CHAPTER VI
THE WAVES

"I am not one person; I am many people; I do not altogether know who I am." The WAVES p. 196.
CHAPTER VI

The novel celebrates friendship and solitude since six characters are shown in relation to each other and their chosen occupations in which physical security and spiritual needs are combined. It is the latter, the spiritual, that is the main concern of the novel. The six characters carry on the narrative with their "dramatic soliloquies." The phrase, "dramatic soliloquies," is apt description. When they "utter" them, they have before them one of their friends. Each narrative is a soul-search, a soliloquy, though it falls short of disinterestedness since they have to triumph over each other. The writer by this device gets over the novelist's obligation to carry the characters from one room to another, from tea to lunch, and to describe the setting. The technique of making each character take up the soliloquy of the one before in a kind of tranced, yet impetuous soliloquy, helps overcome such plot needs of the traditional novel.

The novel is patterned primarily on the mode of the chronicle. The lives of six friends—three men and three women—are traced from the time they are in the
nursery to their death implied in the end.

All the six characters—Susan, Bernard, Neville, Jimmy, Lewis and Rhoda stay in the nursery. When they reach adolescence they are put in different schools. The girls go to a Swiss School for girls, the boys to an English school. Only Bernard and Neville go to college. Lewis settles down in life to earn his livelihood. In the fourth section the friends are soon meeting at a restaurant near the Palace to bid farewell to Percival. Percival is their common friend. He is not given a place in the novel like the six characters with whose consciousness the novel deals. He is a man of action having a frame of body and mind that can enter into any idea and experience it with unconscious ease. The fifth section reports Percival’s death through the consciousness of his friends. He dies falling off his horse in India. The sixth and seventh sections show the friends in their middle-age, feeling uneasy in their minds, reflecting on their chosen paths in life. They achieve what they aim at. But they feel chained to their attitudes and occupations, and yearn for release. In the eighth section the six meet again at the same restaurant where they bid farewell to Percival. They
compare notes on their achievements. They are unable to get any feeling of a full-fledged nation, over their achievements. They feel their insufficiencies. Each feels that he or she is deprived of what the other has experienced. All the six walk in the garden arm in arm. It is a moment of 'their being' which demonstrates their urge to merge with each other. Then the four friends—Bernard and Susan, Neville and Jinny—proceed to the lake to make 'love'. Shoda and Louis keep back with envy. Neville who has been a homosexual out of fear of woman, merges with Jinny who loves the fleeting moment of the body. They long for love and have it on the lake. The ninth section is entirely given to Bernard. He sums up the chronicle of friendship. The artist consolidates and evaluates the experience of a generation, before handing it over to the next. He says that,

...what I call my life, it is not one life that I look back upon: I am not one person... I do not altogether know who I am—Jinny, Susan, Neville, Shoda, or Louis; or how to distinguish my life from theirs.

They have been separated by their chosen attitudes thrust by tradition and memory which cause them to be jealous of each other. That they hate, they love. They have been stuck in 'my life and my world' outlook and
debarred from the sense of 'one world and one life'—
the total human being they wish to be. But their
meetings with friends and memories that flow into their
consciousness, have effected the final union and commu-

All that we might have we saw; all that we had
missed and he grudged for a moment the others
claim, as children when the cake is cut, the
one cake, the only cake and watch their slice
diminishing.¹

David Daiches observes that Virginia Woolf
adopts 'the mask' to communicate her rarefied sense of
significant experience in The Waves. But the paradox
about the mask is, that

though it may be used as a means of conveying
suggestions too subtle for more naturalistic
means of communication, it is itself so rigid
and inflexible that unless you have seen its
meaning before hand you can never be persuaded
of it by watching the mask. The mask is the

¹ Virginia Woolf, The Waves, (London: Hogarth, 
1940), p. 196. (Hereafter page numbers for the references
to the text are given at the end of each reference in
parentheses.)
most effective as a means of communication between those who have the same insights.\textsuperscript{2}

As such it may not be possible to arrive at the total meaning of the novel. One should be familiar with all her unique insights. One strand from her unique vision has been highlighted by an unsigned review. The reviewer sums up one aim of the book: "The substance of life, as we are accustomed to see in fiction, is transformed and the form of the novel is transmuted to match it."\textsuperscript{3} It is not as we live it to meet our diurnal needs. Fiction deals only with loves and hates in human relationships and the what and therefore of life. The reviewer is rightly suggesting that the story teller is the central character. Bernard is the hero of the novel, while summing up at the end of the novel, Bernard says he is looking "at the panorama of life, seen not from the roof, but from the third-storied window (p.171)". From that statement we may conclude that The Waves may be a literary autobiography of the novelist. In the course of

\textsuperscript{2}David Naicks, \textit{Virginia Woolf (A New Directions Paperback)}, p.111.

three hundred years of novel writing it has been the
prerogative and privilege of the novelist to be rea-
listic. In the process knowingly or unknowingly he
has liberated woman from being equated uncritically
with the Angel and 'Madonna figure of the Middle Ages.
It is in the novel, more than in poetry, painting or
other arts that a worthy place is accorded to woman,
hers ambitions, her spiritual aspiration. In a way, he
has liberated also the society from class barriers.
His sympathy for women is not unmixed. It is underscored
by the camel.

Though the fiction writer is himself not free
from the blashm of perpetuating a double attitude to
women, he is more aligned against that sinning because
he is a "gentleman" who has to be in two worlds, mixing
morality with wit. He has to take his hero to low levels
of carnal desire but, at the same time, preserve the
angelic image of the woman as Fielding does in Tom Jones.
In this process he has classified women, and classified
the passions of men towards women, on the fictional
level. In the twentieth century has come the awareness,
that woman is no different from man on mental level and
her urges are no less the urges of man. With that dis-
covery not only man's confidence is shattered, the whole
fabric of fiction is fractured.

