



The Art of Balance: A Corpus-assisted Stylistic Analysis of Woolfian Parallelism in *To the Lighthouse*

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ABSTRACT

This study has a two-fold objective: 1) to examine the density and variety of parallelism in Virginia Woolf's landmark novel *To the Lighthouse* through a sample-based comparison between this novel and other representative modernist novels; 2) to discuss the specific lexical and syntactic structures that characterize Woolf's parallelism. The results are extracted from a corpus-assisted reading and sampled textual analysis of her work. It shows that Woolfian parallelism is defined by an abundance of antithetical and synonymous lexical bundles, juxtaposed propositional phrases, -ing participles and appositional structures. Those structures constitute her special sentential development which is marked by the rhetoric of opposition, the rhetoric of simultaneity and progression, and the rhetoric of specificity. It is concluded that in *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf manipulates the above-mentioned linguistic resources to strike an artistic balance between poetry and prose, order and chaos, the physical reality and the mental world, and finally achieves what she calls "a feminine sentence".

KEYWORDS:

To the Lighthouse, Woolfian parallelism, corpus-assisted analysis, feminine sentence.

RESUMEN

El presente estudio persigue un doble objetivo: 1) examinar la densidad y la variedad de paralelismo en la paradigmática novela de Virginia Woolf *Al faro* a través de una comparación por fragmentos entre esta novela y otras representativas del Modernismo; 2) explorar las estructuras específicas léxicas y sintácticas que caracterizan el paralelismo de Woolf. Los resultados se extraen a partir de una lectura basada en concordancias y análisis textuales de extractos de su obra. Muestra cómo el paralelismo woolfiano se define por una abundancia de conjuntos léxicos antitéticos y sinónimos, sintagmas preposicionales yuxtapuestas, participios en -ing y estructuras aposicionales. Esas estructuras constituyen el desarrollo sintáctico especial de Woolf, marcado por la retórica de la simultaneidad y la progresión, la retórica de la particularidad y la retórica de la oposición. En conclusión, se afirma que en *Al faro*, la autora manipula los recursos lingüísticos mencionados para alcanzar un equilibrio artístico entre la suspensión y la continuidad, la realidad física y el mundo mental, el estado del hacer y el estado del ser, y finalmente alcanza lo que ella misma llama "una oración femenina".

PALABRAS CLAVE:

Paralelismo woolfiano, lectura basada en concordancia, equilibrio, *Al faro*, oración femenina.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout her life of artistic pursuit, Virginia Woolf was a persistent explorer for an artistic balance that might accommodate various forms of duality: “fact and vision, art and life, the inner and the outer world, order and chaos, mutability and continuity” (Novak, 1975: xii). Her artistic aim as an artist, however, was not only to mirror and record these contradictions of human life, but “to find a fictional form that would hold all opposites in a state of momentary wholeness yielding insight...” (ibid.). She believed that “Tumult is vile; confusion is hateful; everything in a work of art should be mastered and ordered” (Woolf, 1966: 228). This pursuit of order and harmony, when projected at the level of language, is realized by the marriage of prose and poetry. The poetic voice, in her novel, has a two-fold rhetorical function: on the one hand, with its inherent properties like deviation, connotation, ambiguity and symbolism, poetry can be the best medium for fully capturing the subtleties of shapeless minds and simultaneously “incants, invokes, suggests, moving towards emotional synthesis and an experience of wholeness of perception” (Davies, 1989: 51). On the other hand, lyricism is also defined by “regularity”: the metrical schemes and incremental repetitions are the most effective ways to give order and coherence among the disordered and fleeting sensations that Woolf would like to depict. The duality of lyricism, is an important avenue for Woolf to strike the balance of all these dichotomies through language. We believe that it is in the novel *To the Lighthouse* that she achieved the culmination of her search for balance and harmony.

To the Lighthouse, in contrast to her other novels, is more brimful with themes of contrast, e.g. masculinity and femininity, psychological time and real time, the state of being and the state of doing, the factual and the visionary, etc. In Roger Fry’s phrases, Virginia Woolf in this novel has created poetically “an equivalent for life” through the novel’s “closely-knit unity of texture” (McNichol, 1990: 106). The verbal texture of this novel, compared to other novels, displays a more intense awareness of poetry and more earnest efforts to produce the poetic voice. Part of the reason for the latter might be that this novel is more focused on people’s inner thinking and Woolf needs a stronger poetic rhetoric to accommodate two contradictory undercurrents: the chaotic and transient streams of consciousness and the orderliness of her controlled artistic form.

Although depiction of inner thinking is the major theme throughout her oeuvre, evidence can be found to prove that Woolf puts more thematic emphasis on perceptions and inner experiences in *To the Lighthouse* than in other novels. We compared *To the Lighthouse* with her other nine novels¹ by using corpus software AntConc. A keyword list was produced to reveal the dominant topics of the novel. Among the top fifteen action-related lexical items, nine of them are related to mental processes (in Hallidayan terms) as shown in Table 1.

The top fifteen action-related key words in <i>To the Lighthouse</i>				
1. THOUGHT	2. FELT	3. WANTED	4. PAINTING	5. KNEW
6. LIKED	7. THINKING	8. READING	9. WONDERED	10. LOOKING
11. BLUNDERED	12. PAINT	13. SUPPOSED	14. REALIZING	15. SAYING
The categorization of top fifteen action-related key words				
Mental process	cognition	1. THOUGHT	5. KNEW	7. THINKING
		9. WONDERED	13. SUPPOSED	14. REALIZING
	perception	2. FELT		
	emotion	6. LIKED		
	intention	3. WANTED		
Verbal process		15. SAYING		
Material process		4. PAINTING	8. READING	10. LOOKING
		11. BLUNDERED	12. PAINT	

Table 1. The categorization of top fifteen action-related lexical items in keyword list

In such a well-knit mental discourse, where many threads and shapes of thoughts and perspectives are intertwined with each other, Woolf's technique is to use carefully chosen wordings and structures to control the contents, the fragments of dancing flows of thoughts, without weakening her expressiveness of the reality of mind. The poetic function of language, with the duality of unbounded semantic associations and designed formal regularities, was brought into full play.

