



Deterritorialising patriarchal binary oppositions: Deleuze & Guattari, Virginia Woolf, Masculinities and Film Adaptations

Dolors Ortega

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Masculinities and Film Adaptations

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Introduction

“Where we hope to land (and where we do land, though only for a fleeting moment, enough for tired wings to catch the wind anew) is a ‘there’ which we thought of little and knew of even less.”

Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodernity
And Its Discontents*

The summer of 2004 I came across a book that opened up new spaces, new unsettling territories, which made the fundamental structures of my perception of the world shake. Its intriguing vocabulary and dazzling conceptual machinery left me in a nomadic position, wandering from a familiar landscape towards an unknown and uncertain land. That book was Gilles Deleuze’s and Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980).

My first contact with Deleuze’s and Guattari’s theoretical framework had a disquieting effect on me; I had the impression of witnessing a radical philosophy, which I was not sure to understand. As a matter of fact, that was a place I had already visited in reading Woolf. Deleuze’s and Guattari’s visceral philosophy¹ made me revisit the dislocating and challenging routes that I had taken when reading Woolf. Their attack on the principles of modern subjectivity and their so suggestive proposal of a dynamic, productive, constantly changing process of individuation took me back to Woolf and her literature of excess. Woolf’s experimental style, her crossing of generic boundaries, and her fluid and limitless characterisations had led me to that nomadic space before.

¹This is a term that I have borrowed from Tamsin Lorraine’s *Irigaray and Deleuze: Experiments in Visceral Philosophy* (1999) to refer to a way of thinking that takes into account the fluxes of dynamic life forces.

A year before, I had finished my M Phil dissertation, entitled *Mrs Dalloway: New Readings on Masculinities*, where I had started my research on Woolf, masculinities and film adaptations. It was then when I noticed the potential of Woolf's radical gender narrative and the constraints that gender studies have generally imposed upon Woolf. On the one hand, much of the critical effort has focused on femininity in Woolf's writing. On the other hand, what I see as Woolf's polymorphous fluid novelistic figurations of gender have generally been inscribed in gender/sex binary thinking. My argument is that in order to approach Woolf's radical narrative of gender we need a change of paradigm. Having read Deleuze's and Guattari's collaborative body of work, I thought that their concept of individuation (becoming-woman) provides the theoretical tools required to explore Woolf's masculinities and gender so as to move away from the constraints of binary thinking.

This thesis aims to contribute to the field of Woolf Studies with an analysis of both Woolf's criticism of rigid hegemonic discourses of masculinities and her challenging proposal of fluid discourses of masculinities. It will build a theoretical framework based on Deleuze and Guattari that displays Woolf's radical gender narrative as it is introduced by the great potential that her fluid male characters embrace.

As will be proved, Virginia Woolf's challenges to the master narratives of gender continue to be relevant and meaningful to contemporary modes of knowing and being. The main object of study of this thesis is to contrast Woolf's narratives of gender with more contemporary ones, carried out by film adaptations of Woolf's novels, so as to prove that Woolf's visionary concept of gender and her special emphasis on fluid representations of masculinities has not really been expanded by more contemporary film adaptations.

In order to reach this goal, this project will start by analysing and proving Woolf's radical concept of gender and her groundbreaking proposal of alternative masculinities through her more fluid male characters. Woolf's treatment of male characters in her novels is not secondary but, on the contrary, essential both for her depiction of the patriarchal oppression addressed towards men and women and for her articulation of a polymorphous notion of gender. Therefore, I will analyse the construction of masculinities in Woolf's novels by focusing on male characters, not as peripheral elements of the narrative line but as essential pieces of Woolf's gender narrative tapestry.

The second step of this thesis will be to prove to prove Woolf's radical approach to gender through two cases of study: Septimus Warren Smith and Orlando. In order to defend these two novelistic characters as polymorphous and multilayered figurations of masculinity, I will use Deleuze and Guattari's

theoretical concerns about the process of individuation, in particular, the notion of becoming-woman, and their potential as characters to transcend gender normativisation (gender/sex binary oppositions).

Finally, the third stage of my research will be to study, from this perspective on masculinities and through the theoretical tools of Deleuze and Guattari, two more contemporary narratives of gender in film adaptations of Woolf's novels; *Mrs. Dalloway* (1997), directed by Marleen Gorris, adapted by Eileen Atkins, starring Vanessa Redgrave, Michael Kitchen, Rupert Graves, John Standing, and Lena Headley, and *Orlando* (1992), written and directed by Sally Potter, starring Tilda Swinton, Billy Zane, Lothaire Bluteau, and John Wood. I will take these film adaptations as new texts that extend, reread, implement and reappropriate Woolf's work to respond to different social demands in relation to gender. Therefore, ultimately, my intention is to analyse whether their representations of Woolf's male characters prove as radical as the challenge that Woolf poses to the rigid and fixed binary opposition of gender. The purpose is to analyse to what extent the gender narrative of these two cinematic texts fails or succeeds in projecting radical figurations of masculinity beyond man/woman, male/female, heterosexual/homosexual taxonomies.

This thesis approaches literature conceptually, from a philosophical perspective; Deleuze and Guattari's theoretical framework. An interdisciplinary methodology has been used to develop this thesis. The whole nature of the project is interdisciplinary in its focus on both different media, novels and film adaptations, and in the crossing of literature, film studies, philosophy, and cultural studies. The main focus throughout is Virginia Woolf's novelistic narrative of gender and the thesis evaluates two late twentieth century approaches to Woolf's gender narrative through an analysis of film adaptations of Woolf.

In my research on gender and Virginia Woolf, I have realised that gender studies, in particular psychoanalytic approaches, do not provide an adequate theoretical basis in order to analyse what, in my view, is Woolf's fundamental challenge to binary opposites of gender. This is why I have turned to the philosophical body of work of Gilles Deleuze and Guattari; particularly their key proposal of a new on-going mode of individuation.

Furthermore, whereas feminist approaches to Virginia Woolf's texts prioritise an analysis of gender constructions of female characters, my research focuses on male characters, since here I see the great potential in Woolf's conception of gender. Here again, a hybrid methodology is required: masculinity studies, feminist theory and philosophy will be integrated in my exploration of male characters in both Woolf's novels and film adaptations.

In short, I have chosen an interdisciplinary method, insofar as the crossing of

different disciplines (cultural studies, comparative literature, literary criticism, philosophy, feminist theory, and gender studies) provides me with the tools required to prove that Woolf embraces a polymorphous gender perspective.

This research project is structured into three main basic blocks of contents: (1) Virginia Woolf's radical concept of gender and masculinities (hegemonic vs. alternative masculinities through her male characters); (2) Deleuze and Guattari and male characters in *Mrs Dalloway* and *Orlando*; (3) masculinities, Woolf and film adaptations.

Chapter 1 explores masculinities in Virginia Woolf's fiction and frames my study of Woolf's male characters within the theoretical framework of masculinity studies. This chapter contextualises the hegemonic discourse of masculinity from the beginning of the twentieth century until the thirties and explores Woolf's novelistic male figurations in order to analyse Woolf's conceptualisation of gender. A brief review of the scholarship on Woolf and masculinities is provided so as to justify my Deleuzo-Guattarian approach.

Chapter 2 develops on the theoretical framework of the thesis. It explores Deleuze's and Guattari's nomadic subjectivities and becomings — it builds a genealogy of the concept of becoming-woman — and elaborates theoretical tools to analyse gender and masculinities in Woolf's fiction from a Deleuzo-Guattarian perspective. In order to do so, it explores feminist reactions for and against Deleuze's and Guattari's theoretical body and looks for feminist intersections. The last sections of this chapter justify the significance of relating Woolf and Deleuze and Guattari's work and offers a brief overview of the scholarly work devoted to it.

Chapter 3 applies my theoretical framework to the analysis of *Mrs Dalloway* and *Orlando* to demonstrate Woolf's radical narrative of gender. This chapter contrasts Woolf's molar male characters with Woolf's molecular male characters in my two cases of study (Septimus Warren Smith and Orlando), which are respectively presented as examples of empty and full bodies without organs. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972, 1980)

Finally, chapter 4 evaluates the extent to which Woolf's polymorphous vision of gender is expanded by more contemporary cinematic narratives. This chapter starts from a brief overview of film adaptation theory which departs from Woolf's thoughts on cinema and adaptation, and develops on Marleen Gorris's and Sally Potter's reading of Woolf's gender narrative.

Every chapter provides an introduction and a conclusion that opens and closes the main arguments discussed throughout. Due to the multidisciplinary character of this project, an appendix has been added to help the reader with specific Deleuzo-Guattarian terminology. This glossary includes a brief defini-

tion of key words in Deleuze's and Guattari's philosophical apparatus in order to help the reader to move along the development of my thesis. After the bibliography and filmography, an index of key words has been added following the same purpose.

Chapter 1

The n-becomings of male characters in Woolf's writing: Virginia Woolf and masculinities

1.1 Introduction

Virginia Woolf's novels articulate an understanding of gender beyond the more traditional and socially accepted view of her society. In fact, the complex and nuanced representations of gender evident in the descriptions of some of her most significant male characters is a direct challenge to the prevailing tenets of nineteenth and early twentieth century concepts of British masculinity. This thesis aims to prove Virginia Woolf's polymorphous and multilayered concept of gender. Throughout Woolf's fiction and by means of her characterisation, gender is defined as a series of shifting, fluid identifications rather than narrowly conceived static oppositions.

The following chapter works on Virginia Woolf's novelistic conceptualisation of gender, paying special attention to her male characters. The first section provides a brief overview of the main theoretical concepts developed by masculinity studies around masculinity, and it explores the main characteristics of the construction of masculinities at the beginning of the century in Britain. The second

section analyses Woolf's male characters in her novels and builds on her radical concept of gender. The third section provides a brief review of scholarship devoted to the analysis of Woolf's masculinities (and gender to some extent). Finally, the last section justifies my Deleuzo-Guattarian approach.

1.2 Masculinities in context

1.2.1 Masculinities and Gender Studies

The contribution to gender studies of current research into the changing nature of masculinities in theorising men is crucial to understanding literary representations of masculinities. insofar as it provides us with elements of analysis. Scholars such as the gender academic Jeff Hearn,¹ the sociologist R W Connell,² the gender studies scholar Keith Pringle,³ the sociologist Michael Kimmel,⁴ and

¹Jeff Hearn is Academy Fellow and Professor at Swedish School of Economics (Helsinki, Finland) and Research Professor at the University of Huddersfield (UK). His authored and co-authored books include *The Gender of Oppression* (1987), *Men in the Public Eye* (1992), *Sex at Work* (1987/1995), *The Violences of Men* (1998), *Gender, Sexuality and Violence in Organizations* (2001), and *Gender Divisions and Gender Policies in Top Finnish Companies* (2002). He has co-edited *Information Society and the Workplace* (2004) and *The Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities* (2004). He was Principal Contractor in the EU FP5 Research Network The Social Problem of Men (2003), and is currently researching men, gender relations and transnational organising, organisations and management.

²R. W. Connell is Professor at the University of Sydney and the author or co-author of key books for masculinity studies, including *Ruling Class Ruling Culture: Studies of Conflict, Power, and Hegemony in Australian Life* (1977), *Which Way Is Up?* (1983) *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (1987), *Masculinities* (1995), *The Men and the Boys* (2000) and, more recently *Gender: In world perspective* (2009). She is the co-editor of the *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities* and editor of *Men, Boys and Gender Equality*. She is a contributor to research journals in sociology, education, political science, gender studies, and related fields. Her current research concerns social theory, changing masculinities, neoliberalism, globalisation, and intellectuals.

³Keith Pringle is Professor in Comparative Social Policy and Co-Director of the International Centre for the Study of Violence and Abuse at the University of Sunderland. Her published work includes *Men and Masculinities Around the World* (2011), co-edited with Elisabetta Ruspini, Jeff Hearn, and Bob Peas; *European Perspectives on Men and Masculinities* (2009), co-authored with Jeff Hearn; and *A Man's World?* (2002), co-edited with Bob Pease.

⁴Michael Kimmel is among the leading researchers and writers on men and masculinity in the world today. He is the author or editor of more than twenty volumes. His books include *Changing Men: New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinity* (1987), *Men Confront Pornography* (1990), *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (1996), *The Gender of Desire* (2005) and *The History of Men* (2005). He also co-edited *The Encyclopedia on Men and Masculinities* (2 volumes, 2004) and *The Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*. He is Expert Witness for U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, in Sex Discrimination

the feminist academic Lynne Segal⁵ have all taken inspiration from feminism to analyse class and racial inequalities between men, the causes and consequences of male violence, the lived experience of different kinds of male sexuality, and the ways in which ideas of masculinities influence social and political thoughts, among many other fields of research. My analysis of male characters in Woolf's novels stems from the theoretical tools provided by scholars from Men's Studies,⁶ in particular, the notions of masculinity, hegemonic masculinities and subordinated masculinities.

To begin with, we need to define masculinity from the standpoint of gender theory. In her key work *Masculinities* (1995), Connell first outlines the field of studies of masculinities within the framework of semiotics by rejecting essentialist definitions of masculinity that form a strategic part of modern gender ideology. Connell outlines three dominant approaches within this strategic modern gender ideology, which she discards: sociobiology, social constructionism, and sex-role theory.

Firstly, as Connell states, the sociobiological approach to gender takes for granted that the body itself produces gender difference; that is to say, that gender is a straightforward extension of an individual's sexuality — therefore, gender behaviour is considered to be genetically determined. Against this essentialist idea of fixed gender definitions, Connell points out the overwhelming cross-cultural and historical diversity that takes place in gender terms. Secondly, Connell warns against the perils of social constructionist perspectives that consider the body as a more or less neutral surface or landscape on which social symbolism is imprinted. She blames this tendency of disembodiment, and argues that bodies cannot be understood as a featureless neutral medium

Cases (The Citadel and Virginia Military Institute).

⁵Lynne Segal is Professor of Psychology and Gender Studies at Birkbeck, University of London. As a feminist scholar and activist, she has contributed to gender studies with a number of works from *Is the Future Female? Troubled Thoughts on Contemporary Feminism* (1987), *Beyond the Fragments* (1979) to *Why Feminism? Gender, Psychology, Politics* (1999), and *Making Trouble: Life and Politics* (2007). In *Slow Motion: Changing Masculinities, Changing Men* (1990) Segal analyses the complexity of forces that generate very differing patterns of masculinity across time and place.

⁶I am using the term Men's Studies to refer to this field of study, despite the ambiguity and connotations pointed out by Jeff Hearn. In "From Hegemonic Masculinity to the Hegemony of Men" (2004), Jeff Hearn rejects the label 'Men's Studies' for its ambiguity: "...is it studies on men or studies by men?...The idea of Men's Studies may be favoured by some men who have no interest whatsoever in promoting feminist theory and practice" (Hearn, 2004: 49-50). Instead, he proposes the term 'Critical Studies on Men' (CSM), in which the centrality of power issues is recognised. I will use the term 'Men's Studies' for its widespread use to refer to that range of studies that critically address men in the context of gendered power relations.

of social practice, insofar as their materiality matters. Finally, sex-role theory takes as a given the biological origins that define the differences between males and females. These biological origins constitute the raw material on to which specific behavioural patterns (sex-roles) are imprinted through the process of socialisation. As a theory, then, it is rooted in essentially biological assumptions concerning what count as the defining characteristics of being male and female. This is why Connell dismisses this theory for its rigidity and fixity.

Moreover, Connell develops a pattern that she terms ‘body-reflexive practice’: “With bodies both objects and agents of practice, and the practice itself forming the structures within which bodies are appropriated and defined, we face a pattern beyond the formulae of current social theory.” (Connell, 1995: 61) Connell considers bodies both agents and objects of social practice, meaning that through body-reflexive practices a social world is formed. Therefore, gender is, according to Connell, social practice that constantly refers to bodies and what bodies do. However, it is not social practice reduced to the body: “[G]ender exists precisely to the extent that biology does *not* determine the social.” (Connell, 1995: 71) Social practice is creative and inventive and responds to particular situations and is generated within definite structures of social relations (Connell, 1995: 72). In this line of thought, masculinity and femininity are configurations of gender practice; that is, historically and culturally defined gender projects (Kimmel, 1987; Brittan, 1989; Segal, [1990] 1997; Connell, 1995).

Following Connell’s (1995: 84-86) threefold model of structures which interweave the machinery of gender — relations of power (patriarchy), production relations (men controlling the major corporations and private fortunes as being a part of social construction of masculinity), and cathexis (the practices that shape and realise desire as an aspect of the gender order) —, masculinity will be analysed, not as a fixed, timeless, and universal category — as essentialist definitions, positivist social science, and normative definitions⁷ have assumed —, but it will rather be explored from a more semiotic approach. Masculinities are an aspect of power produced in and through social relationships and legitimised or excluded by the institutional power. Special attention will be devoted to the practices through which Woolf’s male characters engage their place in gender, and the effects of these practices in their bodily experience, personality

⁷Essentialist definitions usually single out one feature that defines what is considered to be the core of masculinity. Positivist social science provides simple and fixed definitions of masculinity, fixed patterns of male lives: What men actually are. Normative definitions recognise the differences among men and offer a standard; masculinity constitutes a social norm for the behaviour of men.

and culture. The focus will be on the processes and relationships through which these characters conduct gendered lives.

Connell advocates for a multiplicity of masculinities; a multiplicity that is not fixed. Hegemonic masculinity,⁸ therefore, is not a fixed character type, but rather the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations — a position that is always contestable. The mechanisms that regulate these masculinities are the practices and relations of hegemony, subordination, complicity and marginalisation.

Hegemonic masculinity constitutes the master narrative of masculinity, the

⁸The concept of hegemonic masculinity has become one of the keystones of the debate generated around men's studies since the 1970s. The first substantial argument about this concept is to be found in R.W. Connell's "Men's Bodies" in *Which Way Is Up?* (1983), which develops on men's bodies' relation with patriarchy. The notion "hegemonic masculinity" was further developed in the early 1980s with the help of the gay (men's) movement. Two gay activists, Tim Carrigan and John Lee, joined forces with Connell and reformulated the concept of hegemonic masculinity paying special attention to the distinction between hegemonic masculinity from other masculinities, especially subordinated masculinities in "Towards a New Sociology of Masculinity" (1985). As Connell and Messerschmidt review themselves: "The analysis of multiple masculinities and the concept of hegemonic masculinity served as a framework for much of the developing research effort on men and masculinity, replacing sex-role theory and categorical models of patriarchy." (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005: 834) In *Masculinities* (1995), Connell offers a more nuanced definition of this notion, by which hegemonic masculinity is considered to be opened to multiple challenges and changes, insofar as it is historically and culturally specific. However, this term has received much criticism from different scholars (McMahon, 1993; Hearn, 1996b, 2004 ; Clatterbaugh, 1998), who claim that the term has become fixed and somewhat transhistorical, and, as Hearn (2004: 58) suggests, the use of the term has been applied more as a type than a 'configuration of gender practice.' Therefore, Jeff Hearn (2004) argues that the concept of hegemonic masculinity has generally been used too restrictively and suggests that: "...the agenda for the investigation of the hegemony of men in the social world concerns the examination of that which sets the agenda for different ways of being men in relation to women, children and other men, rather than the identification of particular forms of masculinity or hegemonic masculinity." (Hearn, 2004: 60) Hearn claims for the need to address actual men more directly by questioning the very same category; this is, in terms of both the hegemony of the social category of men and the hegemony of men's practices. Connell has continued the discussion of masculinity, masculinities and hegemonic masculinities. In *The Men and the Boys* (2000: 17), she acknowledges some of the difficulties with the term masculinity and goes on to suggest that "the difficulty in formulating widely acceptable definitions of masculinity is one sign of the crisis tendencies in gender relations which have in a number of ways destabilized the situation of men." More recently, in "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept" (2005), Connell and Messerschmidt refute the major criticism received by the notion hegemonic masculinity and conclude that it is desirable to eliminate any usage of hegemonic masculinity as a fixed, transhistorical model insofar as this usage violates the historicity of gender and ignores the massive evidence of change in social definitions of masculinity. Despite the whole debate generated around the theory of hegemonic masculinity, I believe that it has proved its worth insofar as it keeps the power relations of gender always in view.

configuration of gender practice, which is culturally exalted over other less dominant or subordinated forms of masculinity thanks to the correspondence between the cultural ideal and institutional power. As gender relations are historical, thus, gender hierarchies are subject to change. Hegemonic masculinities come into existence in specific circumstances and are open to historical change.⁹ More precisely, there could be a struggle for hegemony, where older forms of masculinity might be displaced by new ones, insofar as challenges to hegemony are common, and so are adjustments in the face of these challenges. Masculinity is not a fixed entity embedded in the body or personality traits of individuals. Masculinities are configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action and, therefore, can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005: 836). Gender constructions, therefore, are not prior to the subject but themselves always in process of formation.

Hegemonic masculinities can be constructed and not correspond closely to the lives of any actual men. Yet, these patterns of social practice do express widespread ideals, fantasies, and desires. There is nothing conceptually universalising in Connell's definition of hegemonic masculinity. Coordination and regulation occur in the social practices of collectivities, institutions, and whole societies. Men can adopt hegemonic masculinity but at the same time distance themselves strategically from it at certain social practices. Consequently, masculinity represents not a certain type of man but, rather, a way by which men position themselves through discursive practices.

When constraining hegemonic discourses of masculinity dominate the gender narrative of a time, it is inevitable that men within that culture will find their gender performance options extremely limited, as it is the case in the Britain portrayed in Woolf's novels. These limitations condition a man's social practice, influencing his choice of profession, personal activities, rituals and icons and anything else associated with his overall social performance. Men who do not live within those limits are either unnoticed or socially unaccepted as many of Woolf's characters demonstrate. Those who do not conform the ideal or archetype fostered by the hegemonic gender narrative risk marginalisation.

Connell argues that there are specific hierarchical gender relationships of dominance and subordination between groups of men. As Connell points out, "[g]ay masculinities are the most conspicuous, but not the only subordinated masculinities." (Connell, 1995: 79) Gender is a way of structuring social prac-

⁹Michael S. Kimmel (1987: 122) insists on the idea that femininity and masculinity are the products of role enactments and, therefore, he suggests detailing the ways in which people negotiate their roles, "the historically fluid and variable enactments of specific prescriptions," since gender is continuously subject to a process of reinterpretation in the course of history.

tice in general, so it is unavoidably involved with other social structures (place of birth, class, sexuality tendency, among others). In this sense, according to Connell, complicity and marginalisation interrelate within the patriarchal network insofar as these men, who do not practise the hegemonic pattern and may be marginalised by the dominant group, still benefit from the patriarchal dividend which determines women as the fundamental Other. We might conclude, then, that the category of “masculinity/masculinities” should be approached as always ambivalent, always complex, discursive, and, therefore, contingent on nomartivisation (in a relationship of hegemony, subordination, complicity or marginalisation).

Virginia Woolf’s novels provide great examples of these mechanisms of hegemony, subordination, complicity and marginalisation through the representation of her male characters. Woolf criticises the constraining gender structures promoted within her patriarchal society and challenges hegemonic gender constructions by presenting characters who epitomise subordinated masculinities that do not fit into these dominating and institutionalised discourses of gender. Woolf does not take essentialist fixed gender definitions for granted and both portrays rigid and hegemonic representations of masculinities of her time and produces fluid male figurations that, to some extent, question the very same category of “masculinity” — as I will demonstrate through my two cases of study: Septimus Warren Smith and Orlando.