With royalty and its attendant hierarchies toppled in the present century, the way for the outsider is made so that he may be above the urge for advertisement and the fear of derision on the material plane. As the six friends walk in the garden in the 8th section, Bernard looks at the Palace. He observes that "English past" appearing to him "one inch of light". Common people put their tinpots on their heads and say they are kings. Bernard observes that whole royalty is "a trick of the mind", a dream. Neville, the tough reasoner, points out that there is the passing of another "reality": "Three hundred years now seem more than a moment vanished against the dog (p.161)". As we know that the dog symbolises for "Ire Woolf a stern warning against romantic love— a fabric woven around the dissipating animal urge. The twentieth century has thrown that "love" to dogs.

Secondly, "Ire Woolf seems to trace the growth of sympathy which is possessive to the all embracing compassion that is progressive. An outsider should have, as stated earlier, an all embracing compassion which reaches out towards a goal worthy of humanity. Louis, who achieved what he struggled through out his life—
worldly advancement—has kept himself away from the angel, on physical level, the virgin figure of woman, since he fears jealousy of affection which would make null and void his worldly ambitions. He satisfies himself with prostitutes. Still he nurtures the desire for the maternal touch of women. As he walks with Jimmy and Susan (the former gave her healing touch at the nursery, and Susan is still a figure of maternity) he feels like weeping, calling himself and then "children." This urge may be called after Bernard "maternal somnolence" (p. 79), or after Andre Side, "maternal touch." Andre Side says: "Understand rightly the Greek fable. It teaches us that Achilles was invulnerable except in the spot of his body which had been made soft by the remembrance of mother's touch." In the novel Louis is associated with the image of a chained beast stamping and stamping. He is a strong man chained with his wish to compose the structure of the society for material advancement, and suffering within from that maternal touch.

Mrs. Woolf seems to distinguish three kinds of sympathy towards others. First, the sympathy that one finds when his poetic heart feels as a result of being "caught and tangled in a woman's body". Perhaps Keats expresses it when he sets aside the steadfast gaze of the hermit, for the pillow of his fair love's ripening breast and the sweet unrest that the swell and fall the breast offers. This sympathy surrounds the image of woman as angel, or it percolates from Adam and Eve of Garden of Eden.

The second variety is the maternal touch which the child gets when it goes to bed with the mother kissing it affectionately, as "Mrs. Ramsay does Can and James. The tender touch gives the child, a sense of security against its fear of darkness. But the habitual desire of the child, fondly fulfilled every evening, may increase the fear of darkness. Speaking of Freud's idea that the child in its mother's womb is the happiest of living creatures, Joseph Wood Krutch remarks that "for the cozy bowl of the sky arched in a protective curve above him he (man) must exchange the cold insensitizes of space and, for the spiritual order which he has designed in the chaos of nature". This has its source in the

Madonna figure. With the memory of this maternal comfort, man clings to the maternal and angelic symbols of women even after he grows into an adult. He seeks it in times of failure. Hence Mrs. Ramsay fears that she has been making her husband, dependent on her by telling him lies. In *A Room* Peter Walsh sleeps in Regent Park after his meeting with Clarissa to whom he goes for consolation. In sleep, he dreams of a woman, a land lady of a way side inn, who cannot offer him anything to eat. The whole dream is an expression of his fear of failure and desire for feminine consolation. As he wakes up, he looks on St. Margaret's clock from which a woman-doll comes out to strike the hour. Peter suddenly feels that the doll might fall off. As it looks like a hostess, he thinks of Clarissa, playing hostess, at her parties, falling out of life suddenly. He experiences fear of death, and that brings out his sympathy and fascination for Clarissa. This maternal touch is a burden on women and a weakening factor in men.

The third kind of sympathy is that of Christ's which sets aside personal fear of death and does not lean on women. It issues from the mind which is androgynous. This all-embracing compassion can turn the whole
honesty to the powers outside. The novelist proposes towards this sympathy in The House.

It is mother's touch that comes in the way of friends. It causes fear of solitude in some, or it drives others to alienation. That is the pebble that disturbs their consciousness in the nursery. Hence, as Bernard says, "In the beginning, there was the nursery... (p.169)". It drives Susan and Bernard to marriage. It makes Louis and Neville to dread marriage. As Bernard puts it, remembering his friends: "The wax—the virginal wax that coats the spine melted in different patches for each of us (p.171)". But in spite of himself, but despite his self, does Bernard, the story teller, perpetuate this sentiment, for he needs an audience. The image of a woman sitting rigid in the nursery constantly recurs in the mind of Bernard. It stands for his ambition—to dislodge the separate identity of women. But his carnal desire for women, ambition for fame and material prosperity as a bread winner drives out that idea from him.

The novelist, Bernard, realises at the end his sins, what his life and what his soliloquies and dramatic meetings with his friends at various stages have
made; he is "tired" of his stories. He discovers that none of the stories of childhood, school, love, marriage, death are true (p. 169). Then at the end they look on the Palace. Neville gives him a sense of the dog pron- cing. The novelists' old sympathies have been fractured.

Let us examine the first two sections to find out how they are divided. Then we will examine the two meetings of friends. Lastly we will examine the storyteller's awareness that fiction should keep in mind the light that governs all things, not committing to any social attitudes. The four sections are their "moments of being", and the last, "Bernard", is his "moment of their being".

