A STUDY IN ANALYSIS OF STYLE.

That Mrs. Woolf's work shows a development of style as well as change of method is obvious. As stated in the preface, an attempt to determine the extent of her change in style was the original plan for this investigation. Hence, the following study was made according to certain methods of scientific analysis of style as presented by Edith Rickert in Methods for the Study of Literature. The work was limited to the study of imagery, word length, sentence length, rhythm, and color.

The study of imagery in a passage from a novel of her first period and a passage from a later novel seems to indicate that the author was much more susceptible to sense impressions in the later than in the earlier period, and that the variety of images is greater. These facts would be expected in the stream of consciousness novel, for description is no longer definitely stated as in the novel of plot, but color, form, in fact all sense impressions become a part of the story because they are in themselves stimuli that help to keep the story moving.
IMAGERY IN NIGHT AND DAY

The passage studied is the description of a street in London on a windy winter night.

The color and form images predominate forming 45 +% of the whole number of images; kinesthetic 16 %; auditory 14 +%; tactual 5 +%; moving 17 %.

The author's purpose here was to show the tumult and confusion of the stormy night and the tumult and confusion in the mind of Denham. The harmony of feeling in nature and in the mind of the character is well done. The author has made especially effective use of kinesthetic and moving images, which in combination with form and color convey the idea intended.

1. Woolf, Virginia, Night and Day, pp 382-394
1. The streets were empty enough on Sunday night... 

2. if the domestic amusements had not kept people indoors, 

3. a strong high wind might... 

4. Ralph was aware of the tumult in the streets much in accordance with his own sensations. 

5. The gusts, sweeping along the Strand, seemed to blow a clear space across the sky, 

6. for a short time the quick-speeding silver moon riding through the clouds 

7. as if they were waves of water surging round her and over her 

8. They swamped her 

9. she emerged 

10. she issued forth indomitable 

11. In the country fields the wreckage of winter had dispersed; 

12. the dead leaves 

13. the whitened bracken
14. the dry discolored grass
15. but no bud would be broken
16. nor the new stalks that showed above the earth
17. a line of blue or yellow would show through a slit
   in their green
18. the whirl of the atmosphere
19. what of star or blossom appeared (was only as)
20. a light gleaming for a second upon heaved waves fast
   following each other.
21. He knocked loudly on the door
22. He rang the bell
23. could no longer pretend sound of the wind in the old
   building was the sound of
24. someone rising from his chair
25. he ran downstairs
26. He walked in direction of Chelsea.
27. Physical fatigue, for he had not dined
28. had tramped far and fast
39. sit for a moment on seat on the Embankment

30. The story... went down the wind

31. disconnected syllables flying past... with queer
alternation of loudness and faintness dying down to
a grumble

32. The unhappy voice afflicted Ralph

33. and angered him

34. man mumbled on

35. an odd image came to his mind of lighthouse besieged
by flying bodies of lost birds who were dashed senseless by the gale against the glass

36. he had a strange sensation that he was lighthouse
and bird

37. he was steadfast and brilliant

38. he was whirléd, with all other things, senseless against
the glass

39. Image of lighthouse and storm full of birds

40. he walked past house of Parliament
41. he went down Grosvenor Road

42. by side of the river

43. In state of physical fatigue details merged in the
vaster prospect

44. the flying gloom and intermittent lights of lamp-
posts and private houses

45. the streets came under the influence

46. He walked in a trance of pleasure,

47. but when he reached it, and pushed the gate of the
little garden open

48. he hesitated

49. the outside of the house held pleasure enough,

50. He crossed the road

51. and leant against the balustrade and fixing his eyes
upon the house

52. Lights burnt in three long windows of the drawing room

53. The space of the room behind became . . . the centre
of the dark flying wilderness of the world.
54. the **steady light** which cast its **beams** like those of the **lighthouse** with searching **composure** over the **trackless waste.**

(PP 393-394)
IMAGERY IN TO THE LIGHTHOUSE

The passage studied is a description of the Ramsey home in the Hebrides as it appears ten years after the family had left it. The feeling of loneliness of the place on a dark night, and loneliness, gloom, and decay of ten years of neglect are admirably produced by the number of color, form, and kinaesthetic images, with a few forceful auditory, tactual, and thermal images.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Color</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gustatory</td>
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</table>

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2. Woolf, Virginia, To the Lighthouse pp 189-192
So with lamps all put out,
the moon sank
and a thin rain drumming on the roof a down pouring of immense darkness began.
Nothing could survive that flood,
the profusion of darkness creeping in at keyholes and crevices,
stole round the window blinds,
came into bedrooms,
swallowed up here a jug and basin there a bowl of red and yellow dahlias,
there the sharp edges and firm bulk of a chest of drawers.
Not only was furniture confounded; . . .
Sometimes a hand was raised as if to clutch something or ward off something,
or somebody groaned,
or somebody laughed aloud as if
share the joke with nothingness.