Masculinity has been traditionally defined in opposition to femininity as it seems to be acknowledged by most scholars from masculinity studies:

Masculinity and femininity are inherently relational concepts, which have meaning in relation to each other, as a social demarcation and a cultural opposition. This holds regardless of the changing content of demarcation in different societies and periods of history. Masculinity as an object of knowledge is always masculinity-in-relation. (Connell, 1995: 44)

Neither masculinities nor femininities are a meaningful construct without the other; each is defined and defines the other. As Connell (1995: 68) argues “[a] culture which does not treat men and women as polarized character types does not have a concept of masculinity in the sense of modern European/American culture.”

This intrinsic polarisation between masculinity and femininity seems to respond to what Judith Butler¹⁰ has defined as the product of “institutional het-

¹⁰Judith Butler is an American post-structuralist philosopher, who has contributed to the

erosexuality” as the only acceptable social norm of gender, which “requires and produces the univocity of each of the gendered terms that constitute the limit of gendered possibilities within an oppositional, binary gender system.” (Butler, [1990] 1999: 30) It is on the basis of the construction of natural binary sex that binary gender and heterosexuality are likewise constructed as natural, denaturalising any construction that moves beyond the sex/gender binary opposition. According to Butler, this schema reduces the multiplicity that exists between and within bodies.

For Butler, gender should be seen as a fluid variable which shifts and changes in different contexts and at different times, eventhough, within the matrix defined before, gender is a norm in itself. Gender is constructed through a series of gender specific practices and also through the establishment of a norm. In *Undoing Gender* (2004: 41-42), Judith Butler argues that “[a] norm operates within social practices as the implicit standard of normalization...The norm governs intelligibility, allows for certain kinds of practices and action to become recognizable as such, imposing a grid of legibility on the social and defining the parameters of what will and will not appear within the domain of the social.” Butler locates the construction of the gendered, sexed, desiring subject within what she calls “frameworks of intelligibility.” According to Butler, gender has fallen into a rigid binary opposition that regulates and restricts certain specific gender practices which become socially intelligible and discards others that move beyond that naturalised binary opposition: “Thus, a restrictive discourse on gender that insists on the binary of man and woman as the exclusive way to understand the gender field performs a *regularory* operation of power that naturalises the hegemonic instance and forecloses the thinkability of its disruption.” (Butler, 2004: 43).

Virginia Woolf traces gender figurations through some of her characters that saturate this system moving beyond this naturalised binary opposition. Woolf’s novels present characters that represent the potential that Butler sees in bodies: “...the body is that which can occupy the norm in myriad ways, exceed the norm, rework the norm, and expose realities to which we thought we were confined as open to transformation.” (Butler, 2004: 217)

fields of feminism, queer theory, political philosophy, and ethics. Judith Butler is Professor of Comparative Literature and Rhetoric at the University of California, Berkeley, and is well known as a theorist of power, gender, sexuality and identity. Her most prominent work includes *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Bodies that Matter* (1993).

1.2.2 Masculinities at the beginning of the century

As has been discussed in the previous section, structures of gender relations are formed and transformed over time; therefore, masculinity and femininity are products and producers of history. Historicising masculinities has attracted the attention of many historians (Bell, 1981; Mangan & Walvin, 1987; Connell, 1995; Mosse, 1996). This is the case of the British historian John Tosh,¹¹ who has taken a leading role in developing the history of masculinity in nineteenth/early twentieth-century Britain.

Following his work, this section aims to provide a brief account of the social practice that produced hegemonic masculinities in the range time that expands through the life span of male characters in Woolf's novels; that is to say, the context for the different generations of male characters that range from late-Victorians to the 1930s.

Before accounting for Tosh's analysis, I would like to start from Connell's broad landmark of the evolution of masculinities over the last two hundred years, which will serve as a framework to contextualise Woolf's society:

The history of European/American masculinity over the last two hundred years can be broadly understood as the splitting of gentry masculinity, its gradual displacement by the new hegemonic forms, and the emergence of an array of subordinated and marginalized masculinities. The reasons for these changes are immensely complex but I would suggest that three are central: challenges to the gender order by women, the logic of gendered accumulation processes in industrial capitalism, and the power relations of empire. (Connell, 1995: 191)

Ideologists of patriarchy struggled to control and direct the reproduction of hegemonic masculinity against the multiple threats of the time: pressure from women breaking into the public sphere; the homosexual as a social type more clearly defined; the gradual displacement of gentry by the spread of industrial economies and the growth of bureaucratic states; and the colonised subjects established by the empire project. New hegemonic forms were adopted in response to the emergence of an array of culturally constructed subordinate and marginalised masculinities. Hence, the hegemonic discourse of masculinity became antifeminine, heterosexual, and white. It expelled homoeroticism from the

¹¹John Tosh is Professor of History at the University of Surrey Roehampton. He is the author of *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (1999) and co-editor of *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800* (1991).

framework of manliness, and adopted hypermasculine masquerades grounded on these new oppositions.

Woolf's fiction is inscribed in a period of time in Britain characterised by multiple changes triggered by the the end of the Victorian age, the contradiction of the Edwardian age, the inescapable print of the First World War and macro structural rearrangements which led to imminent ideological redefinitions.

As a point of departure, in the course of these new rearrangements, Tosh points out the ambivalence that the late-Victorian domestic sphere made men face with. On the one hand, late-Victorian men enjoyed the patriarchal privileges of the domestic sphere as the head of the family. However, on the other hand, these men were exposed to the charge of effeminacy. Out of this tension, men sought for public spaces to reaffirm their identities; as for example billiard rooms and male clubs. According to Tosh (1997: 46), likewise, many late-Victorian men renounced domesticity and were drawn to a career in the colonies in order to reinforce their gender identities by ascribing to hegemonic codes of masculinity, such as national heroism.

Tosh affirms that public schools played an important role in the construction of late-Victorian hegemonic masculinity. These schools were designed essentially to isolate boys from the distractions coming from the domestic sphere as well as any social activities that could otherwise divert them from developing into a proper British gentleman. Traditional academics were an important part of this education insofar as the primary function of these institutions was to provide instruction on manliness.

The dominant code of manliness in late Victorian Britain accurately expressed the public school values of the time. Chivalry towards women was *de rigueur*, but it was secondary. Manliness was essentially a code which regulated the behaviour of men towards each other. It extolled action rather than reflection, duty to one's country rather than one's conscience, and physical pluck rather than moral courage. (Tosh, 1997: 49)

These schools fostered values such as action over reflection, nationalism and physical stoicism; values which were built from the exercising of sport. Athleticism, football and cricket became repositories of hegemonic codes of masculinity (discipline, competitiveness, physical athleticism). Within this tradition, scouting was another school for manliness supporting the main precepts fostered by public schools, which produced the ideal archetype of the national hero. Hegemonic masculinities linked masculinity and heroic British traditions. Athletic,

stoic, national heroes became the ideal of British manliness. By then, counter-types to hegemonic masculinity served to strengthen the normative view of the hegemonic masculine stereotype. Countertypes were epitomised by those who were ethnically, physically and/or sexually different.

Nevertheless, hegemonic masculinity at the turn of the twentieth century in Britain was destabilised by the prominent advent of modern counter-types ('the New man,' which questioned the roots of late-Victorian manliness — nationalism, force, and action over reflection —) and more openly expressions of "unmanly" men (homosexuals). Although the countertype during the Edwardian period began to threaten hegemonic masculinity, with the advent of the First World War, hegemonic masculinity reinforced the ideal of manliness (nationalism, courage, athleticism) once again through the institution of sport and education.

According to Tosh, during the twenties and thirties, "[t]he British upper middle classes continued to boast a large number of men who where secure in their wealth and positions of power...so far as their personal circumstances were concerned, patriarchy operated as smoothly as before." (Tosh, 1997: 56) This phenomenon reinforced the ideal of manliness within the hegemonic definition of masculinity. As a consequence, on the one hand, some men reacted hyper-masculinising the hegemonic discourse of masculinity but "at the other extreme were those men whose personal experience and social principles had led them to regard conventional forms of masculinity as a cruel constraint rather than a support. Gender identities as polarized as late nineteenth-century manliness and femininity were bound to produce a counter-discourse of androgyny." (Tosh, 1997: 56-7) Virginia Woolf contrasts hegemonic masculinity and subordinated counter-types through different social practices represented through her male characters.

The next section explores Woolf's analysis, criticism and counter narrative to the hegemonic constructions of masculinities of her particular cultural and historical context; late-Victorian and the first third of twentieth-century Britain.

1.3 Woolf's literary representations of masculinities

The vast majority of feminist criticism on Woolf has focused its attention on Virginia Woolf as the epitome of the female voice and femininity;¹² the feminist

¹²It was not until the 1970s and 1980s that feminist criticism on Woolf developed. As Laura Marcus states in “Woolf’s feminism and feminism’s Woolf” (2000), “Woolf’s work has been used as key evidence and example in the most significant feminist debates: ‘realist’ versus ‘modernist’ writing as the most effective vehicle for a feminist politics; the existence of a specifically female literary tradition and of woman’s language, the place of feminist ‘anger’ or radicalism; the feminist uses of ‘androgyny’ as a concept; the significance of gendered perspectives and ‘the difference of view’ as a counter to difference-blind assumptions of the universal; the relationships between socialism and feminism, feminism and pacifism, patriarchy and fascism.” (Marcus, 2000: 209-210) Feminist criticism has prioritised the female subject as its object of study. In biographical terms, feminist critics have focused on the lesbian subtext of Woolf’s fiction and queer theories — Eileen Barrett and Patricia Cramer (eds.) *Virginia Woolf: Lesbian Readings* (1997) — and her relationship with other women — Jane Dunn, *A Very Close Conspiracy: Vanessa Bell and Virginia Woolf* (1991) Suzanne Raitt, *Vita and Virginia: The Work and Friendship of Vita Sackville-West and Virginia Woolf* (1993). Before second-wave feminist criticism, Winifred Holtby published *Virginia Woolf: A Critical Memoir* ([1932] 1997), which anticipated key gender questions in feminist criticism on Woolf, such as ‘androgyny.’ In her analysis of *A Room of One’s Own* and *Orlando*, Holtby approaches androgyny in relation to theories of bisexuality and (female) homosexuality rather than aligning this concept to discourses of sexual neutralisation. In “Virginia Woolf and the Flight into Androgyny” in *A Literature of their Own: British Women Novelists from Brönte to Lessing* ([1977] 2007), a seminal text of 1970s gynocriticism, the American critic Elaine Showalter attacks Carolyn Heilbrun’s concerns about androgyny developed in *Toward Androgyny: Aspects of Male and Female in Literature* ([1973] 1974). Showalter criticises Woolf’s analysis of women’s literature and rejects her proposal of the ideal androgynous mind for the writer. Toril Moi’s response to Showalter in her introduction to French feminist theory, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* ([1985] 2002) argues against Showalter’s claim of Woolf’s sex-transcendent unified subject. Moi suggests the use of French Feminist theories by Julia Kristeva, Hélène Cixous, and Luce Irigaray to analyse Woolf’s fiction and non-fiction. On the other hand, Marxist and materialist feminism — with works such as Michèle Barrett’s *Virginia Woolf and Writing* (1979) and Jane Marcus’s *Virginia Woolf and the Languages of Patriarchy* (1987a) — saw in Woolf’s work a common ground within their political agenda — socialist feminism focused on the social and economic circumstances of women writers and readers. Jane Marcus, a materialist feminist, provided a wide range of feminist interpretations of Woolf in her work from the 1980s *Art an Anger: Reading Like a Woman* (1988), *Virginia Woolf and The Languages of Patriarchy* (1987), and her edited collections *New Feminist Essays on Virginia Woolf* (1981), *Virginia Woolf: A Feminist Slant* (1983) and *Virginia Woolf and Bloomsbury: A Centenary Celebration* (1987b). Under the influence of French Feminist theory, Anglo-American feminist literary critics of the late 1970s and 1980s started to reflect upon the relationship between language-identity-otherness. This is the case of Mary Jacobus’s “The Difference of View” (1979), which offers a deconstructionist and psychoanalytic reading of Woolf’s ‘androgyny’ and ‘anger’ influenced by French feminism’s conception of language as a

who tends to undermine a binary society that subordinates the female subject to the rule of patriarchal tyrants — fathers, husbands, doctors, lawyers, members of parliament, professors, admirals —, patriarchal representatives.

From my point of view, female-centred criticism overlooks a fundamental aspect in Virginia Woolf's novels; Woolf's concern about the power relations affecting men within the patriarchal logic¹³ of her time. Whereas feminist literary criticism (Marcus, 1981, 1983; Marcus, 2000; Barrett & Cramer, 1997) has been prioritising the analysis of female characters in texts written by women over the study of male characters, pro-feminist masculinity studies¹⁴ have been primarily concerned with male characters of texts written by men. That is how, few critics of either masculinity or gender studies have dealt with female-authored masculinity as a subject of study.

Sarah S. G. Frantz and Katharina Rennhak's¹⁵ edited work *Women Con-*

“site both of challenge and Otherness.” (Jacobus, 1979: 12) While Gayatri Chakravorti Spivak opens up a feminist-deconstructionist reading of Woolf in her essay “Unmaking and Making in *To the Lighthouse*” (1980), Makiko Minow-Pinkney's *Virginia Woolf and the Problem of the Subject* (1987) stands as the first book-length study to implement French feminist theory, together with Rachel Bowlby's *Virginia Woolf: Feminist Destinations* (1988), which offers psychoanalytic readings of Woolf's feminism. More contemporary criticism such as Naomi Black's *Virginia Woolf as Feminist* (2004) explores Virginia Woolf's feminism by means of a thorough analysis of *Three Guineas*'s process of creation and critical response.

¹³Woolf's construction of male characters in her fictional narrative has received very little scholarly attention to date. There has been little scholarship devoted to male characters in Woolf's fiction, which either analyses specific aspects of male characters or points at aspects in relation to female characters. Among these few studies I would like to highlight Roger Poole's “Was Septimus Smith ‘insane’?” ([1978] 1995), Suzette A. Henke's “Virginia Woolf's Septimus Smith: An Analysis of “Paraphrenia” and Schizophrenic Use of Language” (1981), J. Hillis Miller's “Mrs. Dalloway. Repetition as the Raising of the Dead” (1982), Beverly Ann Schlack's “Fathers in General: The patriarchy in Virginia Woolf's Fiction” (1983), David Dowling's “Characters and themes” in *Mrs Dalloway. Mapping Streams of Consciousness* (1991), Nicholas Marsh's “Male and female in Virginia Woolf” in *Virginia Woolf. The novels* (1998), Peter Knox-Shaw's “The Otherness of Septimus Warren Smith” (1995), and Richard Pearce's “Virginia Woolf's Construction of Masculinity: A Narrative Model, a Reading of *Mrs. Dalloway*” (2000).

¹⁴I am referring to pro-feminist masculinity studies such as Josep Maria Armengol's “‘Attention, attention must be finally paid to such a person:’ A Men's Studies Rereading of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*” (2004), Nancy McCampbell Grace's *The Feminized Male Character in Twentieth-Century Literature* (1995), Michael Kane's *Modern Men: Mapping Masculinity in English and German Literature, 1880-1930* (1999), Ben Knights's *Writing Masculinities: Male Narratives in Twentieth-Century Fiction* (1999), Alice Ferrebe's *Masculinity in Male-authored Fiction 1950-2000: Keeping It Up* (2005), to mention a few.

¹⁵Sarah S. G. Frantz is Assistant Professor of English at Fayetteville State University and her areas of research are: Romantic-era British women novelists (Jane Austen, Hannah More, Elizabeth Inchbald, and Mary Brunton), eighteenth-century British literature and the rise of the novel, eighteenth-century British culture, popular literature (the modern romance novel),

structuring Men: Female Novelists and Their Male Characters 1750-2000 (2010) intended to fill this theoretical gap by offering a collection of essays by scholars from Australia, Canada, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States, which demonstrates that female authors construct complex male characters, not just as mere counterparts of their female characters.

When women construct and write about men in fictional worlds, not only they analyse the causes and effects of patriarchy, as Woolf does in a *Room of One's Own*, but they also construct their own realities, imagining alternative masculinities that are desirable from a woman's perspective...women novelists not only deconstruct patriarchal structures and discursive strategies, but also participate in the reconstruction of ideal masculinity. (Frantz & Rennhak, 2010: 2)

Frantz and Rennhak hint at the potential of female-authored constructions of masculinities to explore new male figurations besides providing a criticism of patriarchal hegemonic patterns. They state that, apart from denouncing oppressive patriarchal constructions of masculinities, female authors activate the machinery of discourse formation by producing and projecting alternative masculinities; "...the male characters of female novelists represent the author's negotiations with the ideologies of gender, class, and sexuality as much as their female characters." (Frantz & Rennhak, 2010: 3)

In fact, inscribing the male in the female narrative is an opportunity to introduce alternative gender narratives insofar as there is no better chance to head towards counter-narratives of masculinities other than starting from the dislocated subject position of the Other *per excellence*,¹⁶ the female subject position. The female subject stands as the paradigmatic Other of the male

vampire literature (18th century to today), and female authors constructing male characters. Katharina Rennhak is Professor of English at the Bergische Universität Wuppertal and her areas of search are: eighteenth century in Britain, English and Irish novelists around 1800, English and Irish Literature since 1950, historical novels, critical theory, gender studies and narrative studies.

¹⁶I am referring to the Lacanian concept of the Other. According to Lacan ([1977] 1998) subjectivity is structured and constructed by means of language, which allows one to construct his/her subjectivity as a different identity and an identity of one's own. Lacan defines the subject as the dialectical outcome of the binary opposition between *the I* and *the Other*; identity is based on a binary opposition through which we are defined according to what we are not. In this process what is alien represents otherness, the site of difference and the repository of our fears and anxieties. That is why *the Self* invests *the Other* with its terror. Whatever is alien becomes stereotyped and able to be marginalized. This reflection on alterity has been used by cultural studies that distinguish a center and a periphery when analysing social structures. In social relations, these forms of symbolic and social differences

subject of enunciation. It is from this marginal position that the female becomes privileged in her search for alternatives to the patriarchal logic.¹⁷

Given that the aim of this thesis is to understand the challenging notion of gender that Virginia Woolf posited throughout her novels, it is of vital importance to analyse what kind of male characters, both patriarchal tyrants and new, and yet unrepresented, men she brings to the fore. To do so, this thesis aims to demonstrate that in Woolf's fictional universe male characters are not mere counterparts of the female characters, but on the contrary, they stand as a crucial element for the understanding of her conceptualisation of gender.

In "The Differential Construction of Masculinity in the Writings of Virginia Woolf," included in Sara S. G. Frantz and Katharina Rennhak (eds.) *Women Constructing Men: Female Novelists and Their Male Characters 1750-2000* (2010), the German scholar Virginia Richter¹⁸ claims for the significance of Woolf's representations of masculinities and denounces the critical gap that exists among wider female-centered studies.

...What deserves closer critical attention is Woolf's representation of masculinity, which cannot be separated from her differential treatment of gender roles. In fact, astonishingly few studies have been devoted to masculinity in Woolf's writing, most of them treating only a particular aspect or focusing on homosexuality and male friendship. This gap may be due to the prevalent perception of Virginia Woolf as a writer on femininity. (Richter, 2010: 156)

According to Richter, few studies have dealt with masculinities in Woolf's writing, and most of them have focused only on specific aspects, homosexuality and male friendship. A further section of this chapter, "Scholarship on Woolf and Masculinities," is devoted to the little criticism focusing on masculinities in Woolf's fiction.

are established through the operation of classificatory systems and these systems apply a principle of difference through a population in such a way as to be able to divide them into two opposing groups *Us/Them, Self/Other*.

¹⁷In "Taking the Bull by the Udders: Sexual Difference in VW: A Conspiracy Theory" (1987), Jane Marcus, despite offering a female-centered feminist analysis of *A Room of One's Own*, detects the othering potential of the female Other: "As male writing continually represents women as other, alien and different, *A Room of One's Own* is one of the strongest feminist statements of maleness as other." (Marcus, 1987a: 160)

¹⁸Virginia Richter, a comparative literature academic, analyses in her "The Differential Construction of Masculinity in the Writings of Virginia Woolf" (2010) different constructions of masculinity and gender in three of Woolf's novels; *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *Orlando: A Biography*.

By obviating masculinity, female-centred critics are not fully embracing the complexity of Woolf's construction of gender since gender in Woolf's fiction is always relational, and gender identities are the interplay between concepts of merging femininity and masculinity, and "a thousand tiny sexes."¹⁹ (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 213) Woolfian alternative gender identities are performative, fluid, non-essentialist or non-fixed. Woolf counterpoises patriarchal hegemonic male representations, usually embracing late-Victorian values, to new figurations of modernist masculinities. According to Richter, some of Woolf's male characters, particularly figures like Septimus, Orlando, Jacob, and even Shelmerdine

...function as seismographs registering the advent of modernity, despite their relative and, occasionally, as in the case of Septimus, catastrophic failure to come to terms with the contradictory social roles with which they are confronted, they, rather than the inflexible defenders of power, patriarchy, and the empire, represent a viable although precarious embodiment of modernist masculinity. (Richter, 2010: 158)

The following sections explore Woolf's novelistic representations of masculinities.

1.3.1 Woolfian male characters

Contrary to her own words in *A Room of One's Own* — "[w]omen do not write books about men...Why are women, judging from this catalogue, so much more interesting to men than men are to women?" (Woolf, 2000 [1929]: 29) — Woolf's fiction studies male characters' psyche as well as the female. Woolf challenges fixed gender-identities and the power relationships between men and women throughout her whole work. Her representations of masculinity in her novels are extensive, multilayered, and complex.

There is a constant gender subtext in all her novelistic work from her very early, and more traditional, work — *The Voyage Out* (1915) and *Night and Day* (1919) — to her more experimental work — *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), *Orlando* (1928), *The Waves* (1931). This section will focus chronologically on Woolf's ten novels²⁰ from *The Voyage Out* (1919) to

¹⁹This is a Deleuzo-Guattarian expression that will be developed in chapter 2, in the section entitled 'Woolf's passion for the molecular.'

²⁰I am including both *Orlando: A Biography* (1928) and *Flush: A Biography* (1933) for their cross-genre blend of fiction and nonfiction.

Between the Acts (1941). Before that, I would like to draw my attention to the assumptions Woolf makes about the mechanisms that construct the male subject in two instances of her non-fictional work, which will serve as an introduction to my analysis of the main male characters in Woolf's novels.

Taking into account that Woolf's work is extremely political, and that she had a very lucid approach to her society and an impending craving for social change,²¹ it is not strange to think that, as an avid observer of her time, one of her main goals, as a writer, might have been to scan the machinery of a social system that produces hegemonic gender constructions — as she has proved in her more political non-fictional work. What follows is an example of Woolf's awareness of the arbitrariness or constructedness of male superiority and the inescapable constraints imposed upon the male subject.

