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"All this little affair with 'being' is over:"

Metaphysical Crisis in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*

BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

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V Praze dne 9. srpna 2015   Vít Opravil

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I have no objections to the BA thesis being borrowed and used for study purposes.

Thesis Abstract

The present thesis sets out to follow three different problems in the metaphysics of Virginia Woolf's late novel *The Waves* and contrast them with the theories of three thinkers – Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari and Jacques Derrida. First chapter discusses Woolf's approach to subjectivity. It is shown that Deleuze's and Guattari's method establishing subjectivity as a by-product of a machinic assemblage is particularly fruitful in reading the characters in the first four chapters where their bodies and their "subjectivities" form in diverse ways. D&G comment on the waves of the lyrical passages as an abstract machine of which the character-assemblages are actualizations. They do not, however, comment on the territorialising function of sunlight which seems to be equally important and therefore needs to be analysed. This function corresponds with the ever growing oedipalisation of the characters, which finds its summit in the fifth chapter of the novel and transforms a deterritorialised rhizome into a reterritorialized (or oedipalised) signifying system.

The second chapter discusses how the functioning of the territorial machine of the sun reduces the rhizome into a centralised system whose centre can be understood through the prism of Derrida's theory of structure as a play of supplementation. It posits Percival as this (non)centre of the signifying structure. The centre needs to be recognized as a supplementary sign that limits the infinite play of the structure. Percival's status is confirmed in three different ways – he is a myth that cannot be the *arché*, he is a supplementary sign, and the transcendental illusion of his presence must be affirmed. Percival's death induces different reactions in the three characters that narrate it. The reactions of Rhoda, Bernard and Neville are discussed along with Louis non-reaction.

In Chapter III, the signs and the style of *The Waves* are analysed. A classification of signs devised by Deleuze is applied to the novel showing that all three basic types – worldly signs, signs of love, and sensuous signs can be found. In order to be able to explicate the fourth type, the signs of art, an apprenticeship has to be taken. Bernard undergoes this apprenticeship throughout the novel with more and less success but finishes it only in the last chapter. The signs of art are thought by Woolf perhaps in a slightly more radical way than Deleuze. Bernard's final step, when the sun sets and the territorial machine stops working, is to take the line of flight towards deterritorialisation. He loses his self which enables him to see the world in its essence as absolute difference. This, however, only works because Bernard's functioning as a character assemblage represents the production of the literary machine at the same time. He is therefore a part of the essence, the superior Viewpoint that provides different perspectives on objects. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the style of the novel and its relation to rhythm.

Abstrakt

Práce si vytyčila prozkoumat tři různé problémy metafyziky v pozdním románu Virginie Woolfové *Vlny* a kontrastovat je s teoriemi tří myslitelů – Gillese Deleuze, Félixe Guattariho a Jacquese Derridy. První kapitola se zabývá přístupem Woolfové k subjektivitě. Deleuzova a Guattariho metoda definující subjektivitu jako vedlejší produkt strojové asambláže se ukáže být obzvláště vhodnou při čtení postav v prvních čtyřech kapitolách, kde se jejich těla a „subjektivity" formují různými způsoby. Deleuze a Guattari považují vlny z lyrických pasáží za abstraktní stroj, jehož aktualizacemi jsou asambláže postav. Nekomentují však teritorializační funkci slunečního světla, jež se ukazuje být stejně důležitou, a tedy je nutné ji analyzovat. Tato funkce koresponduje se stále vzrůstající oidipalizací postav, jež dosáhne svého vrcholu v páté kapitole románu, a která promění deteritorializovanou rhizomu v reteritorializovaný (tedy oidipalizovaný) systém signifikace.

Druhá kapitola se zaobírá mechanismem teritoriálního stroje Slunce, obzvláště tím, jak redukuje rhizomu v centralizovaný systém, jehož centrum se dá považovat přes Derridovu teorii struktury za hru suplementarity. Percival se stává tímto (ne)centrem signifikující struktury. Centrum musí být rozpoznáno jako suplementární znak, který limituje nekonečnou hru struktury. Percivalův status je potvrzen třemi způsoby: je mýtem, který nemůže být *arché*, je suplementárním znakem a transcendentální iluze jeho přítomnosti musí být afirmována. Percivalova smrt vyvolává různé reakce ve třech postavách, jež ji vyprávějí. Reakce Rhody, Bernarda a Nevilla je srovnána s Louisovou netečností.

Třetí kapitola analyzuje znaky a styl *Vln*. Deleuzova klasifikace znaků je aplikována na román a ukazuje se, že lze nalézt všechny tři základní typy znaků – mondénní znaky, znaky lásky a smyslové znaky. Pro rozvinutí čtvrtého typu, znaků umění, je třeba projít učením. Bernard toto

učení během románu podstupuje s větším či menším úspěchem, ale dokončuje jej až v poslední kapitole. Woolfová myslí znaky umění poněkud radikálněji než Deleuze. Když zapadne Slunce a teritoriální stroj přestane pracovat, Bernard udělá poslední krok a vydá se po linii útěku k deteritorializaci. Ztratí své já, což mu umožní vidět svět v esenci jako absolutní diferenci. Toto je však možné pouze proto, že Bernardovo fungování jakožto asambláž reprezentuje taktéž produkci literárního stroje. Je tedy součástí esence, výsostné Hledisko, jež dodává rozdílné perspektivy na objekty. Kapitola končí krátkou diskuzí o stylu románu a jeho vztahu k rytmu.

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Introduction

Virginia Woolf's fictional account comprises ten novels and a great number of short stories. The early years of her career as a novelist – spreading from *The Voyage Out* (1915) to *Jacob's Room* (1922) – are marked by the young author's search for her own voice. With *Jacob's Room* heralding her authorial maturing, she finally found the idiosyncrasy that the following eight novels evince in a particular tinge of experiment, which established Woolf's position as one of the distinguished authors of pre-WWII British fiction. Woolf's experiments include both linguistic and structural variations, temporal and spatial contractions and dilations and, most importantly, as Mattison Laci argues, "[w]e might locate the change in her treatment of 'character' with *Jacob's Room*."[1] By the same time, Woolf commences her subtle novelistic critique of classical metaphysics which finds its pronouncement in the philosopher figure of Mr Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse* (1927). *The Waves* (1931), Woolf's arguably most experimental novel, combines all these features in an ambitious work of art that can be read as Woolf's attempt to redefine, or rather formulate a new philosophy of being, as the older concepts do not suffice anymore. *The Waves* traces the life experiences of six "characters"[2] – Rhoda, Susan, Jinny, Bernard, Louis and Neville. Each different and yet they share a common background, values and certain histories that define them.

Methodology[3]

The present thesis is a close reading of *The Waves* on the background of the theories and methods of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari on the one hand and Jacques Derrida on the other hand. These

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[1] Laci Mattison, "Virginia Woolf's Ethical *Subjectivity*: Deleuze And Guattari's Worlding And Bernard's 'Becoming-Savage'," *Deleuze Studies* 7.4 (2013) 566.

[2] As she writes in a letter to John Lehmann, she wanted to "keep the elements of character; and yet that there should be many characters, and only one; and also an infinity, a background behind" Virginia Woolf, *Selected Letters*, ed. Joanne Trautmann Banks (London: Vintage Books, 2008) 295.

[3] Frequently used works are cited in the main text. Some of the authors cited use emphasis rather often, therefore unless specified otherwise, the emphasis comes from the original text.

authors were selected since there are numerous underlying correlations between Woolf's and their thinking. The corpus of critical writing on Woolf seems to be saturated with Derridean (and especially with derived feminist) readings of *The Waves*, but there has been no particular study to my knowledge that would concern itself to a great degree with the character of Percival as an illusory structuring element. Reading Woolf through Deleuzian philosophy, however, is a field that has only emerged quite recently[4] even though Deleuze quotes her a number of time. Therefore it still promises a large open space that deserves to be filled with research.

The thesis is organized chronologically as regards the chapters of the novel. Chapter I deals with first four narrative passages that present the Ante mortem chapters – before the death of Percival. Chapter II considers the fifth chapter, which we shall call Exitus and where Percival dies. Finally, the last Chapter III discusses Post mortem chapters. The three chapters correspond to the three main interconnected areas of interest of Woolf's philosophy in *The Waves* – subjectivity, centre, and art. Woolf's approach towards subjectivity is discussed in Chapter I along with Deleuze and Guattari's *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* series. Two important distinctions are introduced – one between "characters" and "voices" enabling us to treat them as assemblages and signs, respectively. The second connects with the varied approach to time which leads to thinking of the waves as an abstract machine (belonging to the order of time as Aion, the time of becoming) and Sun as a territorial machine (moving through the eternal present of Chronos). Instead of unified, transcendental subjects, Woolf's characters are considered as a rhizomatic multiplicity of machinic assemblages in which subjectivity is a by-product of a functioning machine which interrupts and transforms the flow of desire. Every character-machine is shown to produce and interrupt a different flow, but in the last Ante mortem chapter, the multiplicity assembles for the first time on

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[4] For instance, *Deleuze Studies 7.4* that is entirely devoted to Deleuzian readings of Woolf and to which a great portion of this thesis is indebted was published as late as 2013.

Percival, interrupting desire that flows from him. If there is an area that would enjoy a further research, it is the machinic character of the personae.

The second chapter utilizes Derrida's thinking of structure and centre based on his essay "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of Social Sciences" and applies it to Percival. This poses a methodological problem since one might argue that Deleuze's and Derrida's approaches are incompatible. The rhizomatic structure of the multiplicity of characters is "[i]n contrast to centered (even polycentric) systems with hierarchical modes of communication and preestablished paths[;] the rhizome is an acentered, nonhierarchical, nonsignifying system."[5] There are two things to consider, however. Firstly, Derrida discusses a structure whose structurality is reduced and neutralized by giving it a centre. It permits the play of the structure but at the same time limits it. It gives a stable basis, which is, however, illusory and it has to be acknowledged and affirmed. Some of the characters in *The Waves* do this: they realize that Percival was just a supplementary sign and they no longer turn towards "the origin which escapes play"[6] – this would then not necessarily exclude the rhizome if the signifying dimension was not kept. Nonetheless, Derrida sees the structure still as a system of signs (in spite of/because of a "rupture"), which Deleuze and Guattari do not. Instead they think a heterogeneous, transversal, nonsignifying system. Woolf, in fact, prefigures both. Whereas the waves of the lyrical passages, inscribed on the plane of immanence, become actualized in the heterogeneous system of the rhizome, the Sun can be thought of as a sort of signification endowing (territorialising) machine that gradually makes the structure more and more oedipalised.[7] As the title of the novel suggests, and Bernard in the last chapter

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[5] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1987) 21. Further referred to as TP.

