CHAPTER III
THE STRUCTURE OF MOMENTS : JACOB'S ROOM

As we have noted in the foregoing discussion, Virginia Woolf started novel writing in the traditional way, and wrote her first two novels in this manner. But she felt dissatisfied with her achievement and began to work out a new theory of fiction writing soon after she completed her second novel. She thought that the traditional mode could not meet the requirements of the novelistic art that was being evolved by the pioneers among her contemporaries, or be a vehicle to put into practice her own revolutionary concepts with regard to the art of the novelist. Her dissatisfaction and intense desire to break away from the tradition finds expression in her essays on the art of the novel: Modern Fiction, written in April, 1919, and Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown, written in May, 1924. She condemned the traditional novelists, such as H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett and John Galsworthy. In Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown she questioned the conception of reality that the traditional novelists, whom she called 'materialists' in Modern Fiction, depicted in their works and agreed with Arnold Bennett, though for different reasons, that "there was no great novelist among the Georgian writers because they cannot create characters who are real, true and convincing."
The traditional novelists presented only the outer side of the personality. But to Mrs. Woolf reality is what lies within, below the surface of things. She elaborated her idea of it as follows:

Look within and life, it seems, is very far from being "like this." Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions—trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms.

Traditionally, the outer appearance was taken as reality and it was treated as static. The new psychologists at the beginning of our century insisted that personality is in a constant state of unstable equilibrium, and a mood is never anything static but a fluid pattern. As Mrs. Woolf puts it in a now famous passage,

Life is not a series of gig-lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display with as little mixture of the alien, and external as possible?

The modern psychological novelists, of whom Mrs. Woolf is one, attempted to come closer to life and reveal the inner working of the mind, not chronologically but sur-realistically. She laid down the norm as follows:

Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness.

Mrs. Woolf attempted to give a new dimension to
her method of presenting reality in her works of fiction written after Night and Day. Her main interest is not in the object but in the subject. It is to reveal the personality. She would not mind sacrificing the traditional elements of fiction like plot and characterization in her search for a new style. She declared that

> if a writer were a free man and not a slave, if he could write what he chose, not what he must, if he could base his work upon his own feelings and not upon convention, there would be no plot, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted style.

In this new type of novel, the setting was to become inward; the landscape described as an expression of the inner reality. The conventional restrictions on the choice of subject were to be discarded:

> The proper stuff of fiction does not exist; everything is the proper stuff of fiction, every feeling, every thought; every quality of brain and spirit is drawn upon; no perception comes amiss.

A birthday entry in her diary dated Monday, January 26, 1920, when she had just turned twenty-eight and was working on her next novel, Jacob's Room, gives some indication of the new method of novel writing that she was trying to evolve:

> I ... arrived at some idea of a new form for a new novel. I figure that the approach will be entirely different this time: no scaffolding; scarcely a brick to be seen; all crepuscular, but the heart, the passion, humour, everything as bright as fire in the mist.

It is clear from this remark that she disliked
the opaqueness and artificiality of the traditional framework and preferred 'lightness' of form, which allowed more exquisite play for the imagination. She means in this remark that she would no longer be using the conventional 'scaffolding' of the narrative art like plot and characterization, not even tragedy or comedy as set conventions. The second thing she implies is that it is not necessary to narrate in fiction every incident as it happened in the external world but to condense events, settings etc., into what she later called "moments". As Ralph Freedman has pointed out,

the moment emerges as Virginia Woolf's key to her theory of apprehension as well as to her concepts of poetry and the novel. ... Virginia Woolf conceived of the moment as a concentration of the manifold elements of life into significant images or scenes. ... From disparate elements combined by a consciousness, the moment moves to associations and memories which expand perceptions. 8

The structure of Jacob's Room is not built around a conventional plot made up of incidents and episodes arranged in time sequence. Nor is it a 'novel of character' in the conventional sense, or for that matter, built around a dominant setting as the novels of local colour. It is significant that the title of this novel is not 'Jacob Flanders' or 'Jacob of Cornwall', but 'Jacob's Room' where the room becomes a kind of emblem for the repeated, cryptic remark: "This is life. This is life." The structure of the novel is made up of a string of 'moments': There are fourteen chapters in the
novel dealing with different stages in the life of Jacob Flanders. The first two chapters centre on moments of Jacob's childhood. The next stage consists of eight chapters covering his stay at Cambridge as a student, during which he establishes certain fundamental relationships with the external world. The next two chapters present a mature Jacob, and deal with his experiences on a tour of Greece. The last phase that suggestively glimpses at Jacob's participation in the world war and his death comprises the last two chapters. The figure of Jacob emerges for the reader from the impressions we absorb through a series of moments, carefully selected and arranged in the 'crepuscular' manner Mrs. Woolf had mentioned in her diary.