In her extended essay, based on a series of lectures she delivered at two women's colleges at Cambridge University (Newnham College and Girton College), *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Woolf diagnoses the power relationships that sustain the patriarchal system of inequality:

Hence the enormous importance to a patriarch who has to conquer, who has to rule, of feeling that great numbers of people, half the human race indeed, are by nature inferior to himself ...Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size ...For if she begins to tell the truth, the figure in the looking-glass shrinks; his fitness for life is diminished. How is he to go on giving judgement, civilizing natives, making laws, writing books, dressing up and speechifying at banquets, unless he can see himself at breakfast and at dinner at least twice the size he really is? (Woolf, 2000 [1929]: 37)

Virginia Woolf examines the process through which identities and stereotypes are built within a network of power relations articulated, at the same

²¹Woolf's work has been attributed a political, moral, ethical and social dimension by a great amount of critics such as Gillian Beer, *Virginia Woolf: The Common Ground* (1996), Mark Hussey, *The Singing of the Real World: The Philosophy of Virginia Woolf's Fiction* (1986) and Alex Zwerdling, *Virginia Woolf and the Real World* (1986). A good example of this criticism can be found in Woolf scholar Alex Zwerdling's article "Mrs. Dalloway and the Social System" ([1977] 1988), which interprets *Mrs Dalloway* as Woolf's criticism of the ruling class in England during the period following World War I. Political issues are addressed by the narrative: emigration, imperialism, government party struggles. According to Zwerdling, *Mrs Dalloway* shows how society and history influence one's life and how class, culture, gender and power determine the characters' fate.

time, within institutionalised power relations.²² The interpolation of different discourses and power relations provides social constructs that build gender identities. Institutional discourses such as Medicine, Science, the Academy, Law, the Army, the Nation-Empire, and the Family,²³ have played upon the basic gender binary opposition to reproduce the patriarchal pattern in society. Woolf describes these mechanisms and those power relationships generated within patriarchy, and she alerts of the consequences and constraints both for men and women.

They too, the patriarchs, the professors, had endless difficulties, terrible drawbacks to contend with. Their education had been in some ways as faulty as my own. It had bred in them defects as great. True, they had money and power, but only at the cost of harbouring in their breasts an eagle, a vulture, for ever tearing the liver out and plucking at the lungs — the instinct for possession, the rage for acquisition which drives them to desire other people's fields and goods perpetually; to make frontiers and flags; battleships and poison gas; to offer up their own lives and their children's lives. (Woolf, 2000 [1929]: 40)

Woolf's awareness of otherness is not restricted to women's powerlessness and subordination to a male-centred system, but on the contrary — “They too, the patriarchs, the professors, had endless difficulties” —, her interest in analysing gender stereotypes extends beyond the boundaries imposed on femininity to the boundaries established upon masculinity. This is the case of her novelistic fluid representations of masculinities. Virginia Woolf contests the hegemonic masculine narrative of gender through her proposal of alternative male characters who break away and become outsiders of their patriarchal societies.

Another instance of her analysis of the consequent constraints for men in patriarchal societies might be found in her memoir ‘A Sketch of the Past’ (1939) in *Moments of Being: Unpublished Autobiographical Writings* (1985), where Woolf

²²Virginia Woolf is using here an analysis of power which could be understood in Foucauldian terms. According to Foucault (1998: 94) power comes from below; that is, there is no binary opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations. Those unequal relationships come into play in the discursive production, in families, limited groups, and institutions. They are the basis for wide-ranging effects of a sharp division that run through the social body as a whole. Major dominations are the hegemonic effects that are sustained by all these confrontations.

²³These institutions have been capitalised in order to emphasize their positions as master or grand narratives in the patriarchal discursive machinery.

fantasises about the destinies that late-Victorian hegemonic configurations of masculinity would have had, had not they been ascribed to the tentacles of patriarchy. What sort of man would her cousin Herbert Fisher have been like, had he not been moulded by patriarchal institutional discourses (of education, nation-empire, family, science, medicine)? Woolf refers to education as the point of departure to build up on other patriarchal social institutions. Here again, there is a subtext where Woolf would be reflecting on the oppressive expectations that her society placed upon men.

What, I asked myself, when I read Herbert Fisher's autobiography the other day, would Herbert have been without Winchester, New College and the Cabinet? What would have been his shape had he not been stamped and moulded by that great patriarchal machine? Every one of our male relations was shot into that machine at the age of ten and emerged at sixty a Head Master, an Admiral, a Cabinet Minister, or a Warden of a college. (Woolf, [1976] 1985: 153)

Woolf, the great social analyst, studies the patriarchal apparatus and observes the confining bounds that even those individuals in a power position are subjected to. The 'machine' patronises and retains men in fixed social categories, which they cannot escape from. Anyhow, despite Woolf's awareness of the hermetic and constraining hegemonic constructions imposed upon men in a patriarchal society, she addresses her harshest criticism to them in her novels. Doctors, admirals, politicians, scholars, lawyers, fathers are object of the most vehement mockery and monstrosity.

Therefore, while it is fundamental to scrutinize some of her male characters as patriarchal tyrants, epitomes of hegemonic masculinity, it would not be accurate to reduce them all to such a restrictive category. In doing so, we would be overseeing her proposal of countertypes (subordinated masculinities) that reveal the multifaceted complexities inherent in her male characterisations.

Woolf's fiction examines generations of men stretching from pre-Victorians — the founding fathers of her contemporary ideal of manliness — to their grandsons — the new generation of men—, some of whom captained the new gender formations of modernity. Woolf's male characters represent these different generations of British men.

Richter (2010) distinguishes between two main types of figurations of masculinity; 'the rigid' men and 'the fluid' men. As Richter explains, 'the rigid' men are trapped in a set of rules that fix their identities but help them to impose their will on those around them. She highlights how these men are represented as tyrannical and narrow-minded, and their actions have devastating

effects on others. According to Richter, these representations of masculinity are associated with the desire of power and control, rationality, the law and the state, the empire, fixed categorisations, intellectual and affective inflexibility, heterosexuality, and an inability to communicate with women.

‘The fluid’ men, on the other hand, have the capacity to feel and to change but are at the same time marginalised and disempowered, “at best, their adaptability is productive on a personal level, at worst, as in the case of Septimus Warren Smith, these ‘new men’ are doomed to death.” (Richter, 2010: 169) Fluid masculinity is related to empathy and imagination, sensibility, the capacity for suffering, madness, the love of literature and art, an affinity to androgyny and bisexuality, flexibility of judgement, “...a “new masculinity” exuberantly celebrated in the gender-bender Orlando, but tragically embodied by the shell-shocked veteran Septimus Warren Smith.” (Richter, 2010: 158)²⁴

On the one hand, those rigid men such as Richard Dalloway, Dr Bradshaw, and Percival are proved to be fierce defenders and perpetuators of hegemonic gender expectations of British manliness. On the other hand, fluid men like Septimus Warren Smith in *Mrs Dalloway*, Bernard in *The Waves*, and even Mr Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse* to some extent, are presented as ambivalent characters who do not easily fit in the rigid definition of manliness assembled by their predecessors.

Although there is a general consensus to catalogue Woolf’s early novels²⁵ as conforming in structure and form to the tradition of the nineteenth century fiction, these novels are already hinting at Woolf’s search for a new voice and modern themes. This is how, her early novels contain some of the key questions around gender that Woolf will explore throughout her work. Despite narrating the stories of her two heroines — Rachel Vinrace and Katherine Hilbury —, both novels provide an accurate account of rigid and fluid representations of masculinities.

*The Voyage Out*²⁶ (1915), Woolf’s first novel, outlines gender relationships.

²⁴Richter (2010) concludes that while the characters in *Mrs Dalloway* remain stuck in the past, and the breakaway from an older gender pattern in *To the Lighthouse* is only tentative, *Orlando* allows Woolf to provide an answer to her scepticism about fixed definitions of masculinity and femininity: the celebration of ambivalence and androgyny. This thesis aims to prove Septimus Warren Smith’s potential to present a fluid and on-going mode of individuation that transcends rigid gender performances and Orlando’s polymorphous figuration of gender, and therefore, his/her potential to break away from categories that are based on rigid binary oppositions of gender (including androgyny).

²⁵The first two novels of Virginia Woolf, *The Voyage Out* (1915) and *Night and Day* (1919) are generally classed together as her early works.

²⁶An earlier version of *The Voyage Out* has been reconstructed by Woolf scholar Louise

From the very first chapter,²⁷ Woolf introduces some of the main characters of the novel by outlining two gendered spaces (female bonding and male bonding) dominated by different codes. On the one hand, Rachel and her aunt Helen are immersed in their female complicity — as when Helen “...glanced back instinctively at Rachel, expecting that as two of the same sex they would leave the room together” (Woolf [1915] 1978: 23) —, whereas Mr Pepper and Mr Ambrose enjoy their masculine rites “...long cigars were being smoked in the dining-room; they saw Mr Ambrose throw himself violently against the back of his chair, while Mr Pepper crinkled his cheeks as though they had been cut in wood.” (Woolf [1915] 1978: 17)

The main male characters of the novel can be grouped in two generations of men. On the one hand we find rigid representatives of late-Victorian hegemonic constructions of masculinities in characters such as Willoughby Vinrace, Mr Pepper, Ridley Ambrose, and Mr Dalloway; and on the other hand, the novel suggests shy hints of more fluid accounts of masculinity embraced by the new generation of men, represented by Terence Hewet but not so much by St. John Hirst.

Willoughby Vinrace stands for the tyrannical patriarchal authority. He considers himself “an old-fashioned father.” (Woolf [1915] 1978: 21) He is depicted as an abusive brute: “...he is big and burly, and has a great booming voice, and a fist and a will of his own...” (Woolf, [1915] 1978a: 25) Helen suspects Willoughby of “bullying his wife” and of committing “nameless atrocities with regard to his daughter.” (Woolf, [1915] 1978a: 25)

Very differently but sharing the male hegemonic iconography, Woolf presents Ridley Ambrose as a male patriarch, the classical scholar and poet, as “a commander surveying a field of battle, or a martyr watching the flames lick his toes” (Woolf, [1915] 1978a: 115), — a character to be developed in the domineering, self-pitying intellectual nature of Mr Ramsay from *To the Lighthouse*. Mr Am-

DeSalvo, trying to capture the original text intended to have appeared in 1912. DeSalvo's edition was published in 2002a under the original title *Melymbrosia*. DeSalvo argues that many of the changes Woolf made in the text were carried out in order to mild its political overtones. My analysis of the male characters in *The Voyage Out* will refer to the text published in 1915.

²⁷*The Voyage Out* (1915), a *bildungsroman*, narrates the story of a twenty-four-year-old woman, Rachel Vinrace, who, in search of her own identity and voice, dies of a tropical fever after a boat-trip into the jungle. Rachel accompanies his father, Willoughby Vinrace on a trading voyage to South America aboard the *Euphrosyne*, her father's ship, together with her aunt and uncle, Helen and Ridley Ambrose. In Lisbon, Richard and Clarissa Dalloway get aboard the ship. Rachel is invited to stay in Santa Marina with her uncles while her father completes his journey. In Santa Marina Rachel meets Terence Hewet — who has already left Cambridge and aspires to be a writer —, falls in love with him, and they become engaged. However, Rachel falls ill and dies after a trip into the jungle.

brose, together with St. John Hirst, represents this scholarly male-dominated world of education.

Richard Dalloway is introduced in the narration as an egocentric conservative politician, who personifies the archetypical role of the patriarchal husband adored by his wife. Their marriage epitomises the Victorian ideal. However, his chivalry is undermined by his sexual approach to Rachel.

St John Hirst, a misogynist character, is opposed to Terence Hewet, who fits in with Woolf's idea that reality needs to be coped with intellect and another kind of sensibility, a combination that is unfolded through other characters such as Jacob in *Jacob's Room*, Ralph Denham in *Night and Day*, Septimus Warren Smith in *Mrs Dalloway*, and Bernard in *The Waves*. Hewet is the only character with whom Rachel can unite and yet preserve her personality, her individuality, her freedom. He combines great intellect and a potential for feeling that makes of his masculinity a more fluid construction. Hewet, however, represents just a discreet hint of more fluid characters that will be present in Woolf's forthcoming novels.

Woolf's second novel, *Night and Day* (1919), highly classical and conventional in form,²⁸ explores and subtly undermines traditional gender roles for both men and women and evaluates concepts such as love, marriage and happiness, by questioning social conventions.²⁹ There is a constant confrontation between traditional old values and morality and modern behaviours.³⁰ Late-Victorian gender attitudes and modern gender constructions are juxtaposed throughout. Therefore, we can find both rigid and fluid figurations of masculinities in the novel. On the one hand, there are characters such as Mr Trevor Hilbery and William Rodney, who embrace hegemonic codes of masculinity and are counterpoised, on the other hand, with characters such as Ralph Denham, whose definition of masculinity seems too complex to suit gender expectations from Edwardian society.

²⁸E.M. Foster said of it: "strictly formal and classic." He called it a "deliberate exercise in classicism" in E.M. Foster's "The Early Novels of Virginia Woolf." (Foster, [1925] 1936: 108)

²⁹*Night and Day* tells the story of two acquaintances, Katherine Hilbery, an upper-middle-class woman who is courted and engaged to William Rodney, and Mary Datchet, a suffragist, involved in a triangular relationship with Ralph Denham, a lawyer who writes for the *Critical Review*, and Katherine, who finally does not marry William Rodney, who starts a relationship with Katherine's cousin, Cassandra Otway. Katherine is helping her mother in writing the biography of her grandfather, a well-known poet, and Mary works in an office of an organisation that campaigns for the suffragette cause.

³⁰Mrs Hilbery is aware of such a confrontation. She affirms in relation to her nephews transgressive behaviour: "Nowadays, people don't think so badly of these things as they used to do." (Woolf [1919] 1999: 124)

Mr Trevor Hilbery, a paradigmatic example of late-Victorian fathers, who embraces rigid patriarchal values, is depicted as a clear representative of patriarchal authority — reminiscent of other heads of families of Woolf's novels such as Mr Ambrose, Mr Ramsay, and Mr Parry. Mr Hilbery's rigidity and constraining vision of life is evidenced in his inability to understand younger generations, which ultimately reveals the superficiality of his authority as a patriarch. This is especially true on two different occasions in the novel.

Firstly, early in the novel, we learn about Katherine's cousin Cyril Alardyce's illegitimate relationship with a woman, with whom he has had two children and is expecting a third one despite not being married. Katherine calls upon her father's authority to take measures on such a socially deviant behaviour, "[g]ranting the assumption that gentlemen of sixty who are highly cultivated, and have had much experience of life, probably think of many things which they do not say, Katherine could not help feeling rather puzzled by her father's attitude as she went back to her room." (Woolf [1919] 1999: 111) To her surprise, her father shows an elusive attitude towards Cyril's case:

'Well if the younger generation want to carry on its life on those lines, it's none of our affair,' he remarked.

'But isn't it our affair, perhaps, to make them get married?' Katherine asked rather wearily.

'Why the dickens should they apply to me?' her father demanded with sudden irritation.

'Only as the head of the family —'

'But I'm not the head of the family. Alfred's the head of the family. Let them apply to Alfred,' said Mr Hilbery, relapsing again into his armchair. (Woolf [1919] 1999: 110)

Secondly, when he is told about the mismatch between the two couples — Ralph Denham, Katherine Hilbery, William Rodney and Cassandra Otway —, aware of his responsibilities as the head of the family, he displays the hegemonic manly attitude that is expected from him, but he ends up being elusive once again in his non-resolving attitude.

On the one hand, we can glimpse Mr Hilbery's patriarchal mentality when Katherine and William Rodney approach him to expose their case to him and he assumes that this is a discussion between men: "'Look here, we must get to the bottom of this,' he said, dropping his formal manner and addressing Rodney as if Katherine were not present." (Woolf [1919] 1999: 493) Mr Hilbery appeals to Rodney 'as a man of the world' (Woolf [1919] 1999: 494), as an active

authoritarian body in the patriarchal world — from father to husband-to-be —, whereas he dismisses his daughter, who becomes invisible, the passive body to be protected in his paternalistic mind.

On the other hand, Mr Hilbery does not understand younger generations: “...the whole position between the young people seemed to him gravely illicit.” (Woolf [1919] 1999: 500) His authority is undermined by their behaviour and, disoriented, he keeps asking his daughter “‘What inferences do you expect me to draw?’” (Woolf [1919] 1999: 499) His final resolution seems rather vague and evasive:

‘These emotions have been very upsetting, naturally,’ he said. His manner had regained its suavity, and he spoke with soothing assumption of paternal authority. ‘You’ve been placed in a very difficult position, as I understand from Cassandra. Now let us come to terms; we will leave these agitating questions in peace for the present. Meanwhile, let us try to behave like civilized beings. Let us read Sir Walter Scott...A note of hollowness was in his voice as he read. (Woolf [1919] 1999: 501-502)

Mr Hilbery tries to reassure himself by turning to a romantic fictional world.³¹ However, there is a sense of hollowness in his reading, insofar as this civilization — patriarchal in structure and essence— that Mr Hilbery is recalling, has been subverted by the younger generation’s gender behaviours.

Mr Hilbery is usually identified and defined by masculine ceremonies and rituals: “Such was the nightly ceremony of the cigar and the glass of port, which were placed on the right hand and on the left hand of Mr Hilbery, and simultaneously Mrs Hilbery and Kartherine left the room.” (Woolf, [1919] 1999a: 100) Woolf distinguishes the female from the male world as two separated spheres dominated by different codes:

These short, but clearly marked, periods of separation between the sexes were always used for an intimate postscript to what had been said at dinner, the sense of being women together, coming out most strongly when the male sex was, as if by some religious rite, secluded from the female. (Woolf, [1919] 1999a: 101)

The very same ‘masculine rite’ is used on other occasions by Woolf, such as in Mrs Dalloway’s party where “[t]he ladies were going upstairs” while the

³¹Likewise, Mr Ramsay turns to a Walter Scott’s novel in *To the Lighthouse* (1927).

gentlemen were “still in the dining-room, drinking tokay!” (Woolf, [1925] 2000a: 146-147) and in *The Voyage Out* (1915) as described above.

William Rodney forms part of Mr Hilbery’s rigid and hegemonic male world, “[a] man naturally alive to the conventions of society...” (Woolf, [1919] 1999a: 256) He is introduced as a man of high intelligence and utmost sensibility, which is demonstrated by his enthusiastic love of poetry and his scholarly theories about forms of art. However, there is a side of him that presents him as a frustrated poet and dramatist, who often subjects others to his mediocre works. He embodies all those ‘manly’ qualities that Mary Datchet criticises: “Men are such pedants — they don’t know what things matter, and what things don’t.” (Woolf, [1919] 1999a: 89) His over exaggerated attachment to hegemonic icons of masculinity make of him a grotesque caricature. This is the case of his strong patronising view about women shown throughout and in a conversation with Katherine — “...he was strictly conventional where women were concerned...” (Woolf, [1919] 1999a: 256):

‘But for me I suppose you would recommend marriage?’
said Katherine, with her eyes fixed on the moon.
‘Certainly I should. Not for you only, but for all women. Why,
you’re nothing at all without it; you’re only half alive; using only
half your faculties; you must feel that for yourself. That is why —’
(Woolf [1919] 1999: 64)

Katherine does not fit in Rodney’s ideal of femininity as Cassandra does. While Katherine represents new generation’s ideas about marriage and gender — in William’s eyes “[s]he lives...one of those odious, self-centered lives — at least, I think them odious for a woman — feeding her wits upon everything, having control of everything, getting far too much her own way at home...” (Woolf, [1919] 1999a: 70) — , Cassandra, instead, seems to suit better “the Angel in the House” archetype.³² William detects that Katherine does not stand for traditionally constructed femininity — she defines herself as “not domestic,

³²The Victorian ideal of femininity — the patient, sacrificing and subordinated wife — is depicted in “The Angel in the House,” a popular poem by Coventry Patmore, published in 1854. In “Professions for Women,” a paper Woolf read to The Women’s Service League in 1931, which focused on the need to put an end to such a damaging and constraining ideal for women — “[k]illing the Angel in the House was part of the occupation of a woman writer ” (Woolf, [1931] 2011: 481), Woolf affirms — Virginia Woolf fights against this archetype: “...if I were going to review books I should need to battle with a certain phantom...The Angel in the House...She was intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed herself daily...in short, she was so constituted that she never had a mind or a wish of her own, but preferred to

or very practical or sensible, really” (Woolf, [1919] 1999a: 201) — from a very early stage in their courtship when Katherine laughs at his concern about social conventions and people talking about them being seen together at nearly twelve o’clock at night: “I know I always seem to you [Katherine] highly ridiculous. But I can’t help having inherited certain traditions and trying to put them into practice.” (Woolf, [1919] 1999a: 66)

In fact, he is certainly putting patriarchal traditions into practice, as he shows in the very same episode when he literally forces Katherine to take a taxi-cab in her way back home after a walk with him; the proper thing to do for a woman in his mind. William feels impelled to exercise his patriarchal authority over her so as to follow his rigid gender standards — in this case, a defenseless woman cannot walk on her own at this time of night. Katherine expresses her desire to walk home and challenges Rodney’s insistence on her taking the taxi-cab by mocking his unease about people’s talk:

Katherine laughed and walked on so quickly that both Rodney and the taxi-cab had to increase their pace to keep up with her.

‘Now William,’ she said, ‘if people see me racing along the Embankment like this they *will* talk. You had far better say good night, if you don’t want people to talk.’

At this William beckoned, with a despotic gesture, to the cab with one hand, and with the other he brought Katherine to a standstill. (Woolf, [1919] 1999a: 66-67)

William, the despotic patriarch, subordinates Katherine’s desire to his own paternalistic and domineering decision: “William shut the door sharply, gave the address to the driver, and turned away, lifting his hat punctiliously high in farewell to the invisible lady.” (Woolf, [1919] 1999a: 67) Woolf’s tone in this description caricatures William’s attitude; the patriarchal tyrant, the despotic patriarch, uses the pomp, rituals and paraphernalia of hegemonic male figurations, by lifting the hat rather extravagantly³³ to show his triumph over the

sympathize always with the minds and wishes of others. Above all...she was pure. Her purity was supposed to be her chief beauty...” (Woolf, [1931] 2011: 480) William Rodney has a rigid and patriarchal ideal — the Victorian ideal of The Angel in the House — of what femininity should be like which can be glimpsed in that episode when he reads his work to Katherine looking for her criticism: “I don’t ask your criticism, as I should ask a scholar. I dare say there are only five men in England whose opinion of my work matters a straw to me. But I trust you where feeling is concerned.” (Woolf, [1919] 1999a: 143) Rodney excludes women from scholarly issues and focuses on their archetypal potential for emotion.