[6] Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences", *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 2001) 370. Further referred to as Structure.

[7] DaG define oedipalisation as a process that represses the unconscious desiring-production (see Chapter I) and substitutes it with desire as lack, as a representation, by imposing the triangular structure of Oedipus: "The whole of desiring *production* is crushed, subjected to the requirements of *representation*, and to the dreary games of what is

confirms, Woolf in the end "preferred" the first type of structure. That, however, does not mean, that the second cannot be found in the novel and should not be analysed. Since the homogenous signifying structure requires the transcendental illusion of Percival which (falsely) refers to the structurality of the structure, it is necessary to deal with it. Therefore, as this is a problem of signification, and a rhizome is said to be nonsignifying, Derrida's, instead of Deleuze's philosophy will be used.

Chapter III deals more extensively with what Deleuze calls a literary machine in *Proust and Signs*. A literary machine emits signs that have certain effects. Deleuze postulates that the problem of artistic creation does no longer consist in the meaning of the work of art, but rather how it works, what it produces. He distinguishes four types of signs that are found in *The Waves* with the last type – the signs of art, being the most important one. Deciphering the first three types leads one towards the essence of the work of art, which is found both in the object emitting it and in the subject apprehending it. Deleuze calls this process "apprenticeship". It is argued that Bernard goes through an apprenticeship, but he finishes it in an idiosyncratic way, revealing Woolf's attitude towards art as difference.

Finally, the Conclusion discusses if and how *The Waves* attains what pre-modern aesthetics called the unity of a work of art. Deleuze shows that there is no inherent, pre-existent totalisation. Instead, all the elements of the book communicate in a transversal way that maintains their difference. Woolf employs a varied set of methods that establish the novel's transversals. These

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representative and represented in representation. And there is the essential thing: the reproduction of desire gives way to a simple representation, in the process as well as theory of the cure. The productive unconscious makes way for an unconscious that knows only how to express itself – express itself in myth, in tragedy, in dream." AO:54. For DaG's critique of Oedipal triangulation see AO:41ff. Therefore the reterritorialisation transforms the rhizome into a centralised system throughout Ante mortem and Derrida's theory of structure becomes feasible for analysing Percival.

transversals work on all linguistic levels – they can be found on morphophonetic boundaries as well as in syntactical constructions.

Chapter I – Ante Mortem

> [T]here is nothing that is one, there is nothing that is multiple, everything is multiplicities.
>
> Anti-Oedipus, 99

> "And now I ask, "Who am I?" I have been talking of Bernard, Neville, Jinny, Susan, Rhoda and Louis. Am I all of them? Am I one and distinct? I do not know.
>
> The Waves, 222

In the Penguin edition of *The Waves*, Kate Flint discusses the conceptual problem of individuality as expressed in the novel thus:

> Yet the achievement of *The Waves* lies in the highlighting the insecurity of the very concept of individuality. To locate it in the body is unreliable, since bodies age, are wounded, are subject to sexual desire. Expressing it in the language means, inevitable, that one cannot contain it either, since language is shared.[8]

Her approach to the novel stems from the romantic nostalgia for subjectivity as something singular and whole. To Flint, the characters struggle to obtain a possession of an "I", however inclusive and manifold it may be. As much as she approximates the interconnectedness and similarity between the voices (or characters) of the novel, she never takes into account the possibility of approaching the characters as a multiplicity.[9] Indeed, she ends with a suggestion that in order to understand the novel it is crucial to acknowledge the tension between our demand for subjectivity and the inability of language to express it[10], but it presents the two sides of the problem as

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[8] Kate Flint, "Introduction", *The Waves*, ed. Kate Flint (London: Penguin, 2000) xxxv.
[9] "One is always the index of a multiplicity: an event, a singularity, a life" Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*, trans. Anne Boyman (New York: Zone, 2001) 30.
[10] Flint, xxxviii.

inherently irreconcilable. Such reading is negative as it builds on Lacanian desire-as-lack.[11] A desire for singular subjectivity; unequivocality conveyed through language.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari offer a radically different approach to subjectivity, one that is closer to Woolf's own. Their approach is affirmative, synthetic and celebrates Difference as a force that works in a definition of a "subject" – not an identical whole, but a product of disparate elements dependent on desire. In *Anti-Oedipus*, Freud's *id* transforms into a machinic *it* of the body: "Everywhere *it* is machines – real ones, not figurative ones: machines driving other machines, […], with all the necessary couplings and connections. An organ-machine is plugged into an energy-source-machine: the one produces a flow that the other interrupts."[12] The flows that the connected machines share, produce and interrupt are produced by the flow of desire (DaG AO:5). Such approach is liberating in the way that the nature/man binary opposition becomes dissolved (DaG AO:2). Everything consists of ever-producing flows and binary machines propelling the universe. The subject is "produced as a residuum alongside the [desiring] machine, as an appendix, or as a spare part adjacent to the machine." (DaG AO:20) Deleuze goes even further in claiming that there are

> [n]o more subjects, but dynamic individuations without subjects, which constitute collective assemblages. […] Nothing becomes subjective but hecceities [*sic*] take shape according to the compositions of non- subjective powers and effects.[13]

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[11] "In Deleuze's analysis, then, the transcendent theory of desire comprises three moments: (1) desire is the mark of our 'lack' of being, since the object of desire is transcendent; but (2) one can only hope for illusory discharges of desire in acts of pleasure; and thus (3) desire is pursuing a *jouissance* that is ultimately impossible. In this manner, says Deleuze, the theory of desire is completely ensnared in a field of transcendence." Daniel W. Smith, "Deleuze and Derrida, Immanence and Transcendence: Two Directions in Recent French Thought" in Paul Patton and John Protevi, eds. *Between Deleuze and Derrida* (London: Continuum, 2003) 59.

[12] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1983) 1. Further referred to as AO.

[13] Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues* (New York: Columbia UP, 1987) 93.

The organ-machines connect and form a fragmented body where each element performs its function and communicates on a transversal plane with the others. The body thus creates a multiplicity – not an organic whole, but an assemblage[14] of differing fragments where nothing is one, or multiple, there are only substantive multiplicities (DaG AO:99). The multiplicities' effect is that of univocity – a "paradoxical, yet harmonious coexistence of the multiple and the whole."[15] The space upon which the machines inscribe their code (function) is a deterritorialised[16] body without organs (BwO).[17] The structure of the multiplicity is rhizomatic – every point is and has to be connected to anything other (DaG TP:8). With all this in mind, any reference to a "subject" and "subjectivity" throughout the thesis always points to the peripheral product of a territorialised multiplicity of machines connected to the body without organs, to the haecceities[18] which are ever-becoming through extrinsic forces. Deleuze and Guattari's methodological framework is utilisable as a productive tool in the criticism of modernist literature. If modernism contains works that "are aesthetically radical, contain striking technical innovation, emphasize spatial or "fugal" as opposed

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[14] Putting pieces (parts of the machine) together to form a working, if fragmentary (the pieces create breaks and interruptions and they communicate only transversally), machine that is capable of production.

[15] Beatrice Monaco, *Machinic Modernism: The Deleuzian Literary Machines of Woolf*, *Lawrence and Joyce* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) 20.

[16] The concept of (re-/de-)territorialisation includes a large battery of uses in DaG. Generally, deterritorialisation points to "taking the line of flight," which constitutes a certain change in the assemblage towards a lower degree of totalization, or in case of a subject, towards a lower degree of oedipalisation. In terms of social structures, territorialisation can also mean the inscription of a territorial machine upon a deterritorialised body of Earth (viz. footnote 25). For more on this concept, see Adrian Parr, "DETERRITORIALISATION/RETERRITORIALISA-TION," *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2010) 69-72.

[17] Regarding the body without organs, DaG write: "The body without organs is an egg: it is crisscrossed with axes and thresholds, with latitudes and longitudes and geodesic lines, traversed by gradients marking the transitions and the becomings, the destinations of the subject developing along these particular vectors. […] Nothing but bands of intensity, potentials, thresholds, and gradients." AO:19.

[18] Haecceities and quidditas form two distinct definitions of objects. Quidditas ("thatness") defines objects in difference from each other. Haecceities ("thisness") defines object upon its singular qualites. DaG appropriate the concept of haecceity and define it as a mode of individuation in contrast to subjectivity and substantiality. The only important distinctions are those of latitude – relations of movement and speed – and longitude – intensities and affects. DaG TP:261.

to chronological form, tend towards ironic modes, and involve a certain 'dehumanization of art'"[19], then the contiguous planes between Woolf and the two thinkers emerge readily. *The Waves* is Woolf's most pronounced declaration of her philosophical thinking on the metaphysics of subjectivity that stretches over her oeuvre.

The main focus of this chapter is to provide an outline of the machinic character of the narrative parts. First and foremost, it is necessary to distinguish between "characters" and "voices" of the novel. What shall be referred to as voices are signs of the novel's functioning as a literary machine[20], in relation to style and effects the machine produces. They will be discussed in the third chapter. The characters, on the other hand, are a set of products of the voices as a collective assemblage that for the sake of the argument will be considered in this chapter as actual machinic assemblages. In order to describe them, it is necessary to begin with the multiplicity of spaces that the machines attach to – the bodies without organs. As Deleuze points out, "A body without organs is the surface of inscription for every statement or for every desire. Except there is not a single body without organs, there are as many as you like. It's a thing to produce or fabricate."[21] Let us then explore what bodies without organs *The Waves* produces.

I.I. Bodies without Organs (BwO)

The novel introduces a particular treatment of temporality. All narrative passages are technically in past as every soliloquy is tagged "someone *said*" despite Woolf having been praised for her

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[19] Malcolm Bradbury, "Modernism", *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms*, ed. Peter Childs and Roger Fowler (London: Routledge, 2006) 145.

[20] A literary machine is a conception of literature in opposition to the organic theory of an artwork; "[t]o the *logos*, organ and organon whose meaning must be discovered in the whole to which it belongs, is opposed the antilogos, machine and machinery whose meaning (anything you like) depends solely on its functioning, which, in turn, depends on its separate parts. The modern work of art has no problem of meaning, it has only a problem of use." Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs: The Complete Text*, trans. George Braziller (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 2000) 146. Further referred to as PS.