The general aim of the present study is to find out, at a micro-linguistic level, what grammatical structures Woolf manipulates to constitute her lyric prose style in this novel. In other words, our task is to examine the lexico-syntactic patterns for rendering poetry and how these linguistic patterns with poetic function work to represent the minds and the themes of balance.

The linguistic criterion in its realization of poetic function was most famously discussed by Russian linguist and literary theorist Roman Jakobson. He contends that (1996: 11-13) there are six constitutive factors in any verbal communication: addresser, message, addressee, context, code and contact. Each of those six factors determines one function of language; correspondingly, emotive function, poetic function, conative function, referential function, metalingual function and phatic function. The nature of any communicative event depends primarily on the predominant function. In literature, the predominant factor of communication is message, which gives priority to the poetic function of the language. In other words, the reader of poetic language focuses more on the message per se and the inherent properties of the message.

Jakobson further maintains that the linguistic realization of poetic function is through parallelism, or known as "principle of equivalence": "*The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination.*" (Jakobson, 1996: 14). That is to say, typically in poetic language the same kinds of elements selected from the same paradigmatic axis are placed at different points of a syntagmatic chain and constitute a sequence. For instance, in the following sentence from *To the Lighthouse*, the axis

of selection with adjectival synonyms describing the selfishness of Mr Ramsay was projected into the syntagmatic sequence in which the equivalence or parallelism of adjectives ‘thickens’ Woolf’s language, and ‘foregrounds’ the formal qualities of the language (see Figure 1). This formal regularity and poetic beauty perfectly fulfills Woolf’s artistic ideal.

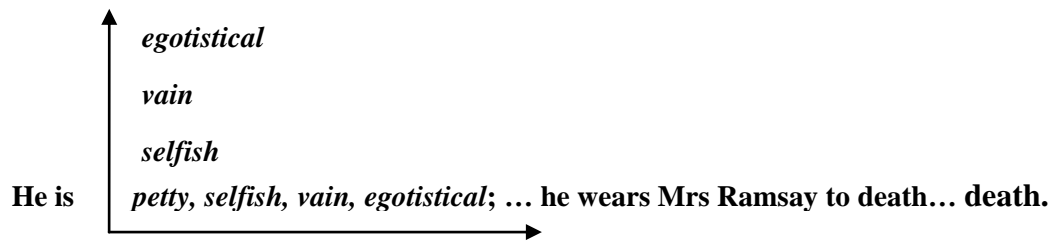


Figure 1. Syntagmatic sequence (Woolf, 1927/1992: 35)

Even though the poetic-prose language style has been commonly received as an important aspect in Woolf studies, the studies focusing on parallelism and its relation to Woolfian poeticness, as far as we can see, are far from adequate. When reading the parallelism-related studies of Woolf’s novels, we found many discussions concentrate on phonetic variations, namely, various forms of phonological parallelism (for typical studies see Bezircilioglu, 2009, McCluskey, 1986) or paralleled literary imageries (see Bell, 1979). Parallelism of other linguistic levels, especially lexical parallelism and semantic parallelism, however, merit further inquiry. Meanwhile, paralleled structures embedded in different rhetorical devices are often cited as examples to support different research topics concerning Woolf’s language style but systematic studies on the stylistic features of Woolfian parallelism itself are somewhat lacking.

In addition, when referring to the poetic aspect of Woolf’s language, many studies tend to choose *The Waves* and *Mrs. Dalloway* for illustration. *To the lighthouse*, in our opinion, represents an even higher level of the blending and the balance between poetry and prose but the question concerning what linguistic resources Woolf employs to attain such aesthetic effect has not been adequately answered.

Based on the above reflections, the present study aims to address two specific questions: 1) is parallelism prominent enough to be regarded as a defining feature of Woolf’s writing style in *To the Lighthouse*? and 2) more importantly, what are the foregrounded linguistic or stylistic features of Woolfian parallelism in this novel?

In reply to the first question, we compared Woolf with several other important modernist writers in terms of the density and variety of parallelism by conducting a sampling-based analysis. For the second part, the research was mainly carried out on a corpus-aided textual analysis.

With the development of corpus linguistics and computer-assisted language analysis, there are a growing number of studies applying corpus to the analyses of literary works (see

Culpeper, 2009; Hori, 2004; Mahlberg, 2007; Pennebaker & Ireland, 2008; Starke, 2009; Yufang Ho, 2011). The electronic collection of texts and the use of software tools allow a systematic exploration of linguistic forms of literary texts, especially the recurring linguistic patterns in literary language which might be invisible to an analyst's naked eye.

The traditional stylistic analysis is often characterized by an individual hermeneutic method, which was critiqued by Fish (1996) as "circular" and "arbitrary". Computer-assisted analysis can enable us to confirm what we already know in literature, which is "no bad thing" in Stubb's words (2005: 6), or more excitingly can produce results which would be impossible to get without a computer. The latter can help us uncover meanings that are not discussed in literary critical sources.

In our case, corpus software was applied to test the findings extracted from the sampled reading; moreover, the analysis of specific concordances allowed us to reveal certain literary meanings that have not been fully discussed by previous studies. The corpus programme we used in this study is AntConc and the main purpose using this tool is to produce related concordances in a KWIC (Key Word in Context) format. By investigating node words and their co-texts, we were able to discover the semantic relationship of the paralleled lexical items and the literary meanings of certain paralleled structures.

2. PARALLELISM

Despite various definitions and categorizations of 'parallelism' in rhetoric, grammar and poetics, a working definition and classifications for the present study are still needed. In our definition, parallelism refers to the pairings or groupings of elements which form an equivalence relation either structurally or semantically. The equivalences can be established along different dimensions of language: phonological, lexical, syntactic, and semantic levels, etc. This study only focuses on lexical, syntactic and semantic parallelism. We mainly followed the classification framework proposed by Rygiel (1994) and also made certain extensions for working out the features of Woolfian parallelism.