³³Woolf uses this image of the hat as a symbol of hegemonic gentlemanliness in *Mrs Dallaway*

invisibilised Other. Rodney is presented as “...the urbane gentleman, who balanced his cup of tea and poised a slice of bread and butter on the edge of the saucer.” (Woolf, [1919] 1999a: 331) However, on more than one occasion, his gentleman manners are revealed as superficial as Mr Hilbery’s: “Her [Katherine’s] preoccupied naturalness was in strange contrast to her father’s pomposity and to William’s military rigidity.” (Woolf, [1919] 1999a: 493)

Ralph Denham, Katherine’s alter-ego, on the other hand, embodies a more fluid construction of masculinity. He combines feminine and masculine traits.³⁴ Ralph is depicted by Mary Datchet as “astonishingly odd.” (Woolf, [1919] 1999a: 130-131) He is different: “...she was accustomed to find young men very ready to talk about themselves, and had come to listen to them as one listens to children, without any thought of herself. But with Ralph, she had very little of this maternal feeling, and, in consequence, a much keener sense of her own individuality.” (Woolf, [1919] 1999a: 131-132) Ralph Denham seems to break away from male arrogance and chauvinism, providing Mary with a space to hold a conversation on equal terms. Nevertheless, in his ambivalence towards patriarchal codes, Ralph cannot help fantasising about him dominating and possessing Katherine. Ralph inherits the most profound patriarchal urge; what Woolf describes in *A Room of One’s Own* (1929) as “the instinct for possession, the rage for acquisition.” (Woolf, [1929] 2000b: 40)

In addition, he refuses to be associated with hegemonic masculine rites and pomp. An example of this might be found in his refusal to shoot with Mary’s brothers in his visit to her family’s house in the countryside:

‘I won’t shoot, but I’ll come with you,’ said Ralph.

‘Don’t you care about shooting?’ asked Edward, whose suspicions were not yet laid to rest.

‘I’ve never shot in my life,’ said Ralph, turning and looking him in the face, because he was not sure how this confession would be received. (Woolf, [1919] 1999a: 196)

with Hugh Whitbread in his encounter with Clarissa, as will be discussed in my analysis of the male characters in this novel in chapter 3 ‘molar and molecular masculinities.’

³⁴Likewise, Katherine presents ‘unwomanly’ attitudes that undermine female social constraints. Her craving for rationality, for instance, and her interest in science subvert traditional expectations of women’s psychic experience: “Perhaps the unwomanly nature of science made her instinctively wish to conceal her love of it. But the more profound reason was that in her mind mathematics were directly opposed to literature.” (Woolf, [1919] 1999a: 42) Her ‘unwomanly’ manners are also highlighted in her visit to William when “...Katherine drew off her gloves, and crossed her legs with a gesture that was rather masculine in its ease.” (Woolf, [1919] 1999a: 139)

His “unmanly” attitude raises Edward’s suspicions, who asks Ralph: “‘But won’t you find it rather dull — just watching us?’” (Woolf, [1919] 1999a: 196) Ralph’s choice is evidently contrasted with Rodney’s, who despite acknowledging his distaste for shooting, affirms that ‘...one has to do it, unless one wants to be altogether out of things.’” (Woolf, [1919] 1999a: 211) Where Ralph diverges from the hegemonic male construction, Rodney sees an opportunity to define himself and not ‘to be out’ of the patriarchal discourse he embraces.

Ralph Denham combines both patriarchal male traits and traditionally female constructed characteristics. We are introduced to him as a hybrid:

His eyes, expressive now of the usual masculine impersonality and authority, might reveal more subtle emotions under favorable circumstances, for they were large, and of a clear, brown color; —they seemed unexpectedly to hesitate and speculate...(Woolf, [1919] 1999a: 11)

His complex and ambivalent gender construction incorporates both the hegemonic masculine façade and a more nuanced — feminised — potential for emotion. He is openly emotional — Katherine considers him “very inexperienced and very emotional” (Woolf, [1919] 1999a: 401) — and he is sometimes overridden by his feelings. An example of his emotional drives is that episode when Ralph is about to propose to Mary and he is suddenly invaded by an overwhelming emotion:

...his eyes filled involuntarily with tears. He would have liked to lay his head on her shoulder and sob, while she parted his hair with her fingers and soothed him and said:

‘There, there. Don’t cry! Tell me why you’re crying—’ (Woolf, [1919] 1999a: 237)

Once again, Ralph’s ‘unmanly’ manners clash with Rodney’s, who, after being rejected by Katherine, cannot cope with his own emotionality: “He brushed off his face any trace that might remain of that unseemly exhibition of emotion.” (Woolf, [1919] 1999a: 256)

Woolf’s third novel, *Jacob’s Room* (1922),³⁵ the novel by which Woolf felt

³⁵Set in pre-war England, *Jacob’s Room* tells the short life story of Jacob Flanders, from his childhood in Scarborough, his university years in Cambridge (Trinity College), his friendship with Timmy Durrant and Bonamy, his relationship with Clara Durrant and Florinda, the prostitute whom he has an affair with, a trip to Italy and Greece, where he falls in love, to his death in the First World War.

that she had finally found her own voice,³⁶ presents an elegiac *Bildungsroman* narrative by which Jacob's story is mainly conducted through different female voices that witnessed his life — Betty Flanders, Clara Durrant, Florinda, and even Sandra Wentworth Williams, among many other minor female characters. It can be argued that in *Jacob's Room* (1922) Woolf's experimentation with the narrative voice has an immediate effect on gender constructions. Woolf's narrative presents a steady scepticism about patriarchal hegemonic definitions of masculinity throughout. Mrs Norman's thoughts voice this impression, "...it is a fact that men are dangerous" (Woolf, [1922] 1992a: 23), a suspicion that permeates throughout the novel. Jacob, despite representing the male institutional world of Cambridge and the nation, is constantly objectified and, therefore, feminised by the feminine gaze of a wide range of female focalisers that approach him. Jacob's identity is repeatedly problematised by these multiple focalisers and the narrator, who usually depicts him with a certain hint of sarcasm.

Moreover, there is a side of him which is not associated with the patriarchal male iconography he stands for. There are a few traditionally female habits that reside in his gender identity. When he was a child, Jacob was better identified with his butterfly hunting rather than with cricket, an emblem of British manliness — "Jacob is after his butterflies as usual," said Mrs. Flanders irritably, but was surprised by a sudden afterthought, 'Cricket begins this week, of course.' " (Woolf, [1922] 1992a: 22) Likewise, in a visit to the Durrants', Jacob does not hide his participation in female-dominated domestic activities, such as winding a ball of wool, which is to be identified with Mrs Durrant throughout:

'Shall I hold your wool?' Jacob asked stiffly.

'You do that for your mother,' said Mrs. Durrant, looking at him again keenly, as she transferred the skein. 'Yes, it goes much better.'
(Woolf, [1922] 1992a: 51)

However, there are exceptional times when we access Jacob's mind and perspective. This is the case of the episode in Cambridge, the great paragon of

³⁶"There is no doubt in my mind that I have found out how to begin (at 40) to say something in my own voice..." (Woolf, [1920-1924] 1978b: 186) *Jacob's Room*, considered her first modernist novel, was primarily a formal and stylistic project, where Woolf explored the idea that voice is unstable and dynamic. The main aim was to structure a story around the thoughts of an observing and interpreting Other, which was already experimented in the short stories "An Unwritten Novel," "The Mark on the Wall," and "Kew Gardens," compiled in her short story collection *Monday or Tuesday* published in 1921, which became the *avant-project* for the novel.

the patriarchal academic world. Woolf depicts this male-dominated institution with the pomp and cult of manliness displayed within British masculine tradition that she will develop in her forthcoming novels; an almost military parade of hegemonic emblems of masculinity marching under the airily gowns of Cambridge.

Look, as they pass into service, how airily the gowns blow out, as though nothing dense and corporeal were within. What sculpted faces, what certainty, authority controlled by piety, although great boots march under the gowns. In what orderly procession they advance. Thick wax candles stand upright; young men rise in white gowns...(Woolf, [1922] 1992a: 24-25)

Jacob fits very well into this world. His reactions against it are superficial and his very strong sense of belonging to the masculine elite shows a glimpse of arrogance which is judged by the narrative tone as pompous and artificial: "...the future depends entirely upon six young men. And as Jacob was one of them, no doubt he looked a little regal and pompous as he turned his page..." (Woolf, [1922] 1992a: 92) Jacob Flanders, impregnated by the patriarchal values promoted by an institution that epitomises patriarchal authority, embraces misogynist discourses about women so deeply rooted in academia:

But this service in King's College Chapel — why allow women to take part in it?...No one would think of bringing a dog into church. For though a dog is all very well on a gravel path, and shows no disrespect to flowers, the way he wanders down an aisle, looking, lifting a paw, and approaching a pillar with a purpose that makes the blood run cold with horror (should you be one of a congregation — alone, shyness is out of the question), a dog destroys the service completely. So do these women — though separately devout, distinguished, and vouched for by the theology, mathematics, Latin, and Greek of their husbands. Heaven knows why it is. For one thing, thought Jacob, they're as ugly as sin. (Woolf, [1922] 1992a: 25-26)

Jacob seems to be deeply concerned about the intrusion of the female into the masculine world of academia. He is presented as a fierce defender of the male-dominated status of education. Jacob denies women's ability to think for themselves. Dependent on their husband's knowledge and devotion, women at King's College Chapel disturb Jacob, who considers them to be "as ugly as sin" maybe as ugly as Julia Hedge, the feminist who waits for her books in the

British Museum Reading Room with her untied shoe laces. Julia Hedge is also an intruder subject in the male-dominated sphere of the Reading Room presided by the dome of the British Museum, which epitomises phallogocentric literary tradition. The unbroken file round the dome is suggestive of the potential for the male canon to permeate. The file is unbroken and does not leave room for female writers: “And she [Julia Hedge] read them all round the dome — the names of great men which remind us — ‘Oh damn,’ said Julia Hedge, ‘why didn’t they leave room for an Eliot or Brönte?’ ” (Woolf, [1922] 1992a: 91) This is the phallogocentric tradition Jacob aligns himself with.

Another instance of Jacob’s misogynist views about women may be found in his patronising ideas about Florinda: “But it did occur to Jacob, half-way through dinner, to wonder whether she had a mind.” (Woolf, [1922] 1992a: 67) Jacob underestimates Florinda’s intelligence on a number of occasions and he dismisses her as a “brainless” (Woolf, [1922] 1992a: 69) and “stupid woman.” (Woolf, [1922] 1992a: 69)

In addition, after Jacob’s irritated reactions against the women in the Acropolis, the narrator predicts — in an annotation in parenthesis — Jacob’s patriarchal fate: “This violent disillusionment is generally to be expected in young men in the prime of life, sound of mind and limb, who will soon become fathers of families and directors of banks.” (Woolf, [1922] 1992a: 132-133) The narrator diagnoses this disillusionment or misogyny as a typical symptom of the patriarchal mind and, at the same time, condemns Jacob to the inescapable fate of the patriarchal mandate.

In spite of these examples of misogyny, Jacob “...had a violent reversion towards male society, cloistered rooms, and the works of the classics; and was ready to turn with wrath upon whoever it was who had fashioned life thus.” (Woolf, [1922] 1992a: 69) He is trapped in this paradox by which he venerates the segregating and chauvinistic values promoted by educational institutions — such as the exclusion of the female subject from the academic world —, but at the same time, he seems to revolt against male academicism and ultimately male chauvinism.

There is an ambivalence of his inner thoughts about women which are to be contrasted with the previous episodes. An example of this ambivalence is his concern about equality with regard to women: “...for women, thought Jacob, are just the same as men — innocence such as this is marvellous enough, and perhaps not so foolish after all.” (Woolf, [1922] 1992a: 66) Jacob’s gender identity seems to be torn between late-Victorian and Edwardian hegemonic constructions of masculinity and new and more fluid male figurations, although his revolt looks pretty dim:

...‘I am what I am, and intend to be it,’ for which there will be no form in the world unless Jacob makes one for himself. The Plumers will try to prevent him from making it. Wells and Shaw and the serious sixpenny weeklies will sit on its head. Every time he lunches out on Sunday — at dinner parties and tea parties — there will be this same shock — horror — discomfort — then pleasure, for he draws into him at every step as he walks...(Woolf, [1922] 1992a: 28)

Jacob reacts against older generations, the traditional hegemonic male figurations embodied by Mr Plumer, but at the same time, as the narrator points out, Jacob will be constrained by the patriarchal tradition that Mr Plumer epitomises, a masculine tradition where Jacob is comfortably accommodated. Mr Plumer is depicted as follows:

Cold grey eyes George Plumer had, but in them was an abstract light. He could talk about Persia and the Trade winds, the Reform Bill and the cycle of the harvests. Books were on his shelves by Wells and Shaw; on the table serious six-penny weeklies written by pale men in muddy boots — the weekly creak and screech of brains rinsed in cold water and wrung dry — melancholy papers.

‘I don’t feel that I know the truth about anything till I’ve read them both!’ said Mrs. Plumer...(Woolf, [1922] 1992a: 27)

Mr Plumer stands for the hegemonic male virtues that will haunt Jacob throughout his life. He has a good command of issues concerning the male-dominated public sphere (such as the Reform Bill). He is associated with writers who, according to Woolf, delineate rigid ‘Edwardian materialism,’³⁷ a tradition that Woolf will try to counteract with more fluid literary forms and characterisations (and, consequently, more fluid and complex constructions of gender) and

³⁷In “Modern Fiction” (1925), Woolf catalogues authors such as Shaw, Wells, Galsworthy, and Bennet as the ‘Edwardian materialists,’ who she condemns for having deprived literature of its natural flow of reality. Woolf distinguishes between the “materialists,” the solid, popular writers of her day, and the “spiritualists,” those experimental writers who are looking for “reality” in unconventional ways, the modernists: “Mr Wells, Mr Bennett, and Mr Galsworthy have excited so many hopes and disappointed them so persistently that our gratitude largely takes the form of thanking them for having shown us what they might have done but have not done...If we tried to formulate our meaning in one word we should say that these three writers are materialists. It is because they are concerned not with the spirit but with the body that they have disappointed us, and left us with the feeling that the sooner English fiction turns its back upon them, as politely as may be, and marches, if only into the desert, the better for its soul.” (Woolf, [1925-1928] 1994: 158)

that Jacob feels repulsed by, convinced that “...the future depends entirely upon six young men” (Woolf, [1922] 1992a: 92) — a possible reference to the Bloomsbury group. Finally, Mr Plumer is related to the intellectual weeklies, such as the *Spectator* and the *Economist*, the “higher journalism” which addressed the hegemony of Woolf’s society.

In Jacob’s boat trip with Timothy Durrant, a male-bonding experience, the narrator makes sure that the scene does not contain any homoerotic overtones:

His [Timothy Durrant’s] calculations had worked perfectly, and really the sight of him sitting there, with his hand on the tiller, rosy gilled, with a sprout of beard, looking sternly at the stars, then at a compass, spelling out quite correctly his page of the eternal lesson-book, would have moved a woman. Jacob, of course, was not a woman. The sight of Timmy Durrant was no sight for him, nothing to set against the sky and worship; far from it. They had quarrelled. (Woolf, [1922] 1992a: 38)

Jacob is not only not feminised but he is hyper masculinised in this scene, where he fulfills the rigid gender expectations that require male characters to perform differently from women; for he “was not a woman.”

Furthermore, Jacob Flanders displays his gentleman’s manners on a number of occasions. His gentleman’s manners are ascribed to icons of hegemonic masculinity: “...Jacob thought and spoke — so he crossed his legs — filled his pipe — sipped his whisky, and once looked at his pocket-book, rumpling his hair...” (Woolf, [1922] 1992a: 61) He enjoys masculine rites and ceremonies like smoking cigars and drinking whisky, constructed male performances, gender-based codes of behaviour which reveal the hegemonic constructions of masculinity: “Gentlemen, feeling for matches, moved-out, and Jacob went into the bar with Brandy Jones to smoke with the rustics.” (Woolf, [1922] 1992a: 87) Florinda outlines Jacob’s gender construction within the hegemonic parametres of gender codes.

...he had grown to be a man, and was about to be immersed in things — as indeed the chambermaid, emptying his basin upstairs, fingering keys, studs, pencils, and bottles of tabloids strewn on the dressing-table, was aware.

That he had grown to be a man was a fact that Florinda knew, as she knew everything, by instinct. (Woolf, [1922] 1992a: 122)

Jacob has been trained to be a man as much as the chambermaid has been trained to clean. His gender identity has been socially constructed within a

framework of meanings produced in a patriarchal society where this identity is defined in opposition to those virtues attributed to women. The patriarchal machinery offers him a privileged position in the social scale, but this privileged position turns to be arbitrary; there is nothing heroic or grand in him. Jacob is a paradigmatic young man of his ‘type’, a potential member of the Establishment. However, as I have pointed out before, Jacob Flanders does not fit one hundred per cent in gender-based codes of male behaviour, as Fanny Elmer proves ironically at the Empire music hall:

And for ever the beauty of young men seems to be set in smoke, however lustily they chase footballs, or drive cricket balls, dance, run, or stride along roads. Possibly they are soon to lose it. Possibly they look into the eyes of faraway heroes, and take their station among us half contemptuously, she thought (vibrating like a fiddle-string, to be played on and snapped). Anyhow, they love silence, and speak beautifully, each word falling like a disc new cut, not a hubble-bubble of small smooth coins such as girls use; and they move decidedly, as if they knew how long to stay and when to go — oh, but Mr. Flanders was only gone to get a programme. (Woolf, [1922] 1992a: 102)

Despite his misogyny and his devotion for masculine pomp (his gentleman’s manners and his loyalty to the male-centred academic world), Jacob Flanders used to go butterfly hunting instead of playing cricket as a child, he rejects the ‘Edwardian materialists’ — phallogocentric literary tradition — by advocating for new and more flexible modern forms, and, finally, he is depicted with irony by Florinda as not fulfilling his role as a gentleman.

Gender remains a subtext in the novel. From the very beginning in chapter two Woolf problematises fixed gender identities and the power relations behind them, a patriarchal schema that seems to resonate in Mr Dickens’s — the bath-chair man — mind: “He liked to think that while he chatted with Mrs. Barfoot on the front, he helped the Captain on his way to Mrs. Flanders. He, a man, was in charge of Mrs. Barfoot, a woman.” (Woolf, [1922] 1992a: 20) This patriarchal dictum will be questioned throughout the whole novel.

Woolf’s fourth novel, *Mrs Dalloway* (1925),³⁸ stands, in my eyes, as one of the most overt examples of Woolf’s contrast between rigid hegemonic and alternative fluid gender constructions. One of the opening scenes of the novel

³⁸*Mrs Dalloway* tells the story of one day in the life of Clarissa Dalloway when she is giving a party.

illustrates the deeply-rooted paraphernalia associated with masculinity and the cult of manliness displayed within British masculine tradition. As an official car, “with its blinds drawn and an air of inscrutable reserve” (Woolf, [1925] 2000a: 13), drives through the streets of London, the men in the crowd react with great admiration and reverence:

Tall men, men of robust physique, well-dressed men with their tail-coats and their white slips and their hair raked back who, for reasons difficult to discriminate, were standing in the bow window of White’s with their hands behind the tails of their coats, looking out, perceived instinctively that greatness was passing, and the pale light of the immortal presence fell upon them as it had fallen upon Clarissa Dalloway. At once they stood even straighter, and removed their hands, and seemed ready to attend their Sovereign. (Woolf, [1925] 2000a: 14-15)

This scene serves as the framework for all male gender formations in the novel, where there is a parade of hegemonic representations of masculinity epitomised by The Prime Minister, Richard Dalloway, Hugh Whitbread, Dr Holmes, Sir William Bradshaw, Mr Parry, and Professor Brierly to be contested by means of more fluid male figurations represented by Peter Walsh and Septimus Warren Smith. Woolf creates characters that represent traditional British masculinity, the ideal male of the period. She caricaturises the pomp and ‘greatness’ of the hegemonic male subject position, and suggests alternatives.

In addition, while Virginia Woolf addresses a harsh criticism towards traditional patriarchal representations of masculinity, she also hints at the constraining effects that rigid patriarchal gender formations have upon male characters themselves. This is specially true for Richard Dalloway, whose inability to express his love for his wife seems to be part of the patriarchal constraints imposed upon men in patriarchal societies, where they are deprived of any sort of emotional language: “Here he was walking across London to say to Clarissa in so many words that he loved her. Which one never does say, he thought.” (Woolf, [1925] 2000a: 101) Richard fantasises about the idea of openly showing his emotions — “For he would say it in so many words, when he came into the room” (Woolf, [1925] 2000a: 102) — , when he is aware of patriarchal social conventions and expectations: to show emotion is a feminine code to be associated with women, to break away from the hegemonic ideal of manliness, something that men like Dalloway find abhorrent.

Despite his best intentions, — [b]ecause it is a thousand pities never to say what one feels...(Woolf, [1925] 2000: 102) — Richard Dalloway feels simply

trapped in the archetype he embodies, handing Clarissa the flowers in silence. Richard Dalloway, like the traditional men he represents, is a prisoner of hegemonic masculinity, trapped in a system of expectations and programmed by a system of indoctrination that proves extremely effective in keeping manly men from breaking with acceptable modes of conduct. Finally, Richard, both victim and victimizer of the hegemonic discourse of manliness, fails to express his own feelings towards his wife.

A whole chapter — chapter 3: ‘Molar and molecular masculinities’ — is devoted to the analysis of the different kinds of representations of masculinities in *Mrs Dalloway* and *Orlando*. The central male characters in the novel are Septimus Warren Smith and Peter Walsh, whose more nuanced gender constructions challenge the rigid hegemonic representations posed by characters like Richard Dalloway, Hugh Whitbread and Sir William Bradshaw. Peter Walsh displays characteristics that correspond to traditionally patriarchal masculine performances — such as his admiration for the colonial pomp and his fantasies of himself as an adventurer, a romantic buccaneer —, but he is also presented as an outsider of patriarchal society, by incorporating some codes which are not commonly accepted within his gender identity — for instance, he is feminised by his tears on more than one occasion. This is also the case of Septimus Warren Smith, who introduces a number of concerns about men in post-war Britain in relation to the pressures they faced to conform.

Woolf’s fifth novel, her poetic novel *To the Lighthouse* (1927),³⁹ offers a more nuanced version of the rigid patriarchal ‘type.’ While Mr Ramsay stands as an emblem of traditional masculinity, as the patriarchal father,⁴⁰ he is a far more

³⁹The novel basically narrates the course of two days, separated by ten years, in the life of the Ramsays and their guests, and it is divided into three sections: ‘The Window’, ‘Time Passes,’ and ‘To the Lighthouse.’ In the first section we are introduced to the Ramsays and their guests in their holiday house in the Isle of Sky around 1910. This section ends with the celebration of Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle’s engagement — two of Ramsays’ guests. The second section focuses on the description of time passing in the house, which metaphorically accounts for time transformations: the death of Mrs Ramsay, the death of her son Andrew in the war, and the death of her daughter Prue in childbirth. In the final section, the Ramsays and their guests return to their summer house after ten years. Mr Ramsay finally takes the trip they never took in section one. He imposes it on his son James and his daughter Cam, who finally seem to come to terms with their father. Parallel to the trip, Lily Briscoe, one of their guests, finally completes the picture she had in her mind since section one of the novel.

⁴⁰Mr Ramsay is introduced as the patriarchal source of authority in his family, the archetypal father of the Oedipal family, a patriarchal tyrant: “incapable of untruth; never tampered with a fact; never altered a disagreeable word to suit the pleasure or convenience of any mortal being, least of all his own children.” (Woolf, [1927] 1999b: 8) In the opening scene of the novel, Mr Ramsay is described as a domineering father who represses James’s desire to go to the Lighthouse. He corrects Mrs Ramsay’s hopeful answer to James’s demand to go to the Light-

complex and multifaceted character than the patriarchs depicted in other novels such as *Mrs Dalloway* (1925).