[21] Giles Deleuze, "Dualism, Monism, and Multiplicities (Desire-Pleasure-*Jouissance*)", trans. Daniel W. Smith, *Contretemps*, vol. 2, May 2001. Available online at http://sydney.edu.au/contretemps/2may2001/deleuze.pdf.

"sustained use of the pure present"[22] in which the soliloquies are narrated. On the other hand, the interspersed lyrical passages all utilize past tenses even though they describe one present moment. Deleuze and Guattari conceptualize two different notions of time:

> *Aion:* the indefinite time of the event, the floating line that knows only speeds and continually divides that which transpires into an already-there that is at the same time not-yet-here, a simultaneous too-late and too-early, a something that is both going to happen and has just happened. *Chronos:* the time of measure that situates things and persons, develops a form, and determines a subject. (DaG TP:262)

Bodies without organs shall therefore belong to the time of Aion, whereas the subjects to the time of Chronos. The first BwO can be found within the second sentence of the novel: "*The sun had not yet risen. The sea was indistinguishable from the sky, except that the sea was slightly creased as if a cloth had wrinkles in it.*"[23] The creases on the sea that traverse the unformed matter may be seen as the intensities and potentials of a BwO. D&G think of the waves on the sea as an abstract machine:

> It is the abstract Figure, or rather, since it has no form itself, the abstract Machine of which each concrete assemblage is a multiplicity, a becoming, a segment, a vibration. And the abstract machine is the intersection of them all. […] Waves are vibrations, shifting borderlines inscribed on the plane of consistency as so many abstractions. The abstract machine of the waves. […] Each [character of *The Waves*] advances like a wave, but on the plane of consistency they are a single abstract Wave whose vibration propagates following a line of flight or deterritorialization traversing the entire plane (each chapter of Woolf's novel is

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[22] Eric Warner, *Virginia Woolf, The Waves* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987) 92.
[23] Virginia Woolf, *The Waves* ed. Kate Flint (London: Penguin, 2000) 3. Further referred to as TW.

preceded by a meditation on an aspect of the waves, on one of their hours, on one of their becomings).[24]

They do not mention the sun and its effect that at this point had "*not yet risen*". The sun functions as a territorial machine[25] which is about to attach to the infinitely producing multiplicity of the sea and inscribe its code onto the deterritorialised flow of the abstract machine:

> *As they neared the shore each bar rose, heaped itself, broke and swept a thin veil of white water across the sand. The wave paused, and then drew out again, sighing like a sleeper whose breath comes and goes unconsciously. Gradually the dark bar on the horizon became clear as if the sediment in an old wine-bottle had sunk and left the glass green.* (Woolf TW:3)

The sun then gradually actualizes the virtualities of the BwO as the "*surface of the sea slowly became transparent and lay rippling and sparkling until the dark stripes were almost rubbed out.*" (Woolf TW:3) In the second interlude, it is indeed described in terms of imagery suggestive of a machine, as "[i]*t sharpened the edges of chairs and tables and stitched white table-cloths with fine gold wires.*" (Woolf TW:20) After the last Ante mortem chapter, "*the sun burnt uncompromising, undeniable. It struck upon the hard sand, and the rocks became furnaces of red heat; it searched each pool and caught the minnow hiding in the cranny*" until it gives "*to everything its* exact measure of colour.*" (Woolf TW:111, my emphasis) Its illumination is the inscription of the territorial machine in the time of Chronos[26] upon the deterritorialised BwO of the sea. If the waves

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[24] DaG TP: 252. An abstract machine is different from other machines in that it is not a concrete assemblage – it is inscribed on the plane of immanence. The other machines are concrete actualizations with a substance. The signs of the literary machine produce the abstract machine of the waves which in turn is actualised as characters. The assemblage of characters as a substance (non-signifying) is therefore a product of an assemblage of signs. Cf. with the proposed distinction between "voices" and "characters". (Of course none of the machines in *The Waves* are substantial in any other way than that they are signs produced in the working of the literary machine, see chapter III).

[25] "The *territorial machine* is therefore the first form of socius, the machine of primitive inscription, the "megamachine" that covers a social field." DaG AO:141.

[26] As a sidenote, Deleuze's notion of time also has a distinct spatial dimension. Chronos is cyclical and envelopes a vast, deep present, On the contrary, Aion develops on the surface. Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (London: Athlone, 1990) 60-62. Further referred to as LS. The Chronos therefore corresponds with the revolution of Sun whereas Aion to the BwO of the unformed sea.

are the abstract machine of which the characters in the narrative sections are concrete, actualized assemblages, it is the sun that performs this function in demarcating the differences between the sea and the sky and ultimately also between particular waves. Therefore the preludes serve as an allegory for the narrative chapters.

D&G's discussion of schizophrenia as a result of deterritorialization of the schizo and thus becoming a body without organs without subsequent reterritorialisation is especially potent for analysing the Ante mortem of the novel. The narrative sections actualise the potentials of the bodies without organs of the characters. The most prominent body without organs is Percival because of his status of non-presence. His voice is never recorded and therefore he cannot be considered a productive machine as the other characters. He is in kind of a constant line of flight of de- and re-territorialisation. Although he succumbs to stratification (i.e. acquiring a form – of God, of a hero, of a brute), the other voices' emitted signs cannot sediment the forms into any actualised substance,[27] preventing any concrete assemblage that would provide him with a subjectivity. D&G argue that "Percival is like the ultimate multiplicity enveloping the greatest number of dimensions. But he is not yet the plane of consistency."[28] But presuming that he never acquires a voice (effectively making him a body *with* organs) while at the same time he is forever becoming-multiplicity with them, it might be argued that he operates on both the plane of immanence as well as of transcendence, unlike how D&G describe him, since "he sees nothing; he hears nothing" (Woolf TW:25) and yet "he understands." (Woolf TW:34) Percival works as the

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[27] "The strata are phenomena of thickening on the Body of the earth, simultaneously molecular and molar: accumulations, coagulations, sedimentations, foldings." DaG TP:502. Percival belongs to the anthropomorphic type of strata. Each stratum has a double articulation. The first articulation chooses from a particle flow metastable molecular units (substances) and imposes statistical connections (forms). The second articulation establishes stable structures (forms) and constructs molar compounds (substances). DaG TP:40-41. Percival undergoes the first articulation – he is a sign (substance) and has a name and a set of functions (forms). They do not undergo the second articulation – choosing one stable structure and constructing the compound substances.

[28] DaG TP:252. Plane of consistency being the synonym of plane of immanence.

source of the flow of desire that the other characters interrupt, which makes him "the BwO [that] is *the field of immanence* of desire, the *plane of consistency* specific to desire (with desire defined as a process of production without reference to any exterior agency, whether it be a lack that hollows it out or a pleasure that fills it)." (DaG TP:154) A slightly different, yet in many aspects complementary account of Percival and his structuring (non)function will be given in Chapter II.

There are numerous other bodies without organs and schizo movements of becoming-BwO, In particular, let us mention Rhoda: "It is to this [i.e. dark crest of life] we are attached; it is to this we are bound, as bodies to wild horses. And yet we have invented devices for filling up the crevices and disguising these fissures." (Woolf TW:47) And furthermore, Louis's highly sedimented colonial aspect dissolves in a deterritorializing move: "But when darkness comes I put off this unenviable body – my large nose, my thin lips, my colonial accent – and inhabit space." (Woolf TW:38) The individuating signs that "represent" him are ineffective in darkness. He does not inhabit *a* space or *the* space, but non-definite, dark space of the body without organs. But apart from these rare moments of flight, which happen more often to Rhoda than Louis, their behaviour mostly resembles the machinic fragments of the multiplicity rather than bodies without organs. Following is a discussion of the character-machines, their production, coding and decoding, flow breaks and interruptions.

I.II. Machines

The six characters of *The Waves* create a multiplicity of machinic assemblages upon their bodies without organs. It is a multiplicity of fragments traversing on the field of immanence. The machines are binary machines (the flow enters the machine, it interrupts the flux and produces a different flow), therefore the assemblage will have two sides:

> One side of a machinic assemblage faces the strata, which doubtless make it a
> kind of organism, or signifying totality, or determination attributable to a subject;
> it also has a side facing a *body without organs,* which is continually dismantling
> the organism, causing asignifying particles or pure intensities to pass or circulate,
> and attributing to itself subjects that it leaves with nothing more than a name as
> the trace of an intensity. (DaG TP:4)

D&G's notion of subjectivity has this important dimension of de- and re-territorialisation, which points in two directions,[29] while the subject is continuously shattered and reconstituted anew as a by-product. Woolf's *characters* have names, but viewed from the vantage point of the book as a literary machine, the names of the *voices* are but traces of intensities. As characters, each fabricate their own BwO (more or less de- and reterritorialized) and attach organ-machines to it, thus creating a machinic assemblage. Each character also produces a different kind of flow to keep the machine working. There are six characters, six assemblages, innumerable multiplicities.

The first chapter provides an overview on the process of territorialisation, or oedipalizing individuation where Logos gradually imposes itself. Louis is the first voice that gives a full developed "speech"[30], producing the effect of the first assemblage. The flow that he interrupts is precisely that of reterritorialization. At the outset he is connected with the body without organs of Terra: "I am the stalk. My roots go down to the depths of the world, through earth dry with brick, and damp earth, through the veins of lead and silver. I am all fibre." (Woolf TW:7) The imagery of ancient civilizations, however, takes over up to the point where he becomes a stone figure from "a desert by the Nile" overseeing women walking with pitchers to the river and men in turbans. (Woolf TW:7) He "ha[s] lived a thousand lives already." (Woolf TW:95) DaG argue that "no one

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[29] Towards the incoming flow of desire – movements of deterritorialisation. Away into the strata, producing desire – reterritorialisation.