Nothing stirred in the drawing-room

or in the dining-room

or on the staircase.

Only through the rusty hinges

and seamed ace-moistened woodwork

certain airs crept round corners and ventured indoors. ... 

trying with the flap of hanging wall paper

would it hand ... would it fall

Smoothly brushing the walls

red and yellow roses on the wall paper

would they fade

the torn letters in the waste basket

the flowers, the books,

Some random light directing them

its pale footfall upon the stair and mat

for some uncovered star

or wandering ship
or the Lighthouse
the little airs mounted the staircase
and nosed round bedroom doors
Those sliding lights
those fumbling airs that breathe and bend over the bed itself
you can neither touch nor destroy

ghostily wearily
feather-light fingers
and the light persistency of feathers
they would look on the shut eyes
and the loosely clasping fingers
and fold their garments wearily.

Nosing, rubbing, they went to the window
on the staircase,

to the servants' bedrooms
to boxes in the attic
descending
blanched the apples in the dining-room
fumbled the petals of roses

tried the picture on the easel

brushed the mat

and blew a little sand along the floor

all ceased together

gathered together

sighed together

together gave off a gust of lamentation

some door in the kitchen replied;

swung wide; admitted nothing;

slammed to. (pp 189-191)

One night? a short space,

when darkness dims

birds sing, a crow crows,

a faint green quickens

like a turning leaf, in the hollow of a wave.

night succeeds night.
Winter holds a pack of them
deals them equally

Indefatigable fingers,

they lengthen, they darken

Aloft clear planets, plates of brightness

Autumn trees, take on a flash of tattered silk

Kindling the gloom of cool cathedral caves

Where gold letters on marble pages describe death in battle and

How bones bleach and burn in Indian sands

Autumn trees gleam in yellow moonlight

In the light of harvest moons,

The light which mellows labour

Smoothes the stubble

Brings wave lapping blue to the shore.

(p 193)
This graph shows the rhythm scheme of 17 lines from To the Lighthouse (p. 32, 33). The purpose is to show Mrs. Woolf's feeling for iambic hexameters. It will be observed there are 27 dialects in the 19 lines, 59.23% of which are prepositional phrases.
COLOR

The color charts tend to show that Mrs. Woolf uses almost twice as many color images in To the Lighthouse as she uses in Night and Day, and that she is, therefore, a greater impressionist in her later period. The reds predominate in Night and Day in percentage, though there are only twenty-six reds to the twenty-five in To the Lighthouse. The reds in Night and Day are nearly all referring to fire; in To the Lighthouse it is color of flowers.

The author's use of green in To the Lighthouse is due to the fact that the main character is seeing the world in the springtime, and her views are mostly those she gains through her window in the daytime. In the earlier story nearly all the scenes studied occur at night.
Colors Chart for 100 pages of Night and Day
89 - Total number.
RHYTHM IN MRS. WOOLF'S LATER WORKS

Mrs. Woolf has a very definite sense of rhythm which is much more evident in the works of her second period. These are especially noticeable in *Monday or Tuesday* and *To the Lighthouse*. The following is but one of many passages that might be cited. The regularity of the anapest is decidedly marked.