Lexical parallelism in the present study refers to different schemes of lexical repetition, or the repetition of lexical items. In order to display the variety and subtlety of Woolfian lexical repetition, we adopted and made certain changes of the categories proposed by Rygiel (1994) which as he defined, were basically derived from traditional rhetoric but were adapted for greater precision as suggested by modern stylistics. In our classification, nine types of lexical repetition are distinguished:

1. Initial-final (epanalepsis²): "Choose, dearests, choose," she said, hoping that they would make haste. (110)³
2. Initial and final (symploce): He braced himself. He clenched himself. (48)

3. Initial (anaphora): It is putting cabbages in water. It is roasting meat till it is like leather. It is cutting off the delicious skins of vegetables. (136)
4. Medial: ...in her little grey dress with her little puckered face and her little Chinese eyes. (140)
5. Final (epistrophe): And his habit of talking aloud, or saying poetry aloud, was growing on him...(96)
6. Final-initial (anadiplosis): In sympathy she looked at Rose. She looked at Rose sitting... (147)
7. Crossing pattern (chiasmus): She would never know him. He would never know her. (125)
8. Total immediate repetition (epizeuxis): He walked up the drive, Lights, light, lights... (107)
9. Total extended repetition (tautotes): ...whose bursting would flood her with delight, she had known happiness, exquisite happiness, intense happiness ... in her eyes and waves of pure delight raced over the floor of her mind and she felt, It is enough! It is enough! (88-89)

Syntactic parallelism stands when parings or groupings of elements bear structural equivalence at the same level of grammatical hierarchy. The grammatical levels in this study involve sentence level, main-clause level, sub-clause level, and words and phrases level (as indicated in the following examples).

1. Sentence parallelism: ...that was what she was thinking, this was what she was doing... (113)
2. Main-clause parallelism: ...she would never for a single second regret her decision, evade difficulties, or slur over duties. (11)
3. Sub-clause parallelism: As summer neared, as the evenings lengthened, there came to... (179)
4. Phrase parallelism: Once in the middle of the night with a roar, with a rupture, as after a centuries... (177)
5. Word parallelism: ...able only to go on watching, asking, wondering. (198)

Semantic parallelism occurs when parings or groupings of elements “can be interpreted to have parallel meaning” (Fabb, 1997: 139). Parallel meaning covers range of possibilities with two most common kinds being similarity of meaning and opposition of meaning (ibid.). The present study mainly focuses on semantic parallelism that arises at the lexical level, where two words are interpretable as being similar or opposite to one another. The following two kinds of semantic parallelism were examined in the novel:

1. Synonymy: repetition of synonyms– She was outraged, indignant. (43)
2. Antithesis: paralleled antonyms– ... that vastness and this tininess (103)

The different kinds of parallelism defined above will be employed as categories for comparing Woolf's parallelism and those of other contemporary modernist writers in the following section.

3. DENSITY AND VARIETY OF PARALLELISM IN *TO THE LIGHTHOUSE*

The discussion of one writer's style is usually based on comparison with other writers. The closer the writing style of the target writer to that of the reference writers, the more accurately we can find the most delicate specialities of the writing features of the target writer⁴. Following the sampling method adopted by Rigiél (1994), we made a sample-based comparison between Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and five other representative modernist works written by Woolf's contemporaries or her literary competitors (shown in Table 2). For each work chosen⁵, we took a sample of 2,000 words, based on four 500-word cuts chosen according to the page numbers produced by an online random number generator⁶. Each cut begins with the first full written sentence on the page and ends with the 500th written word. The pages on which the cuts begin are shown in Table 2:

Writer	Works	Randomly selected pages
Dorothy Richardson	<i>Pointed Roofs</i>	141, 88, 55, 33
James Joyce	<i>Ulysses</i>	393, 42, 146, 452
Katherine Mansfield	<i>The Garden Party and Other Stories</i>	132, 108, 21, 248
Virginia Woolf	<i>To the Lighthouse:</i>	154, 95, 227, 63
D.H. Lawrence	<i>Lady Chatterley's Lover</i>	265, 78, 13, 229;
William Faulkner	<i>The Sound and Fury</i>	44,152,110, 85

Table 2. The writers included for comparison and the sampled pages of each work

The categories of parallel structures for comparison are listed as follows:

The type of parallelism	Lexical parallelism, syntactic parallelism semantic parallelism
The level of syntactic parallelism	Sentence, Main clause, Subordinate clause: (Specifically indicating -ing participle and -to infinitive), Phrases and words: (N phrase and N, V phrase and V, Prep phrase, Adj phrase and Adj, Adv phrase and Adv)
The number of members	Doublet, Triplet, Series

Table 3. The categorization of parallelism designed for comparison

What should be emphasized is that the pages of each work were randomly chosen to guarantee that the data selected represent the general features of the novel. The paralleled structures on each page were manually identified and classified through careful reading by one analyst and then checked by another analyst. The reason why we did not employ corpus to extract data at this stage is that there are too many variations in each type of parallelism and a solely corpus-based extraction might leave certain special cases behind.

The frequencies of different categories of parallelism compared between the sampled parts of *To the Lighthouse* and those of other modernist novels are shown in Table 4. The boldfaced figures in each line indicate the highest frequency in each category. Among 18 categories of comparison, Woolf ranks first in 14 categories in the randomly selected samples. This proves that her language is characterized by a high density and a great variety of parallel structures.

In terms of density of parallelism, it is indicated clearly that parallelism is an evident style marker of her language in this novel. Within only two thousand words, seventy syntactic parallel structures on different levels are intertwined with fifty-four lexical repetitions. Her texture is indeed intensively constructed by equivalences and repetitions.