[30] For, even though each of the soliloquies is appended with "[name] said", they are not in fact proclaimed out loud in front of the other characters,

has ever been as deeply involved in history as the schizo, or dealt with it in this way. He consumes all of universal history in one fell swoop." (DaG AO:21) Louis fluctuates between the becomings-schizo and an extreme reterritorialization. The first major occurence of the novel marks the break with the deterritorializing flow that Louis interrupted: "She has found me. I am struck on the nape of the neck. She has kissed me. All is shattered." (Woolf TW:8) From then on, he transforms the deterritorialising flow into a reterritorializing flow as he is always reinserted into the Oedipal triangle by "killing"[31] the father and thus attempting, unsuccessfully, to acquire a singular English identity. Louis's orientation is therefore towards the strata of territorialisation and transcendence – "[they] hint at some other order, and better, which makes a reason everlastingly." (Woolf TW:28)

Neville is another assemblage seeking transcendence in his search for order based on difference, but not the immanent difference in and of itself, rather an outer difference organized by Logos with a traditional view of identity: "There is an order in this world; there are distinctions, there are differences in this world, upon whose verge I step." (Woolf TW:14) As Jason Skeet argues in his essay on linguistic invention in *The Waves*, this attempt of Neville to establish order through repetition is undermined by the tautological nature of the statements.[32] Even though he interrupts and produces the flow of power anchored in Logos, he attempts to establish his own Logos of the second, mythological order, his own kingdom and religion,[33] but it is not enough: "Those who have despised me shall acknowledge my sovereignty. But by some inscrutable law of my being sovereignty and the possession of power will not be enough." (Woolf TW:44) He and the kingdom are infertile as he becomes the thigh-wounded fisher king that Percival is supposed

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[31] His father, a banker in Brisbane, is the looming colonial force that Louis tries to escape.
[32] Jason Skeet, "Netting Fins: A Deleuzian Exploration Of Linguistic Invention In Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*," *Deleuze Studies* 7.4, 485.
[33] He despises and ridicules the authority figure of Dr Crane and by extension the Church as the schoolmaster menaces his liberty. Woolf TW:25.

to heal and fails to do so.[34] Finally Neville seeks his rejuvenation in his complete offering to the individualizing god, Percival, but without avail:

> Then suddenly descended upon me the obscure, the mystic sense of adoration, of completeness that triumphed over chaos. […] Nobody guessed the need I had to offer my being to one god; and perish, and disappear. […] I begin to wish for firelight, privacy, and the limbs of one person. (Woolf TW:37-38)

Perhaps closest to the Deleuzian view of subjectivity is Jinny. She is an assemblage of organ-machines interrupting the flow of sensual desire. She puts emphasis on bodily organs and produces a synaesthetic view of reality: "My hand is like a snake's skin. My knees are pink floating islands. Your face is like an apple tree netted under." (Woolf TW:16) Unlike Louis, Jinny "hate[s] darkness and sleep and night" desiring that "the week should be all one day without divisions," (Woolf TW:40) a continuous flow. Woolf's thinking aligns the most with D&G's concept of becoming in Jinny: becoming as the immanent process of difference that cannot be traced, since it points to all three dimensions of time – past, present and future, always eluding the present. (Deleuze LS:1) "I cannot follow any word through its changes. I cannot follow any thought from present to past." (Woolf TW:30) The traced language of present would be a representational language, one that she ignores.[35] She is unceasingly becoming-world, a true multiplicity independent of a logocentric, ordering language, moving through intensities by "flowing this way, flowing that way." (Woolf TW:76) This is why she professes her hatred towards the "small looking-glass on the stairs" as "[i]t shows our heads only; it cuts off our heads." (Woolf TW:30) The mirror does not create a new world, nor a simulacrum, it merely produces a representation of world, and on top of that incomplete. Her body works like an extension of other bodies and vice

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[34] For more on the myth of the Fisher King and Percival, see Chapter II.
[35] "Words crowd and cluster and push forth one on top of another. It does not matter which." (Woolf TW:77)

versa, "I am thrown over you like a net of light. I lie quivering flung over you." (Woolf TW:8) The only possible pitfall of such view of subjectivity is that her "imagination is the bodies [*sic*]. I can imagine nothing beyond the circle cast by my body." (Woolf TW:96)

Rhoda takes the line of flight to becoming a body without organs most often, yet her flow, that of imagination, is still lightly coded in the Ante mortem chapters. Her movements towards deterritorialisation cause that "[s]he has no body as the others have", "no face." (Woolf TW:15, 91) She prefers escape towards the imaginary since she fails in adopting the symbolic order of significations: "the figures mean nothing now. Meaning has gone. […] I begin to draw a figure and the world is looped in it, and I myself am outside the loop" (Woolf TW:14-15) Therefore, as a potentially nomadic subject trying to survive in the highly territorialized capitalist socius, in order to acquire "lodgment" [sic] she needs to feign territorialisation by pretending to be like the others. If there is no "single body for me to follow" (Woolf TW:98), she takes a line of flight towards becoming a BwO. This is a becoming that sometimes leads Rhoda to drift atop the intensities of the waves – especially alone – but most of the time the intensities are too much for her to handle: "I am afraid of the shock of sensation that leaps upon me, because I cannot deal with it as you do – I cannot make one moment merge in the next. To me they are all violent, all separate" (Woolf TW:97). These violent breaks in the vibrations of emotion thrust her out of her body insofar as she "often die[s] pierced with arrows" (Woolf TW:31) – and ultimately becomes a full body without organs of death in Post mortem.

Susan is a part of the primitive territorial machine that Deleuze and Guattari describe as the only still non-territorialising machine. However, she operates along the filial line which is hierarchical and administrative as opposed to alliance which is political and economical. (DaG AO:146) She "cannot float gently, mixing with other people," (Woolf TW:73) she does not

"understand phrases" (Woolf TW:99), communicates with one word since "[t]he only sayings [she] understand[s] are cries of love, hate, rage and pain." (Woolf TW:98) Therefore she is the precursor of territorialisation: she thinks she is the field, the barn (territories), but still also the trees – the body of the earth. Indeed she would bury the main building block of the civilization – school and all it entails – into the ground. (Woolf TW:32) Derek Ryan claims in his paper on the territory of cows in Woolf that "Susan is not claiming ownership over the natural world, but, in a similar vein to Woolf's, and Mansfield's, 'thin dog' cited by Deleuze, she is entangled in an ecological assemblage which includes 'the cow that creaks'."[36] This would, however, be true only if she created alliances. Instead, her breeding, maternal function implies an arborescent structure of possession in love: "I could have loved her, but now love no one, except my father, my doves and the squirrel whom I left in the cage at home." (Woolf TW:29) The squirrel becomes one of her possessions that she wants to unfold in solitude. (Woolf TW:39)

Bernard interrupts the flow of sign emission. He is the most acutely aware of the multiplicity he forms with the other characters and of the de- and reterritorializing becomings that they experience. The characters first "make an unsubstantial territory" only to be "the discoverers of an unknown land" ready to "take possession of [their] secret territory." (Woolf TW:10, 11, 15) Throughout the Ante mortem he thus oscillates between states characteristic of an oedipalized individual, a smooth multiplicity and even takes a line of flight towards the intensities of a body without organs. His preoccupation with language (both the production and interpretation of signs) especially hints at the overcoding of Oedipus. Bernard's linguistic production is strictly relational as it lacks any imaginative power of its own – the "stories that follow people into their private rooms are difficult." (Woolf TW:37) His phrases always bubble up without attaining the aim of

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[36] Derek Ryan, "'The Reality Of Becoming': Deleuze, Woolf And The Territory Of Cows," *Deleuze Studies* 7.4 (2013), 547.

finding the transcendent "perfect phrase" for "this very moment exactly" since there are "the things that for ever interrupt the process upon which I am eternally engaged." (Woolf TW:51) His becoming multiplicity is a frequent development as he does not "believe in separation. We are not single." (Woolf TW:50) But when two singularities crash, instead of communicate transversally, it may cause an individuating becoming as when

> [l]ike a long wave, like a roll of heave waters, he [Neville] went over me, his devastating presence – dragging me open, laying bare the pebbles on the shore of my soul. […] To be contracted by another person into a single being – how strange. (Woolf TW:66)

Finally, when he is engaged, the intensity of the feeling works against the territorializing flow and he takes a line of flight: "I have been traversing the sunless territory of non-identity. A strange land. […] I have had one moment of enormous peace. This perhaps is happiness." (Woolf TW:7)

The last narrative passage of the Ante mortem narrative is a grand move of assemblage. All the machines attach for the first time unto Percival (before this moment, all the characters are never on the same place at the same time with him) and the rhizome – the plane of immanence – emerges. "A circle has been cast on the waters; a chain is imposed. We shall never flow freely again." (Woolf TW:107) It is a violent, ritualistic event, a feast with a procession, a becoming-savage.[37] We have seen how the machines operate within and out of the assemblage. The second chapter shall focus on Percival and his (non)function as a structuring element of the multiplicity.

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[37] Rhoda and Louis comment on the becoming in parentheses, making them for a while "withdrawn together to lean over some cold urn" and discuss how "Death is woven in with the violets". Woolf TW:105-106

Chapter II – Exitus

> Why would one mourn for the center? Is not the center,
> the absence of play and difference, another name for
> death? The death which reassures and appeases, but
> also, with its hole, creates anguish and puts at stake?
>
> Ellipsis, 374[38]

The rhizomatic structure of the multiplicity of the characters "'maps' a process of networked, relational and transversal thought"[39] as opposed to the hierarchizing arborescent structures. It is also "acentered, nonhierarchical, nonsignifying system." (DaG TP:21) If one line of a rhizome stops performing its function as one of the forces of becoming, the network simply becomes otherwise. However, as discussed in the first chapter, Woolf's novel includes both readings of time, implying two types of structures. The time of Aion as the time of becoming is where the rhizome unfolds – on the flat surface of the sea as the waves of intensity. But Chronos has a prominent position in *The Waves* as well in the presence of Sun high above the sea. As a territorial machine, it forms substances[40] and sediments their structures. One of the structures is that of the characters. Referring to the two articulations of strata, Deleuze and Guattari show how the structure can attain its properties capable of signification:

> Although the first articulation is not lacking in systematic interactions, it is in
> the second articulation in particular that phenomena constituting an overcoding
> are produced, phenomena of centering, unification, totalization, integration,
> hierarchization, and finalization. (DaG TP:41)

Although the rhizome of the characters in *The Waves* takes the lines of flight towards

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[38] Jacques Derrida, "Ellipsis", *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 2001).
[39] Felicity J. Colman, "RHIZOME", *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2010) 232-233.
[40] "Substances as formed matters refer to territorialities and degrees of territorialization and deterritorialization." (DaG TP:41).

deterritorialisation, it is still a highly oedipalised system and therefore should be analysed also in the direction of signification. The Ante mortem chapters show the gradual process of oedipalisation, which finds its apex in the Exitus chapter. In approaching this phenomenon of centering, a different theoretical framework is required.