The first section of the novel reveals Bernard the criminal. Louis, out of inferiority complex, hides behind the green leaves so as to escape from being seen by others. He fears derision. Jinny finds him out. She fears, he is dead. Like a mother who kisses the child to assure it of good dreams in sleep, she impresses a kiss on Louis' face. He dreads the touch as it has for him a mixed feeling of uneasy passion, and comfort. Susan, sees it. She grows jealous. She hates Jinny.
while in fact she loves her enviable daring. She tries to control her hatred by knotting her handkerchief. She is a clergyman's daughter. Bernard, the story-teller, observes her. He feels her tear as well her beautiful eyes. He leaves Neville. He would like to console her with his words which move "darkly" in "the depths" of her mind, to disentangle the knot of hatred (p.11). He combines motherly sympathy with his carnal desire. Bernard tries to untie the knot in her emotions by his stories of domestic scenes; the stable boy clattering in the garden, people clipping garden roses. But Susan insists on love and hate. He takes her closer and tugs her skirt. Susan is unable to understand why he pulls her skirt, and looks back. She is bitter that she cannot kiss like Jimny, nor does Bernard take the initiative. His poetry about the pigeon confuses her, though she listens to it enthralled. She is a clergyman's daughter and as she says later, and she would await her lover to whose one word she would answer with one word (p.71). It may be pertinent to note that she is the last of three girls to attain puberty. Bernard is the son of a gentleman. They are circumscribed in swaddled clothes of traditional attitudes. The story-teller is conscious of his audience.
Failing with Susan, he goes to Jinny. He tells stories of "skirts of Miss Hudson and Miss Curry", extinguishing candle lights. Jinny is afraid of darkness. Later we find her saying that she carries her body as a candle light through dark passage. He takes her to the "secret territory" of pendant currants. He asks her to "curl up close". He tells her stories of eagles and vultures to arouse her to the fear of death. He kindles her envy by making references to the socks of Susan, and Louis's neat sand shoes. Jinny is made conscious of her snake skin and her knees that are pink floating islands. She is drawn to Bernard. They lie under the leaves. From his asking her to remove the caterpillar on her neck and the twigs in her hair, it is evident that the desire that flushed his face at lessons has been fulfilled. Jinny regrets that they will have to go from the nursery to separate schools, and soon she can have only mistresses at her school, and "this is only here and now (pp. 16-17)".

Susan, who has evidently seen Jinny and Bernard under the currant leaves, is again jealous. Hence her angry command to Jinny and Bernard to follow Louis who is not a wool-gatherer and shuffler of feet. She does not know Louis is equally a sufferer like her.
Neville does not go for walk with others. He is physically very weak for, on looking at the apple trees, he remembers how he came to know of a man whose throat was cut. It constricts his consciousness and passion. He feels relief in elegiac spots of sunlight.

Susan who returns from the walk cries that she saw Florrie, the maid, being kissed in bull-like passion by Ernest, the stable boy. Susan's curiosity for the kiss is shocked rudely by the stable boy's kiss which seems to suck life out of Florrie. A physical fear and jealousy attends that urge for befriending men. Hence she loves, she hates. She is frightened by man's bull-like passion, but wishes to be friendly with men, as does Jinny. The two passages that occur in the later part of the novel show what she is after:

I love with such fervency that it kills me when the object of my love shows by a phrase that he can escape. He escapes, and I am left clutching at a string that slips in and out among the leaves on the tree tops. I do not understand phrases (p. 95).

I hear traffic roaring in the evening wind. I look at the quivering leaves in the dark garden and think 'They dance in London' Jinny kisses Louis (p. 72).

It is Bernard who is like an animal when he goes to Jinny but whose phrases untangle the knot of jealousy
that would satisfy her. Does she represent the conflict Andre Gide speaks of in his journals?

I am torn by a conflict between the rules of morality and the rules of sincerity. Morality consists in substituting the natural creature (the old Adam) ... a fiction that you prefer. But then you are no longer sincere. The old Adam is the sincere man. This occurs to me: the old Adam is the poet. The new man, whom you prefer, is the artist. The artist must take the place of the poet. From the struggle between the two is born the work of art. 6

If we substitute Eve for Adam it may apply to Susan. At a later stage, bored with her maternal conscience always putting her children to sleep, she longs for humor and ideas. Humor and ideas are the artist's means to overcome the self-centered illusions. She has been, as Bernard once terms, a figure that poets admire. The artist must twice with the poet and from that struggle between the two should emerge the work of art which presents a conflict between the rules of morality and the rules of sincerity, for the birth of a new morality that is both sincere and moral. The artist is there.

6The Modern Tradition, p. 199.
Shoda, who desires to be like Jinny and Susan, but she thinks of "Amadas sailing on the high waves". She is afraid of the society of men. She is incapable of holding on to any one of them. She has no commitments because her soul is committed to pure abstraction of triangles, oblongs and squares. Her imagination cannot shape anything. She can see only a desert with a pillar which also is not a solid body. Susan's imagination wants both body and mind. Unable to hold them on Jinny's and Shoda's terms, she holds on to the familiar cottage life in which her cunning is matched with the objects.

What happened to the story-teller? Having disposed of his passion with Jinny, he dreams of Susan, after his bath that rules his back and makes his blood purr with arrows of sensations. "Rich and heavy sensations form on the roof of mind; down showers the day—the woods; Elvedon; Susan and the pigeon (p.19)". Thus he concludes his story conjuring woman as poets figured her. He still allows his mind to waver between feeling and reason. As Neville says he is "a dangling vine, a broken bell-pull always twangling (p.13)". As later Neville analyses him, he half-knows somebody and knows nobody (p.87).
Incidentally, the first section thus shows the jealousy of affection which manifests positively in Susan, vaguely and negatively in Roda, waveringly in Louis. It is shoved into depths of his being in Neville. Neville shows his jealousy of affection later when he throws his poem on love at Bernard. Louis reveals it when he reads the poem on western wind or when he thinks of Susan to whose barren door he would like to be impaled.