In terms of variety of parallelism, several foregrounded features can be perceived: 1) while syntactic parallelism is the most prevalent because it enjoys the highest frequency of usage (70 in total), the most prominent and individualistic aspect of her parallelism lies in semantic parallelism. As shown in Table 4, the number of antitheses used in Woolf's samples (9) is two times more frequent than that of the second highest, Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* which employs it only three times. The frequency of using synonymy (7) is even more prominent in Woolf's writing, with *Lady Chatterley's Lover* using it only twice, *Ulysses* merely once and the other novels null. It seems that Woolf often puts contradictory concepts in equivalence and she likes using more than one word to express the same concept. Remaining contradictory and reinforcing the sameness are important writing features of this novel. 2) Woolf ranks first in all prominent levels of parallelism including sentence parallelism, main clause parallelism and subordinate clause parallelism. Her use of linguistically more prominent parallel structures indicate that she was highly aware of the sentence shape in the constitution of her poetic voice. 3) Among all levels of syntactic parallelism, the parallel structures with –ing participles and prepositional phrases are exceptionally high by comparison with other authors. In 2000 words, Woolf uses twelve parallel structures with –ing participles while others use no more than two; she parallels seven prepositional structures when other authors adopt three at the most. 4) Woolf uses far more doublets than triplets or series. The binary structure, whether through antithesis or synonymy, is Woolf's dominant mode of discourse.

	Woolf TL	Lawrence LCL	Mansfield GPandOS	Richardson PR	Joyce Ulysses	Faulkner The SF
Types of parallelism						
Lexical parallelism	54	50	22	18	18	10
Syntactic parallelism	70	57	41	39	26	14
Semantic parallelism						
Antithesis	9	3	2	0	1	1
Synonymy	7	2	0	0	1	0
Levels of syntactic parallelism						
Sentence	7	6	7	2	3	5
Main clause	6	2	5	2	0	2
Subordinate clause	19	1	4	3	0	2
-ing participle	12	1	2	2	0	0
-to infinitive	4	0	2	1	0	0
Phrases and words	38	48	25	32	23	5
N phrase and N	7	17	6	11	17	2
V phrase and V	6	1	6	4	1	0
Prep phrase	7	1	3	3	2	0
Adj phrase and Adj	16	27	10	14	2	2
Adv phrase and Adv	2	2	0	0	1	1
Number of members						
Doublet	44	36	29	16	11	10
Triplet	25	17	12	7	8	3
Series	1	4	0	6	6	1

Table 4. Frequency of parallelism in selected samples: Virginia Woolf and other writers

Parallelism including repetition, actually bears double rhetorical functions: on the one hand, paralleled structures indeed foreground regularity and conformity, through which a kind of tension is established causing the reader to pause, inviting him or her to ponder the relationship between the paralleled elements since the formal equivalence will inevitably give rise to semantic equivalence. Such a tension is Woolf's method of saying what cannot be said about the mind through language and of giving her writing an elastic texture. On the other hand, the sameness and the repetition embedded in a parallel momentum are strong cohesive ties. They will greatly facilitate the reading process and give a "forward" motion to drive the reader ahead.

Bearing in mind the findings from the sampled reading and comparison, we investigated the whole novel to see whether these features are truly representative of Woolfian parallelism. More importantly, we wanted to see how Woolf skilfully manipulates these linguistic resources to represent the reality of life and to achieve her artistic concern for balance.

4. CORPUS-ASSISTED STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF WOOLFIAN PARALLELISM

4.1. Lexical antithesis and synonymy—Woolf's way to define the texture

Antithesis is the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas in a balanced structure. In *To the Lighthouse*, opposition or contradiction is everywhere, for example, the phonological

Chiasmus embedded in the two names of the major characters Mr. Ramsay and Mrs. Ramsay in its most subtlety up to the structure of the whole novel: the balance and opposition between Part 1 and Part 3. What we focus on here is the antithesis on the lexical level—which is not as obvious as syntactic antithesis but far more conducive to bringing tension and elasticity to her sentences.

In order to get the antithetical lexical pairs, we first chose the conjunction “and”⁷ as the search term and produced all the concordance lines in the novel containing the word “and” which amounted to 2411 lines. The first 500 lines were chosen, in a way that we selected sentences in which “and” functions as a conjunction between two words or phrases and not between two sentences or clauses. After three rounds of sifting, 220 concordances were produced for further analysis.

As shown in Table 5, we found 46 antithetical lexical pairs in 220 concordances, which amount to 20% of the total. Considering that we took only one signal conjunction of parallelism as the search term and investigated only the first five hundred, the percentage we have obtained is quite high.

Most of the antithetical pairs (like ‘now and then’, ‘boys and girls’, ‘brothers and sisters’), are clichés commonly used by people on many occasions and it seems not very meaningful to relate separate antithetical pairs to the style of the novel. But, when all those clichés are aggregated at such a density (20% of the sentences), the antithetical force becomes abnormally significant.

Adv.	up and down (10) ⁸ , in and out (3), here and there (3), now and then
N.	this and that (3), one thing and another (2), rich and poor (2), joys and sorrows, yes and no, high and low, humps and hollows, wages and spendings, employment and unemployment, a croak and a song, Kings and Queens, subject and object, men and women, reds and blues, boys and girls, brothers and sisters, father and mother, the strangest and the most exhilarating, severity and humor
Adj.	open and shut (2), red and ermine, venerable and laughable, pitiable and distasteful
V.	shut and spread
Total	44 (20% of the concordance lines contain antithetical lexical pairs)

Table 5. Antithetical lexical pairs found in selected concordances

Some of the antithetical pairs suggest the uncertainty and ambivalence of time, place and entity, like “now and then”, “here and there”, “this and that”, “one thing and another”; others are indicating oppositional movement, like “up and down”, “in and out”; some are semi-antithetical to show a striking visual contrast, such as “reds and blues”, “red and ermine” and still others are the juxtapositions of fundamental contrasts of human concern, such as “men and women”, “yes and no”, “subject and object”. It can be proved that ambivalence and opposition have become strong undercurrents of Woolf’s mindset when writing this novel. What she wants to convey through these antithetical lexical pairs is that there is no ultimate

stability and permanence in human life. Human perception and humanity itself is full of contradictions and ambivalences.

The phrase “up and down” is the most frequently used antithetical pair in the sampled concordances. Adolphs (2006: 73-77) examined the daily usage of “up and down” with reference to concordances from *Bank of English*. According to her analysis, the phrase bears different semantic prosodies in different contexts: if it is related to physical movement it is neutral in semantic prosody and when referring to children’s activities, it is actually quite positive; when it refers metaphorically to movement, its semantic prosody is often about uncertainty, and often with an additional slant of negativity; when it is related to emotion, it expresses an uncertain state of mind, mostly with a very negative association.