In his paper "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," Jacques Derrida discusses "two interpretations of interpretation of structure, of sign, of play." (Derrida Structure:369) The novel fluctuates continuously on the verge of both of them. The first one seeks transcendental truth and origin, a centre (e.g. all of Bernard's soliloquies except for the last one); the other one affirms the play of interpretation (Rhoda and her death, see below). The common ground between Derrida and Deleuze is that they both try to dismantle the first interpretation and theorize the second. Deleuze simply discards the origin in favour of creating a new ontology in which difference figures as immanent, transdimensional and independent of a (transcendent) subject. This leads to the transversally communicating, asignifying, heterogeneous structure. On the other hand, Derrida's thinking of differance avoids Being-as-presence and deconstructs the first interpretation from in/outside,[41] but at the same time retains the homogenous system of signification as a play without limits. Woolf's own approach to this metaphysical crisis consists of exposing the origin as a false promise in the Exitus chapter, thus approximating Derrida's, rather than Deleuze's method in this respect. She does so in terms of the structure of the novel and the inherent problem of signifying – the relation between signifier and signified.

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[41] "However, if differance [is] (I also cross out the "is") what makes the presentation of being-present possible, it never presents itself as such. It is never given in the present or to anyone. Holding back and not exposing itself, it goes beyond the order of truth on this specific point and in this determined way, yet is not itself concealed, as if it were something, a mysterious being, in the occult zone of a nonknowing. Any exposition would expose it to disappearing as a disappearance. It would risk appearing, thus disappearing." Jacques Derrida, "Differance", *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*, ed. David H. Richter, trans. Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato (Boston (MA): Bedford / St. Martin's, 2007) 935.

II.I. The Centre

The novel as a book has a distinguishable circular structure. Its nine narrative chapters are alternatingly encapsulated in ten lyrical passages. Such numeral configuration presupposes a central chapter, and indeed the fifth chapter might be called a centre, yet it marks what Derrida calls a "rupture" (Derrida Structure:353) in the structure. As regards the narrative chapters, the first presence in narration is given to the voice of Bernard and the last chapter is narrated solely by him.[42] This characteristic structure is one of the features that add to the appearance of the novel as if circulating around a centre, as if it delineated its existence in reference to that centre. Given the odd number of nine chapters, the fifth is naturally in the middle. In material terms, it is indeed the centre of the book. Viewing it as a part of the narrative, however, it is its supreme irony that de-centralises it; in other words, the chapter engages in the deconstruction of the semblance of the structurality of the structure[43] by removing the transcendental origin that the centre-sign had been trusted to refer to traditionally.

Derrida explains the paradox of the centre in the classical thought:

The center is at the center of the totality, and yet, since the center does not belong to the totality (is not part of the totality), the totality *has its center elsewhere.* The center is not the center. The concept of centered structure— although it represents coherence itself, the condition of the *episteme* as philosophy or science—is contradictorily coherent. (Derrida Structure:352)

An originary centre is therefore a myth, a sign that points only to itself and limits the play of signification. Percival betrays his mythological nature in at least three different ways. Firstly, his

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[42] The last and the fifth chapters are the only ones *not* narrated by all of the characters.
[43] "Nevertheless, up to the event which I wish to mark out and define, structure—or rather the structurality of structure—although it has always been at work, has always been neutralized or reduced, and this by a process of giving it a center or of referring it to a point of presence, a fixed origin." (Derrida Structure:352)

presence in name is of heroic origin, establishing a link with Perceval from the Arthurian legends.[44]

Woolf is not documented to have read the original narrative poem by Chrétien de Troyes, but Richard Wagner's opera *Parsifal* (itself based on Wolfgang von Eschenbach's *Parzival*) was one of her favourites.[45] There are some indications that she did, however, know Chrétien's work. The last Ante mortem chapter is very much like the Fisher King's feast, as it takes place in a restaurant and everyone awaits Percival. Rhoda and Louis even compare the gathering to a procession of savages with assegais or spears. (Woolf TW:105) The death of Percival in *The Waves* coincides with the end of Chrétien's fragment – after the feast. Woolf's Percival of course never asks the healing question either, since his voice is not recorded. It seems that little critical attention has been given to identifying the figure of the Fisher King in *The Waves*. Certain hints show that the potential candidate may be Neville. Neville's affection for Percival establishes a link between them. The symbolic infertility of the Fisher king may connect with Neville's homosexuality, as indeed a link between the Fisher King, castration and homosexuality has been made.[46] The Fisher King is punished for breaking the vow of chastity that the Grail knights take – he succumbs to the forbidden love. In Wagner's version, Parsifal in the end succeeds in healing the king, whereas the Indian quest of Percival – solving the "Oriental problem" (Woolf TW:102) – ends with an ironic, ignominious tragedy. Woolf thus subverts the myth in two ways – first, in substituting the forbidden love with the 'perverse' homosexual love and second by killing the hero that was prophesied to provide the stability in a ridiculous way – by having his horse tumble over a molehill.

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[44] Perceval is a naive knight that meets the Fisher King, who is the guardian of the Grail. The guardian is wounded in his thy by his own lance and the Grail is the only thing that sustains him and his kingdom. Perceval arrives to the Fisher King's castle and takes part in a feast and a procession where the lance and the Grail are put on display. Perceval does not ask about the nature of these objects and later finds out that the question would have healed the king and the kingdom. Chrétien's story is unfinished and ends at this point.

[45] John Louis DiGaetani, *Richard Wagner and the Modern British Novel* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1978) 111.

[46] See the essay Anna Roberts, "Queer Fisher King: Castration as a Site of Queer Representation ("Perceval, Stabat Mater, The City of God"), *Arthuriana* vol. 11, No.3 (Fall 2001). 8.7.2015 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27869652>.

She shows that mythology is not an appropriate way of dealing with reality anymore.

Secondly, more importantly, he is both present and absent at the same time throughout the novel – his being in the universe of the text is ratified merely through the discourse of the other characters, and they are not always reliable narrators. The notion of a zero phoneme can be of use here, as extended to include signs. A zero phoneme is a fictional sliding phoneme that "inserts itself in one place or the other in order to assert the determining pause between morphemes."[47] Derrida thinks of a centre-sign in similar terms: "The *overabundance* of the signifier, its *supplementary* character, is thus the result of a finitude, that is to say, the result of a lack which must be *supplemented.*" Percival's is the only voice that is missing and thus can become this zero or fluid sign – with and without a signifier, with and without one, transcendental, signified. Percival is, "paradoxically, *within* the structure and *outside it*" (Derrida Structure:352), he is "a sort of nonlocus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions c[ome] into play." (Derrida Structure:353) Therefore, Percival is attributed numerous signs. He becomes a God, a judge, a pagan and, of course, a mediaeval commander. (Woolf TW:102, 117, 25, 26) But these are just substitutes, symbolic investments of Neville and other characters in a play of supplementation that cannot be sustained, since they do not point to any present referent. From all the characters, Rhoda seems to be the most aware of the centre's virtual, self-delusive production of comfort as it only allows the play with security and prevents the affirmative play as a "disruption of presence" (Derrida Structure:369):

> 'Unknown, with or without a secret, it does not matter,' said Rhoda, 'he
> [Percival] is like a stone fallen into a pond round which minnows swarm. [...]
> Like minnows, conscious of the presence of a great stone, we undulate and eddy

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[47] Garrett Stewart, "Catching the Stylistic D/rift: Sound Defects in Woolf's the Waves," ELH vol. 54, no.2 (Summer 1987) 8.7.2015 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2873031> 427.

contentedly. Comfort steals over us. Gold runs in our blood. One, two; one, two; the heart beats in serenity, in confidence, in some trance of well-being, in some rapture of benignity'. (Woolf TW:102)

Percival is here just a mute stone, fallen into a pond. Static and passive. He is merely the trace of a centre. But the trace cannot function as a set of rules governing the structure. It brings the ever-swarming minnows the "trance of well-being", which, as the Exitus chapter shows, is an elusive and illusory one.

Each of the six characters constantly define themselves in referring to the other characters, since even though the structure does not fall apart without the presence of one of its element, the element cannot exist without the structure. In this way, the characters do create a transversal multiplicity. But their own being-as-presence is inevitably being questioned as the textuality of human life, its *signification* is invoked: "Bernard says there is always a story. I am a story. Louis is a story." (Woolf TW:27) If life is a story, how can we *know* it?

I mixed with an unknown Italian waiter – what am I? There is no stability in this world. Who is to say what meaning there is in anything? Who is to foretell the flight of a word? It is a balloon that sailed over tree-tops. To speak of knowledge is futile. (Woolf TW:88)

As Derrida suggests, this epistemological doubt is what prerequisites the rupture, redoubling, play without limits.

II.II Anxiety and Affirmation

Finally, Woolf acknowledges Percival's status of a non-centre at one particular place the most: the fifth chapter, where the affirmation takes place. "'He is dead,' said Neville. 'He fell. His horse tripped. He was thrown.'" (Woolf TW:114) Thus is announced the great exit of the centre in the

centre of the novel structure. Not only is Percival's presence deferred in discourse, "that is to say, a system in which the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences," (Derrida Structure:354) his death also confirms his being as a supplement. This in turn induces in some of the characters what Derrida calls "the affirmation of the play" which "*then determines the noncenter otherwise than as loss of the center.*" (Derrida Structure:369) In other characters, however, it even more enhances their desire for transcendental meaning, to overcome the monstrosity, the anxiety of the play. The Exitus chapter is narrated exclusively by three narrators – Neville, Bernard, and Rhoda. Neville's perspective suddenly changes. In Neville's mind, the image of dying Percival is passive – "he was thrown", "[t]hey carried him to some pavilion". (Woolf TW:114) The death of a God, the death of a myth, the death of the centre. For Neville, the death of law and order as well: "[y]et if someone had just said: 'Wait'; had pulled the strap three holes tighter – he would have done justice for fifty years." (Woolf TW:115) In the rest of the book, he indulges in nostalgic remembrance of Percival, trying to substitute him with different boys, for he does not take part in the affirmative play, he is still a creature of ressentiment.[48]

Derrida writes that "contrary to the metaphysical, dialectical, and 'Hegelian' interpretation of the economic movement of difference, we must admit a [play] where whoever loses wins and where one wins and loses each time."[49] Bernard thus comments on the loss of Percival: "[m]y

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[48] "*Ressenti(e)* is the past participle of the French verb, ressentir, and *ressentiment* is the noun form. Nietzsche makes use of *ressentiment* constantly, in his own singular fashion, to describe the phenomenon whereby an active force is deprived of its normal conditions of existence, where it directs itself inward and turns against itself. "Pushed back and repressed, incarcerated within and finally able to discharge and vent itself only on itself" is a perfect definition of what is meant for something to be *ressenti* according to Nietzsche's concept of *ressentiment.* In his *Nietzsche et la philosophie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1970), Deleuze defines *ressentiment* as the becoming-reactive of force in general: "separated from what it is capable of, the active force does not however cease to exist. Turning against itself, it produces suffering" (p. 141). Hence, Deleuze concludes, with *ressentiment* a new meaning and depth is created for suffering, an *intimate, internal meaning. (Translators' note.)*" DaG AO:214
[49] Derrida, Differance 944-945.