The method of Mrs. Woolf, and the resultant novelistic structure, can be illustrated from a detailed analysis of the thirteenth chapter of the novel. In this chapter which telescopes backwards and forwards practically the whole subject matter of the novel, story converges on two different lines of action: the first particular and private - mainly Jacob's love-affairs, and the second, the general theme of life at the outbreak of the world war. These two lines are connected in the moment of Jacob's joining the war which comprises the penultimate chapter of the novel.
The author has broken this chapter into thirteen sections by means of indentures, a practice followed uniformly in all the other chapters, mixing fractions of settings and glimpses of relationships between characters and of incidents, some of them centring round Jacob's affairs, others round the public event of the start of war. These sections consist of fragmentary excerpts from scenes made up of Whitehall offices, the crowd in the streets, and the procession in Piccadilly, as well as Jacob's musings in and out of Hyde Park, intimations of events, people and landscapes connected with his life and experiences in years gone by in the past.

In the first section the reader comes upon Jacob in Hyde Park one afternoon on his return from Greece. His friend Bonamy is with him, and talking about the holiday in Greece, makes the overwhelming remark: "you are in love!" This remark with cutting force of irony (unintended on the part of Bonamy), makes Jacob introspect, giving over all his attempts at love in one flashing moment: the episodes of Clara, Julia, Fanny, Florinda and Sandra Williams, not in chronological but fragmentary order.

The second section follows an inventory of Jacob's mistresses flashing through Bonamy's mind as he walks away from the musing Jacob, "too proud to look back", 
and at this very moment we get a glimpse of a simultaneous movement in another part of London: Clara walking with her friend Bowley down Piccadilly. Here is a situation parallel to the one in the first section. And the parallelism is deeper: Clara, too, is thinking intensely, about Jacob. As she is exercising her Aberdeen terrier in the company of Bowley, her mind goes on repeating, "Jacob, Jacob," giving intimations of their love that failed, so much so that Bowley chuckles on the situation in the privacy of his hotel room. This characteristic comment forms the brief third section.

The fourth section picks up the incident of the galloping horse in the second section. It further elaborates the theme of Jacob's loves. At this very moment Julia Eliot, another girl in Jacob's life, was passing through Piccadilly and she also encountered the galloping horse that was met by Clara. Thus the stray incident of the galloping horse becomes a connecting link. We gather from the last sentence that the time is twelve and half minutes to five o'clock.

The fifth section starts with the clock at Verrey's striking five, and presents Florinda in her hotel, pregnant. Florinda was another woman in Jacob's life, something of a vagrant, and in this section she is shown as remarking upon the entrance of a newcomer.
that he's like Jacob.* This can be taken as evidence that Jacob is very much on her mind.

The next two sections bring us back to Jacob in Hyde Park, linking up with the first section. There are two lines of development in this section. There is Jacob in Hyde Park, aimlessly reading a letter that had arrived two days before from Sandra Williams in Greece. During his tour of Greece, he had come very close to her, and they had grown to liking each other extraordinarily. With this scene in Hyde Park is juxtaposed another in Greece, at this very moment. Sandra, with a copy of Donne in her hand, - a present from Jacob - is thinking of their mutual attraction, and comparing it with that of Alceste and Célimène in Molière's play, The Misanthrope.) There is a striking similarity between the relationship between Sandra and Jacob and Alceste and Célimène. Alceste thinks that he is madly in love with Célimène, but the very violence of his protestations betrays an element of doubt. (Similarly, Sandra is equally introspective regarding the relationship between herself and Jacob. This illustrates the use of literary allusion as a device, occasionally used by Mrs. Woolf in framing the "moment" as a constituent of novelistic structure. The Alceste-Célimène relationship is, however, an ironic reinforcement of the Jacob-Sandra relationship in her novel.
This section presents simultaneous action at a given moment and at the same time brings in yet another of Jacob's loves, continuing the private motif.

The seventh section brings in the intrusion of the external world of workaday life around, as it merely relates the encounter of Jacob with a ticket collector in Hyde Park, enquiring about his chair ticket.

The eighth section brings in another woman in Jacob's life - Fanny Elmer, who had been deeply in love with him. Her intense love for Jacob is shown through her state of mind depicted here, as her visits to the British Museum are just to recapture her vision of their days in love. There is a parallelism between Jacob's relationships with Clara and Fanny. Both of them had passionately loved Jacob, but the love had failed to be enduring. As against this, his relationships with both Julia and Sandra had been controlled. The third paragraph of this section unfolds a generalized, externalized comment on the private motif, as Fanny, recapitulating her relations with Jacob muses: "This is life. This is life." This is one of the ways Mrs. Woolf combines the private and the general motifs.