As displayed in Figure 2, the phrase appears 21 times in *To the Lighthouse*, among which for 13 times including lines 1 to 5, 8 to 10, and 14 to 18, it is all related to male characters, especially Mr. Ramsay, either walking up and down the terrace or thinking up and down. The phrase is gradually transformed through narrative progression into a fixed tag for the male protagonist. This is the way of Virginia Woolf’s characterization---using habitual behavioral pattern to “crystallize and transfix” a character. This antithetical bundle is often about the mechanical movement, either physical or mental, of male characters and thus forms a strong association with masculinity, especially the mechanical and rigid aspect of personality and with “a slant of negativity”.

The phrase “up and down” appears twice (line 6 and 7) in Lily’s mind when she compared Mr. Bankes and Mr. Ramsay in her thoughts and when numerous “everlasting and contradictory” impressions of those two men poured into her mind.

He is petty, selfish, vain, egotistical; he is spoilt; he is a tyrant; he wears Mrs Ramsay to death; but he has what you (she addressed Mr Bankes) have not; a fiery unworldliness; he knows nothing about trifles; he loves dogs and his children. He has eight. Mr Bankes has none. Did he not come down in two coats the other night and let Mrs Ramsay trim his hair into a pudding basin? All of this **danced up and down**, like a company of gnats, each separate but all marvellously controlled in an invisible elastic net---**danced up and down** in Lily’s mind, in and about the branches of the pear tree, where still hung in effigy the scrubbed kitchen table, symbol of her profound respect for Mr Ramsay’s mind... (*Emphasis added*) (Woolf, 1927/1992: 35-36)

The repetition of “danced up and down” reinforces the image of “elastic net” to which contradictory evaluations of Mr. Ramsay are made with reference to Mr. Bankes. The antithetical pair ‘up and down’ reflects the state of uncertainty and ambivalence in Lily’s thinking and also indirectly strengthens the association between this phrase and its masculinity connotation. The image of “scrubbed kitchen table”, another masculinity sign established in previous discourse for Mr. Ramsay, also effectively enhances this association.

1. hem, for he was sharing Mr Ramsay' s evening walk up and down, up and down the terrace. That is to say, the win
 2. as sharing Mr Ramsay' s evening walk up and down, up and down the terrace. That is to say, the wind blew from t
 3. knew what he liked best — to be for ever walking up and down, up and down, with Mr Ramsay, and saying who had
 4. liked best — to be for ever walking up and down, up and down, with Mr Ramsay, and saying who had won this, who
 5. ted, beginning in the garden, as her husband beat up and down the terrace, something between a croak and a song
 6. his hair into a pudding basin? All of this **danced up and down**, like a company of gnats, each separate but all m
 7. controlled in an invisible elastic net — **danced up and down** in Lily' s mind, in and about the branches of the
 8. one had blundered," he said again, striding off, up and down the terrace. But how extraordinarily his note ha
 9. not help smiling, and soon, sure enough, walking up and down, he hummed it, dropped it, fell silent. He was s
 10. pend thus, with his pipe, of an evening, thinking up and down and in and out of the old familiar lanes and comm
 11. **e fabric of the masculine intelligence, which ran up and down, crossed this way and that, like iron girders spa**
 12. uch to be said about it. Her mind was still **going up and down**, up and down with the poetry; he was still feelin
 13. d about it. Her mind was still going up and down, **up and down** with the poetry; he was still feeling very vigor
 14. rmed. Nancy had vanished. There he was, marching up and down the terrace in a rage. One seemed to hear doors s
 15. thing. Every time he approached — he was walking up and down the terrace — ruin approached, chaos approached.
 16. elf walking on the terrace, alone. He was walking up and down between the urns; and he seemed to himself very o
 17. use was Mr Ramsay forgot his dream; how he walked up and down between the urns on the terrace; how the arms wer
 18. e wash and hush of the sea, how a man had marched up and down and stopped dead, upright, over them. Meanwhile,
 19. gain of Mrs Ramsay on the beach; the cask bobbing up and down; and the pages flying. Why, after all these years
 20. oat where three or four mackerel beat their tails up and down in a pool of water not deep enough to cover them.
 21. there was the old cask or whatever it was bobbing up and down among the waves and Mrs Ramsay looking for her sp

Figure 2. Concordance lines of the phrase 'up and down'

It is in the middle of the novel (line 11) that Woolf reveals her real meaning of this phrase: it symbolizes "the fabric of masculine intelligence", the rigid aspect of masculinity. Other images associated with this phrase, such as the bobbing cask (line 19 and 21) and the beating of mackerel fish (line 20) are naturally tainted with this masculine quality. In fact, both of them co-occur with male characters in the novel. However, this masculine aspect by no means only belongs to male characters. After Woolf has established and clearly indicated in the text that the phrase refers to the "masculine intelligence" (line 11), it becomes more interesting to see that the masculine and mechanical "up and down" movements occur in the inner world of Mrs. Ramsay (line 12 and 13), the female protagonist: "Her mind was still **going up and down, up and down** with the **poetry**; he was still feeling very vigorous, very forthright, after reading about Steenie's funeral" (Boldface added for emphasis) (164).

What is more unexpectedly contradictory is that "up and down" with a negative prosody is used and repeated to depict her reading of poetry, a genre seldom defined by rigid mechanicalness and a word with positive association (Adolphs, 2006: 74). The contrast between Mrs. Ramsay's inactive and mechanical reading of poetry and Mr. Ramsay's active and vigorous reading of novels, which is reinforced by sentence parallelism and lexical repetition, indicates that in Woolf's frame of mind, masculinity and femininity, intellectualism and creativity, logic and intuition can never be separated but are fused in her characters—which subtly reflects her androgynous vision.

Apart from giving new meaning to the clichés, Woolf does create some distinctive antithetical pairs to describe the contradictory personality of Mr. Ramsay, a compound of “severity and humor”, who is strangely “venerable and laughable at one and the same time”, who looks “pitiable and distasteful” in the eyes of William Bankes and Lily Briscoe. The contradictory and multiple aspects of personality are an important part of Woolf’s portraying of life.