feeling about him was: he sat in the centre. Now I go to that spot no longer. The place is empty." (Woolf TW:116) But he also partakes, admittedly only for a short time, in Derrida's play: "'Such is the incomprehensible combination,' said Bernard, 'such is the complexity of things, that as I descend the stairs I do not know which is sorrow, which joy. My son is born; Percival is dead.'" (Woolf TW:115) Which is the *arché*, which is *telos*? There is neither and both. Bernard takes the first line of flight out of the signifying structure and observes it almost as a body without organs: "[t]he machine then works; I note the rhythm, the throb, but as a thing in which I have no part, since he sees it no longer." (Woolf TW:116) However, this movement-towards-play is but temporal: "[y]et already signals begin, beckonings, attempts to lure me back. [...] One cannot live outside the machine for more perhaps than half an hour." (Woolf TW:117) During his contemplation, Bernard visits a gallery and "still *resent[ing]* the usual order" (Woolf TW:117), he engages in a play of interpretation: "Mercifully these pictures make no reference; they do not nudge; they do not point." (Woolf TW:118) Yet, in an ironical gesture, Woolf is not content with his not trying to reach some meaning:

> Yet something is added to my interpretation. Something lies deeply buried. For one moment I thought to grasp it. But bury it, bury it; let it breed, hidden in the depths of my mind some day to fructify. After a long time, loosely, in a moment of revelation, I may lay hands on it, but now the idea breaks in my hand. Ideas break a thousand times for once that they globe themselves entire. They break; they fall over me. "Line and colours they survive, therefore..." (Woolf TW:119)

Bernard prophesies the meaning to come in a revelatory fashion. The line and colours, the signifiers, should survive and grow like an organic whole, a totalised, entire, sole interpretation. He only gradually realises that this revelation will not come through language: "I have filled innumerable notebooks with phrases to be used when I have found the true story, the one story to which all these phrases refer. But I have never yet found that story. And I begin to ask, Are there

stories?" (Woolf TW:143) In the end, he finds art outside of language: "[h]ow much better is silence; the coffee-cup, the table." (Woolf TW:227)[50]

The last character who, significantly, narrates the death of Percival is Rhoda. To Rhoda, the whole world seems to be imbued with infinite meaning, which amounts to no meaning at all. She is overwhelmed by it and she always saves herself by touching something real, but after the death of Percival, "[a]ll palpable forms of life have failed me. Unless I can stretch and touch something hard, I shall be blown down the eternal corridors for ever." (Woolf TW:120) As she walks down Oxford Street, she is "envisaging a world rent by lightning," she tries to "do the usual things under the lightning flash," (Woolf TW:120) pretending that the absence of the centre does not matter. In the second chapter, she complains: "There is some check in the flow of my being; a deep stream presses on some obstacle; it jerks, it tugs; some knot in the centre resists. Oh this is pain, this is anguish! I faint, I fail." (Woolf TW:41) The allusion to Shelley's "Indian Serenade" should run "I die, I faint, I fail", yet Rhoda is not prepared for her own death at this moment. Only after Percival's death can she pronounce "[n]ow I will relinquish; now I will let loose. Now I will at last free the checked, the jerked-back desire to be spent, to be consumed." (Woolf TW:124) This marks the event, the rupture – Rhoda is the only character who in the end fully embraces the différance with all its economic entailment: "[o]n the bare ground, I will pick violets and bind them together and offer them to Percival, something given him by me. Look now at what Percival has given me. [...]" (Woolf TW:120), "Percival, by his death, has made me this present, has revealed this terror, has left me to undergo this humiliation" (Woolf TW:121) "I am alone in a hostile world. The human face is hideous. This is to my liking." (Woolf TW:120) This present, this gift of death, opens up a world of disgust, of monstrosity, of play. But Rhoda takes the

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[50] Bernard's final soliloquy is further analysed in Chapter III.

responsibility[51] and affirms the play by giving herself death. By dying, she accesses that which is hers – the apex of her subjectivity – and shatters into a body without organs of death.[52]

From the other three characters, Louis' relationship with Percival is of interest, for it is both productive and reductive: Percival destroys the second order – of the transcendental; but inspires a new one – concerned with poiesis:

> [Grass, trees, air] hint at some other order, and better, which makes a reason everlastingly. This I see for a second, and shall try to-night to fix in words, to forge in a ring of steel, though Percival destroys it, as he blunders off [...]. Yet it is Percival I need; for it is Percival who inspires poetry. (Woolf TW:28)

Still, Louis' obsession with order is awesome in its reductionist attitude:

> But I seeking contrasts often feel his [Louis'] eyes on us, his laughing eye, his wild eye, adding us up like insignificant items in some grand total which he is for ever pursuing in his office. And one day, taking a fine pen and dipping it in red ink, the addition will be complete; our total will be known; but it will not be enough. (Woolf TW:68)[53]

The totalising desire for a closure, does not, however, stem from a mere craving for power and "reduc[ing] us to order" (Woolf TW:121) – he says "I am conscious of flux, of disorder; of

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[51] "They ground responsibility, as experience of singularity, in this apprehensive approach to death. The sense of responsibility is in all cases defined as a mode of "giving oneself death." Once it is established that I cannot die *for* another (in his place) although I can die *for* him (by sacrificing myself for him or dying before his eyes), my own death becomes this irreplaceability that I must assume if I wish to have access to what is absolutely mine. My first and last responsibility, my first and last desire, is that responsibility of responsibility that relates me to what no one else can do in my place." Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death,* trans. David Wills (Chicago: U of Chicago, 1995) 43-44.

[52] According to Leonard Lawlor, Deleuze recognizes two types of death: "On the one hand, death is personal: I am dying. It attacks my body in the present, causing me to cry and yell, forcing noise out of me. This noise is not yet language. On the other hand, death is impersonal: they *(on)* are dying. This death of them *(I'on)* is incorporeal since it is not grounded in my body. But this impersonal death also 'side-steps' the present. This death is the infinitive death of them in which *one (on)* never finishes dying. This second death is silent, or this silence is a dead space, in which nothing noisy happens, the non-lieu. Yet, for Deleuze, the silent death of them is the genuine event in which 'death turns against death' in order to produce an excess of life." Leonard Lawlor, "The Beginnings of Thought: The Fundamental Experience in Derrida and Deleuze" in *Between Deleuze and Derrida*, 78. Rhoda's case seems to be of the second type.

[53] Louis, unlike Bernard, in the end denies the essence in the signs of art as absolute difference. Cf. Chapter III.

annihilation and despair." (Woolf TW:69) It rather originates in a profound religious, ontological anxiety: "If this is all, this is worthless." (Woolf TW:69) Louis imagines his self on basis of a paradox, which allows him to keep an illusion of "a point of presence, a fixed origin." (Derrida Structure:352) The recurrent images of women at Nile, Plato, a duke, "dark men and yellow men migrating east, west, north and south" (Woolf TW:127) are all part of his identity – he contains structures within structure. Therefore, the death of Percival does not have such an impact on him as on the other characters – the becoming-schizo gives way to the oedipalization. He shall now simply sum his "many-folded life" in his name: "'I have signed my name,' said Louis, 'already twenty times. I, and again I, and again I. Clear, firm unequivocal, there it stands, my name. Clear-cut and unequivocal am I too.'" (Woolf TW:127)

In *The Waves*, the characters' discourse revolves like the sun on the horizon around some virtual centre. When they are forced to contemplate the sudden absence of it, each of them deals with the anxiety differently. For Rhoda, the realm of language is not inhabitable anymore; her death can be viewed as the most pure affirmation of the unlimited play. Susan and Jinny were not dealt with here, since they are the two characters most independent of language as we saw in the first chapter. Neville and Louis are unable to affirm the play. Even though they know of its workings, they opt for refusal and foreclosure in order to retain the order. Bernard realises his search for meaning in words is doomed to fail and instead he turns to the raw materiality of objects in his last soliloquy.

Chapter III – Post Mortem

> "Like" and "like" and "like" – but what is the thing that lies beneath the semblance of the thing?'
>
> The Waves, 123

Reading Percival as a supplementary sign inevitably opens up the question of Woolf's treatment of signs in general. In this respect, one of Deleuze's early books, *Proust and Signs* will be of use, the point of departure being Woolf's pronounced admiration for Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*:

> My great adventure is really Proust. Well – what remains to be written after that? How, at least, has someone solidified what has always escaped – and made it too into this beautiful and perfectly enduring substance? One has to put the book down and gasp.[54]

Although not directly influenced by it,[55] the third part of *The Waves*, Post mortem, largely depends on exploring, revisiting, and recreating past – the "search for truth" (Deleuze PS:3) – as does the *Search*. But Proust's novel had an intensely dark effect on Woolf and her writing.[56] Woolf's authorial suffering is reflected in the writer figure of Bernard who never becomes the great author he intended to be. Luckily she managed to avert the induced writing block and create a work of art infused with and developing on Proust's ideas on signs.

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[54] Virginia Woolf, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, 6 vols., ed. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautman (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975-1980), 2.566.

[55] There are indications that Woolf stopped reading the *Search* and only returned to it in 1934, 3 years after finishing *The Waves.*

[56] "Take Proust after dinner and put him down. This is the worst time of all. It makes me suicidal. Nothing seems left to do. All seems insipid and worthless." Virginia Woolf, *Selected Diaries*, ed. Anne Olivier Bell (London: Vintage Books 2008) 246.