The last sentence of the section once again links up, structurally, the two locales - Piccadilly and Hyde Park. At the very moment Fanny is boarding a bus for
Piccadilly, Jacob is sitting in the Park. His indifference to Fanny is made vivid; for, though she hopes that he must come back to her, "Jacob might have been thinking of Rome; of architecture; or jurisprudence; as he sat under the plane tree in Hyde Park" at this very moment.

In the ninth section the particular and general motifs meet, and a new line of development in the general theme - the world war - is introduced. Fanny Elmer's bus journey, continuing from the foregoing section, is juxtaposed with a crowd of people in procession at Charing Cross. The procession with banners indicates political stir; cryptic descriptions of historical figures in the square give subtle suggestion of the impending war. The motif of war, however, is not yet introduced, and Jacob, who is to die in it, is not yet mentioned.

In the tenth section, again, the general and particular themes are juxtaposed. Its earlier part consists of a few sentences dealing with the Admiralty office, and carries on the theme of the outbreak of war suggested by the "paper sent round by the Treasury for information." The second part of it picks up the private theme, Jacob walking back from Hyde Park towards Piccadilly. There is a typical dovetailing of the two lines of thematic development as well as of simultaneous
-action at different places at the same time, linked by suggestive means in the following passage:

Timothy, placing the Blue book before him, studied a paper sent round by the Treasury for information. Mr Crawley, his fellow-clerk, impaled a letter on a skewer. Jacob rose from his chair in Hyde Park, tore his ticket to pieces, and walked away.

'Such a sunset,' wrote Mrs Flanders in her letter to Archer at Singapore. 'One couldn't make up one's mind to come indoors,' she wrote. 'It seemed wicked to waste even a moment.'

The long windows of Kensington Palace flushed fiery rose as Jacob walked away; a flock of wild duck flew over the Serpentine; and the trees were stood - against the sky, blackly, magnificently.

'Jacob, ' wrote Mrs Flanders, with the red light on her page, 'is hard at work after his delightful journey. ...'

'The Kaiser, ' the far-away voice remarked in Whitehall, 'received me in audience.'

The first unit of this section presents the atmosphere of the Admiralty office; the second unit, heralding the theme of Jacob, indicates Jacob's departure from Hyde Park. It is followed by an excerpt from his mother's letter to Archer in Singapore, describing a sunset. The sunset in her letter corresponds with the sunset at Hyde Park, and the passage is obviously brought to mind on account of it. The next unit deals with the progress of Jacob's walk from Hyde Park towards Piccadilly which is wedged between the two parts of the excerpt, from Mrs. Flanders' letter. The second one comes at the end of the brief narrative of Jacob's stroll, and lays bare
the purpose behind its inclusion, for in it she intimates Archer of Jacob's affairs: "Jacob is hard at work after his delightful journey." Thus in one moment are condensed incidents scattered in the different corners of the world: Cornwall, London, Greece, and Singapore. The last unit, full of intimations of the far away voice of history, brings in the Kaiser and Whitehall, once again making for the awareness of the world war in the background - the general, imperceptible theme enveloping the tangible, particular one.

In the eleventh section there are three lines of development that bring us back to the earlier sections. Jacob, returning from Hyde Park, as we have noticed in the discussion of the foregoing section, is spotted by Mr. Floyd, an old family acquaintance, in the Piccadilly crowd. The second notable thing is the other procession, which, linked to the procession in the ninth section, suggests the war. The third line of development links up with the motif of Clara's relationship with Jacob, introduced in detail in the second section; for here we encounter her again, going to the opera in the company of Mr. Wortley. Mr. Wortley makes casual remarks, comparing the London night life of theatres with that in the rural atmosphere of Clara's native place symbolized by the moors. These remarks link up the episodes of Jacob's days in love with Clara on the one
hand, and as we shall see in the next section, with the end of Jacob's career by death in the war on the other.

The twelfth section starts with Clara's moors, taken up from the casual remark of Mr. Wortley in the eleventh section, and the first impression of them here elaborates upon the remark, stressing the quietness and natural beauty of them, shortly to be rudely disturbed by the report of gunfire noticed by Mrs. Pascoe in the second para of the section. This para introduces the actual impact of the war on the British shores.