On the one hand, Mr and Mrs Ramsay's relationship follows the hegemonic pattern of the patriarchal husband and the docile submissive wife, the perfect specimen of the Angel in the House, who is subordinated to the law of her husband as the closing words of Part One indicate: "‘Yes, you were right. It’s going to be wet tomorrow.’ She had not said it, but he knew it. And she looked at him smiling. For she had triumphed again." (Woolf, [1927] 1999b: 167) She is the perfect wife. She adores and venerates her husband: "There was nobody whom she revered as she revered him" (Woolf, [1927] 1999b: 45), "...she was not good enough to tie his shoe strings, she felt." (Woolf, [1927] 1999b: 45) Therefore, her triumph must be read within the framework of patriarchal relations; she is a wife,⁴¹ who succeeds in magnifying her husband's subject position, insofar as Mrs Ramsay feels a profound respect towards patriarchy:

Indeed, she had the whole of the other sex under her protection; for reasons she could not explain, for their chivalry and valour, for the fact that they negotiated treaties, ruled India, controlled finance; finally for an attitude towards herself which no woman could fail to feel or to find agreeable, something trustful, childlike, reverential...(Woolf, [1927] 1999b: 10-11)

Forming part of this patriarchal machine, Mr Ramsay, a philosopher and academic, sees himself as a heroic masculine figure. He calls on the 'tradition' of adventurers, the great explorers of British tradition, and embraces the language of manliness. His exaggerated self-image is counterpoised with his decaying end, stagnated in the Q of his alphabet,⁴² for "[n]othing would make

house, "[y]es, of course, if it's fine tomorrow,"" (Woolf, [1927] 1999b: 8), by affirming that "‘it won't be fine.’" He is shown as the patriarchal father in charge of his household. James depicts him as "standing, as now, lean as knife, narrow as the blade of one, grinning sarcastically, not only with pleasure of disillusioning his son and casting ridicule upon his wife, who was ten thousand times better in every way than he was (James thought)..." (Woolf, [1927] 1999b: 8) His son hates him, "...most of all he hated the twang and twitter of his father's emotion which, vibrating round them, disturbed the perfect simplicity and good sense of his relations with his mother." (Woolf, [1927] 1999b: 51) Mr Ramsay embraces the patriarchal discourse of rationality and rejects Mrs Ramsay's attachment to the world of emotionality.

⁴¹Mrs Ramsay feels compelled to perpetuate the values of her marriage among other characters. This is the case of her interest in getting Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle together, as well as Lily Briscoe and William Bankes — an attempt that proves to be unsuccessful in both cases, and that ultimately challenges these very same values.

⁴²"...his splendid mind had no sort of difficulty in running over those letters one by one,

Mr Ramsay move on.” (Woolf, [1927] 1999b: 51-52) William Bankes corroborates his stagnation by stating that Mr Ramsay did his best work when he was younger and that his philosophical work has not evolved much since then.

While Woolf views men like Dalloway, William Bradshaw, Rodney, Mr Ambrose as static and unthinking, Ramsay’s self-delusion makes the point that this group of men are hollow and that their tradition of heroism is as artificial and vague as them. Mr Ramsay’s belief that he is somehow heroic fits perfectly within the boundaries of traditional British manliness. Despite not having done anything glorious, he has reached what he believes to be his intellectual peak, nothing more. Woolf satirises middle class sensibilities of masculine heroism as she did in *Mrs Dalloway* with characters like Peter Walsh and Septimus Warren Smith, for whom the heroic dimension of the colonial enterprise and the war had a devastating impact, leaving in them a deep sense of failure.

On the other hand, Mr Ramsay is self-reflective, childish and insecure — as Lily Briscoe notes: a man that seemed to “...depend so much as he did upon people’s praise” (Woolf, [1927] 1999b: 33) —, qualities which cannot be inscribed in hegemonic codes of manliness. Woolf’s archetypical patriarchal tyrants — as for instance Hugh Whitbread, Sir William Bradshaw and Dr Holmes in *Mrs Dalloway* — lack any sort of depth, and, accommodated in their hegemonic gender roles, they do not need to question their subject positions.

This is not the case of Mr Ramsay, who, despite being petty, selfish, vain, egotistical, spoilt and tyrannical, according to Lily Briscoe (Woolf, [1927] 1999b: 35), is constantly obsessed with his insecurities: “He was a failure, he said.” (Woolf, [1927] 1999b: 52) Mr Ramsay is not a self-confident character, he is deeply concerned about others’ opinions about him. As an academic he feels insecure with his work — he feels that “[h]e had no genius.” (Woolf, [1927] 1999b: 49) — and with his legacy — he is convinced that “[i]t is permissible even for a dying hero to think before he dies how men will speak of him hereafter.” (Woolf, [1927] 1999b: 49) As a husband, Mr Ramsay is needy and absolutely dependent on his wife, and he expects her to mother him, to comfort him, as James observes: “...the arid scimitar of his father, the egotistical man, plunged and smote, demanding sympathy [from his mother].” (Woolf, [1927] 1999b: 53) This is something that Mrs Ramsay cannot tolerate since it challenges the patriarchal precept of women’s inferiority and a wife’s subordination to her

firmly and accurately, until it had reached, say, the letter Q. He reached Q. Very few people in the whole of England ever reach Q...But after Q? What comes next? After Q there are a number of letters the last of which is scarcely visible to mortal eyes...Z is only reached once by one man in a generation.” (Woolf, [1927] 1999b: 47) Mr Ramsay’s linearity of thinking is not capable of embracing life as Mrs Ramsay does.

husband, two principles which she inscribes her femininity in:

[S]he did not like, even for a second, to feel finer than her husband...Universities and people wanting him, lectures and books and their being of the highest importance — all that she did not doubt for a moment; but it was their relation, and his coming to her like that, openly, so that any one could see, that discomposed her; for then people said he depended on her, when they must know that of the two he was infinitely the more important, and what she gave the world, in comparison with what he gave, negligible. (Woolf, [1927] 1999b: 54-55)

Moreover, Mrs Ramsay, willing to promote the patriarchal values of marriage and very aware of her husband's insecurities, detests Mr Ramsay's vulnerability, insofar as it digresses from her ideal of masculinity. He seems to her to have had a mind for extraordinary concepts — questionable in his latest work — and a tendency to fail to deal with the ordinary world.

But then again, it was the other thing too — not being able to tell him the truth, being afraid, for instance, about the greenhouse roof and the expense it would be, fifty pounds perhaps to mend it; and then about his books, to be afraid that he might guess, what she a little suspected, that his last book was not quite his best book (she gathered that from William Bankes); and then to hide small daily things, and the children seeing it, and the burden it laid on them — all this diminished the entire joy, the pure joy, of the two notes sounding together, and let the sound die on her ear now with a dismal flatness. (Woolf, [1927] 1999b: 55)

Mr Ramsay's patriarchal authority is undermined by the dichotomy through which Lily Briscoe and William Bankes approach him: "how strange he was venerable and laughable at one and the same time." (Woolf, [1927] 1999b: 63) Mr Ramsay's gender construction is both glorious within the patriarchal hegemonic imagery and laughable in its artificiality.

Charles Tansley, a guest, one of Mr Ramsay's students and the greatest disciple of his patriarchal discourse and his most rigid male side, is presented as a pompous, pedantic, self-centred male character, — "He was such a miserable specimen, the children said, all humps and hollows...a sarcastic brute, Andrew said." (Woolf, [1927] 1999b: 12) He struggles for power in every conversation by using his intellectual and academic jargon to diminish other's perspectives:

When they talked about something interesting, people, music, history, anything, even said it was a fine evening so why not sit out of doors, then what they complained of about Charles Tansley was that until he had turned the whole thing round and made it somehow reflect himself and disparage them, put them all on edge somehow with his acid way of peeling the flesh and blood off everything, he was not satisfied. (Woolf, [1927] 1999b: 13)

Woolf draws a harsh criticism towards this patriarchal snob, whose will for power and flattery turns him into an artificial creature “an awful prig,” “an insufferable bore,” (Woolf, [1927] 1999b: 19) as Mrs Ramsay notes.

His male chauvinism is glimpsed specially with regard to women. In his patriarchal mind, women must be subordinated to male authority, insofar as men possess superior intellectual capabilities. In this line of thought, Charles Tansley asserts that women can neither paint nor write. What is more, he epitomises the phallogocentric tradition of academia, which has dismissed women from its activity. We learn from Lily Briscoe towards the end of the novel that he has been awarded an academic fellowship. Mr Tansley stands for the paradigmatic outcome of Jacob’s world.

Anyhow, Woolf’s novel hints at new incipient gender politics, which challenged old narratives of gender after the Great War: “Not only was furniture confounded; there was scarcely anything left of body or mind by which one could say ‘This is he’ or ‘This is she.’” (Woolf, [1927] 1999b: 172) The dominance of conventional masculine values has been saturated and as Mr Ramsay, the tyrannical patriarch, is approached in more nuanced terms, conventional gender roles are challenged by the painter Lily Briscoe and the poet Augustus Carmichael (a guest and an old college associate of Mr Ramsay). Mr Carmichael does not feel attracted to the public success that Mr Ramsay is tormented by. In fact, he is indifferent to patriarchal ambition.

Woolf’s sixth novel, *Orlando* (1928),⁴³ develops on Woolf’s polymorphous conception of gender. Woolf questions the very category ‘Man’ and ‘Woman’ and analyses gender as a socially functional limitation. This is how, Orlando’s multifaceted selves cannot be inscribed in the rigid gender binary opposition that society imposes upon him/her. With the help of Deleuzo-Guattarian framework, I will take Orlando as one of my cases of study to prove Woolf’s polymorphous concept of gender in chapter 3, ‘Molar and molecular masculinities’.

⁴³ *Orlando* (1928) narrates the story of an aristocrat that spans 400 years from the sixteenth to the twentieth century.

In Woolf's seventh novel, *The Waves* (1931),⁴⁴ male characters present a dichotomy between rigid gender constructions and fluid countertypes. Education stands out as one of the main institutions in charge of shaping rigid masculinities. Men are indoctrinated in their manliness. In fact, the real gender moulding does not begin until the sexes are divided and sent off to separate boarding schools. While the girls' education revolves around skills to be implemented in the domestic sphere, the boys are being instructed in the structure of power controlled by masculine hegemony. Two fundamental elements of the hegemonic patriarchal gender construction displayed in educational institutions are depicted in two different episodes.

Firstly, we are introduced to a scene in the chapel when Dr Crane delivers his sermon, which triggers very different reactions from Louis, Neville and Bernard. Dr Crane, an archetypical representative of patriarchal authority,⁴⁵ instructs his pupils in hegemonic patriarchal values through religion. The whole scene is depicted in martial terms by hyperbolising the rigid procedures of masculine pomp: "Now we march, two by two," said Louis, "orderly, processional, into chapel." (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 19) Whereas Louis is absolutely seduced by Dr Crane's totalitarian authority⁴⁶ and Neville is revolted by it,⁴⁷ Bernard

⁴⁴*The Waves* (1931) tells the story of a group of seven friends (Rhoda, Jinny, Susan, Bernard, Neville, Louis and Percival), from their childhood, college times, through their adulthood. The novel is structured by nine pastoral interludes, in italics, detailing a coastal scene at the different stages in a day from sunrise to sunset, that are alternated with the soliloquies of six of the main characters (all of them except for Percival who dies in India), that span the characters' lives. Bernard, who opens and closes the novel, is a story-teller obsessed with stories and language. Louis, from Australia, is a businessman whose world feels very different from the rest. Neville is a homosexual character, who becomes one of 'those dons in Cambridge.' Both Jinny and Susan accomplish female gender expectations: Jinny is a beautiful socialite and Susan moves to the countryside, gets married and has children. Rhoda, the most alienated and tormented of the group of friends, commits suicide. Finally, Percival is a heroic and mythical character that stands at the centre of the narrative despite dying midway through the novel. *The Waves* (1931) is one of the most experimental modernist texts written by Woolf, a poetic and theatrical novel: "I want to avoid chapters; that indeed is my achievement, if any here: a saturated, unchopped, completeness; changes of scene, of mood, of person, done without spilling a drop." (Woolf, [1925-1930] 1980: 343) The novel deals with the boundaries between individual and collective consciousness.

⁴⁵Woolf uses a general tone of mockery when describing patriarchal representatives. An example of this might be found in Neville's caricature of the Headmaster: "Behold, the Headmaster. Alas, that he should excite my ridicule. He is too leek, he is altogether too shiny and black, like some statue in a public garden. And on the left side of his waistcoat, his taut, his drum-like waistcoat, hangs a crucifix." (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 18)

⁴⁶"I rejoice; my heart expands in a bulk, in his authority. He lays the whirling dust clouds in my tremulous, my ignominiously agitated mind..." (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 20)

⁴⁷"The brute menaces my liberty," said Neville, "when he prays...The words of authority are

presents a distant critical attitude towards the patronizing and ridicule pose of the masculine headmaster: “Now he lurches back to his seat like a drunken sailor. It is an action that all the other masters will try to imitate; but, being flimsy, being floppy, wearing grey trousers, they will only succeed in making themselves ridiculous. I do not despise them. The antics seem pitiable in my eyes.” (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 21) His scepticism undermines Dr Crane presumed superiority. Both Bernard and Neville question the authority of Dr Crane. Anyhow, school has provided them with the main patriarchal parametres: “Above all, we have inherited traditions” (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 36), states Louis. School has provided the boys with the elements to construct themselves within the framework of the stereotypical masculine male.

Secondly, sport represents one of the activities fostered by public schools in order to exalt the cult of manliness. Sport is depicted as the result of a long patriarchal tradition, a male-bonding institution that reinforces a feeling of belonging to a larger group:

“The boasting boys,” said Louis, “have gone now in a vast team to play cricket. They have driven off in their great break, singing in chorus. All their heads turn simultaneously at the corner by the laurel bushes. Now they are boasting. Larpent’s brother played football for Oxford; Smith’s father made a century at Lords. Archie and Hugh; Parker and dalton; Larpent and Smith — the names repeat themselves; the names are the same always. They are the volunteers; they are the cricketers; they are the officers of the Natural History Society. (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 28)

However, this group is not opened to everyone, but just to those who embrace the hegemonic male codes of behaviour (such as competitiveness and athleticism). Louis, Neville and Bernard are excluded from this world. Neither Louis — the foreigner —, nor Neville — the effeminate — are allowed their entrance to it: “Only Bernard could go with them” (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 29), affirms Neville. However, Bernard does not seem to be interested: “Archie makes easily a hundred; I by fluke make sometimes fifteen.” (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 30)

Percival, on the other hand, comes across as the by-product of this masculine hegemony represented by his teachers, those “men in black gowns” (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 36), this older generation that has indoctrinated the new generations within this late-Victorian rigid values. There is a constant confrontation

corrupted by those who speak them. I gibe and mock at this sad religion, at these tremulous, grief-stricken figures advancing, cadaverous and wounded, down a white road shadowed by fig trees where boys sprawl in the dust...” (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 20)

between old narratives of gender and the advent of new definitions of masculinities in Woolf's novels. Nevertheless, though there is a sense of decay of these old gender discourses, Woolf is aware of gender politics of her time, as she presents characters from the new and younger generations that carry out residual discourses of gender, most clearly seen in Percival in *The Waves* (1931) and Rodney in *Night and Day* (1919).

The Waves presents an iconic figure of English hegemonic masculinity in Percival. He is depicted as a stereotypical young upper-middle class Englishman. He represents the archetype of manliness. He embraces all the hegemonic values of masculinity (class, gender conventions, patriotic values). His friends adore him. He stands in the story as a heroic figure, the paragon of manliness. Bernard describes him: "He [Percival] is conventional; he is the hero. The little boys trooped after him across the playing-fields. They blew their noses as he blew his nose, but unsuccessfully, for he is Percival." (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 80) Like Rodney and Mr Dalloway, Percival fulfills gender social expectations, that suit the requirements of British hegemonic masculinity; a lack of emotional depth, a devotion for sports and cricket, and an affiliation to the imperial project.

Through Percival, Woolf both describes the mythical dimension attributed to the representatives of rigid figurations of masculinity and denounces the absurdity and artificiality of masculine heroism — as she does with Mr Ramsay. Percival is depicted in hyperbolic terms in his most trivial actions. Louis observes him playing cricket:

Look now, how everybody follows Percival. He is heavy. He walks clumsily down the field, through the long grass, to where the great elm trees stand. His magnificence is that of some medieval commander. A wake of light seems to lie on the grass behind me. Look at us trooping after him, his faithful servants, to be shot like sheep, for he will certainly attempt some forlorn enterprise and die in battle. (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 21-22)

Louis describes him in chivalric terms (the medieval commander, the solid leader) and, at the same time, he envisions an epic heroic, and glorious destiny for him, dying in battle as a national martyr. Another example of this exaltation can be found in Bernard's projection of Percival's life in India:

But now, behold, Percival advances; Percival rides a flea-bitten mare, and wears a sun-helmet. By applying the standards of the West, by using the violent language that is natural to him, the Bullock-cart is righted in less than five minutes. The Oriental problem is solved.

He rides on; the multitude cluster round him, regarding him as if he were — what indeed he is — a God. (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 89)

Bernard constructs a mythical character, a God-like figure, which is ironically undermined by Percival's unheroic death — a trivial riding accident: ““He is dead,” said Neville. “He fell. His horse tripped.”” (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 98)

Paradoxically, Percival, the only character who is denied a voice — we approach him through the eyes of the rest of the characters —, remains at the center of the narration, even in his absence, after his death in India. Bernard affirms: “...without Percival there is no solidity. We are silhouettes, hollow phantoms moving mistily without a background.” (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 79) Percival embodies all the ideal hegemonic values and traits of masculinity that Neville, Bernard, and Louis pursue to embrace but cannot hold from their outsiders' subject position. By the end of the novel, Bernard recalls Percival's male mannerism and their unsuccessful attempt to mimic him:

He also had a way of flicking his hand to the back of his neck. His movements were always remarkable. We all flicked our hands to the backs of our heads — unsuccessfully. He had the kind of beauty which defends itself from any caress. (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 162)

Like Terence Hewet, Ralph Denham, Jacob Flanders, Mr Ramsay, Peter Walsh, and Septimus Warren Smith, the other three main male characters in *The Waves* (1931), Bernard, Louis and Neville, all display personality traits that separate them from a more traditional middle class understanding of rigid masculinity. What is more, Bernard, Louis and Neville are conscious of their multifaceted individuation. Bernard thinks to himself “I am not one and simple, but complex and many” (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 48), he realises that “[t]here are many rooms — many Bernards.” (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 174) Neville also perceives this complexity: “As he approaches I become not myself but Neville mixed with somebody — with whom? — with Bernard? Yes, it is Bernard, and it is to Bernard that I shall put the question, Who am I ?” (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 53) These characters are self-reflexive and they are aware of their complex and fluid identities. They are conscious of their otherness and their inability to conform social gender expectations, and this is why they live in the shadow of the ideal conformed by Percival.

Neville's overtly emotionality and his homosexual drives exceed the boundaries of socially accepted hegemonic masculinity. This is why he feels isolated from the patriarchal tradition of school: “There is nobody — here among these

grey arches, and moaning pigeons, and cheerful games and tradition and emulation, all so skillfully organised to prevent feeling alone.” (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 31) Percival shows a homophobic attitude towards Neville in front of the other cricketers: “He [Percival] despises me [Neville] for being too weak to play (yet he is always kind to my weakness). He despises me for not caring if they win or lose except that he cares.” (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 29) Therefore, Neville does not reveal his homosexual love for Percival to any of his friends, insofar as he is afraid that they will not understand. Neville’s sexual identity challenges gender social expectations.

Louis is not English, he is Australian, and as a colonial subject, he occupies an in-between position in a society that does not grant an appropriate place as an insider for him. Louis is aware of his otherness since school:

I know the lesson by heart. I know more than they will ever know...I could know everything in the world if I wished. But I do not wish to come to the top and say my lesson. My roots are threaded, like fibres in a flower-pot, round and round the world...Jinny and Susan, Bernard and Neville bind themselves into a thong with which to lash me. They laugh at my neatness, at my Australian accent. (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 10)

Despite being sure of his cognitive skills, he does not show them in front of the class, insofar as he is afraid of his friends’ ridiculing laughter. He will never fit into the English masculine hegemony since his marked colonial accent and his social status do not belong to Percival’s archetypical subject position: “His ascendancy was resented, as Percival’s was adored.” (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 163) Louis, as an outsider of the hegemonic codes of masculinity, embraces ambivalent feelings towards Percival’s world.

On the one hand, he feels envious: “...we will settle among the long grasses, while they play cricket. Could I be ‘they’ I would choose it.” (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 21) He wished he could fit into Percival’s world. On the other hand, he feels resentful: “I resent the power of Percival intensely...” (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 23) Trapped within this paradoxical feelings, Louis venerates the archetypical ideal of manliness Percival epitomises — “Yet it is Percival I need; for it is Percival who inspires poetry” (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 23) — in spite of his inevitable countertype position and consequent exclusion from it. Louis is torn between his urge to belong to this English hegemonic masculine world and his incapability and frustration to become part of it as an insider: “My heart turns rough; it abrades my side like a file with two edges: one, that I adore his magnificence;

the other I despise his slovenly accents — I who am so much his superior — and I am jealous.” (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 22)

Louis is not only expelled from the English male hegemony due to his colonial condition, but also because of his social status — his father was a banker in Brisbane. He does not go to university as the others do but, on the contrary, he goes “to make money vaguely.” (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 41) Louis feels bitter about what he sees as the only fate that society has programmed for him.

Then I shall grow bitter and mock at them. I shall envy them their continuance down the safe traditional ways under the shade of old yew trees while I consort with cockneys and clerks, and tap the pavements of the city. (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 42)

Consequently, he is evicted from hegemonic male tradition by not accessing two of what Woolf considered to be the emblems of this tradition; Cambridge and Oxford.

Finally, Bernard is the only male character that rejects to be affiliated with the patriarchal project. He is a male character that does not fit into the stereotypical ideal of manliness; he is depicted on more than one occasion as overwhelmed in “unmanly tears” (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 81), “[h]is friends observed in him a growing tendency to domesticity” (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 173), he is not interested in the patriarchal tradition (neither from educational institutions, nor from sports), he is self-reflexive, and his identity is multiple and fluid, rather than stable and rigid. Bernard’s conscious decision to remain outside the patriarchal discourse places him in a unique position to destabilize traditionally masculine methods of authorship and allows him the potential to create language that is outside gender constrictions. By the end of the novel, Bernard no longer trusts the constraining structures of language and prefers alternative modes of expression: “Also how I distrust neat designs of life that are drawn upon half sheets of note paper. I begin to long for some little language...broken words, inarticulate words...I begin to seek some design more in accordance with those moments of humiliation and triumph.” (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 159) When Bernard accounts for his biography he asserts that ““we need not whip this prose into poetry. The little language is enough.”” (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 176)

Neville, Louis, and Bernard are men whose split, fluid and on-going individuations do not fit into that system, and despite willing to conform the gender stability that Percival represents, their gender performances inevitably question the social standards that dominated Britain. By creating new expressions of gender, Woolf destabilizes the gender binary dominated by masculine hegemony.