III.I. Three material signs

Deleuze's analysis in *Proust and Signs* is "[l]aying the groundwork of his entire concept of the sign,"[57] further developed in different directions in *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense*. Deleuze identifies three main types of signs, all of which can be found also in *The Waves*. For Deleuze, "[l]earning is essentially concerned with signs," it is a "temporal apprenticeship" where one tries to decipher "signs or hieroglyphs." (Deleuze PS:4) Therefore, the *Search* is not a mere exploration of memory, but rather an "apprenticeship to signs." (Deleuze PS:4) The first type of signs needed are the "worldly signs":

> The worldly sign appears as the replacement of an action or a thought. It stands for action and for thought. It is therefore a sign that does not refer to something else, to a transcendent signification or to an ideal content, but has usurped the supposed value of its meaning. This is why worldliness, judged from the viewpoint of actions, appears to be disappointing and cruel, and from the viewpoint of thought, it appears stupid. One does not think and one does not act, but one makes signs. (Deleuze PS:6)

Jinny is the character most associated with this type, since the worldly signs are the most material of the three. As she claims

> 'I see what is before me,' said Jinny. 'This scarf, these wine-coloured spots. This glass. This mustard pot. This flower […] I do not temper my beauty with meanness lest it should scorch me. I gulp it down entire. It is made of flesh; it is made of stuff. My imagination is the body's. Its visions are not finespun and white with purity like Louis's.' (Woolf TW:169)

There is no transcendental meaning to the scarf or the glass. The worldly signs do not refer, they rather differentiate "*materiality* into individual *materials*"[58]. The meaning is therefore incarnated

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[57] Chris M. Drohan, *Toward a Material Concept of the Sign: The Semiotics of Gilles Deleuze*, diss. The European Graduate School, 2007.
[58] Drohan, 19.

in the sign, it is im-plicated in the object. Deciphering the object is the unfolding or ex-plication of the worldly sign, learning from and about it. But Jinny is "like a little dog" that "stops to snuff a tree-trunk, to sniff some brown stain," (Woolf TW:169) which makes her apprenticeship quite limited even though she is capable of "in a few seconds, deftly, adroitly, […] decipher the hieroglyphs written on other people's faces." (Woolf TW:133)

The signs one encounters on other people's bodies may be of the second type of signs, the "signs of love". These signs point to worlds[59] that are inaccessible to the lover, since they belong to the loved one. They are therefore deceptive and the interpreter is an "interpreter of lies". (Deleuze PS:9) The person who tries to explicate them is frustrated by their failure which can lead to jealousy or disappointment. Their meaning does not reside in the signs themselves, but in the unknown objects or events of the loved one's past. The signs of love are thus material, too. Neville's love of Percival is an unceasing series of interpretations of Percival's "signs"[60]. These are of course, as was discussed in the second chapter, ultimately inexplicable. In a scene connected with one of his boys, Neville describes the self-defeating process:

> I revisit my past life, scene by scene; there is an elm tree, and there lies Percival. […] Then darted in the usual doubt. I clutched your hand. You left me. […] I sat staring in my own room. By five I knew that you were faithless. I snatched the telephone and the buzz, buzz, buzz of its stupid voice in your empty room battered my heart down, when the door opened and there you stood. (Woolf TW:136)

The signs of love lead Neville to jealousy, a false knowledge of the partner's faithlessness, thus deceiving him.

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[59] Unfolding signs, according to Deleuze, is concerned with exploring and creating new worlds. PS:4.
[60] The quotation marks are used here to emphasise the illusory nature of Percival's being altogether.

The last type are the "sensuous signs" or qualities. An encounter with a sensuous sign means an immediate affect. It points to an "*altogether different*" (Deleuze PS:11) object that must be deciphered, but contrary to the signs of love, this object can be deciphered, since even though the object belongs to a world different from the interpreter's, the unfolding of the sign creates a new world which overlaps with his. Deleuze argues that interpreting a sensuous sign first brings a "prodigious joy," (Deleuze PS:11-12) but Woolf asserts that it does not necessarily have to be so. Bernard encounters a sensuous sign "by some flick of a scent or a sound on a nerve" and "the old image – the gardeners sweeping, the lady writing" (Woolf TW:206) returns different:

> I saw the figures beneath the beech trees at Elvedon. The gardeners swept; the lady at the table sat writing. But I now made the contribution of maturity to childhood's intuitions – satiety and doom; the sense of what is unescapable in our lot; death; the knowledge of limitations; how life is more obdurate than one had thought it. (Woolf TW:206-207)

The sensuous signs point to one different world that arises "in a form that was never experienced, in its "essence" or its eternity." ((Deleuze PS:12) But they never quite reveal it, for they still remain material – both in their sensuous origin and the unfolding of the meaning.

III.II. Two apprenticeships

The apprenticeship to signs is a process of failure and disappointment since the three material types of signs never reveal the truth or the secret of the object. (Deleuze PS:34) The apprentice first attempts an objective interpretation and then, inevitably disappointed, tries a subjective interpretation. (Deleuze PS:36) Failing there as well, one has to turn to the final type of signs, the signs of art. The signs of art are the only immaterial signs. They show the first three types in their ideal essence "that constitutes the sign insofar as it is irreducible to the object emitting it; it is the essence that constitutes the meaning insofar as it is irreducible to the subject apprehending it. It is

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the essence that is the last word of the apprenticeship or the final revelation." (Deleuze PS:38) The truth of the first three types of signs reveals itself only in the absolute time of the work of art. It unites all the dimensions, all the possible worlds (Deleuze PS:25), but not into one world, rather a multiplicity of worlds distinct and absolutely different.[61]

There are two apprenticeships searching for essences in *The Waves* – one is Bernard's (and by extension Woolf's) and the other is our own, of our engagement with the text. Woolf's and Proust's novel share that their "work is not oriented to the past and the discoveries of memory, but to the future and the progress of art apprenticeship." (Deleuze PS:26) In all but last chapter of *The Waves*, Bernard does not master the deciphering. He goes through all lines of apprenticeship – explicating all three types of material signs – except the fourth one. As seen in Chapter II, Bernard's visit to a museum after Percival dies is an unsuccessful affair. At one moment he is on the verge of being individualised[62] by the essence of art, but he buries it inside, lets it grow and awaits its revelation – which never comes, since he does not explicate it in its heterogeneity, but rather still only understands it to be homogenous as a part of Logos. In the last chapter, Woolf presents a seemingly different view of essence than Proust, because she does not find it in art, but in the heterogeneity of the world itself after a line of flight towards body without organs has been taken. Bernard of the last chapter is a paradox, "[a] man without a self, I said"[63]:

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[61] Deleuze PS:41. Deleuze develops the concept of difference in *Difference and Repetition*. A shortened version in Beatrice Monaco, "'Nothing Is Simply One Thing': Woolf, Deleuze And Difference," *Deleuze Studies* 7.4 (2013): 458, asserts that the absolute or "pure difference must be that which differs from itself, rather than from what it is not (the orthodox view of difference in the Hegelian model), [therefore] any concept of difference is false difference; it refers difference to an order of sameness. Difference must always involve an element of repetition, which is its paradox, because no repetition is ever the same; the act of repeating implies an alteration, however slight. The relation of difference to repetition is paradoxical, two-fold; each is 'in' the other."

[62] "It is not the subject that explains essence, rather it is essence that implicates, envelops, wraps itself up in the subject. […] It is not the individuals who constitute the world, but the worlds enveloped, the essences that constitute the individuals. […] Essence is not only individual, it *individualizes*." Deleuze PS:43.

[63] Woolf TW:219. One of the last scenes of the novel is set during an eclipse (its real counterpart happened 29 June 1927 as recorded in Virginia Woolf, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, 5 vols., ed Anne Olivier Bell (London: Hogarth Press, 1977-84) 142. After the sun is eclipsed, Bernard loses his self. Afterwards the sun comes back, but Bernard does not acquire the self anymore and he sees the world "with this difference" (Woolf TW:220).

> This self now as I leant over the gate looking down over fields rolling in waves
> of colour beneath me made no answer. He threw up no opposition. He attempted
> no phrase. His fist did not form. I waited. I listened. Nothing came, nothing.
> (Woolf TW:218)

If *he* can *say* that *he* is a man without a *self*, he is different from himself. At this stage the opposition that we set out in the first chapter of a voice/character as a sign/machinic assemblage needs to be synthesised. Bernard as a subject becomes "nothing more than a name as the trace of an intensity." (DaG TP:4) We need to read him now both as an element of Woolf's style – as a voice-sign (that is in fact a part of the essence of *The Waves*) – and as a BwO–becoming entity, still necessarily "subjective", since only in this way can Woolf communicate her vision of the world in its essence as a work of art, the absolute difference that signifies infinitely. This is why Proust's and Woolf's view of essence do not exclude each other and in fact amount to the same thing – the absolute difference of the work of art is its essence that involves the heterogeneity of the world itself in the same way it involves Bernard as both a sign and an assemblage.

Deleuze's essence is intersub(/ob)jective, immanent to both the object emitting it and the subject apprehending it, and it is the absolute Difference that "constitutes being." (Deleuze PS:41) When Bernard claims that "this little affair of 'being' is over" (Woolf TW:´221), the representational 'being' gives way to the order of being as difference:

> When I look down from this transcendency, how beautiful are even the crumbled
> relics of bread! What shapely spirals the peelings of pears make – how thin, and
> mottled like some sea-bird's egg. Even the forks laid straight side by side appear
> lucid, logical, exact; […] I could worship my hand even, with its fan of bones
> laced by blue mysterious veins and its astonishing look of aptness, suppleness
> and ability to curl softly and suddenly crush – its infinite sensibility. (Woolf
> TW:223)

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The words "transcendency" and "logical" apparently contradict that the essence should be incarnated, but it is not so. In order to understand Bernard, essence needs to be defined as

> a kind of superior *viewpoint*, an irreducible viewpoint that signifies at once the birth of the worlds and the original character of a world. […] [it] also forms a specific world absolutely different from the others and envelops a landscape or immaterial site quite distinct from the site where we have grasped it. (Deleuze PS:110)

The "transcendent viewpoint" is not individual but it individualizes. (Deleuze PS:110) It does not belong to a subject, it is superior to it, but is still intertwined with it. Logos, the law and reason is based on a transcendent(al) subject that organises it, gives it totality. But firstly, Bernard is now without a self, that is, without a subject. Secondly, there is no underlying totalisation to the world. The logical has a new logic – of *infinite* sensibility which comes as an *effect* of the encounter after Bernard's umbra, it does not precede it. A new world has been created. Both Bernard-the-sign and Bernard-the-subject become a part of the essence of *The Waves*. Woolf managed to "saturate every atom."[64] She lets Bernard on the infinite line of Aion forever, thus ending the novel with affirmation of difference. As befits the most sarcastic of Woolf's writings, however, the self-different Bernard becomes Bernard-the-subject again, being disturbed by "the head waiter, who has finished his own meal, appears and frowns." (Woolf TW:227) But even though the sun is rising up in a new day, it is the eternal return of Aion rather than Chronos: "[y]es, this is the eternal renewal, the incessant rise and fall and fall and rise again." (Woolf TW:228) Bernard is not speaking of rising and setting Sun, but of the waves, since in him "too the wave rises. It swells; it arches its back. I am aware once more of a new desire." (Woolf TW:228) The desire leads him to