The second section where the three boys and girls go to separate schools, the jealousy of vanity rears its head. The seeds are sown even at the nursery. The schools with "cheerful games, tradition and emulation all so skilfully organised to prevent feeling alone", stands as a barrier between one and the other (p.37).

Bernard, the dawdling wire, begins the section. He fears "the gulping ceremony" (p.21) with his mother and the loneliness that is to come with the leaving of his home. But he must not cry, he must be indifferent. So he interposes his emotion with observations of the things around, and with phrases. The same cultivated pretence attends his reflections. He thinks of his girl friends of the nursery: "This is our first night
at school except for our sisters (p.23). We cannot but wonder at his reflection when we remember what he did with his sisters at the nursery. The same double loyalty to feeling and reason prevails in his attitude to the head master, Old Crane. He loves the master's "terrible words, sonorous words". He hates the insincerity of the substance behind the words. His love for caricature and fantasy are revealed in his impression of the headmaster's face: "The nose looks like a mountain at the sunset, and a blue cleft in his chin, like a wooded ravine (p.23)". He cannot distinguish black from white, so he cannot score more than fifteen runs in cricket, and envies Lambert who can score a hundred. He cannot, since his imagination seeks continuities, and dreads space, either phrases, people, or objects should fill the gaps. While leaving school he regrets he has to lose the enjoyment of "swaying bits of candle ends and immoral literature (p.45)". They are the inspiration behind the stories. As he tells the story of Dr Crane, his mind's eye 'peeps' into the bedroom where the professor's wife is reading a memoir of an Italian lady. He draws the cricketing boys from the playfield with his stories, and sheds tears when they go away at the end, disenchanted,
for the stories are neither here nor there.

Louis whose perceptiveness is alert to the railway engine is deflected by the boasting boys who bring to his mind his ancestry. He looks at the bottle-green engine without a neck, all black and thighs, breathing steam, and feels the soft forward movement of the train "like an avalanche started by a gentle push (p.32)". He can know black from white. But the boasting boys make him envy Percival when he admires for his leaderly capacities. He works hard and becomes the best scholar at school and has a mind to convention. Neville lacks associative sensibility. He pursues his passion on Percival and pursues the study of writers with his literal imagination.

At the Swiss school the three girls are divided by mutual envy. Susan envies Jinny who could win the admiration of the mistress; hates the school, hates the city. She would get back and seek shelter in her paternal home. Jinny who is jealous of Susan's face dislikes her wide mouth showing too much of her gum. She cultivates her body, playing tennis vigorously. She is drawn to clothes and the life of the city. She wants to join the society of ladies. Rhoda, who has not the dash of Jinny nor the face of Susan, with her love for abstract space and abstract time, nurtures the stance of 'the
eolian mystic. Falling into typical stances they seal themselves off to each other's experience.

Susan faces the same confusion as she did in the nursery with Bernard, when he escaped from her with phrases first, and then with Jimmy. Jimmy chases the mistress Miss Perry at school. So Susan feels, "I could have loved her, ("Miss Perry), but now love no one, except my father, my doves ... (p. 39)". Strangely she remembers a man drowned previous Christmas (p. 33). So it was partly Bernard's fault. He revealed her anxieties and went to Jimmy as if she and Jimmy were distinct. She thinks of death like Bernard who contemplates on the shortness of existence when his vision falters. A.D. Moody writes: "He is unmistakably the central character, but if this entitles him to be the hero it has to be added that he is heroic rather in the manner of Leopold Bloom". 7

Bernard is beaten and bullied by Mrs. Woolf for he perpetuates the Amoral Virgin figure of woman. Professing to be real he ends up in the unreal. We say

recall here that Fielding ends his novel *Tom Jones* by restoring the hero to the status of a born lord, and wedding him to the ideal womanhood.

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IV

We may now examine the first meeting of the friends, and the efforts to be outside their selves. The friends meet at a restaurant of Hampton Court to bid farewell to Fussell. Significantly the meeting is prefaced by a long soliloquy of Bernard. Once again he will be responsible for the division among friends insisting with, half-indifference, on "the maternal touch".

He begins with his observations on the city. He finds that the city is in maternal reverence. He thinks, she (the city) "hums and murmurs; she awaits us". The reason for his reflection is he is engaged to be married. As usual his happiness in engagement is coupled with his indifference, his "peninsular" pose. He generalizes: "Over us all broods a splendid unanimity (p.30)". He finds himself changed in nerve to "a sense of identity"—a husband, who could not see a tooth brush in a glass, still he declares that he would embrace the whole world...
with some of understanding, and feels pride on it that it has not been given to those who act. Though his life's passage has become "ephemeral", he assumes that his life is prolonged since he will fling his seed wider by begetting children. He cannot ignore his identity as a writer, as he cannot extinguish "the persistent smell". He knows what his persistent smell is. When he looks on a girl waiting, he asks himself for whom she is waiting; his prying curiosity for the carnel.

But his soliloquies pall. He envies the authentics—Louis and Rhoda who could be lonely. If he is alone he cannot make a web. He is impelled to go to Hampdon court to wake out of somnolence, to "sparkle". He would say all these things to his friends. Meeting friends, he hopes, would give his life new possibilities and speculations for his curiosity. But Bernard's mind now is in a way going to disturb the friends, and conceal them to chosen attitudes.