"I'm in love with you?" No, that was not true.
*I'm in love with all this,* waving her hand at the hedge, at the house, at the children. It was absurd, it was impossible. So now she laid her brushes neatly in the box, side by side, and said to William Bankes: "It suddenly gets cold. The sun seems to give less heat," she said, looking about her, for it was bright enough, the grass still a soft deep green, the house starred in its greenery with purple passion flowers, and rocks dropping cool cries from the high blue. But something moved, flashed, turned a silver wing in the air. It was September after all, the middle of September, and past six in the evening. So off they strolled down the garden in the usual direction, past the tennis lawn, past the pampas grass, to that break, in the thick hedge, guarded by red hot pokers like braziers of clear coal burning cool between which the blue waters of the bay looked bluer than ever.
They came there regularly every evening drawn by some need. It was as if the water floated off and set sailing thoughts which had grown stagnant on dry land, and gave to their bodies even some sort of physical relief. First the pulse of color flooded the bay with blue, and the heart expanded with it and the body swam, only the next instant to be checked and chilled by the prickly blackness on the ruffled waves. Then, up behind the great black rock, almost every evening spurted irregularly, so that one had to watch for it and it was a delight when it came, a fountain of white water; and then, while one waited for that, one watched on the pale semi-circular beach, wave after wave shedding again and again smoothly a film of mother of pearl.

There are fifty anapests in the thirty-four lines quoted.
Anapest phrases are numerous.

1. let its sails drop down;
2. both of them looked at the dunes far away.
3. communing with the sky which beholds an earth entirely at rest.
4. Looking at the far sand hills, William Bankes thought of Ramsey;
thought of a road in Westmoreland, thought of Ramsey striding along a road by himself.
5. by a hen,
6. on that stretch of a road.
7. the pulp had gone out of their friendship
8. after a time
9. It was to repeat that they met.

(pp 34, 35)

10. Flies wove a web in the sunny rooms; (p 193)
11. His wife had been fond of her.  (p 231)
12. So they passed the edge of the lawn (p 231)
13. saw the room, saw the chairs,  (p 34)
Passage from To the Lighthouse in free verse form, showing use of anapests and prepositional phrases.

"I'm in love with you?"
No, that was not true.
"I'm in love with all this," waving her hand,
at the hedge, at the house, at the children.
It was absurd, it was impossible.
So now she laid her brushes neatly
in the box, side by side, and said to William Bankes:
"It suddenly gets cold."
The sun seems to give less heat, she said,
looking about her, for it was bright enough,
the grass still a soft, deep green,
the house starred in its greenery with purple passion flowers,
and rocks dropping cool cries from the high blue.
But something moved, flashed,
turned a silver wing in the air.
It was September after all, the middle of September,
and past six in the evening.
So off they strolled down the garden
in the usual direction,
past the tennis lawn, past the pampas grass,
to the break in the thick hedge,
guarded by red hot pokers
like braziers of clear burning coal,
between which the blue waters of the bay
looked bluer than ever,

(To the Lighthouse pp 32, 33)
The following study of two thousand words seems to indicate (1) a tendency toward the use of a greater number of structural words in the later period; and (2) toward the use of shorter words.
Use of one-syllable words in an earlier and a later work by Virginia Woolf.

(1919) Night and Day
(1927) To the Lighthouse
Structural works in 2000 studied in an earlier and a later work shows an apparent increase in the later work:

(1919) Night and Day
(1927) To the Lighthouse
The study of two hundred sentences in the earlier work and two hundred in the later work is sufficient to at least show Mrs. Woolf's tendency in her earlier period to normal and somewhat regular sentence length; and in her later period a tendency to irregularity in length, fifty-two of which range from one to ten syllables; while there are only twelve which have less than ten words in the passage from the earlier work.
Range 5 - 12#

Dominant Length:

1-25 = 38.1%
1-35 = 51.7%
25-35 = 21.7%
50-75 = 15.7%

Woolf Night and Day (1717)

Sentences Length
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<th>Range 1 to 274</th>
<th>Dominant Length</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - 25 % = 27 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 25 % = 15 %</td>
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</table>
SENTENCE LENGTH.

Study of the early and the later works of Mrs. Woolf shows interesting facts relative to sentence length. In the passages studied in earlier works there is less range in length, the dominant length being from one to thirty-five syllables. This is accounted for, without doubt, by the fact that Mrs. Woolf has followed the conventional form of a definite plot novel. Therefore, it seems she has taken greater care with the conventional in sentence structure.

In her later works, Mrs. Woolf has thrown aside all conventions and presented her story from the subjective point of view. The characters are affected by every conceivable impression. To show this constant and rapid change of impression and the variation of effect produced on the mind of the characters, Mrs. Woolf has used a greater variety of sentence length. The sentence length ranges from a word of one syllable to sentences of three hundred forty-eight syllables in the passages studied.
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