The final section presents the war most explicitly and links up with Mrs. Flanders in the tenth section. It describes her hearing the gun-shots 'half asleep', but she mistook them for the noise of the sea. The war is presented through the consciousness of Mrs. Flanders. It takes note of her awareness that Morty and Seabrook are dead in the war, and in the same breath presents her awareness that her sons are also fighting in the war. This detail prepares for the final event—the death of Jacob in the war, which rounds up the novel in the next and last chapter of the book. In this section the general and particular lines of development run simultaneously. The general theme of war is mixed with the particular theme of Jacob. The impact of war on individual life and property is subtly suggested by Mrs. Flanders' anxiety: "Were the chickens safe?"
The detailed analysis of the thirteenth chapter of the novel, made above, illustrates the point about the novelty of the novelistic structure of Jacob's Room and is intended to endorse the verdict of Bernard Blackstone:

*Jacob's Room* shows a great advance in technique. Mrs. Woolf has come into her own in style and construction. The novel proceeds not with mechanical regularity, but in a series of short pictures, sometimes linked together in time and place, sometimes detached.

II

Symbolism plays a great role in the structure of *Jacob's Room*. Virginia Woolf has used in this novel the characteristic devices of symbolist art, in which narrative statement is replaced by cryptic suggestion, words and scenes and people surrender part of their identity and become symbols to communicate things - themes and motifs, complexes of feelings - other than themselves. The persistent use of certain symbols contributes significantly to the structure of meanings in this novel. Besides, symbols externalize the working of the inner minds of the people.

The most pervasive symbols in this novel are the sea, the wind, and the lighthouse which are used thematically. The beginning of the novel presents a scene on the sea-shore: Mrs. Flanders, who has become a widow in the prime of her life, after long lapse of
time is writing a letter to Captain Barfoot to give an outlet to her discomforts. Her eyes are full of tears. Through the setting, the novelist reveals her state by using symbols significantly in the following passage:

The entire bay quivered; the lighthouse wobbled; and she had the illusion that the mast of Mr. Connor's little yacht was bending like a wax candle in the sun.12

(The quivering of the bay, the wobbling of the lighthouse and the bending of the mast of the yacht in the sun like a wax candle communicate her feelings of fear and insecurity.) It requires a great blow of the wind to make a bay quiver, and a very bright sun to bend a mast like a candle. These symbols suggest the strength of the difficulties Mrs. Flanders has to face.

The association of wind with sea and lighthouse is repeated intermittently in the novel. Mrs. Flanders is sensitive to this symbolic impact of wind, sea and lighthouse. She sits staring at this scene for hours together so that she feels the suggestiveness of it. It has been very difficult for her to control her children, and Jacob, particularly, is a very obstinate child. Marriage has become a fortress to her. She goes to the sea-shore for a walk where the children collected a cow's skull and a crab. She is rather irritated and requests Jacob to throw the things away. But Jacob squirms away from her instead. Then
she looks at the sea:

The wind was rising. The waves showed that uneasiness, like something alive, restive, expecting the whip, of waves before storm. The fishing boats were leaning to the water's brim. A pale yellow light shot across the purple sea, and shut. The lighthouse was lit. 

Mrs. Flanders sees the reflection of her mind in the wind and the sea. The rising of the wind suggests that the situation may become still more dangerous and lead to ultimate destruction. The constant moving of the waves suggests instability and their struggle to come to the shore. They sometimes reach the shore; yet they cannot come out of the sea. They fight against the shore, that is, against their fate, but finally the fate pulls them back to the wide ocean to struggle. The fishing boat, a symbol for Mrs. Flanders' life, has to travel in the vast ocean, facing the dangers of the sea. The lighthouse suggests stability against the instability of the waves. It conveys the feeling of caution and security. The impact of the lighthouse on Mrs. Flanders suggests that though life is difficult and full of dangers, one should be cautious in steering across the astonishing agitations of life. The sea is a symbol of eternity, suggesting that life is like the sea: deep, full of wind, waves and dangers.

The lashing of the coast by the wind and waves which parallels the happenings in Mrs. Flanders' life
conveys that life is to end in destruction. It is described in the following passage:

For the wind was tearing across the coast, ... rolling dark waves before it, it raced over Atlantic, jerking the stars above the ships. The wind and the dark waves that raced over the Atlantic suggest the stir in the situation that will lead to destruction. The jerking of the stars by the wind and waves implies the power of the difficulties to come. The ship in the sea becomes a symbol of precariously lived life. The strong wind suggests that the ship may sink in the sea.

The symbols of sea, wind, waves and lighthouse constitute a kind of primary structure for the novel. In the earlier part these symbols are used to reveal Mrs. Flanders' life. In the later part they are used to externalize the inner reality of Jacob's mind. Jacob went to Cambridge where he got friendly with the Durrant family. One day he went to a bay in Scilly Isles with his friend Timothy Durrant and spent a day there. He sat looking at the sea gloomily. This is how it is described:

The beam from the lighthouse strode rapidly across the water. Infinite millions of miles away powdered stars twinkled; but the waves slapped the boat, and crashed, with regular and appalling solemnity, against the rocks. The description suggests that darkness is coming rapidly into Jacob's life. The twinkling of the stars suggests
that they can give some light, but it would be very insufficient for leading life. There is the lighthouse that communicates constancy and determinateness. But the violent slapping of the waves on the boat evokes fear of destruction. As the waves meet the rock and are broken to pieces, so the boat of Jacob's life will hit the rock and will be broken to pieces. The boat always carries some suggestion of his own journey to death.