Neville arrives first since he cannot bear being looked at by others, as well as to choose a seat by his 'beloved' hero, Percival. Louis niftles him with his "acrid, suspicious, domineering" look, but his laughter
smoothens their meeting. Louis envies Susan's assurance and health. He feels like submitting to her possessiveness. He would like to be "nailed to her barnyard door (p. 66)".

Rhoda comes as usual very much afraid of the society of men, but since she can label their conduct as this or that she assures herself by calling up in her mind her hatred of men, hatred of passion between men and woman.

Jinny's arrival upsets them all. Susan envies Jinny's ability to be at the centre and her own insufficiency in allowing her lover to escape from her in jealousy which nails her to the cottage. Rhoda sees the fire ablaze, the fire Jinny is capable of to join the society of bodies. Neville experiences the bite of passion a woman causes while Louis adjusts his tie.

Despite his desire to get an edge to his mind, in the company of his friends, Bernard shows his blue shirt under the ampit. The audience are his down fall. He lives for others, an insider. Neville observes the story-teller 'scenting'. Bernard looks at the woman in opera cloak and his look conveys his prying curiosity. Bernard poses benignity which Neville
analyzes; it is composed of love of mankind and the thought of utility of "loving mankind" (p.37). Neville distrusts his pose.

Bernard phrases the solidity and composition that results among friends upon the arrival of Fessival, the man of action. They who "yelped like jackals" biting at each other acquire a solemn, confident air (p.38). As he thinks of it, his mind is endeavour to speak of his engagement.

They all begin to be friendly with each other forgetting their possessive lives. They recollect the experiences at the nursery and school.

Bernard, in his pensman's sympathetic, symbolic, shorthand, terms their experiences at the nursery as a "second severance from the body of our mother (p.39)". Jimmy has no such illusion of maternity. She thinks of "Mrs Lambert, Miss Cutting, Miss Bard "those monomental ladies" as enigmas to her. The words, "Bard, Cutting, Lambert" (p.39) seem to convey her wonder at the women's pose which hands sunny, sculptors cut and which is a flickering lick of life. The words Bard, Cutting, and Lambert seem to convey that metaphorical inference.
Louis is enthralled by the order that has gone with Peveril's presence. Hence he feels they are changed and cognisant. But Bernard still clinging to maternal sensuality, tries to keep that emotion in "love", though he fears it is not the word to "enlose" that enlarged expansion of their selves as friends (pp 50-51). But the damage is done. Louis yearns for that maternal sensuality: the balm ing sympathy of Jimmy and Susan's maternal look of pity for the endearous child. He feels like a caged tiger because he fears his desire.

The meeting occurs when they are bidding farewell to a man of action and they are young. Therefore they are eager on to action and triumph, not to expose themselves to each other's scrutiny. The understanding that comes from humiliation is not given to them.

Something has been left out from fear. Something has been altered, from vanity. We have tried to accentuate differences. From the desire to separate we have laid stress upon our faults, and what is particular to us (p.99).

But there is "a steel-blue circle" (p.98) beneath them. Their very hate is love. Only four friends join the dance with Peveril. Rhode and Louis keep apart.
Bernard disturbs them by announcing his engagement in his egotistical style declaring that any one is at liberty to marry him who is engaged to be married. Susan who loves him is touched to the quick with jealousy. She feels that something irreparable has happened and a chain is imposed on their lives. Louis grows conscious of the pain of jealousy on Susan's face. The voice of action calls them all. They go out separately.

It must be admitted that the foregoing paraphrase cannot convey the creator's ambition and talent in each mind and the inhibiting factors, the full import of both of which only metaphorical inferences can bring forth. We may look at a passage in Susan's soliloquy:

And I, though I pile my mind with damp grass, with wet fields, feel her decision steel round me, feel her laughter curl in tongues of fire round me and light up unsparingly my shabby dress, my square-tipped finger nails, which I at once hide under the table (p.37). Susan's love and hate of Jimny are conveyed in the phrase, "laughter curl in tongues of fire round me and light up". From the phrase we may infer the kind of her look which expresses a history and prophecy 'Curl
in tongue' stands obviously for the child's delight in laughter and the adolescent's fear of it. The uninhibited talk of the city-dwellers causes disgust in the clergyman's daughter. It looks as if they were undressing an old woman whose dress seems to be a part of her.

The second meeting takes place at Hampden court restaurant. The friends are mellowed and have no desire to triumph over each other. The reason is that they are all middle aged and spent fires, except Susan. Susan who laboured with her hands, is stronger and healthier. She is not a mere worker that worked for prescribed timings, but one who dragged day in and day out for the house and the farm. She earned living, really living.

Hence when she sits before Neville, she need not show any credentials. Her own health and cheer are the best credentials. Neville to assure himself thinks of her as a mere culprit of maternal splendour "stuck" like a limpet to the same rock (p.151). But he who has taken of things a print from the inward can show only 'a pale and yielding flesh (p.153)' to Susan. Her clear eyes feed quenches the silver flicker of words. Her hardness is an abrasive to their softness.
Bernard, who always looked at the upping skirt of cycling girls, without understanding the 'spirit' in the cycling woman, now has come to look at the old ladies holding their skirts up. While coming to meet the friends Bernard, who once asserted that he had caught the fleeting moment, has now nothing to "state". Even his physical identity, earlier underlined in the exposure of the ampit, is gone. Mosde takes him for a stranger, shyly away as usual from strangers. He is about to cry to Neville that he too has flowers in the pages of Shakespearean sonnets. The novelist is yearning for poetry. His curiosity in "people" has gone since he went through the phase of the naturalist. But as he looks at the golden bar and daffodils of March, he recovers. He is penitent. He regrets that he is no authority on law, medicine, or finance. Trace his story teller's history. He for his living "served wives and daughters with beads and ballads". He has only stories of girls "seduced, not seduced" (p.154). He is brushed aside from life for ever. He has no philosophy whatsoever. He has spoken of the shortness of life.