To sum up, antithetical lexical bundles serve as very delicate linguistic resources Woolf has exploited, which makes the reading of this novel both demanding and compelling. The tension of opposition becomes a very distinctive feature of her language.

The second feature of her semantic parallelism is the frequent use of synonymy---to parallel synonyms or semi-synonymous lexical pairs. Among 220 concordance lines selected, 69 sentences (which accounts for 31%) employ synonymy. Some of them are listed in Figure 3:

- e wheel of sensation has the power to **crystallise and transfix** the moment upon which its gloom or radi
- ehead and his fierce blue eyes, impeccably **candid and pure**, frowning slightly at the sight of human fra
- on the right, as far as the eye could see, **fading and falling**, in soft low pleats, the green sand dunes
- I am your support,” but at other times **suddenly and unexpectedly**, especially when her mind raised its
- s a rainbow — this sound which had been **obscured and concealed** under the other sounds suddenly thunder
- he body swam, only the next instant to be **checked and chilled** by the prickly blackness on the ruffled w
- his own mind from the imputation of having **dried and shrunk** — for Ramsay lived in a welter of childre
- was picking Sweet Alice on the bank. She was **wild and fierce**. She would not “give a flower to the gent
- o short.” Never did anybody look so sad. **Bitter and black**, half-way down, in the darkness, in the sha
- exact as a bird, gave her, naturally, this **swoop and fall** of the spirit upon truth which delighted, ea
- h to regain his equilibrium, that he was **outraged and anguished**. She stroked James’ s head; she transfe
- me round again, at the window he bent **quizzically and whimsically** to tickle James’ s bare calf with a s
- idden through the valley of death, been **shattered and shivered**; and now, she flew in the face of facts,
- steady goers of superhuman strength who, **plodding and persevering**, repeat the whole alphabet in order,
- nterrupting them; he hated him for the **exaltation and sublimity** of his gestures; for the magnificence o
- her energies were being fused into force, **burning and illuminating** (quietly though she sat, taking up h
- and into this delicious fecundity, this **fountain and spray** of life, the fatal sterility of the male pl
- male plunged itself, like a beak of brass, **barren and bare**. He wanted sympathy. He was a failure, he sa
- t for her to know herself by; all was so **lavished and spent**; and James, as he stood stiff between her k
- ’ s towards him, which had made her turn to **steel and adamant** there, in the horrible little room in St
- ght; here, on his terrace, he was merely **foraging and picnicking** (he threw away the leaf that he had pi
- ft, suddenly to shed all superfluties, to **shrink and diminish** so that he looked barer and felt sparer,
- thought, pretending to move her canvas, **distilled and filtered**; love that never attempted to clutch its
- was immensely exciting. Nothing could be **cooler and quieter**. Taking out a pen-knife, Mr Bankes tapped
- in his drawing-room, which painters had **praised, and valued** at a higher price than he had given for it
- 癩lounder” and that in a moment she would **fidget and fight** with James as usual. Cam shot off. Mrs Rams
- dering his age, turned sixty, **and his cleanliness and his impersonality**, and the white scientific coat

Figure 3. Examples of synonymy in selected concordance lines

Examples show that Woolf’s language is dominated by expressions of emphasis. Two synonymies are aligned to emphasize the important concept in a sentence. More importantly, most synonymous lexical items are further unified by different figures of sound. The echo of sound directly promotes the echo of meaning and numerous lexical pairs like this aggregate

into a very large and elastic rhythmic network. The prevailing binary lexical equivalence or symmetry plays a key role in the creation of the rich and ordered poetic texture of the novel.

As a matter of fact, the two-fold structure has become a dominant feature of Woolfian parallelism. According to Evans (1989), there are 796 ‘balance structures’⁹ in the whole novel, among which, as we counted, 525 (more than 66%) are of a binary structure. Why are two-fold parallel structures prevailingly adopted? The reason may rely on the fact that dualistic grammatical structure stands between a singular structure and a climaxical reinforcement. It is a structure that encourages solid confirmation but not over-emphasis. It indicates a state of balance which keeps our reading at a stable and moderate pace and while fostering a sense of closure which seems more important and necessary in an extensive and overstretching reading of stream of consciousness.

4.2. Paralleled adverbial modifiers—Woolf’s way to define the verb

From the pilot comparison between Woolf and other modernist writers, we also see that she uses far more parallelistic structures with –ing participles and prepositional phrases. After reading the whole novel, the reason we have found is that most of those structures are used as adverbials to modify verbs in a discourse which is mainly concerned with mental processes or ‘static’ actions. By using many adverbial structures to provide information about time, place, manner, condition, purpose, reason and the result of the mental verbs, Woolf succeeds in capturing the inner reality more accurately and with more subtleties. With parallelism, these modifying elements give the sentence a strong sense of right-branching extensiveness and fluidity, which iconically mirrors the streams of inner thinking. In addition, -ing participles and prepositional phrases enjoy much more flexibility than other elements in a syntactic space and they are also the most economical ways to extend a simple sentence without transforming itself into a complex one. The following are some of the examples of paralleled –ing participles:

1. How long, she asked, creaking and groaning on her knees and under the bed, dusting the board, how long shall it endure? (178)
2. surround her where she sat knitting, talking, sitting silent in the window alone... (267)
3. How childlike, how absurd she was, sitting up there with all her beauty opened again in her, talking about the skins of vegetables. (136)
4. They would say nothing, only look at him now and then and then where he sat with his legs twisted, frowning and fidgeting, and pishing and pshawing and muttering things to himself, and waiting impatiently for a breeze. (220-221)
5. Looking along his beam she added to it her different ray, thinking that she was unquestionably the loveliest of people. (67)
6. And she waited a little, knitting, wondering, and slowly those words... (160)

7. Almost one might imagine them, as they entered the drawing-room questioning and wondering, toying with the flap of hanging wall-paper, asking, would it hang much longer, when would it fall? (172)
8. Was she wrong in this, she asked herself, reviewing her conduct for the past week or two, and wondering if she had indeed put any pressure upon Minta... (82-83)

An -ing participle bears the double characteristics of adjective and verb, and it is strongly associated with the present continuous tense which denotes simultaneity and emphasizes “being this moment”. In Examples 1-2-3-4, verbs like ‘creak’, ‘groan’, ‘pish’, ‘pshaw’ and ‘mutter’ are all about sound-making, vocal actions; others like ‘knit’, ‘sit’, ‘talk’, ‘wait’, although describing physical involvement, are actually very “static”. With -ing presentation, these “static” verbs will be infused with more action-like continuity and progression.