The wind associated with waves and sea presents the situation Jacob has to face. Jacob went on the tour to Greece where he fell in love with Sandra Williams. Finally he realized that he had to come back to England with mere sweet memories of Sandra. He was still unaware of the danger he had to face in life, and this danger is suggested by the growing of the wind in the following passage:

... a cloud must have touched the waves and spattered them - the dolphins circling deeper and deeper into the sea. Violent was the wind now rushing down the sea of Marmara.16

The danger and Jacob's struggle with life are implied in the use of images of sea, violent wind and waves which occur frequently in the novel. One more significant image of the meeting of cloud with wave is used to reinforce the nature of the union of Sandra and Jacob. A cloud and a wave never really meet; it is an illusion only. The sea, wind, and waves are central symbols in
the novel that are brought together in reconciliation of the theme of life and death.

The author has used certain other unconventional symbols to evoke a feeling of fear and predict the future ill. The symbol of a 'cow's skull' in Jacob's hand comes as a prediction of something terrible going to happen in Jacob's life. Jacob picked it up in his hands against his mother's advice. This symbolizes his natural tendency to run risks without caring for consequences.

In the first chapter of the novel we come across the symbol of 'crab'. A crab symbolizes crookedness, as it never walks straight. The whole world around Mrs. Flanders is moving like a crab. The crab is described thus:

... trying with its weakly legs to climb the steep side; trying again and falling back, and trying again and again.17

In this movement of the crab Mrs. Flanders sees her own struggle against life. The crab does not stop climbing up the steep; it tries again and again though it has weak legs. The effort the crab has put in the struggle is admirable, and it gives inspiration to her to accept the challenge of the situation and try to reach the goal of life.

The author uses other symbols like gee, stag-
beetles and butterflies. Mrs. Flanders' children always ran after the gee$4. They collected stag-beetles and butterflies, and imprisoned them in boxes where they died. This was merely an entertainment to the children. Mrs. Flanders disliked it and forbade them to catch the insects. This situation reminds a reader of the lines from *King Lear*:

> As flies to wanton boys are we to th' Gods; They kill us for their sport. (IV, i, 37-38)

This illustrates the identification of Mrs. Flanders' tortured mind with that of tragic humanity. Her mind is impaled and crucified on the cross-beams of love and disillusion.

Jacob is sent to Cambridge to study. Mrs. Woolf, who herself studied at Cambridge, glorifies it by using images that can present its widespread fame: "If you stand a lantern under a tree every insect in the forest creeps up to it - a curious assembly."

Mrs. Woolf has often used symbols in this novel uniquely. They bring testimony to her originality. To give an illustration, Jacob is telling Clara Durrant and Julia Eliot about a walking tour he had taken. The inn where they sat was called 'The Foaming Pot'. The image suggests outwardly that the inn was full of noise. But the deeper meaning is the momentariness of human
life. The foams exist, but as they burst, they disappear. So, too, the human beings that assembled at the inn were a fleeting company.

As the thread of the novel is spun out through an associational chain of symbols, we are involved into the deeper range of persons divided and tormented by life. In Chapter V, the author thus comments on life:

"In any case life is but a procession of shadows, and God knows why it is that we embrace them so eagerly, and see them depart with such anguish, being shadows."

The image of life as a procession of shadows symbolically conveys this meaning. As a shadow, life follows a person; and, at the same time the image of shadow suggests disillusionment with life. We can feel its existence, but cannot catch it in our hands. Still we run after it because of the possessive instinct in us. Clara and Julia running after Jacob is a kind of running after shadow.

The artificiality of human life, which the writer is aware of all the time thematically, has been presented in a symbolic structure in this novel. In Chapter VI, Mrs. Woolf presents it through the character of Florinda, who pretended that she was a chaste woman enjoying the confidence of a Royal master, chiefly when drunk. She talked much about her virginity, and Jacob believed her. Commenting on such artificiality, whose one aspect
Florinda symbolizes, the author says:

The widows of businessmen prove laboriously that they are related to judges. The wives of coal merchants instantly retort that their fathers kept coachmen. ... And so on again into the dark, passing a girl here for sale, or there an old woman only matches to offer ... 21

This is a tremendous and shocking picture of contemporary society as seen by the author. To her the whole moral basis of society has been destroyed.