Compared with him Neville has varied experiences.
various intimacies while demolishing the old ways of thought with his reason.

Louis envies the beauty, indifference and laughter. He regrets the day when Jinny saved discard in mind forcing him to be pedestalized in a high office. Jinny's scarf has been a streamer thrown at him as at a charging bull.

Jinny remembers her father and mother, and regrets that she has been like a little dog, caring "after some mongrel cur (p. 156)". She has no relics to leave. She is conscious of her ugliness though she asserts she is not afraid.

Mode has taught her body assurance that it lacked in the past. She can walk about freely. But inwardly she goes with thoughts of, "I fear, I hate, I love, I despise you". She who prided on her reducing life to a triangle and a pillar would like to reach the circumference. She only hopes of another morrow where the sun wakes them to escape, from here and now she hopes for a life not chained to the body. Since such a hope is illusory, she puts an end to her life later. As William Dean Howells says: "We are really a mixture of the plebeian ingredients of the whole world, but that


is not bad; our 'vulgarity' consists in trying to
ignore 'the worth of the vulgar', in believing that
the superfine is better. 3

Bernard feels like harping on the ticking of
the clock, ticking away life, and on the thought of
the earth as a mere pebble thrown from the sun. But
at the end of the dinner he strikes the spoon as if
it were a signal to fight. Neville recovers. As he
is one who is fascinated by reason or feeling strongly
he finds that the soldier making love to a maid is
admirable and equally he is drawn to the trembling
star. He regrets that human beings defile the trees
with lust, mixing the two. He is an outsider giving
to body and mind their due. At that moment Jimmy pulls
out her puff. At that Susan first buttons her coat and
unbuttons it. She would not lose the opportunity. All
set out. Bernard evaluates the passage of three hundred
years, looking at the Palace, as a dream of royalty.
Neville remarks that the three hundred years seem also

3. "Criticism and Fiction", *Literary Criticism
in America*, ed. Albert D van den Broek. (New York,
a moment vanished against the day—the passage of
unreal attitude to love. They are Georgians that
demolished old gods. The fate of Europe, Neville
declares, depended on the battle of Blenheim. There
seems to be a play on the word, Blenheim, which also
means a kind of dog.

They hold their hands and walk. Louis walks
with Susan and Jimmy on either side. He feels it
difficult to refrain himself from weeping. It is a
divine moment for him reminding him of Miss Curry who
played harmonium long past in the nursery raising
sympathetic feelings in each. He has not felt that
sympathy till then by his marriage with Rhodes who
feared sentiment, and by bedding with prostitutes,
Susan feels neither hate nor love now. Rhodes remembers
the symphony of Beethoven that means an urge to sense
the totality of experience. For Bernard the moment
becomes a distillation of the feelings behind marriage,
travel, death, friendship, town, the country, children.
The feeling is crystallised in that moment when the
friends hold the hands and feel spiritual friendship.

But Rhodes and Louis stand back with their un-
compromising right-or-wrong attitude. Susan goes
forward with Bernard. She breaks the story teller's illusion of marriage by 'sinning' with Bernard. Neville asks Jinny for love in his characteristic way repeating 'love' and 'love', and Jinny answers him in the same note. Rhode grows critical about her and Lewis' lives. Lewis with his fear for sounds and laughter, and resenting compromise Suarez only solitude which is alienation. They have denied for themselves the "love by the lake" and "embraces among the forms" (p.164). Rhode observes to Lewis that the four friends are 'our representatives' going every night here or in Greece to battle, the battle that purports to break the dated traditions. Lewis' eyes brighten and pulse quicker, but he must get back to the insanity of his chosen, personal existence.

Bernard declares that they have destroyed everything, 'a world perhaps'. Neville utters prophetically "we are in that passive exhausted frame of mind when we only sigh to rejoin the body of our mother from whom we have been severed (p.165)". Reason would stop taking the print of mind from books and go to natural joy which gives health to the eyes and ears so as to perceive the concrete facts. Jinny has nothing to keep in the locket.
Her experience had been one mixed with 'sideboard'
and no sense of memory is left but the surface joy
of the physical union.

Any union and communion is an act of assertion
to step the passage of time. It is both triumph and
defeat. We may close the spiritual act of love as the
lake with the following observations. Stephen Spender
calls his son an extension in time. It implies a
triumph of the spirit as if it made the moment eternal
and a sense of humiliation that its physical existence
is transitory. Artistic creation is equally a triumph
and a humiliation. It is said Joyce felt transported
by the beauty in Uday Shankar's dance and declared that
there are still "some beautiful things in this poor old
world"9 The idea of beauty manifests the spirit's
triumph over the alogical universe. Artistic creation
of high order gives solidity to human experience but
in its wake leaves a sense of its shifting. It provides
a sense of sublime light that asserts against mortality.
An individual may be a speck but every achievement gives
an assurance that it is a thrust into cosmos and towards

9 Richard Ellman, JAMES JOYCE, (London: OUP,
immortality. This seems to be the underlying passion of the book. The following note in *Mrs. Woolf’s Diary* gives confirmation to that impression. A. D. 'Body calls' 10 our attention to it.