In 1933, Woolf published *Flush: A Biography*,⁴⁸ a cross-genre blend of fictional and non-fictional biography, which presents the life of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's cocker spaniel. Virginia Woolf predominantly uses Flush's point of view to address her social criticism, drawing on matters related to class, gender and the city. In gender terms, *Flush: A Biography* depicts a society presided by men both in the public and the private sphere, where patriarchal gentlemen and fathers are constructed as the main source of public and domestic authority. Flush is aware of the patriarchal structure of his society and, therefore, feels threatened by men: "Men in shiny top-hats marched ominously up and down the paths. At the sight of them he shuddered closer to the chair. He gladly accepted the protection of the chain." (Woolf, [1933] 2002b: 29)

In the Barrett household, Flush fears Mr Barrett's tyrannical power. This is especially true in two different episodes in the novel. Firstly, by the end of the second chapter, 'The Black Bedroom,' the last scene in Elizabeth's room, Mr Barrett is described as a despotic and frightening character through Flush's eyes: "As that dark body approached him, shivers of terror and horror ran down Flush's spine. So a savage couched in flowers shudders when the thunder growls and he hears the voice of God...A force had entered the bedroom which he dreaded; a force that he was powerless to withstand." (Woolf, [1933] 2002b: 42-43) Secondly, by the end of chapter five, 'Italy,' when Elizabeth and Flush visit her father's house after his death: "...Flush was in a fever of anxiety. Suppose Mr. Barrett were to come in and find them? Suppose that with one frown he turned the key and locked them in the back bedroom for ever?" (Woolf, [1933] 2002b: 136) Flush detects Mr Barrett's patriarchal supremacy and fears his domineering attitude.

In this novel, Woolf's representation of masculinities focuses on the hege-

⁴⁸*Flush: A Biography* outlines the story of a cocker spaniel, from his early life in the countryside with his first owner, Mary Mitford, through his life next to Elizabeth Barrett Browning. *Flush: A Biography* is divided into six chapters. The first chapter, 'Three Mile Cross' explores Flush's genealogy, birth and pedigree. In the second chapter, 'The Back Bedroom,' Flush develops an intimate relationship with his owner, confined in her bedroom where she writes and receives visitors. Chapter three, 'The Hooded Man' narrates Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett's courtship and Flush's jealousy. This chapter ends with Flush's dognapping. The fourth chapter, 'Whitechapel,' describes the robbers' bribery and Elizabeth's final acceptance to pay the bribers six guineas to have the dog returned. Through this episode Woolf describes poverty and upper-middle classes' indifference towards it. Chapter five, 'Italy,' narrates Flush's life in Italy with Elizabeth, now married with Mr Browning. Finally, the closing chapter, 'The Endm,' describes Flush's latter days. Flush's biography becomes Woolf's account of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's life: her early convalescence in her patriarchal household, her passionate romance with the poet Robert Browning, and their happy married life in Italy.

monic and rigid construction, of which Mr Barrett is its best representative. He epitomises the patriarchal law that is called for on more than one occasion throughout.

...the door opened and in came the blackest, the most formidable of elderly men — Mr. Barrett himself. His eye at once sought the tray. Had his commands been obeyed? Yes, the plates were empty. Signifying his approval of his daughter's obedience, Mr. Barrett lowered himself heavily into the chair by her side. (Woolf, [1933] 2002b: 42)

Mr Barrett, as the head of the family, imposes his orders upon the rest of the members of his pyramidally structured household. It is his patriarchal authority that is claimed to intervene in Elizabeth and Mr Browning's courtship. Flush demands the patriarchal father to interfere: "If only Mr Barrett could hear the tone in which she welcomed this usurper, the laugh with which she greeted him, the exclamation with which he took her hand in his!" (Woolf, [1933] 2002b: 60) Flush, aware of the patriarchal structure of the family, objectifies Elizabeth (his main object of desire), and calls for patriarchal custody to protect her against the 'usurper.' Flush is shown as an active participant of hegemonic male imagination.

The very same patriarchal logic operates in this episode when Flush is stolen by Mr Taylor and his men. Miss Barrett asks her brother Henry to deal with Mr Taylor, insofar as her health and female condition does not allow her to sort it out as a fully autonomous subject. It is here again when Mr Barrett's patriarchal authority is called for. When Henry is asked for more money to have the dog returned, he turns to Mr Barrett: "But Henry, instead of telling her, had told Mr. Barrett, with the result, of course, that Mr. Barrett had ordered him not to pay, and to conceal the visit from his sister." (Woolf, [1933] 2002b: 84) Elizabeth sees herself as the object of male conspiracy: "Her father and her brother were in league against her and were capable of any treachery in the interests of their class...Mr. Browning himself threw all his weight, all his eloquence, all his learning, all his logic, on the side of Wimpole Street and against Flush." (Woolf, [1933] 2002b: 85) Their attitude — father, brother, and husband-to-be — can be read in gender terms, insofar as, willing to protect the sovereignty of their gender, they are determined to exclude Elizabeth from the matter.

Mr Browning asserts "If Miss Barrett gave way to Taylor, he wrote, she was giving way to tyranny." (Woolf, [1933] 2002b: 85) However, whose tyranny is at

stake? Mr Browning writes in his letter to Elizabeth: ““one word more — in all this, I labour against the execrable policy of the world’s husbands, fathers, brothers and domineers in general”” (Woolf, [1933] 2002b: 88). Mr Browning is positioning himself against patriarchal tyranny, when, ironically enough, he is involved in this male conspiracy that marginalises Elizabeth Barrett and prevents her from taking her own decisions about Flush’s case. As the narrator affirms: “The adventure was risky enough for a man in health. For her it was madness.” (Woolf, [1933] 2002b: 94) Mr Browning claims to fight against a system he is part of and it is Flush who most clearly sees the connection between Henry, Mr Barrett, and Mr Browning himself and patriarchal tyranny to impose their rules upon Elizabeth. Flush fantasises about escaping with Elizabeth — “Were they about to escape together from this awful world of dog-stealers and tyrants?” (Woolf, [1933] 2002b: 97) — as if both outsiders — a dog and a woman — had whom to scape from (dog-stealers and patriarchal tyrants).

Flush is the repository of hegemonic gender discourses and he constructs all the male characters around him according to hegemonic codes of masculinity. This is the case of Mr Browning, whom Flush depicts in similar terms to Mr Barrett: “That dark, taut, abrupt, vigorous man, with his black hair, his red cheeks and his yellow gloves, was everywhere.” (Woolf, [1933] 2002b: 56) Furthermore, Flush has internalised human gender division and he has constructed himself in hegemonic masculine terms to the extent that he feels emasculated when deprived of his pedigree insignia: “Robert Browning snipped, as the insignia of a cocker spaniel fell to the floor, as the travesty of quite a different animal rose round his neck, Flush felt himself emasculated, diminished, ashamed.” (Woolf, [1933] 2002b: 129) In my opinion, Virginia Woolf uses Flush to draw her criticism towards the artificiality of hegemonic male pomp. As Flush needs his pedigree, his long tradition to assert his aristocratic identity, male tyrants need their patriarchal insignia, their hegemonic male codes, to establish themselves at the top of the social scale.

Woolf’s ninth novel, *The Years* (1937),⁴⁹ is an episodic novel which traces

⁴⁹ *The Years* (1937), growing out of a speech to the National Society for Women’s Service in 1931, was originally thought as a “novel-essay,” *The Pargiters: A Novel-Essay*, which would combine essays and novelistic passages exemplifying the ideas dealt in the essays. It finally diverged into Woolf’s essay-letter *Three Guineas*, published in 1938, and *The Years*, published in 1937. It is the last novel that Virginia Woolf published in her lifetime. The novel is structured in eleven chapters, with the date of a year as a title and opened by a pastoral passage, which ranges through the life of the Pargiters from 1880 to the 1930s. Chapter one presents Colonel Abel Pargiter’s household: his mistress Mira, his sons and daughters — Morris, Martin, Edward, Eleanor, Delia, Milly and Rose — and his dying wife. In chapter two, ‘1891,’ time has gone by and we learn about Martin’s adventures in India, Milly and —

the lives of the members of three generations of the Pargiters. The wide tapestry of characters is composed of fragments. These fragments present episodes which characters are to be built from. In *The Years*, out of these episodes, we can outline two differentiated spheres, the male-dominated public sphere and the female-dominated private sphere. Woolf was aware of the hegemonic gender expectations of her time and, therefore, depicts this markedly divided feminine and masculine world. Celia is aware of this division: “‘Shall we leave the gentlemen to their politics,’ she said, ‘and have our coffee on the terrace?’ and they shut the door upon the gentlemen and their politics.” (Woolf, [1937] 1998: 148) In addition, Virginia Woolf challenges the conventions of both spheres by depicting the artificiality of the hegemonic representatives of both femininity and masculinity, and by outlining characters that do not fit into the gender paradigm attributed to them.

The clearest representative of the public sphere is Colonel Abel Pargiter. He embodies the Victorian values of the patriarchal head of the family and the public gentleman — despite breaking away from his marital bond by having a mistress and being retired from his professional activity:

Colonel Abel Pargiter was sitting after luncheon in his club talking. Since his companions in the leather armchairs were men of his own type, men who had been soldiers, civil servants, men who had now retired, they were reviving with old jokes and stories now their

Edward’s friend — Gibbs’s marriage, and Eleanor’s being in charge of Mr Pargiter’s household. Throughout the chapter, we follow Eleanor’s day, who does charity work and visits her cases, visits court to watch Morris as a professional barrister, and, after reading the news about Parnell’s death, tries to visit Delia unsuccessfully. The chapter closes with Alan Pargiter’s visit to his niece Maggie for her birthday. In chapter three, ‘1907,’ Maggie comes from a dance, where she has been talking with Martin while Sara has stayed in reading Edward’s translation of *Antigone*. Chapter four, ‘1908,’ describes the scene when Martin, Eleanor and Rose meet after Digby and Eugénie’s sudden death (their uncles). In chapter five, ‘1910,’ Rose visits her cousins Maggie and Sara, who now live under poor conditions and takes Sara to one of Eleanor’s meetings, where they will meet Martin and Kitty (now married to Lord Lasswade). Chapter six, ‘1911,’ starts with Maggie’s marriage with a frenchman, it narrates Eleanor’s visit to Morris’s at his mother-in-law’s house, after her trip to Spain and Greece and her father’s death. There she meets an old suitor, Sir William Whatney. In chapter seven, ‘1913,’ Eleanor sells her father’s house and moves to a flat in Richmond. Chapter eight, ‘1914,’ follows Martin through his day, when he meets his cousins Sara and Maggie and finally goes to Kitty’s party. Chapter nine, ‘1917,’ describes, in the context of the First World War, Eleanor’s visit to Maggie and Renny, who have moved to London. Chapter ten, ‘1918,’ tells us about the end of the war. Last chapter, ‘Present Day,’ presents North and Peggy as the third generation of the Pargiters and ends with a party given by Delia, where all the family members meet again.

past in India, Africa, Egypt, and then, by a natural transition, they turned to the present. (Woolf, [1937] 1998: 4)

From the opening scenes, he is associated with the patriarchal institutional power epitomised by this club where he meets men of his 'type' and discusses about public affairs, such as the empire. The club has an air of decay, being inhabited by an older generation that seems to be stuck in their construction of the past. Mr Pargiter represents the archetypal definition of masculinity. He remains the source of authority in his household; his sons fear him:

'It's Papa!' Milly exclaimed warningly.

Instantly Martin wriggled out of his father's armchair; Delia sat upright. (Woolf, [1937] 1998: 9)

He presides the typical Victorian household: "...they were a handsome family, she thought as they filed in — the young ladies in their pretty dresses of blue and white sprigged muslin; the gentlemen so spruce in their dinner-jackets." (Woolf, [1937] 1998: 26) In addition, Abel Pargiter is competitive. This can be seen in his appreciation of his brother Digby: "He was a distinguished man in his way; the top of his tree; a knight and all the rest of it. But he's not as rich as I am, he remembered with satisfaction; for he had always been the failure of the two." (Woolf, [1937] 1998: 91) Mr Pargiter considers himself to be 'the top of his tree.' His high rank in the army, his position in his family, and his social prestige grant him a privileged position in his patriarchal society. Aware of his subject position, Eleanor comforts Rose after a bad dream by calling upon male protection by referring to both representatives of patriarchal masculinity: "There's Papa, there's Morris — they would never let a robber come into your room." (Woolf, [1937] 1998: 30)

Furthermore, Woolf criticises patriarchal theatricality by means of Morris, Mr Pargiter's son, who is a barrister. He is a member of one of the fundamental patriarchal institutions: Law. When Eleanor goes to court to watch Morris in his professional context, she observes that:

Men in wigs and gowns were getting up and sitting down and coming in and going out like a flock of birds settling here and there on a field...the solemn sallow atmosphere forbade personalities; there was something ceremonial about it all. (Woolf, [1937] 1998: 79)

Woolf depicts the atmosphere of the court as an artificial and solemn ceremony. The members in court are represented as cardboard cut-outs:

They all looked like pictures; all the barriers looked emphatic, cut out, like eighteenth-century portraits hung upon a wall. They were still rising and settling, laughing, talking...Suddenly a door was thrown open. The usher demanded silence for his lordship. There was silence; everybody stood up; and the Judge came in. He made one bow and took his seat under the Lion and the Unicorn. Eleanor felt a little thrill of awe run through her. That was old Curry. But how transformed! Last time she had seen him he was sitting at the head of a dinner-table...But now, there he was, awful, magisterial, in his robes. (Woolf, [1937] 1998: 79)

Woolf identifies male power with a long tradition and a whole process of social construction. These men in court are reified as icons; images of a male-dominated society. Sanders Curry is the head of this structure. He is transformed. He is presented as a different person from his persona in the private sphere, in his ordinary activities. His magisterial pose is revealed to Eleanor as a masquerade, something constructed by his robes: “And that man, she thought, thinking of the dark little Court and its cut-out faces, has to sit there all day, every day. She saw Sanders Curry again, lying back in his great chair, with his face falling in folds of iron.” (Woolf, [1937] 1998: 81)

There is a subtext throughout the novel about the constructedness of masculinity, which is shown in the double gender performance, which these male characters who foster hegemonic patterns of masculinity, carry out. I would like to point out two further examples of this. Firstly, in this very same scene in the Courts, Morris’s public persona is described as different from his private one: “...she [Eleanor] did not recognize the other gesture — the way he flung his arm out. That belonged to his public life, his life in the Courts.” (Woolf, [1937] 1998: 80) Secondly, Eleanor identifies this constructedness, this dissonance between the public and the private face, in the press’s representation of her uncle Digby after his death:

...he wasn’t like that, she thought, glancing at the press cuttings. ‘A man of singularly handsome presence...shot, fished, and played golf.’ No, not like that in the least. He had been a curious man; weak; sensitive; liking titles; liking pictures; and often depressed, she guessed, by his wife’s exuberance. (Woolf, [1937] 1998: 112-113)

Furthermore, Woolf criticises male chauvinism and vanity through characters, such as Edward. Edward is an Oxford Don. He is vane and likes to be flattered — “he liked to feel their [Ashley and Gibbs] eyes on him.” (Woolf,

[1937] 1998: 39) His father is very proud of his prestige in Oxford: “‘They seem to think a lot of him at Oxford,’ he said gruffly. He was very proud of Edward.” (Woolf, [1937] 1998: 90) This pompous vanity is shared by other minor characters in the novel, such as Sir William Whatney — “He seemed too big for the quiet, English dining-room; his voice boomed out. He wanted an audience” (Woolf, [1937] 1998: 147) — or Mr Grice, whose pretentious vocabulary seems to connect with male chauvinism: “...he used absurd long words. He was hauling himself up into the class above him, she supposed, by means of long words.” (Woolf, [1937] 1998: 157)

Edward’s friends from university present different constructions of masculinity. On the one hand, Gibbs embraces patriarchal codes such as athleticism and masculine rituals like drinking port, whereas his bookish friend Ashley, a good representative of academia, criticises Gibbs’s archetype and defends what he considers Edward’s countertype:

He often caught Edward out in small vanities like this; but they only served to endear him the more. How beautiful he looks, he was thinking: there he sat between them with the light falling on the top of his hair; like a Greek boy; strong; yet in some way, weak, needing his protection.

He ought to be rescued from brutes like Gibbs, he thought savagely. For how Edward could tolerate that clumsy brute, he thought looking at him, who always seemed to smell of beer and horses (he was listening to him) Ashley could not conceive. (Woolf, [1937] 1998: 39)

Ashley despises Gibbs, whom he perceives as a brute, in opposition to Edward’s more delicate and balanced countertype of masculinity. While Woolf’s novel offers a nuanced representation of these emblematic figures of patriarchy, she also explores gender constructions that transcend gender fixities imposed by dominant discourses. Martin and his imperialist project of India is an example. Martin finally leaves the army, since according to Eleanor he does not fit the archetype: “...isn’t it odd, she mused, listening to the voices, that he should be such a dandy too? He was wearing a new blue suit with white stripes on it. And he had shaved his moustache. He ought never to have been a soldier, she thought; he was much too pugnacious...” (Woolf, [1937] 1998: 114) In fact, on several occasions he doubts and regrets his choice of having joined the Army.

Another example of a character who does not fulfill gender expectations is Rose, the youngest of the Pargiters. Since childhood, Rose proves to be keener

on military struggle than Martin himself. Rose's imaginative games — especially her adventure to the toy shop — fantasise about fighting at the Front. As an adult, Rose finds her space of struggle by becoming involved in the suffragette cause, being arrested and sent to prison for throwing a brick. She does not conform social gender expectations: “She was handsome, in a ravaged way; more like a man than a woman.” (Woolf, [1937] 1998: 125) She does not speak women's language: “I never could make my own clothes.” (Woolf, [1937] 1998: 125) Maggie replies: “you did other things.” (Woolf, [1937] 1998: 125) Finally, she does not identify herself with domesticity: “I never liked being at home,” said Rose. ‘I liked being on my own much better.’” (Woolf, [1937] 1998: 125) This is why Eleonor concludes that she fits the archetype of the soldier better than Martin: “She ought to have been the soldier, Eleanor thought. She was exactly like the picture of old Uncle Pargiter of Pargiter's Horse.” (Woolf, [1937] 1998: 115) Woolf's analysis of gender as culturally constructed figurations is revealed by characters that embrace both masculine and feminine traits. The argument is that what is assumed to be ‘masculine’ behaviour can be seen in women too, and the other way round. Furthermore, Woolf moves a step forward in her criticism of gender fixities, by presenting an openly homosexual character, Nicholas, who makes Eleanor wonder about his condition and is not judged by the narrative voice.

North, the third generation of the Pargiters' men, Morris's son, another representative of the nation, who has returned from Africa, stands in the final party as the young generation; the future, the advent of new gender definitions. He feels an outsider of the world contained in the microcosm of the party (Woolf, [1937] 1998: 295). He does not identify himself with those men of his generation who are a product of public schools and universities insofar as he has been at the war and in a farm in Africa, instead. He is not a Don but he is not a Colonel either. Although Woolf's eighth novel does not clearly explore fluid male characters as Septimus Warren Smith or Bernard, it provides a wide range of nuanced patriarchal characters and it questions gender constraints, by finally presenting a third generation, epitomised by North, whose new subject positions need to elaborate new male codes to suit changing social gender expectations.

Woolf's last novel, *Between the Acts* (1941),⁵⁰ offers an impressionistic account of the life of the Olivers between the acts of a play, the acts of twentieth

⁵⁰Woolf's last work, a chapterless poetic play within the novel, originally entitled *Pointz Hall*, takes place in a single day of June, 1939 — with the war imminent but virtually unperceived— at Pointz Hill, an English country house owned by the Olivers. It revolves about a pageant played upon the lawns by the local villagers. *Between the Acts* was published shortly after Woolf's death, who had not finished revising the manuscript.

century European history (the First World War, the Spanish Civil War, and the second World War), and the acts of the characters. The novel alternates italicised passages of the annual pageant — an episodic theatrical work that traces the history of England — with episodes which explore relationships between the characters and aspects of their personalities. Although this novel does not pose a clear proposal or alternative to hegemonic gender constructions — as many of her previous novels do —, the novel contrasts old and new generations of male characters.

The main representative of these older generations, thus, of this rigid definition of masculinity associated with other characters, such as Colonel Abel Pargiter in *The Years* (1937), is to be found in the head of the house, old Bartholomew Oliver, — “[t]he old man in the arm-chair – Mr. Oliver, of the Indian Civil Service, retired...” (Woolf, [1941] 1992b: 5) — who like so “[m]any old men had only their India” (Woolf, [1941] 1992b: 13) to cling to. His authority and his gender discourse seems to be decadently residual. He is depicted as an abusive ‘old brute’ (Woolf, [1941] 1992b: 14) in an episode where he teases his daughter-in-law Isabella by upsetting and terrifying his three-year-old grandson George and then reproaching him as a cry-baby: “‘And he howled. He’s a coward, your boy is.’” (Woolf, [1941] 1992b: 14) His patriarchal tyranny towards his grandson can be linked to his imperial past; reminiscent of the patriarchal oppressive logics underlain in the imperial project — an association that had been referred in her epistolary essay *Three Guineas* (1938).

Furthermore, he seems to ascribe himself to the national patriarchal tradition: “Arms akimbo, he stood in front of his country gentleman’s library. Garibaldi; Wellington; Irrigation Officers’ Reports; and Hibbert on the Diseases of the Horse.” (Woolf, [1941] 1992b: 71) He exalts patriarchal images and values of the past, emblems of male power, and denies any diversion from his rigid schema of male conduct. This is something that he clearly states in front of his son Giles: “‘Reason, begad! Reason!’ exclaimed old Bartholomew, and looked at his son as if exhorting him to give over these womanish vapours and be a man, Sir.” (Woolf, [1941] 1992b: 81)

However, his patriarchal persona seems rather archaic and obsolete. He is more a ghostly image of the past than a real source of authority: “He looked leafless, spectral, and his chair monumental.” (Woolf, [1941] 1992b: 129) Bartholomew Oliver is aligned with that generation, identified with his sister Mrs Swithin, which according to Isabella needs to be replaced: “She looked at Mrs. Swithin as if she had been a dinosaur or a very diminutive mammoth. Extinct she must be, since she had lived in the reign of Queen Victoria.” (Woolf, [1941] 1992b: 104) Victorian values are shown to be extinct, and this old gen-

eration is presented as the last vestiges of the past.

Two male archetypes are contrasted through Isabella's eyes; the romantic gentleman farmer Rupert Haines and her husband Giles Oliver, "[t]he father of my children,' she added, slipping into the cliché conveniently provided by fiction." (Woolf, [1941] 1992b: 11) In fact, Giles embodies 'that old cliché': the stockbroker son, "handsome, muscular, hirsute, virile" (Woolf, [1941] 1992b: 65) and surly — "...not a dapper city gent, but a cricketer...(Woolf, [1941] 1992b: 31)

William Dodge, Mrs Manresa's homosexual friend, seems to be the only male character that challenges the rigid and hegemonic construction held by the other male characters. He remains an outsider, he sees himself as 'a half-man' (Woolf, [1941] 1992b: 46) and reveals the dominant homophobic discourse held by male characters, such as Giles, which is extended to the sexual politics of the time:

A toady; a lickspittle; not a downright plain man of his senses; but a teaser and twitcher; a fingerer of sensations; picking and choosing; dillying and dallying; not a man to have straightforward love for a woman...but simply a — At this word, which he could not speak in public, he pursed his lip...(Woolf, [1941] 1992b: 38)

It is Isabella, who will question the homophobic prejudices displayed by her husband: "Isabella guessed the word that Giles had not spoken. Well, was it wrong if he was that word? Why judge each other?...Not here, not now. But somewhere, this cloud, this crust, this doubt, this dust...but somewhere surely one sun would shine and all, without a doubt, would be clear." (Woolf, [1941] 1992b: 39) She calls for a new sexual politics that allows diverse gender identities to coexist without the constraining effect of judgement. Woolf is hinting at the challenge that non-hegemonic sexual identities pose to her patriarchal British society, but as has been stated before, Woolf does not explore fluid gender constructions in *Between the Acts* (1941) as in some of her previous work.