(The "paper flowers" that are used as a substitute to real flowers are another set of symbols suggesting the artificiality of contemporary life. A true union of human hearts in love is not to be found in such life, the writer observes: "But real flowers can never be dispensed with. If they could, human life would be a different affair altogether." 23

The image of the world as spectacle, used effectively in Chapter VIII to externalize the conflict in Jacob's mind is yet another one significant for the novelistic structure. This image stands for the insecurity of life and shallowness of human minds. One has to play out one's role as hero, heroine, or villain. A clown plays his role and makes the audience laugh, even though he may be unhappy at heart; he has to suppress his own personal feelings and act as the situation requires.
Another image, that of "the world our ship", is employed in this novel to emphasize the large variety of life, and contributes to the richness of its symbolic structure. Every creature character in this novel is a traveller, and the journey of the ship suggests the journey towards death. It will meet dangers, face them and struggle to survive. If it meets a rock and is broken to pieces, it will bring the ultimate destruction. The image also implies that some of the travellers will cease to exist before they reach the shore. The shade of fear and insecurity in the world-view that was caused by World War I has been revealed through this image. Ultimately, Jacob becomes a victim of the war, and loses his life.

Some symbolic images, such as the 'snow falling', or the 'rain pouring down' are used incidentally to communicate a sense of unhappy and miserable life of some of the characters in the novel, or of life in general.

The simile in the following passage indicates that the sea is used as symbol for the Infinite:

As for the beauty of women, it is like the light on the sea, never constant to a single wave. They all have it; they lose it. Light is diffused over all and not on a particular wave. It also suggests that beauty decays and glamour flies; but
the inner beauty of heart never dies. Everything is changing in the world. One more meaning is suggested. As the light is never constant to a single wave, so too, woman is not constant to a single man. Her love is fleeting and frail. This is, again, an idea of thematic dimensions for this novel, and hence images bringing out this idea become contributory to the symbolic structure. Analogous to the beauty of women, the writer describes the beauty of young men, using the simile of smoke in the same chapter: "And for ever the beauty of young men seems to be set in smoke. ..." Men in certain situations look handsome, but their smartness, too, is thin and ephemeral. As smoke disappears, the beauty of young men vanishes slowly.

Images of darkness are used intermittently in Chapter XII, when Jacob has to break up with Sandra Williams and come back to England. They communicate symbolically the fear, insecurity and transitoriness of the relationship, and eventually of the reality of life. The entire atmosphere of dark night and the agitation of the air threatens Jacob:

Obscuring the moon and altogether darkening the Acropolis the clouds passed from east to west. The clouds solidified; the vapours thickened; the trailing veils stayed and accumulated. The hiding of the moon by clouds precludes Jacob's fate. The accumulation of trailing veils and the thickening of
the vapour suggest that his life in future will be more dark and difficult. The lights of the town are extinguished one after the other, and there is a violent wind that makes the atmosphere more fearful: "Violent was the wind now rushing down the sea of Marmara between Greece and the plains of Troy."31

The above discussion amply illustrates the fact that Mrs. Woolf has used the techniques of symbolist art extensively to build the structure of meanings in this novel. A discussion of some unconventional symbols diffused in the body of the novel will further support the point. The myriad casual little acts of Jacob like presenting Sandra with a book of Donne's poems or advising Fanny to read Tom Jones acquire symbolic significance, suggesting the attitudes of Jacob to love and life. The galloping horse without a rider in Ch. XIII can be cited as yet another unconventional symbol significantly contributing to the structure of meaning peculiar to this work. It suggests a number of things. Firstly, it indicates Clara's disillusionment in love; secondly, it gives a foreboding of unhappiness, as is very natural in the context of a horse having lost its rider; thirdly, it suggests the uncontrolled march of time. Similarly, the persistent use of bird imagery in the novel also acquires structural significance.
Birds which are migratory are effective symbols of man's transitory life. Mrs. Woolf is not alone in using bird-soul symbolism, suggesting through bird-flight imaging the transition of the soul from one form to another by means of life and death. Yeats, for one, employed swans and sea-gulls as such symbols of transition in this poems. In the first chapter of Jacob's Room the white sea-gull stands for purity. Chapter IV presents Jacob and Timothy Durrant in Scilly Isles and they find "the gulls making their broad flight and then riding at peace." The broad flight of the gulls suggests that they will travel to another country. When it is winter in England, the birds fly to sunny land over the sea, and when spring arrives they return. Their long flight over the sea brings to mind many difficulties they have to face. Sometimes some of the birds lose strength of wings and cannot fly; they have to die in the sea. Only a few reach the sunny land, that is, their ultimate goal. The gulls "rode gently swaying in little companies of two or three..."; this communicates the essence of companionship in life. The gulls symbolize man's life acutely. As they are caught in the storm, they shudder and hesitate. Still they continue flying high in the sky, symbolizing liberty and daring. This inspires Jacob to move in the world and probe deep into life, limitlessly.