Now is life very solid or shifting? I am
hunted by two contradictions: This has gone
on for ever, will last for ever; goes down to
the bottom of the world—this moment I stand on.
Also it is transitory and flying, deceiving.
I shall pass like a cloud on the waves. Perhaps
it may be that though we change, one flying after
another, so quick, so quick, yet we are somehow
successive and continuous, we human beings, and
show the light through, but what is light? 11

Hence Mr. Woolf calls *The Waves* 'a mystical poem'. The
moment's surrender on the lake by the four friends is a
symbolic act of this mystical awareness. The human
mind, patterned by some inner light into the novelist
mode, has achieved what it has been impelled to, frac-
turing the social structure. It has been done by the
cooperative imagination and action of the society— the

10 *Mrs. Woolf*. p. 47.

11 *A Writer's Diary*. p. 137.
readers and the writers. So Bernard's awareness of the fabric folding is both a triumph and humiliation. The novelist faces the shift in human relations that affect his habitual mode in the final section and understands this spiritual reason.

Regarding the other three friends as to what they make the moment of surrender, no answer is vouchsafed in the novel because the novel confines itself to the novelist. Susan who gets bored with 'her children' implying my life attitude - would perhaps seek children of the mind.

While summing up Bernard visualises the life of his friends—all six, including himself. Their lives have been one cake cut into six slices. Percival who is silent throughout the novel is a man of action. He could be 'any' slice.

Bernard realises that his ability to strike the spoon, symbolic of his ability to fight, is gone after the experience by the lake. His phrases, he feels, are resonances and echoes, and he has clung to "the brass handle of the cupboard (p. 170)"—the domestic life.
With the loss of its charm and value, he finds himself without a self. He is denuded of a vision. He feels selfless and weightless. Suddenly he meets the vision of a man who sees no shadows but only light, who sees clearly without any impulsion to fight.

"The heaviness of my despondency thrust open the gate I leaned on and pushed me; an elderly man, a heavy man with grey hair, through the colourless field, the empty field. No more to hear echoes, no more to see phantoms, to conjure up no Op position, but to walk always unshadowed, making no impression upon earth. If even there had been sheep marching, pushing one foot after another, or a bird, or a man driving a spade into the earth, had there been a bramble to trip me, or a ditch, damp with soaked leaves, into which to fall—but no, the melancholy path led along the level, to more wistfulness and pallor and the equal and non-interesting view of the same landscape (emphases mine, 203).

At that Bernard is released from ontological anxiety; "All this little affair of 'being' is over (p. 203)."

Not only phrases but the plotting should disappear, the plotting in which an individual self is the modus operandi. He would describe the "world without self" with light, the spirit within, the sin that would rush out
of the waste of waters. Even colour "blue, red, even they hide with thickness instead of letting the light through (p.304)."

To that realisation Rhode drives him - Rhode who with her intense awareness, sees the dark sky as a white beam but not as the old society has compelled her. Despite her vision, because she was born a woman, she succumbed to death by suicide with her fear for the male. Hence Bernard who has been a lover of women with mixed feelings of carnal desire, comes to see her, a sister, offering a friendly hand, not the hand that tugged the skirt:

"Wait", I said, putting my arm in imagination (thus we convert with our friends) through her arm. "Wait until these sanctuaries have gone by. Do not cross so dangerously. These men are your brothers" (p.199).

To such realisation his other friend also subscribed, Neville showed the dogs prancing. Louis, with his sympathy for women who carried pitchers, brings woman into public life (even if it is merely to carry attache cases to the office) and thereby contributes to Bernard's vision. No less does Susan subscribe by surrendering her maternal instinct by the lake. Bernard discards his anger, amused, jealous, vigilant curiosity
into the lake. He realises the agonies of tired shop girls whose lives he scented wrongly like a dog. The memory of Percival's death awakens Bernard to the sense of religion symbolised in the image of the boy who wails round the dome of St. Paul "like a wandering dove (p. 200)".

He who was afraid of loneliness, feared space and time, now resolves to be alone. "The enemy, eyes meeting our eyes (p. 108)", no more frightens him. The story teller would open up the human experience shedding old themes and 'plotting'.

Friedman rightly observes that the struggle of the modern is a struggle for open form and open experience; "the new flux of experience insisted on a new vision of existence; it stressed an ethical vision of continual expansion and virtually unrelieved openness in experience of life". 12

Bernard states humbly:

Light floods the room and drives shadow beyond shadow to where they hang in folds inscrutable. What does the central shadow hold? Something? Nothing? I do not know (p. 207)

On this open confession it is futile to expect that

the modern novelist has explored the truth about the unknown spirit. At best he can hope to catch the luminous hole behind the gig lamps. The spirit is unknown, cannot be discerned by the individual vision but by the cooperative act and imagination.

"Mrs. Woolf asked herself and her colleagues in her manifesto of modern fiction:"

Let us trace 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 of incident scores upon the consciousness. Let us not take it for granted that life exists merely fully in what is commonly thought big than what is commonly thought small.¹³

While writing *The Waves* she thinks it is "my first work in my own style" for she is "about to embody at last the exact shapes my brain holds".¹⁴

In the following passage from *The Waves* we discover the style which traces the atoms as they fall upon the mind, the pattern.

I go then to the cupboard, and take the damp bags of rich sultanas; I lift the heavy flour on the clean scrubbed kitchen

¹³"Modern Fiction", The *Common Reader* First Series, p. 169–190

¹⁴"A Writer's Diary", p. 158.
table: I knead; I stretch; I pull, plunging my hands in the warm inwards of the dough. I let the cold water stream fascinated through my fingers (p. 72).