Seldom does Woolf use -ing participles singularly, but she often aligns them in doubles or triples. The doubling and tripling further foregrounds the co-occurrence of different actions. In Examples 5-6-7-8, looking vs. thinking, knitting vs. wondering, wondering vs. toying are the parallels between physical actions and mental behaviors. The -ing grammatical form serves as a very effective linguistic bridge to combine the inner world and the outer reality –the balance that Woolf permanently wants to achieve. All the mental processes like ‘question’, ‘ask’, ‘review’, and ‘wonder’ are reinforced by a fluid progression by being presented in an “-ing” form.

The second prominent way for Woolf to modify and specify actions in the novel is to parallel prepositional phrases. Prepositions are indicators of the relationship between objects mentioned in a sentence. They are great in number and short in graphological space so they are the simplest but most effective linguistic resources to indicate the inner relationship between different objects mentioned in a sentence. The principle of economy is what Woolf always follows. Let’s look at some examples of her juxtaposition of prepositional phrases:

1. ...so that she had only strength enough to move her finger, in exquisite abandonment to exhaustion, across the page...through her, like a pulse in a spring... (54)
2. Her eyes had been going in and out among the curves and shadows of the fruit, among the rich purples of the lowland grapes, then over the horny ridge of the shell, putting a yellow against a purple, a curved shape against a round shape, without knowing why ... (146-147)
3. She looked blankly at the canvas, with its uncompromising white stare; from the canvas to the garden. (212)
4. The boat was leaning, the water was sliced sharply and fell away in green cascades, in bubbles, in cataracts. Cam looked down into the foam, into the sea with all its treasure in it... (223)

Woolf's style is to place several different or the same prepositional phrases in a paratactic manner and, typically, these phrases are separated by punctuation marks. This separation highlights the relational or spatial dimensions conveyed by the prepositions. One change of state or condition is placed in an equivalent position with another and thus each change or condition is emphasized. Such equivalence and emphasis creates a prominent reading experience of dynamism and simultaneity. The separation by punctuation marks leads to the interruption of reading. But this interruption can be weakened or offset by the parallel or semi-parallel arrangement of the prepositional phrases. It is this interrupted elasticity that gives tension and suspense to Woolf's writing.

4.3. Appositional structures—Woolf's way to define the noun

If the cumulative and flexible arrangement of paralleled adverbials is Woolf's preferred style for defining a verb, to capture the "saturated details" of the state of doing, her manner of defining a noun, to specify the state of being, is through apposition. Syntactically, apposition is the juxtaposition of two or more units, normally without a conjunction. Semantically, the two or more than two constituents of apposition, or appositives, should be co-referential. Normally they should be identical in reference; otherwise the reference of one must be included in the reference of the other (Quirk *et al.*, 1985). Dillon (1978) distinguishes five semantic types of apposition—synonymous, specifying, generalizing, replacing appositions and a type he describes as "a mix of coordination and apposition". Among the appositional structures we have found in *To the Lighthouse*, we see that most of Woolf's appositions are of a specifying relationship—the second appositive is adding details to its antecedent. In many cases, the specifying relationship is realized emphatically through parallelism. Let us look at some of her appositional structures:

1. It annoyed her, this phrase-making, and she said to him... (95)
2. It came over her too now---the emotion, the vibration of love. (137)
3. He seemed to be rather cocksure, this young man... (128)
4. They were actually fighting. Joseph and Mary were fighting. (109)
5. It was something quite apart from everything else, something they were hoarding up to laugh over in their own room. (147)
6. There was in Lily a thread of something; a flare of something; something of her own which Mrs Ramsay liked very much indeed, but no man would, she feared. (140)
7. He wanted something — wanted the thing she always found it so difficult to give him; wanted her to tell him that she loved him. (168)
8. Qualities that would have saved a ship's company exposed on a broiling sea with six biscuits and a flask of water — endurance and justice, foresight, devotion, skill, came to his help. (48)
9. She looked out of the window at a sight which always amused her — the rooks trying to decide which tree to settle on. (109)

The antecedents, especially when they are personal pronouns (it, he, they), pronouns with unspecified and indeterminate meaning (something), nouns with more general senses (qualities), or nouns with indefinite articles (a sight) serve as cataphoric expressions, with a function strongly referring to the following text. The reader is led in a ‘forward’ motion to the upcoming details. In a sense, the appositional structure, similar to the arrangement of modifier adverbials, is characterized by a semantic relationship of specificity. From indeterminacy to determinacy, from general to specific, this semantic development contributes to a sense of an ongoing process of thinking. The frequent use of dash or dashes reinforces this specifying and continuously-searching movement and the heavy use of indeterminate words (it, something, things, etc.) particularly acts to generate the reader’s participation to supply meanings for the inadequacy of language. Reading Woolf is very often and very much like going through a tunnel.

Many appositional structures in Woolf’s sentence are framed by parallel structures in combination with lexical repetitions (see example 6). This combination, as a structural and semantic clue facilitates the reader to grasp her sentence but also makes it quite difficult for us to distinguish between coordination and apposition. All the juxtaposed items, as Dillon (1978) said, seem to be all appositive-like and they seem to be co-referential in a mix of coordination and apposition. The widespread specifying appositions, mostly embedded in parallel structures, do suggest the sense of a mind exploring, reshaping or refining ideas. As Dillon (1978: 99) explained, “a writer may essentially develop his thinking about something through a string of appositives...the final appositive has the last word—that is, it comes at the end of what often appears to be a process of getting it just right”.