In Chapter X the symbols of sparrow and butterfly
are employed very effectively to suggest temporariness of human relationship. Jacob told Fanny Elmer that he would be in Paris. She was shocked to know this. Then she noticed that "a sparrow flew past the window trailing a straw. ... And the butterflies are flaunting across the rides in the Forest." The sparrow is busy collecting straws. The butterflies are flaunting with happiness; but winter will come afterwards and they will have to disappear. Fanny knows that happiness is temporary; still one should not cease to enjoy it. After winter, spring will arrive.

The use of bird imagery in this novel acquires thematic, and hence structural significance. Jacob met Cruttendon and Miss Jinny Carslake. He enjoyed their company for some days. Jinny liked Jacob much. But Jacob pointed to the birds and said: "Those silly birds, directly one wants them - they've flown away." The birds convey the fleeting nature of a man's company in this world. Man is a traveller for a short time. It is not his permanent abode. No one knows when he will be picked, perhaps unripened too.

Bird singing when Jacob comes to Italy in Chapter XII predicts symbolically the pleasantness of life there. But this, too, was temporary. (The symbol of an eagle in Chapter XII, when Sandra said to Jacob that "you will see the eagle," suggests the kingliness
and freedom Jacob had in life before him. An eagle is the prince of birds. This is the last bird symbol employed to represent the meaning of Jacob's life. The earlier bird symbols which are employed in the novel whenever he is to break up with the company represent Jacob as a transitory and small person. This last symbol of an eagle interprets the vast and high range of life Jacob had experienced freely.

III

One of the striking consequences of the diffused influence of the continental Parnassian and symbolist movements was the interpenetration of art forms, particularly breaking the barriers between poetry, painting and music. The evidence of this peculiar trend in modern literature is quite happily reflected in the work of Mrs. Woolf, one of the most sensitive connoisseurs of arts in modern times, strikingly noticed in her first novel in the new style. It can be clearly seen that the structure of Jacob's Room is organized also on principles other than strictly literary, such as the techniques of music, impressionistic painting and the cinema, which are all remarkable for their intangible and suggestive formal structure.

In this novel we find extraordinary repetition of certain ideas and feelings. With this technique on
the pattern of leitmotif in a piece of music, Mrs. Woolf is able to induce and sustain a high pitch of emotional intensity and deepen the reader's awareness of and involvement with the moments that form the basic units of the novelistic structure. The emotional attitudes towards love, death and sorrow are expressed in surging rhythms. Many themes, more or less related, but still distinct variants, are woven thus. It is in this manner that the motifs of Jacob's own life, his mother's and those of Clara, Sandra, Florinda and Fanny are blended into one theme. 'Life' is employed as a leitmotif to emphasize its various phases in alterations and variations. (In Chapter V, "life is a procession of shadows..." suggests the disillusionment with life. In the same chapter, "Life is thoroughly pleasant..." presents a variation. Again, it becomes a problem and hence the comment on life: "The problem is insoluble." The variation continues, and to Rose Shaw in Chapter VII, "Life is wicked - life is detestable!" Ultimately, Fanny communicates her total experience of life in this emotional utterance: "This is life, This is life," in the penultimate chapter, and accepts life for whatever it has to offer.

The recurrent use of fear in the first two chapters of the novel recalls certain themes and the emotional state of Mrs. Flanders as refrain in music does. The
The novel begins with Mrs. Flanders, a widow, in a fearful situation. The entire quivering wave, the tremendous black rock, the huge crab, the enormous man and woman, the cow's skull, the hurricane at sea, the lodging house gurgling and gushing, the sudden sparks of light— the entire atmosphere of the first two chapters suggests that Mrs. Flanders' mind is throughout full of fear and insecurity.

To take another example, the repetition of the phrase "Jaco-b! Ja-co-b!" a number of times throughout the novel seems to have a function similar to that of a refrain, an indicator of emotional intensity.

The technique of impressionistic painting has also influenced the structure of this novel. A characteristic feature of impressionism, described in the Oxford English Dictionary, is the method of "describing things so as to give their general tone and effect, or the broad impression which they produce at first sight without elaboration of detail." The very first chapter of Jacob's Room can be easily seen to derive its structural setting through such a technique of novelistic description. It presents the house of the lonely, insecure widow, Mrs. Flanders, on the sea-shore, her children playing on the heath with such odd things as a crab or a cow's skull, and their mother apprehensive about them. This scene is
presented not in the traditional naturalistic style, giving all the details, and setting the people in their surroundings, but presents it impressionistically, seizing upon broad impressions that capture the general tone and effect. The first such impression is of the glimpse of the bay from Mrs. Flanders' window:

The entire bay quivered; the lighthouse wobbled; and she had the illusion that the mast of Mr. Connor's little yacht was bending like a wax candle in the sun. She winked quickly. Accidents were awful things. This snap underscores the anxious, insecure mood of the widow, and contributes to the general tone and effect intended. The sea-shore on which the boys are playing is, again, not described from the outside, giving all the details elaborately, but concentrates on striking features relevant to the general tone:

The rock was one of those tremendously solid brown, or rather black, rocks which emerge from the sand like something primitive. Rough with crinkled limpet shells and sparsely strewn with locks of dry seaweed, a small boy has to stretch his legs far apart, and indeed to feel rather heroic, before he gets to the top.