The action of Susan here (put in the ever present for immediacy and significance) carries in its careful phrasing, a metaphor for varied physical and mental activities - of a swimmer, of a bird tearing its prey with its beak; of a mind analyzing and entering into the warmth of understanding to reach an order (cold water streaming fascinated); artistic imagination taking slice of life and embodying it in words that slip through fingers in a shape and, above all, of one performing actively the act of love, with bird figuring in the metaphorical muscles of the action of Susan, the body, mind and imagination belong neither to the masculine nor to the feminine consciousness but to that of a live being.

These are the words that a human being is given to feel the warmth and cold the body and mind in contact with the world offer. But jealousy and love which struggle to possess, do not allow the plunge: We are not laying great stress on this jealousy and love.
Mrs. Woolf does,

I am not laying too great a stress upon all this. I am not exaggerating the intensity of children's feelings! Indeed, there is nothing more certain than that children are tortured by jealousy and love long before they knew their names; the mind was certain of this.15

This is what she says in the first draft of The Waves. The act of Susan where there is no dividing line between body and mind; is it not the act of the spirit that is inked in the confines of domesticity? She has to be the figure "the poet's adorer" and a clergyman's daughter. Being so confined she is not given the opportunity to reason, to imagine, and put into words and reach an order beyond the man-made. Even other men and women of the novel are denied of it because they are inheritors though contemporaries. As contemporaries each could continue only one area of apprehension in the choice one makes—Jim to swim through life with her body; Bernard, creative imagination; Neville, reason; Louis, material order; Rhoda, the mystic, an order, reason.

sensations that belong to abstractions. The choices are not theirs. They continue in the chosen occupa-
tions owing to the competitive core in their breasts, "We have chosen now, or sometimes it seems the choice
was made for us—a pair of torna pushed us between
the shoulders (p.131)."

Mszo Mrs. Woolf's fright and ecstasy at the
"mystical side of this (solitude) how it is not oneself
but something in the universe one is left with". This
statement equally applies to the social and universal
predicament of human awareness. Even when human being
is given the whole body for comprehension, he is still
solitary with what Bernard calls, "this little apparatus
of observation".

If this is the mystical side of her vision in
The Waves the similarities in prose poems are revealing and
significant. The waves and light are described in terms
of warriors fighting—"Light almost pierced the thin
swift waves... (p.33)". "The waves drenched on the shore,
like turbered warriors, like turbered men with poisoned

15 A Writer's Diary, p. 103 Regarding misprint
of 'solitude', for 'solitude', See J.W.Graham's
"Point of view" in The Waves... University of Toronto
Quarterly. 39, 3 April 1970, p. 211.
aseqais who, whirling their arms on high, advance upon the feeding flocks, the white sheep (p.34).", 
or in terms of women bedecked with jewels: "The girl who had shaken her head and made all the jewels, the 
topen, the aquamarine, the water coloured jewels with sparks of fire in them, damne, now bared her 
brows and with wide open eyes drove a straight path way over the waves (p.53). "The sun... darting a 
fitful glance through watery jewels, bared its face and looked straight over the waves". When the sun 
had risen to its full height, it was seen, "as if a 
girl cooched on her green sea mattress tired of her 
brows with water globed jewels that sent lances.." 
The warrior image and that of women with jewels are 
set aside in the end. The waves are also described in 
terms of children playing. The stashes of light move 
"one after another, beneath the surface; following 
each other, pursuing each other, perpetually (p.5)". 
Life awakening and moving in birds is also described 
in the similitude of children chasing each other. Or 
it is described in terms of singing in choirs and alone.
These are the patterns of thought to comprehend light and life: war, toilet, games, hunting and music: "something in the universe one's left with". They are the little apparatus to formulate actions and to communicate. Further so long as light is there these forms and shapes appear and the mind is made aware. But when darkness sets in, nothing is left to shape or to get inspired and aware. Darkness is ineradicable. As Bernard vossens: "Day rises, the girl lifts the watery fire-hearted jewels to her brow, the birds sing in chorus... gradually all is astir. Light floods the room and drives shadow beyond shadow...what does this central shadow hold? Something? Nothing? I do not know (p.267)". Mrs. Woolf calls elsewhere, "the eyelass dark". She called The Waves "a mystical eyelass poem". One can describe light with the shapes it provides, not the darkness where "no order" is perceptible, "no sequence".17

Perceptions are the source and sustenance of human effort. Some impressions of the external world collected by the perceiving self are engraved with the

sharpeness of steel. As Bernard says they happen one
second and last for ever. The impression of women
carrying pitchers in their heads Louis saw in the
museum evidently, lasts in his consciousness for ever.
His effort through out his life has been sustained by
that and he rests contented when he finds women carry-
ing attache cases which is part of the emancipation of
women. Neville took the impression of death among the
apple trees and that led him to cut out reasoning. The
impression became responsible for the demolition of
old gods. For Jimmy the impression she had under the
pendant currant leaves at Elveden led her to a life of
body which became a companion for life. The same body
who repels Rhode has "no Face" like the other two, but
she could see the abstract order music apprehends.
Why are these contrasts in states of consciousness which
are valuable like windows violently breaking into the
closed wall of experience as if seen by the other self
which watches beyond time?

As Edwin Muir observes that in the novel "a new
catharsis has been found. Its art is at once modern
and complete" because it represents "the grief that
is very keen, but it is not a grief that can be solved
by tears; it is hostile to them".18

18 Critical Heritage, p. 293.