1.3.2 Woolf's conceptualisation of gender

Woolf's experience of masculinity is at once echoed and subverted by her fiction. On the one hand, Woolf's personal account of masculinities in her most intimate writings, her diaries and letters, seems to be conditioned by a deeply-rooted conservatism coming from her family heritage. However, on the other hand, Woolf's fiction presents a potential for flexibility and fluidity in gender terms that seems to transcend her own personal experience.

Woolf was trapped in the contradictory narratives of gender that surrounded her. She had experienced very conservative and traditional gender narratives in her family household, a typically upper-middle class household dominated by late-Victorian rigid gender roles, and the transgressive gender figurations embodied by the new generation of men that she basically experienced through the Bloomsbury Group. In fact, Ralph Denham, Hewet, Jacob, Bernard, Septimus, seem to be modelled after some of the gifted young men that Woolf herself knew, loved and admired, such as one of her brothers who died young and her nephew Julian Bell. Therefore, the so present dichotomy between rigid and fluid representations of masculinities in her fiction mirrors the different generations of men that inhabited her life.

Even though her fiction seems to challenge the boundaries of her own morality, despite this openness towards sexuality and sexual tendencies, Woolf was to be more reticent and reserved than other modernists (Foster, Joyce, Lawrence) to openly write about sex and sexuality.

However, her narrative of gender both in her essays and her fiction seems to surpass the parametres of her time. The first step in Woolf's social criticism is to point out the numerous fallacies and restrictions of the traditional gender expectations dominating her country. By creating characters like Mr Ambrose, Trevor Hilbery, Mr Plumer, Richard Dalloway, Hugh Whitbread, Dr Holmes, Sir William Bradshaw, Mr Tansley, Percival, Mr Barrett, and Mr Pargiter, Woolf is able to satirise the patriarchal system that has trapped men into specific patterns of thought and behaviour. What Woolf is able to demonstrate is that Britain is ruled by a narrow system of classification, a system that makes no exceptions for those who do not or cannot fit into the neatly prescribed categories of masculine or feminine, a system that, by the end of World War I and towards the Second World War, Woolf suggests, is no longer tenable.

Therefore, Woolf presents more fluid characters who, despite sharing some of the traditionally masculine characteristics, also embrace feminine codes (domesticity and emotionality among others). Their gender constructions are so complex that they transcend the rigid binaristic system of gender categorisation in Britain.

As has been shown in my analysis of male characters in Woolf's novels — especially those of the 1920s (*Jacob's Room*, *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, *Orlando*, and even *The Waves*), and as Richter (2010) points out — the merging, the flux of various embodiments of gendered identities in which the performance need not correspond to a fixed reality, takes place repeatedly throughout the characters. That is how male characters capable of displaying feminine codes are viewed with greater sympathy. Woolf does not judge these characters that do

not fit in the paradigm of rigid gender performances. On the contrary, her novels open a space where these new expressions of gender can flow. As Woolf describes these male representatives, she repeatedly draws on specific personality traits and specific social practice to help her present a more complex understanding of gender. Moreover, these male characters show that their various characteristics are fluid and often overlapping, occasionally incorporating aspects of traditional masculinity. As has been analysed in the previous section, men can adopt hegemonic masculinity but at the same time distance themselves strategically from hegemonic masculinity at certain social practices. Woolf positions her male characters through discursive practices, rather than establishing fixed types. Consequently, Woolf develops, from social elements well established within her culture, aspects of male gender performance that had been given no socially acceptable space within British society. As a result, Woolf's characters give voice and meaning to those facets of gender that had been socially ignored because they do not fit the accepted structure of manliness.

These male characterisations are vital for Woolf's larger gender argument because she makes the insufficiency of traditional gender expectations self-evident and unquestionable. Woolf's more intricate male characters establish that there are few men who completely fulfill hegemonic masculine predictions, compelling her readers to question traditionally accepted gender expectations and to think about a new, wider conception of gender. What is evident from her descriptions is that manliness is often one aspect of a larger continuum of gender performance options. What is more, some of her male characters undermine the fixed gender binary opposition that reduces these gender performance options to two rigid categories (femininity and masculinity). This is the case of my two cases of study, Septimus Warren Smith and Orlando, which I will try to defend as paradigmatic examples of Woolf's polymorphous conception of gender in chapter 3.

Woolf's polymorphous gender perspective challenges the rigid sex/gender binary opposition. She advocates in *A Room of One's Own* (1929) for a multiplicity of sexes, other sexes, which may imply, in the performative ground, a multiplicity of genders, sexual identities, sexual object choices, and sexual practices.

It would be a thousand pities if women wrote like men, or lived like men, or looked like men, for if two sexes are quite inadequate, considering the vastness and variety of the world, how should we manage with one only? Ought not education to bring out and fortify the differences rather than the similarities? For we have too much

likeness as it is, and if an explorer should come back and bring word of other sexes looking through the branches of other trees at other skies, nothing would be of greater service to humanity...(Woolf, 2000 [1929]: 87)

It is this vastness and variety of other sexes what traverses the frontiers of the binary opposition of gender and sexuality. Some of Virginia Woolf's characters — Septimus Warren Smith, and, even more paradigmatically, Orlando— who carry out fluid gender social practices move beyond the man-woman, male-female, heterosexuality-homosexuality binary taxonomy.

Woolf does not attempt to negotiate space for these men within the current system of British masculinity insofar as she seems to recognise that the traditional view of gender must be replaced by new gender codes. Woolf's work advocates for a new understanding of gender as the only significant step toward the ultimate goal of gender equality. In her proposal of fluid alternative gender constructions, Virginia Woolf is not only evaluating her present time, but she is projecting new gender figurations into the future, participating in the reconstruction of ideal gender formations. Woolf posits a new mode of individuation which is fluid, flexible and multifaceted, which in gender terms as it will be analysed through Deleuze and Guattari,⁵¹ advocates for a polymorphous condition.

The following section provides a general overview of the approaches to Woolf's novelistic male characters, in order to frame and justify my Deleuzo-Guattarian reading of the male characters in *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) and *Orlando* (1928).

⁵¹Deleuze (1925-1995) was a poststructuralist philosopher, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Paris VIII. Among his work we find philosophical dissertations (*Difference and Repetition*, 1968; *Logic of Sense*, 1969) monographs on some crucial philosophers, cinema and literary criticism. Deleuze challenged the dominant belief of structuralism that we know and experience our world through imposed structures of representations. He, among others, opened the politics of the virtual. For Deleuze, Western thought has been committed to dogmas of representation which regard productive differences negatively, as something that lies outside concepts. He refers to the totality of these prehuman, prelinguistic, and profound differences in a number of ways: as the abstract machine, as the Body without Organs, as difference-in-itself, or as the virtual multiplicity. I am interested basically in his theories on the process of individuation, especially in the concept of becoming-woman that he developed with Félix Guattari (1930-1992). Guattari was a French psychoanalyst and philosopher. He was a Lacanian analyst who turned away from Lacan especially when he started to collaborate with Deleuze. Guattari was a left wing activist who supported a number of minorities. In 1968, they met and wrote several works, among them the two-volume *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, comprised of *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980). Their final collaboration was *What is Philosophy?* (1991).

1.4 Scholarship on Woolf and masculinities

Despite the vast female-centered studies and the small amount of studies focused on masculinities, there are a number of scholars who have dealt with rigid and fluid male characters in Woolf's writing by focusing on different aspects. In order to stem from the body of work that has been devoted to the analysis of male characters in Woolf, I will try to scan the main approaches that have been assigned to those two categories and the many in between. I will classify Woolf's scholarship related to masculinities into four general approaches: those studies that assimilate masculinities to the discourse of patriarchy, war, imperialism and fascism; psychoanalytic perspectives on gender; works on male homosexuality; research on androgyny; and poststructuralist approaches to gender that can provide us with new readings of Woolf's fiction.

1.4.1 Imperialism, patriarchy, fascism = Virginia Woolf and masculinity

There is a tendency among critics⁵² to bound Woolf's study of masculinities to the empire by focusing on Woolf's comment on the relationship between British patriarchy, imperialism, fascism and masculinity. In my view this narrows down Woolf's understanding of male characters since a lot of the potential I see in her work remains unrevealed. The scholarship which focuses on Woolf's attack on patriarchy as aligned with imperialism, mainly deals with hegemonic masculinities in Woolf and does not explore characters that embody new salient definitions of masculinities. In focusing on rigid male characters and obviating more fluid definitions of masculinities, these studies are belittling part of the potential I see in Woolf's narrative of gender. What follow are a few examples of this.

In "Britannia Rules *The Waves*" ([1992] 2004), Jane Marcus considers *The Waves* a story of the submerged mind of empire. According to Marcus, *The Waves* explores the way in which the cultural narrative England is created by an Eton/Cambridge elite who reproduces the national epic and elegy in praise of the hero (Marcus, 1992: 228). Woolf's attack on imperialism becomes an attack on patriarchy, according to Marcus.

The feminist critic Elizabeth Abel (1989) identifies and regrets Woolf's focus on prevailing definitions of masculinity in her fiction from the 1930s. She

⁵²Jane Marcus's "Britannia Rules *The Waves*" (1992), Kathy J. Phillips's *Virginia Woolf against Empire* (1994), Anna Snaith's topic for 2005 Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain's Annual Virginia Woolf Birthday Lecture "Virginia Woolf and Empire."

considers this shift a distraction from Woolf's concern with women during the 1920s. In the same direction, Holden (1999) asserts that there is a connection between the production of masculinity and the consequences of its forms of domination and the political fascism established in Europe in Woolf's political consciousness (in her work of the late 1930s). The most clear-cut example of this is *Three Guineas*, where Woolf focuses on the institutional practices by which the hegemonic emblem of masculinity tries to counteract the effects of a crisis in masculinity by revealing that women are outsiders in the machinery of war. In *Three Guineas*, Woolf focuses on the institutional practices by which the "sons of educated men, that is English bourgeois class, reproduce a precise set of values under the sign of adult masculinity." (Holden, 1999: 147) According to Holden, Woolf assesses the proximity of this masculinity to its production within fascist discourse. Holden concludes that Woolf is very perceptive about displays of male power, the historical exclusion of certain women from education, and fascism, patriarchal institutionalised practices based on a crisis in masculinity.

Another example of an analysis of Woolf's representation of masculinities in relation with imperialism is to be found in Rasmussen's "Virginia Woolf: Masculinity as Imperial 'Parade.'" (1996) According to Rasmussen, Woolf analyses masculinity as an imperial 'Parade.' Rasmussen emphasises Woolf's concern about the constructedness of male dominant subject positions. Woolf analyses the logic of British imperialism from the home-front: "Woolf analyses empire in *Three Guineas* on the home-front. The patriarchal home is at once seeded of empire and fascism and a *front*, a deceit. It functions, one might say, as a fantasy scenario where male dress is a 'parade', a showing off of power, of the specious possession of the phallus and female dress is a masquerade of inferiority and dependence whilst also being a figuration of the phallus for men." (Rasmussen, 1996: 40-42) Indeed, Woolf criticises the masculine paraphernalia of power (clothes in judges, admirals and other sources of authority) and evidences the artificiality of male production. Rasmussen points out the symbolic effect that boots and shoes have in Woolf's fiction; the empty boots in *Jacob's Room*, the bloody shoes in *Between the Acts* and Mr Ramsay's boots in *To the Lighthouse*. The three cases stand symbolically for force, war and patriarchal authority to be associated with imperialism. Rasmussen's analysis of Woolf's fetishising of clothes demonstrates the very same fetishisation of imperialist icons within masculinity. Rasmussen concludes that the metaphor of the empty boots "undermine[s] a specific patriarchal construction of masculinity; showing it as just that: empty boots on parade with all their imperial and imperious vigour." (Rasmussen, 1996: 45)

Likewise, in "The Lunacy of Men, the Idiocy of Women: Woolf, West, and

War” (2003), Marina MacKay argues how *Jacob’s Room* deals with female complicity, deliberately empty ideals of gentlemanliness, and a heroic ideal of manliness which is proved to be artificial, and acknowledges that Woolf explores the cultures that women have developed independently of patriarchy.

Richard Pearce’s “Virginia Woolf’s Construction of Masculinity: A Narrative Model, a Reading of *Mrs. Dalloway*” (2000) presents an analysis of Peter Walsh which hints at the multiple dimensions that male identities play in Woolf’s fiction and provides a more nuanced analysis of Woolf’s criticism of patriarchy in relation to imperialism. Pearce locates Peter Walsh between two narratives of masculinity. While he is positioned within the ideological frame of English imperial power from where he is object of parody and mockery, Peter is also repositioned sympathetically within that frame, by being victimised and mocked by the models of manhood that constrain his subject position. Pearce provides a nuanced analysis of the mechanisms used by Woolf to locate discourses of masculinities within the intricate power relations of other discourses such as the traditional male narrative of the empire: “the dual positioning of Peter Walsh results from and contributes to the instability of the novel. And it leads us to understand that we cannot ask questions of dominance, but only of hegemony — ‘who or what force has power at a given moment.’” (Pearce, 2000: 144)

Scholars who have approached Woolf’s masculinities in relation with the empire and fascism have mainly studied characters that embrace hegemonic definitions of masculinity. Much of the effort of these critics has been devoted to the analysis of Woolf’s construction of rigid male characters under the logics of patriarchy. However, this approach does not provide an analysis of Woolf’s countertypes.

1.4.2 Psychoanalytic studies on Woolf

Although there has been a shift in psychoanalytic studies on Woolf from the 1970s and 1980s, which focused on autobiographical issues such as mental illness (Ferrer, 1985), suicide, sexuality and child abuse (De Salvo, 1989⁵³), such studies still seem restrictive when dealing with Woolf’s conception of gender. Poststructuralist theory and feminist literary criticism have brought about a rediscovery of Woolf’s work from new psychoanalytic perspectives.

⁵³In *Virginia Woolf: The Impact of Childhood Sexual Abuse on her Life and Work* (1989), the American scholar Louise De Salvo related her mental attacks to sexual abuse that she had suffered at the hands of her two step-brothers. This work received much criticism and it has often been accused of simplistic psychoanalytic interpretations (Lee, 1996).

These other psychoanalytic approaches that took place from the nineties onwards, have placed the emphasis on the use of psychoanalytic tools for the understanding and the analysis of gendered and sexual identities through the relationships of Woolf's characters — tools such as the patriarchal Oedipal schema imposed on male and female characters, and the Lacanian 'Symbolic order' as inherently masculine. Nicole Ward Jouve's "Virginia Woolf : Penis envy and Man's Sentence" (1998) and Rachel Bowlby's *Feminist Destinations and Further Essays on Virginia Woolf* (1988) are clear examples of these psychoanalytic reading of the Oedipal relationships of the Ramsays in *To the Lighthouse* (1927).

French feminism,⁵⁴ which took great inspiration from psychoanalysis, has become the basic theoretical framework for much of psychoanalytic Woolf criticism. Gillian Beer's "Beyond Determinism: George Eliot and Virginia Woolf" (1979), analyses Woolf's narrative in terms of the new female language, the struggle about female sexuality and feminine writing developed by French feminists. Other feminists, such as the American academic Jane Marcus denounced patriarchal values and power by using psychoanalytic concepts to make her point in *Virginia Woolf and the Languages of Patriarchy* (1987a). Studies on androgyny departed from Nancy Topping Bazin's *Virginia Woolf and the Androgynous Vision* (1973) to Minow-Pinkney's post-structuralist revision of subjectivity in Woolf's novel in *Virginia Woolf and the Problem of the Subject* (1987) — in chapter 3, a whole section will be developed to the debate around androgyny. Rachel Bowlby (1988) and Elizabethr Abel's *Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis* (1989), present enlightening analysis of male and female characters' interactions and a deep analysis of the patriarchal tyrannies and oppressions imposed on the female subject.

Although psychoanalytic Woolf criticism of the last two decades has offered great tools to analyse gender dynamics, centered very often on femininity, the psychoanalysis approach proves to be very useful in analysing hegemonic masculinities in Woolf's characters, but it seems rather restrictive to provide a framework for Woolf's fluid male figurations. Woolfian fluid representations of masculinities are presented as deviant scapegoats in a phallogocentric constraining society, as impossible projects by works like Suzette A. Henke's "Virginia Woolf's Septimus Smith: An Analysis of 'Paraphrenia' and Schizophrenic Use of Language" (1981). Psychoanalytic concepts such as difference and body and psychoanalyst feminist groundings on the category 'woman' are still based on the fixed gender/sex binary opposition that reduces the multiplicity of identi-

⁵⁴Cixous's attack on gender and sexual binary oppositions in her problematising of the category 'Woman' and her proposal of bisexuality; Kristeva's analysis of the pre-Oedipal.

ties to the taxonomies man-woman, male-female, heterosexual-homosexual. In this sense, psychoanalysis traps characters like Septimus and Orlando's polymorphous potential within this binary paradigm.

1.4.3 Male homosexuality

Much of the scholarship devoted to the study of fluid male characters has been concerned with homosexuality or homoeroticism. This is the case of some studies on male bonding and the configurations of British dominant masculinity after the war at the beginning of the century, such as Sarah Cole's (1997). Cole describes the alienating effect that war had on some men who, far from enjoying the opportunity to forge connections and bonds among men facilitated by the environment provided in public schools and universities, became outsiders, aside male institutions, when coming back from a war — that had enabled homosocial and homoerotic bonds — to a society that excluded them from these contexts. Cole counterpoises the characters of the beloved and idealised Percival in *The Waves* and Jacob in *Jacob's Room* to Septimus Warren Smith in *Mrs Dalloway*, a novel that concludes that “There is no room in this post-war world, the text indicates, for all-powerful and potential debilitating male friendship system codified by the war.” (Cole, 1997: 195)

Cole focuses on peripheral definitions of masculinities and widens the scope of other studies on masculinities and Woolf which happen to centre on the patriarchal representations of men. She inscribes these ‘other’ characters in a fixed gender identity that restricts their potential as far as their gender identity is concerned.

Similarly, studies of homosexual male characters have been carried out by authors like A.D. Boxwell (1999), Stuart N. Clarke (2002), and Jean E. Kennard (1996). There are authors who consider Woolf critical of male homosexuality; Marcus, Louis De Salvo, and Phyllis Rose, to quote some. On the other hand, there are scholars who consider her as gay-affirmative or even queer; Christopher Reed (1994) and Stephen Barber (1997).

Clarke, for instance, argues that in many of Virginia Woolf's novels there is at least one male homosexual who is self-identified as such and who is ‘out,’ to some extent to some of the other characters. In his study of the homosexual subject, Clarke considers the homosexual innuendo a crucial axis in the understanding of Woolf's fiction and picks up homosexual characters such as Mr Carmichael and Andrew in *To the Lighthouse*, Septimus Warren Smith and Evans in *Mrs Dalloway*, John Hirst in *The Voyage Out*, Bonamy in *Jacob's Room*, Neville in *The Waves*, Nicholas in *The Years*, and William Dodge in *Between the Acts*.

He wonders how Woolf's fiction was able to pass by the critics without comment in such homophobic society and he finally attributes that fact to her prose style, being delusive and settling no clear boundaries and categories. I will argue whether this delusive style is not part of the ambivalent nature of her understanding of gender and sexuality rather than a mere stylistic device of her aesthetics as a modernist writer.

By inscribing these characters into the rigid taxonomy of sexual identities I believe critics are narrowing down the potential of Woolf's perspective on gender and sexuality. As has been stated in the previous section — 'Woolf's conceptualisation of gender' —, Woolf herself advocates in *A Room of One's Own* (1929) for a multiplicity of sexes, other sexes, which may imply, in the performative ground, a multiplicity of genders, sexual identities, sexual object choices, and sexual practices.

There are, then, other more appealing scholars who have attempted to approach the representation of fluid male characters beyond the heterosexuality-homosexuality binomial by including a third element (bisexuality). As Nowell Marshall points out: "Rather than acknowledge the possibility of bisexual readings of Woolf's novels, critics have too often ascribed aspects of Woolf's lesbianism to her characters." (Marshall, 2009: 321) Calling it bisexuality or androgyny might still be too restrictive to such an heterogeneous and fluid conception of gender, which might explore the multiplicity of other sexes, insofar as both bisexuality and androgyny look back to the fundamental division of the two sexes. Both concepts stem from the binary opposition man-woman/male-female/heterosexual-homosexual. By combining the two elements of the binary, multiplicity potential is unavoidably limited to a certain amount of combinations.

1.4.4 Androgynous Woolf

There has been a great number of critics who have written about Woolf's androgynous approach to gender. This concept has raised positive (Bazin, 1973; Heilbrun, 1985; Minow-Pinkney, [1987] 2010; Moi, [1985] 2002; Hargreaves, 2005) and negative (Showalter, [1977] 1999; Rado, 1997) reactions from scholarship.

There are some studies on Woolf's exploration of androgyny which are confined in the binary opposition that they seek to deconstruct. These studies regard androgyny either from a female-centered perspective (Heilbrun, 1985; Cixous, 1986; Jones, 1994; Marcus, 1983) or from a male-centered approach (Fayad, 1997).

A third consideration of this notion has been taken into account by critics; a merging conception of androgyny (Sánchez-Pardo, 2004; Minow-Pinkney, [1987] 2010; Moi, [1985] 2002). The merging view on androgyny poses some risks. In particular that of neutralisation is problematic because it can lead us to a certain relativity when considering gender identities. There is the risk to diminish the great potential that difference brings into play. However, at the same time, this merging of opposites opens up *n*-possibilities for gender identities and signifies difference beyond its oppositional nature.

A review of these three main approaches to androgyny and Woolf is provided in my analysis of the character of Orlando in the section entitled 'The case of Orlando: Androgynous or molecular individuation?' in chapter 3. There, I point out the main risks of these three approaches — a reductionist approach to androgyny either based on binary thinking or neutralisation — and suggest a new Deleuzo-Guattarian reading that focuses on multiplicity. My thesis is that the celebration of ambivalence and androgyny acclaimed in *Orlando*, is, thus, Woolf's response to hegemonic and normative definitions of masculinity and femininity. By transcending rigid, fixed, and stable gender representations beyond her contemporary discursive regulation of gender roles, Woolf projects her literature towards a rhizomatic plane where fluid individuations underpin innumerable gender identities.

Orlando's multiplicity of selves, sexualities, and genders makes his androgynous project an extremely innovative vision of gender, when reading it from a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach. In fact, androgyny as a term, presents some limitations, insofar as it merges two poles of the binary opposition male/female without taking into account the thousands of gender/sexual identities in between. The term androgyny, as well as the term bisexuality, stems from the binary opposition it seeks to deconstruct.