5. CONCLUSION

The most attractive thing about parallelism, from both a linguistic and an experiential point of view, is that it breeds variation out of regularity. It is this perfect balance of contradiction that renders to poetry most of its beauty and vibrancy.

Woolf’s parallelism, as far as our discussion is concerned, is characterized by several important features. Firstly, her lexical choice for paralleled parties is dominated by the rhetoric of opposition. The widespread use of antithetical lexical pairs constitutes the fundamental texture in which many contradictions of thematic significance are discursively constructed. The reading of the novel becomes more challenging and more enriched due to the tension raised by these micro-level antithetical structures. Secondly, she is fond of paralleling synonyms or semi-synonyms in the form of doublets and in most cases with phonetic figures. The aesthetic effect is that her lines are full of lexical and phonological echoes which effectively prolong the reader’s perception of the message of communication, in other words,

the poetic aspect of the language. Thirdly, much of her parallelism is characterized by the rhetoric of simultaneity, which is linguistically realized either by the parallelism of –ing participles or by the alignment of prepositional phrases. The former stresses the co-occurrences of different actions and gives a strong sense of “being now” and “keeps-going-on”. The latter allows the reader to experience the changes and extension of space. In a discourse of streams of inner thought, such techniques can be used effectively to capture fleeting and varying minds. Fourthly, the relationship among the paralleled parts is often featured by the rhetoric of specificity. The appositional elements with a specifying semantic relationship embody the process Woolf gradually sees and feels about things, lead us readers to re-experience it and bring about many new feelings for ourselves as we try to process all those juxtaposed items.

As we all know, Virginia Woolf raised the question of and enabled herself to realize the concept of a woman’s sentence: “a sentence which we might call the psychological sentence of the feminine gender. It is of a more elastic fiber than the old, capable of stretching to the extreme, of suspending the frailest particles, of enveloping the vaguest shapes” (Woolf, 1979: 191). It is by no means easy to interpret how this “female” sentence style gets realized in her novel, however, the present discussion on parallelism at least can provide part of the answer to this question: parallelism, with its many variations and with its capability of interweaving with different levels of syntactic structures, is one of the important techniques she adopts to achieve “extreme stretchingness”. The “elastic fiber” can be partially derived from many wide-spread yet unnoticeable antithetical lexical pairs. “The frailest particles” can be suspended through the specifying momentum or the tunneling process of sentential development.

However, the investigation of parallelism itself can never fully answer the question about her writing style. But as the major mode of her sentential development, it can perform as a pivot or framework for further studies. For instance, when parallelism represents the aspect of over-obedience of regularity in her syntactic style, the regularity-breaking aspect of her sentence, such as varied parenthetical elements, incomplete chunks, and the involved periodical structures, among other things, should be equally examined. Without addressing the question of how parallel structures interact with those structures to form a special sentence rhythm of suspension and continuation, we cannot fully grasp her writing style. These two contradictory yet complementary modes of writing style—the attainment of over-regularity and the frequent breaking of the regularity—linguistically meet Woolf’s desire to convey both the fluidity of the mind and the intensity of the moments of consciousness.

To be more exact, Woolf regards parallelism and repetition not as a handy linguistic instrument but as an important avenue along which the extraordinary complexity of the variations, movement, change and the breaking of parallelism and repetitions can take place. Without parallelism as the order and frame, there will be no sense discussing variation and

change. The tension between parallelism and the interruption of parallelism, fluidity and the interruption of fluidity give much dynamic and continuous rhythm to her discourse.

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NOTES

1. These nine novels include *The Voyage Out* (1915), *Night and Day* (1919), *Jacob's Room* (1922), *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *Orlando: A Biography* (1928), *The Waves* (1931), *Flush: A Biography* (1933), *The Years* (1937) *Between the Acts* (1941). It should be annotated that *Orlando* and *Flush* are regarded by certain critics more as biographies than as novels as their names indicate, especially for *Flush*, which is often more explicitly regarded as a cross-genre. We include both of them because they definitely bear fictional writing features and with the inclusion of those two books the corpus includes works from different stages of Woolf's life.
2. Terms enclosed in brackets of different categories are traditional terms in Rhetoric.
3. All examples in this paper with only page numbers enclosed in brackets were extracted from the novel *To the Lighthouse* (Woolf, 1927/1992). The underlined parts were made for emphasis.
4. This idea is based on Culpeper's discussion of how to choose a reference corpora for keyword analysis. He contends that "the closer the relationship between the target corpus and the reference corpus, the more likely the resultant keywords reflect something specific to the target corpus" (Culpeper, 2009: 35).
5. The versions used for random page selection are as follows:
Richardson, D. M. (1979). *Pointed Roofs*. In *Pilgrimage I* (pp. 15-185). London: Virago.
Joyce, J. (1997). *Ulysses*. London: Picador.
Mansfield, K. (1922). *The garden party and other stories*. London: Constable.
Woolf, V. (1992). *To the Lighthouse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Lawrence, D. H. (1990). *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. London: Penguin.
Faulkner, W. (1994). *The Sound and the Fury*. In D. Minter (Ed.), *The sound and the fury: an authoritative text, backgrounds and contexts, criticism* (pp. 1-197). New York: Norton.
6. Please refer to the website <http://www.psychicscience.org/random.aspx>.
7. We chose 'and' rather than 'or', 'but' or other conjunctions because 'and' is one of the most commonly used conjunctions and it is also the most neutral one to bridge two lexical items despite their inner structure or meaning. In Hiatt's (1975) study of parallelism in daily written English, she defined 18 signals of parallel structure, including 'comma', 'and', 'not only...but also...', 'not...but...', 'either...or...', 'neither...nor...', 'both...and...', 'and', 'but', 'nor', 'instead of', 'as well as', 'rather than', and 'semi-colon'.
8. The number within brackets indicates the number of times a specific antithetical lexical pair appeared in all selected concordances.
9. As indicated by Evans (1989), the 796 balance structures include 280 cases of asyndeton, 115 polysyndetons, 95 anaphora, 62 epistrophe, 20 anadiplosis, and 24 parataxis.

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