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[64] Woolf, *The Diary* 209.

battle the infinite passive present which is the "unvanquished, unyielding, O Death!" (Woolf TW:228)

The second apprenticeship is the reader's. In what way does the superior viewpoint, the essence of *The Waves*, come to be? It is produced by a literary machine. The book produces truths that affect us through the disparate fragments of style: "[s]tyle is the explication of the signs, at different rates of envelopment, following the associative chains proper to each of them, gaining in each case the breaking point of essence as Viewpoint." (Deleuze PS:166) The different rates of envelopment are especially important for Woolf, who described style as follows:

> Style is a very simple matter: it is all rhythm. Once you get that, you cannot use the wrong words. But on the other hand here I am sitting after half the morning, crammed with ideas and visions, and so on, and can't dislodge them, for lack of the right rhythm. Now this is very profound, what rhythm is, and goes far deeper than words. A sight, an emotion, creates this wave in the mind, long before it makes words to fit it and in writing (such is my present belief) one has to recapture this, and set this working (which has nothing apparently to do with words) and then, as it breaks and tumbles in the mind, it makes words to fit it. But no doubt I shall think differently next year.[65]

This is reminiscent of D&G's thinking of the waves mentioned in Chapter I, but on the level of style. The waves are inscribed on the virtual plane of immanence as an abstract machine where they determine the style as a function of the literary machine – the signs produced by the literary machine point both to the abstract wave that contains all the possible rhythms and the one concrete wave (the specific rhythm) that is actualised through the words of *The Waves*.[66] Deleuze defines

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[65] Virginia Woolf, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf, vol. 3*, ed. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann (London: Hogarth Press, 1977) 247.
[66] DaG talk about two different types of music corresponding with the two times of Chronos and Aion, respectively: "Boulez distinguishes tempo and nontempo in music: the "pulsed time" of a formal and functional music based on values versus the "nonpulsed time" of a floating music, both floating *and* machinic, which has nothing but speeds or

three machines[67] that have a relation to rhythm in Proust's novel. Similarly to the *Search*, *The Waves* also include the three machines that work together in the production of it: the first machine produces *partial objects* – "fragments without totality, vessels without communication, partitioned scenes", a weak beat; the second machine produces resonances, effects of resonance connecting two objects of different temporal relation in a superior Viewpoint, a strong beat of the singular essence; the third machine produces the idea of death, *the forced movement of greater amplitude* "which sweeps away the two moments [past and present], emphasizes the gap between them, and pushes the past still farther back into time". The last one works differently in *The Waves* than in the *Search* in terms of perspective. Whereas the narrator in Proust encounters the signs of death and aging, Bernard first ponders death and aging not as signs but as facts and subsequently encounters Death itself, which produces the forced movement of greater amplitude. It produces a "certain effect of Time" (Deleuze PS:158) which defines present as a function of past and pushes it further and further back.

> The relation of art and rhythm is important particularly on the level of style,
>
> > because *style* sets up a resonance between any two objects and from them extracts a "precious image," *substituting for the determined conditions of an unconscious natural product the free conditions of an artistic production.* (Deleuze PS:155)

In this production, the work proposes new linguistic conventions and becomes a whole in a new sense, by virtue of them. (Deleuze PS:156) The style of *The Waves* involves some conventional methods of poetry, such as alliteration – "With dispassionate despair, with entire disillusionment,

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differences in dynamic." TP:262. Woolf's rhythm would therefore correspond to the nonpulsed time as it is variable and has differences in dynamic. The words and sounds of *The Waves* point to this kind of rhythm.

[67] See Deleuze PS:150-160.

I surveyed the dust dance" (Woolf TW:219) – heralding the "dead man" Bernard, but Woolf goes far beyond that. Skeet, for instance, talks about "subterranean syntax of flows and breaks." [68] He sees "blaze" as almost a repetition of "blades" and "one" as an echo of "were run" in the sentence "all the blades of the grass were run together in one fluent green blaze." (Woolf TW:112) Or consider the supreme rhythm and ambiguity of "quenching the silver-grey flickering moth-wing quiver of words." (Woolf TW:165) Garrett Stewart comments on the "doubled glottal stop" of win*g* *q*uiver as an effect that "falls, or flashes, between words"[69] The aural ambiguity cannot produce an identity. Rather it is a becoming that points to the silence between *g* (past) and *q* (future) that produces another forced movement of greater amplitude, which in this case may be identified as the singular aleatory point of Aion, an instant which is never quite reachable since it is always already in the past and future. (Deleuze LS:64)

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[68] Skeet, 488.
[69] Stewart, 421.

Conclusion

If there is any unity to a work of art that would not manifest in a whole, in One, pure meaning, a pre-existing amalgamation of all its elements, what is it? Deleuze does not find it in style – "style must receive its unity from elsewhere." (Deleuze PS:167) He does not find it in essence either, since "essence as viewpoint is perpetually fragmenting and fragmented." (Deleuze PS:167) The unity must not be sought in Logos, the initiating Word of God, since "in a world reduced to a multiplicity of chaos, it is only the formal structure of the work of art, insofar as it does not refer to anything else, that can serve as unity – afterwards." (Deleuze PS:168) The unity of differing fragments is achieved by transversality.

Transversal communication retains the difference of the fragments but establishes a transversal line that connects them. The above mentioned "win*g q*uiver" duplet serves as an example par excellence on the level of style as a particular morphophonetic transversal where the void between the words enhances the difference, but at the same time extends over both of them. Coming back to the multiplicities of the characters, we recognize that whilst the subjects are interconnected as a rhizome, there are certain structural affinities between the voices that are more intensive than others. These affinities are transversals creating a rhizosphere around each character.[70] Since the characters are multiplicities themselves, each creates a rhizosphere of influence transversally communicating with other rhizospheres. Hence it can be distinguished already in the first paragraphs how Rhoda becomes Louis and vice versa as they are the only ones commencing their soliloquies with "I hear" instead of "I see" (Woolf TW:5) as the other characters do, effectively foreshadowing their relationship. Moreover, Woolf often lets one voice flow into

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[70] "The region of the soil in the vicinity of plant roots, considered as a microenvironment in which the chemistry and microbiology is influenced by root growth, respiration, and nutrient exchange." "rhizosphere, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, June 2015. Web. 15 June 2015.

another through repetition of segments that indicate the contiguity of the voices and their transversal mode of communication: "I begin to wish for firelight […]' [said Neville] 'I begin to wish,' said Louis, 'for night to come." (Woolf TW:38)

The present thesis set out to follow three different problems in the metaphysics of Virginia Woolf's late novel *The Waves* and contrast them with the theories of three thinkers. There is therefore a transversal dimension to the thesis as well. Woolf, Deleuze, Guattari and Derrida, among others, are the differing fragments that were violently put together in the making of it. Communicating transversally, they effected this commentary. First problem, subjectivity – perhaps the most pronounced one. Woolf's approach to subjectivity is a radical one, if not revolutionary for her time. Deleuze and Guattari were influenced by her as indeed Woolf is quoted on several occasions throughout *A Thousand Plateaus*. It was shown in Chapter I that Deleuze's and Guattari's method establishing subjectivity as a by-product of a machinic assemblage is particularly fruitful in reading the characters in the ante mortem chapters where their bodies and their "subjectivities" form in diverse ways. D&G comment on the waves of the lyrical passages as an abstract machine of which the character-assemblages are actualizations. They do not, however, comment on the territorialising function of sunlight which seems to be equally important. In imbuing everything with the exact measure of colour, the sun gradually territorializes the waves. This corresponds with the ever growing oedipalisation of the characters which finds its summit in the Exitus chapter. The Deleuzian rhizome would not be oedipalised and the desiring production as a functioning of the unconscious would be left unhindered. This is and is not true for the characters of *The Waves*. They start as a deterritorialised rhizome which is reterritorialized (or oedipalised) into a signifying system throughout Ante mortem.

The second chapter discusses how the flat rhizome of the characters (the waves) unfolding on the surface of the ever-becoming Aion is submerged in the vast deep present of Chronos (the revolution of the Sun). The functioning of the territorial machine of the sun reduces the rhizome into a centralised system whose centre can be understood through the prism of Derrida's theory of structure as a play of supplementation. It posits Percival as this (non)centre of the signifying structure. The centre needs to be recognized as a supplementary sign that limits the infinite play of the structure. Percival's status is confirmed in three different ways – he is a myth that cannot be the *arché*, he is a supplementary sign with excess on the part of the signifier but a lack of signified[71], and the transcendental illusion of his presence must be affirmed. The Exitus is narrated by only three characters that were most dependent on Percival. His death induces different reactions. Rhoda becomes deterritorialised as a result of the affirmation of the infinite play (a process of de-centralisation) by giving herself death. Neville continues in the supplementary, reactionary movement of centering the structure. Bernard-the-character starts the process of affirmation, but the deterritorialisation is only finished in the last chapter. Louis's non-reaction was intercalated from Post mortem for comparison and as a prefiguration of the last chapter.

In Chapter III, the signs and the style of *The Waves* were analysed. A classification of signs devised by Deleuze was applied to the novel showing that all three basic types – worldly signs, signs of love, and sensuous signs can be found. In order to be able to explicate the fourth type, the signs of art, an apprenticeship has to be taken. Bernard undergoes this apprenticeship throughout the novel with more and less success but finishes it only in the last chapter. The signs of art are thought by Woolf perhaps in a slightly more radical way than Deleuze. Bernard's final step, when the sun sets and the territorial machine stops working, is to take the line of flight towards

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[71] See "Eighth Series of Structure" in Deleuze LS:48-51.

deterritorialisation. He loses his self which enables him to see the world in its essence as absolute difference. This, however, only works because Bernard's functioning as a character assemblage represents the production of the literary machine at the same time. He is therefore a part of the essence, the superior Viewpoint that provides different perspectives on objects. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the style of the novel and its relation to rhythm.

In order to work, a literary machine needs to be plugged into other machine(s). (DaG TP:4) The literary machine of *The Waves* connects to a number of other (literary) machines – Bergson[72] and Proust indirectly, Shakespeare, Shelley, Chrétien and many others more so. This multiplicity of connections produces an ever-becoming wave of intensity that, although "*[t]he waves broke on the shore*," (Woolf TW:228) never stops reverberating.

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[72] For Bergson-influenced readings of Woolf, see e.g. Shiv Kumar, *Bergson and the Stream of Consciousness Novel* (NYU Press: New York, 1963).

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