But there, on the very top, is a hollow full of water, with a sandy bottom; with a blob of jelly stuck to the side, and some mussels. A fish darts across. The fringe of yellow-brown seaweed flutters, and outpushes an opal-shelled crab...

Such glimpses of the scenario are punctuated with significant interruptions, the anxious cries, "Jac-cob! Ja-cob!" of Archer, and the sigh of relief uttered by Mrs. Flanders on spotting him: "There he is!"
This impressionistic way of writing is followed throughout the book, and elaborately used, as we shall see later, in other masterpieces of the author in this style, like Mrs. Dalloway, To the Lighthouse, and The Waves. The scenes are more and more condensed and precise. The general tone of the novel is established clearly, among other things, by the use of this method, and the total tragic effect at the end becomes as effective as that of music. This technique has made the structural effect of the novel more intensive than that of her earlier, traditional novels.

The cinematic technique employed in this novel has also left remarkable mark on the structure of this novel. A wide span of life is condensed in a manner resembling, as in cinema films, a quick succession of snap-shots; gaps lying in-between have been filled by the reader's imagination, just as the film projector leaves the gaps to be filled by the natural process of blurring of the details, giving the illusion of continuity in the cinema shows. Disconnected and broken scenes are presented throughout the book, and the reader is left to connect the broken pieces and build a pattern with his own imagination, providing such consistency and coherence as his sensibility can find. Quite often, throughout the book two or more scenes are fused in a cinematic fashion. The following brief
extract from Ch. VI is a fine illustration of diverse threads of story presented like a group of snap-shots simultaneously arrayed:

Florinda was sick.

Mrs. Durrant, sleepless as usual, scored a mark by the side of certain lines in the *Inferno*.

Clara slept buried in her pillows; on her dressing-table dishevelled roses and a pair of long white gloves.

Still wearing the conical white hat of a pierrot, Florinda was sick.47

The whole book is constructed in this manner. It is not necessary to quote bigger extracts for illustrating this manner of structuring. It may also be stated at this stage of our study that this technique is also used in the later masterpieces of the author like *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *The Waves*, with increasing artistic power. Though it had been initiated by men like James Joyce earlier in point of time, one can say that Mrs. Woolf was something of a pioneer in using this technique - the "montage" as it is called in literary criticism - as a characteristic structuring device, in so far as she became a lasting name in the history of novelistic technique of our time.
Notes and references

1Quoted from "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," in Walter James, ed., *Virginia Woolf: Selections from her Essays* (London, Chatto and Windus, 1966), p. 102. *Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown* was a paper read to the Heretics at Cambridge in May, 1924 and then published in *The Criterion* in July, and as a book in October. It was collected with other essays in *The Captain's Deathbed and Other Essays*, and thus published again in 1950.


3Ibid., p. 120.

4Ibid., p. 120.

5Ibid., p. 119.

6Ibid., p. 123.


8Freedman, op. cit., pp. 192, 197 and 198.

9*Jacob's Room*, Penguin edition, p. 163. All references, unless otherwise stated, are to this edition.

10Ibid., p. 165.

11Blackstone, op. cit., p. 65.

12*Jacob's Room*, p. 5.

13Ibid., p. 9.

14Ibid., p. 11.
In the first chapter Mrs. Flanders goes on the seashore with Jacob, Archer and John. Jacob strays, and then the apprehensive Archer cries for him, "Ja-cob! Ja-cob!" Again, in the second chapter Mrs. Flanders is on Dod's Hill where Jacob goes away again. She calls after him anxiously, "Ja-cob! Ja-cob!" Then in Chapter XIII, when Jacob is no more with her, Clara remembered him passionately, repeating "Ja-cob! Ja-cob!" to herself. Finally, when Bonamy goes to Jacob's room after his death to find Jacob's things scattered here and there, he passionately repeats, "Ja-cob! Ja-cob!"

In all such cases the repetition of the phrase underscores the passionate anxiety of various people for Jacob, and links up with their ultimate deep sense of loss of him.

44 Jacob's Room, p. 5.
46 Ibid., p. 8.
47 Ibid., p. 73.