1.4.5 Poststructuralist approaches to gender: The merging of genders

Feminist poststructuralists defend feminine writing as an alternative to the logocentrism of Western culture, patriarchal in its very formation. Authors such as Julia Kristeva (1982) and her concept of subjectivity have opened up new perspectives for literary criticism. She presents an alternative conceptualisation of the subject to be distinguished from the traditional concept of the unitary fixed subject; the “subject in process/ on trial.”

Poststructuralist approaches to Woolf have provided some new insights about gender in Woolf’s fictional work. An example of these approaches can be found in Andrea L. Harris’s⁵⁵ “‘This Difference...This Identity...Was Overcome:’ Merging Masculine and Feminine in Virginia Woolf’s *The Waves*” (1997). Harris analyses the character of Bernard in *The Waves* and offers a study of Woolf’s deconstruction of the masculinist ideal of unity related to subjectivity which relies on a unitary and stable core. Harris, without referring to androgyny, considers that Woolf explores the merging rather than the union of identities, the blurring of boundaries between identities. That is how Bernard becomes a differently gendered being, one in whom masculine and feminine coexist, he actually wonders at one point whether he is a man or a woman in communion with his friends.

Harris regards Bernard’s gender identity as fluent and indeterminate. Fragmentation and disintegration operate in the novel at two levels: the narrative and the figurative. According to Harris, Bernard seeks to dismantle his subjectivity, and he takes woman as his figure/model by merging the so-called phallogocentric masculine language and the ‘little language’ — feminine languages as Harris (2000) states. Given this sense of dispersed identity, Rhoda remains both in and as Bernard. The text both relies upon the gender binary in its positioning of gender-marked languages and questions the gender binary in its merging of these languages (Harris, 1997: 354).

Andrea L. Harris claims that “Woolf sketches the contours of a new state of being in which difference no longer represents an obstacle or battlefield but instead a fertile ground of exchange.” (Harris, 1997: 354-55) Harris puts forward the need for a new conceptualisation of difference when analysing Woolf and gender insofar as Woolf questions the very notion of sexual difference. Harris points out Woolf’s claim for the need to expand our way of thinking about

⁵⁵Andrea L. Harris is Associate Professor of English at Mansfield University of Pennsylvania. Her scholarly research has focused on 20th Century British and American Literature, Literary Theory, Women’s Studies, and Gay & Lesbian Studies.

sexual difference so as to multiply the possibilities of gender, sex, and sexuality. Such questioning of difference leads to a more fruitful exchange between the genders — an exchange which is restrictive when gender is considered in opposition. Harris affirms that there is a wider range of differences between multiple genders when the binary opposition is broken down. Likewise, according to Jane Goldman (1998), Woolf has been rediscovered as a deconstructor of binary oppositions *par excellence*. Goldman affirms that Woolf subversively disrupts all fixed oppositions, her texts exemplify and celebrate the free play of the signifier. That is how, following Goldman, “Toril Moi recommends a cocktail of Derridean and Kristevan theories to assist feminist literary criticism in reconciling Woolf’s aesthetic practice to her politics.” (Goldman, 1998: 16)

In light of Harris’s claims, in “Killing the Angel in the House: Virginia Woolf, D. H. Lawrence, and the Boundaries of Sex and Gender” (2007), Susan Reid⁵⁶ suggests the connection between Woolf’s conception of transcendence and Deleuze and Guattari’s deconstruction of subjectivity. According to Reid, in Woolf’s texts there is a rejection of polarity and fixity, there is a possibility of multiple selves as an alternative to the rigidly individualised subject and a shift towards the merged subject.

What if, as Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari suggest, the body is not an organic whole but a “desiring machine” connected in “fissional multiplicity” with the world? While Irigaray, like many feminists, remains suspicious that concepts such as “becoming-woman” and “desiring machines” represent new forms of male appropriation, Elizabeth Grosz, in particular, has argued that the Deleuzian interest in the question of difference may be productive for both men and women. (Reid, 2007: 70)

In fact, while poststructuralist feminist critics, such as Harris (1997; 2000) and Reid (2007) have started exploring Woolf’s concern with multiple sexualities and elusive subjectivity, many feminists (Irigaray, [1977] 1985b; Jardine, 1984, 1985, 1987) have considered the deconstruction of the concept of subjectivity

⁵⁶Susan Reid is a scholar and founding member of the Katherine Mansfield Society, guest editor of *Katherine Mansfield Studies* (vol.2, 2010), editor of the online ‘Katherine Mansfield Blog’, and reviews editor for the *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*. Her published work includes articles on Mansfield, Lawrence and Woolf, with a particular focus on masculinity, and other questions of gender and identity, such as Englishness, the pastoral, and the utopian. Among her most recent work as a co-editor we could point out *Historicizing Modernism: Katherine Mansfield and Literary Modernism*, published in 2011.

as yet again another chance to doubly displace the feminine identity as a non-discursive category.⁵⁷ However, what do we understand by the male location? Feminists (Irigaray, [1977] 1985b; Jardine, 1984, 1985, 1987) claim that women have not gained a position in this subjectivity location; they have been denied a subjectivity of their own — and I would add: neither many male constructions have. There is a multiplicity of “other” men who do not fit into the phallogocentric hegemonic discourse of masculinity. So, women’s “non-identity” might be extended to the multiple others that exceed the boundaries of phallogocentric subjectivity, and this includes some men who try to build up alternative constructions of gender practices. In this sense, Harris’s poststructuralist analysis of Bernard’s gender practices in *The Waves* (1927) hints at new male (gender) practices drawn by Woolf in her fiction.

In “Septimus Smith and Charles Watkins: The Phallic Suppression of Masculine Subjectivity” (2000), Theresa L. Crater’s⁵⁸ analysis of Septimus Warren Smith acknowledges likewise Woolf’s attack on the gender/sex binary opposition. After drawing the main lines of the Lacanian paradigm concerning gender identity, Theresa L. Crater suggests that men are not the autonomous, singular, universalising selves of humanist theory, although in Lacan’s view they do have access to the Symbolic (language) in a way that women do not, in the discourse of Western civilisation. Crater goes on questioning “If language speaks Man, Phallus, how do men speak? How do they separate themselves from the totalizing ideology of patriarchy, express the gap or difference between their own lived experience and the demands of gender identity?” (Crater, 2000: 191-91)

What Crater is questioning here is what, in my view, Virginia Woolf was questioning in *Three Guineas* and explored by means of these alternative more fluid male characters such as Bernard, Orlando, and Septimus. Crater highlights Woolf’s ability to depict the power ascribed to the psychiatrist treating Septimus in relation to what she identifies as male violence and English/capitalistic imperialism and the instrumentalisation of the war to regulate patriarchal gender behaviour. Crater analyses Septimus’s shell shock in gender terms.

Septimus comes back from the war re-established in a male-centred society as a Man. But it is through his madness that he fights to escape the constraints of such a subject position. That is how he engages in fragmentary languages

⁵⁷Section ‘Feminist intersections’ from chapter 2 analyses different reactions from feminists to Deleuzo-Guattarian deconstruction of unitary subjectivity.

⁵⁸Theresa L. Carter is a North-American scholar and writer of fiction who has published a number of critical essays about literature. *Under the Stone Paw* (2006) is her first novel. She has published two short stories, one poem and a number of articles. Her scholarly writings have focused mainly on Virginia Woolf, Doris Lessing and The X-Files.

that are no longer patriarchal: “Septimus attempts to speak from elsewhere, to produce a new identity for himself.” (Crater, 2000: 194) Septimus decides to die rather than lose his new self; he prefers to die rather than cease to become.

Reconciling himself to his grief for Evans has brought Septimus up against patriarchal ideology about identity, about nature, about being rational. Septimus breaks through into a new mode of being. The male role, not feeling, being separated from nature, he now views as a criminal, as leading to violence, to war ...Septimus is on his way to create a new identity for himself, but he is interrupted by the psychiatrists. (Crater, 2000: 194-5)

According to Crater, the narrator connects Sir William’s sense of proportion and his power with male power in general, with imperialism. His sense of proportion shows an inability to allow difference; thus, the hegemonic discourse of masculinity epitomised by the psychiatrist does not allow Septimus’s countertype, alternative discourse of masculinity, to flow.

I find this poststructuralist approach to male characters especially convenient when analysing male characters that overcome the binary opposition man-woman, male-female, homosexual-heterosexual insofar as it provides a new mode of individuation that deconstructs fixed-rigid processes of subjectification.

1.5 Conclusion: Why Deleuze and Guattari?

Deleuze and Guattari’s criticism of subjectivity offers the possibility to rethink identity away from binary oppositions. Their emphasis on the positivity of desire and the non-centrality of phallogentrism in the process of subjectivation provides a fruitful framework for the analysis of my approach of Woolf’s polymorphous concept of gender.

Deleuze and Guattari replace the psychoanalytic pattern of subjectivity of the One vs. the Other by a multiple, mobile and connected individuation that breaks that dual system. While psychoanalysis (Oedipus complex) poses a set of oppositions, including masculine and feminine, in the process of individuation, Deleuze and Guattari replace this pattern by a model of subjectivity, desire, and difference which is mobile and connective rather than fixed and oppositional. Deleuze and Guattari advocate for a multiplicity that does not simply multiply the normative subject but that deconstructs its basic foundations.

Their radical proposal of subjectivity resides in their theories on becomings. Subjectivity is not understood as a finite, stable and fixed formation but as a

dynamic process of becomings that grants the continual production of difference. Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy provides the tools to deconstruct a tradition in criticism that relies on a notion of subjectivity as unitary and stable, which, as has been proved in the previous sections, embraces a masculinist ideal in Woolf's view.

This is precisely the potential I see in Deleuze and Guattari for the study of masculinities in Woolf, especially her fluid male characters. Woolf's minority, subordinated masculinities are complex, multiple and dynamic and, thus, break with the codes and foundations of binary gender normativity. Woolf's fluid male characters; become-other, they become-woman; they dislocate the normative subject, the Male Standard.

Furthermore, Deleuze and Guattari underline the polymorphous intensities of sexuality. They believe that the sexual dichotomy male/woman is a simplification of a wider range of multiplicity. Deleuze and Guattari believe sexuality produces multiple becomings that generate n sexual and gender formations based on the affirmation of difference beyond the binary opposition man/woman, male/female, heterosexual/homosexual. These opposite gender disjunctions are proved to fail to cope with gender multiplicity. This is the case of some of Woolf's fluid characters — such as Bernard, Septimus and Orlando — who do not fit into these sex/gender taxonomies. I will prove Septimus and Orlando to be two paradigmatic examples of the concept becoming-woman.

Deleuze and Guattari's claim for a new strategy for subjectification away from the binary oppositional system might be an instrumental strategy that allows us to understand Woolfian conception of polymorphous and unfixed gender formations. We can analyse Virginia Woolf's characters in the light of Deleuzo-Guattarian becomings to prove her shift from the foundational binary opposition (the fundamental equation of the One and the Other).

Chapter 2, 'Deleuzo-Guattarian Potential Gender Becomings and Woolf's Radical Male Characters,' provides a detailed analysis of Deleuze's and Guattari's theories applied to my analysis of masculinities and gender in Woolf's writing.

Chapter 2

Deleuzo-Guattarian Potential Gender Becomings and Woolf's Radical Male Characters

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to prove how useful Deleuze and Guattari's reformulation of the process of social subjectification is for the analysis of Virginia Woolf's narratives of gender. The contribution to gender studies of current feminist research on Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari will be crucial to my understanding of Woolf's literary representations of masculinities and her concept of gender. By means of exchange between gender studies, men's studies and the poststructuralist writing of Deleuze and Guattari, I will elaborate a theoretical framework that will provide me with strategies to address male characters in Woolf's fiction.

Deleuze and Guattari revisit concepts, such as difference and sexuality, categories, such as 'man', 'woman', 'heterosexual', 'homosexual', 'deviant,' which offer a new mode of individuation that is disperse, unlimited, multiple and nomadic.¹ Their redefinition of the subject, away from fixed and stable signs

¹For Deleuze and Guattari, the nomadic is process: "...a local integration moving from part to part and constituting smooth space in an infinite succession of linkages and changes in

(such as Freud's Oedipal), provides my study of male characters with a wide range of theoretical elements in order to conceptualise Woolf's gender perspective. Deleuze and Guattari's project offers an opportunity to explore Woolf's characters' multi-dimensionality.

Furthermore, Virginia Woolf is one of the few female writers mentioned by Deleuze and Guattari. In *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), Deleuze and Guattari explore, with references to Woolf's writing, the notion of becoming-woman. They show a particular interest in "[Virginia Woolf]...who made all her life and work a passage, a becoming, all kinds of becomings between ages, sexes, elements, and kingdoms..." (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 252) Deleuze and Guattari consider Woolf and her writing to be examples of becomings, of this on-going subjective process.

Their project offers an opportunity to rethink gender and gender politics. On the one hand, at the micro-level of individuals, their concepts of difference and individuation provide new understandings of sexuality and gender performance against hierarchical binary sex/gender oppositions. On the other hand, at the macro-level of society, their redefinition of the subject in terms of multiplicity opens up spaces to break away from fixed social structures, such as patriarchy. It is at this second level where Deleuze and Guattari suggest a new paradigm for the politics of difference.²

Contemporary feminism, committed to corporeality and sexual difference,³

direction." (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 494) The metaphor of nomad, indicates the dynamic and evolving character of nomadic thought. The nomadic space is an open territory filled in with emancipatory potential. Nomadic individuals break away from constraining modern forms of identity and stasis to become desiring nomads in a constant process of becoming and transformation. Nomadic individuals are always in the process of becoming-other.

²By politics of difference, I mean to refer to identity/difference politics, which embraces a wide range of political activity and theorising that has focused on difference; a politics that stresses strong collective group identities as the basis of political analysis and action. On a theoretical level, I am referring to research carried out within cultural studies (focusing on class or ethnicity for instance) and feminism (sexual difference feminism), which has defined collective specific identity locations. Deleuze and Guattari's theories about difference-in-itself prove these identity locations to be constraining identity systems that categorise social groups on the basis of a restrictive frame of reference — the normative subject — and that do not cope with multiplicity. Deleuze and Guattari's position in relation to identity politics will be developed in the section entitled 'The *n* becomings of gender/sexual difference' in this chapter.

³By contemporary feminists committed to corporeality and sexual difference I mean to refer to poststructuralist feminists and French psychoanalyst feminists such as Judith Butler (1990; 1993; 2004), Rosi Braidotti (1987; 1991; 1994a; 1994b; 1996; 2002; 2003), Luce Irigaray ([1974] 1985a; [1977] 1985b; [1984] 1993), Julia Kristeva, and Hélène Cixous (1975; 1990) among others.

has been concerned to break away from the rigid binary oppositions produced within patriarchy. One of the main goals of feminism since the 1990s has been to break down the circularity of phallogentrism and the patriarchal subject of enunciation.⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980) suggest challenging modes of thinking the subject as well as a critique of foundational psychoanalytic concepts related to the constitution of the subject. They reject both the Oedipal subject and its familial foundation (the Oedipal complex), and the foundational principle that psychoanalysis attaches to sexuality in relation to desire and the process of subjectivation.

In addition, Deleuze and Guattari's notion of difference-in-itself — Deleuze's original concept as will be discussed in the section entitled 'The *n* becomings of gender/sexual difference' — becomes the theoretical basis for their challenging concept of sexual difference. Deleuze and Guattari advocate a notion of difference not as the reactive pole of a binary opposition organised so as to affirm the power and primacy of the same, but as the affirmation of difference in terms of a multiplicity of possible differences; difference as the positivity of differences. Difference is defined (Deleuze, [1968] 2004) as something that exists intrinsically within the subject beyond identity, analogy, opposition, and resemblance. Difference contains a multiplicity that exceeds and precedes identity, analogy, opposition, and resemblance. When Deleuze and Guattari apply this definition of difference to sexual difference, the binary opposition woman/man, female/

⁴The subject of enunciation is a psychoanalytic term that stems from the linguistic notion of the enunciated and enunciation in order to work out the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious. Lacan states that all linguistic acts have two important dimensions; the first level of what is enunciated (words represent factual states of affairs in the world) and the second level of the performative dimension, "the level of enunciation." For Lacan the analysing subject's speech unveils traces of unconscious motions and desires. Since there are two levels of discourse — the enunciated, which is literal (basically informative) and we could locate at the level of *parler* and the enunciation, which is the subjective connotation, usually unknown by the speaker, and which is related to the subject of the unconscious — the subject of enunciation will be referred as the subject of the unconscious. Lacan criticises post-freudians, Ego Psychology and contradicts Descartes's *Cogito ergo Sum* by stating: "I am thinking where I am not, therefore I am where I am thinking not." (Lacan, 2006: 518) Deleuze and Guattari (1972; 1980) use the term subject of enunciation to refer to the normative subject; "...for a subject is never the condition of possibility of language or the cause of the statement: there is no subject, only collective assemblages of enunciation." (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 130) Deleuze and Guattari claim that the individual majoritarian speaking subject cannot be taken to be the ultimate foundation of truth, meaning or value but a surface effect of resonance (Goodchild, 1996: 151). Deleuze and Guattari define this subject of enunciation as mainly male; "the Male Standard." I am using this term in order to point out feminist's efforts to claim for the right of a female subject of enunciation to be an epistemological subject.

male, heterosexual/homosexual, promoted by the Oedipal schema, collapses and is proved to be a simplification of a wider range of multiple differences.

Consequently, Deleuze's definition of difference as prior to identity, and multiple rather than oppositional may pose some controversial challenges to categories and notions that feminism seeks to re-appropriate such as 'woman' and 'sexual difference.' Deleuze and Guattari replace the psychoanalytic pattern of subjectivity of 'the One vs. the Other' with a multiple, mobile and connected process of individuation that overcomes this dual system. An immediate result of this is their problematising of the very sexual dichotomy, by questioning the category 'woman-man'. Deleuze and Guattari's thesis might seem contrary to feminist claims for women's subject-position (Irigaray, [1977] 1985b; Jardine, 1985). Yet, Deleuze and Guattari inscribe difference in a new paradigm where to overcome the binary opposition system. They invent a new language from where gender politics and theory might underpin new potentialities; open new locations of gender practice and research.

The following chapter will try to draw intersections between feminism and Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical project by focusing on the concept of becoming-woman presented in *A Thousand Plateaus*.⁵ This chapter will attempt to show how the notions of becoming-woman and becoming minority meet the demands of feminism and politics of difference.

My intention is to build a genealogy of this concept, looking at their body of work as an introduction or background for becoming-woman, rather than giving a substantial introduction to Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy as a whole. Therefore, I will focus my attention on those issues related to subjectivity, gender and sexual difference in their two collaborative volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Anti-Oedipus* (1977) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980).

This chapter will move from a level of abstraction, in exploring the Deleuzo-Guattarian project, towards the more concrete plane of gender politics and the intersections between their proposals and feminism. My point of departure will be the Freudian Oedipal complex and Deleuze and Guattari's critique of the Oedipal subject. From this criticism, the chapter will lead to the analysis of their description of the process of individuation, to end up with suggesting the repercussions that this new mode of individuation can generate in a social plane, particularly with regard to masculinities. The last three sections of this chapter will relate Deleuze and Guattari's work with Virginia Woolf, and will provide a

⁵Most feminist responses to Deleuze and Guattari have focused on the concept of becoming-woman: Boundas and Olkowski (1994), Braidotti (1987; 1991; 1994a; 1994b; 1996; 2003; 2006), Grosz (1994a; 1994b), Jardine (1984; 1985; 1987), Irigaray ([1977] 1985), just to mention a few. In contrast, very few have focused on difference; Butler (1990; 1993; 2004) is an example.

brief overview of the scholarly work devoted to exploring this connection.

Deleuze and Guattari were very aware of the patriarchal condition of the subject of enunciation. They detect the patriarchal determinations of the molar⁶ and present alternatives with their molecular project. In this sense, their scheme of subjectivities opens up a whole range of possibilities for feminism in their attempt to deconstruct patriarchal binary oppositions. Their project and feminism may meet in their common search for an alternative configuration of subjectivity. Feminism fosters alternative conceptualisations of the subject, alternative modes of subjectivity that welcome new definitions of difference and sexuality, building on deconstructions of essentialist views of women and men and the gender binary division between them.

2.2 Deleuzo-Guattarian concept of nomadic subjectivities and becomings

2.2.1 Deleuze and Guattari in context

In writing about Deleuze and Guattari's collaborative work there has been a general tendency to overlook the figure of Guattari. When they met in 1969, Gilles Deleuze was already a well-established academic who had written monographs revising the theories of modern philosophers such as Hume, Bergson, Nietzsche and Spinoza⁷ and had started postulating his own philosophy in *Difference and Repetition* (1968) and *The Logic of Sense* (1969). These texts contain many of the elements of the "philosophy of difference" which served as a point of departure for his collaborative work with Guattari.

⁶'The molar,' is also frequently referred to as 'arborescent.' Deleuze and Guattari use the terms 'molar' and 'molecular' from physics: "two directions in *physics* — the molar direction that goes toward the large numbers and the mass phenomena, and the molecular direction that on the contrary penetrates into singularities, their interactions and connections at a distance or between different orders..." (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a: 280) When using these terms in a social plane they consider that "One [molar] is a *subjugated group* investment, as much in its sovereign form as in its colonial formations of the gregarious aggregate, which socially and physically represses the desire of persons; the other a *subject-group* investment in the transverse multiplicities that convey desire as a molecular phenomenon, that is, as partial objects and flows, as opposed to aggregates and persons." (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a: 280) The molar homogenises difference, whereas the molecular is heterogeneous by focusing on singularities.

⁷*Empirisme et subjectivité* (1953), *Nietzsche et la philosophie* (1962), *La philosophie critique de Kant* (1963), *Proust et les signes* (1964), *Nietzsche* (1965), *Le Bergsonisme* (1966), *Présentation de Sacher-Masoch* (1967), *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression* (1968), *Spinoza-Philosophie pratique* (1970).

On the other hand, Félix Guattari was a Lacanian psychoanalyst working at *La Borde*, an experimental and alternative psychiatric clinic founded by Jean Oury,⁸ and had proved himself to be a political activist, editing and contributing to *La Voie Communiste*, beginning the journal *Recherches*⁹ in 1966, and being involved in political causes such as the anti-colonialist struggle of Algeria and May 68, where he had helped organise and occupy the *Théâtre de L'Odéon*.¹⁰

These differing biographies partly explain why Gilles Deleuze has been credited as the intellectual, the theorist, whereas Félix Guattari has been considered more an activist than an intellectual.¹¹ Guattari's anti-hierarchical attitudes, that is, his anti-establishment medical, social and political claims led to his political activism and made him a participant of social movements including feminism, the gay-rights movement and environmentalism.

Consequently, for the purpose of this thesis, Guattari will be considered of vital importance for my discussion on gender due to the political dimension of his work. Félix Guattari was more concerned with politics and with subjectivity than Gilles Deleuze. He is actually more easily connected to gender politics and sexuality as an editorial incident in 1973 shows. In March of 1973, Guattari was fined for publishing a special issue of *Recherches* (#12) devoted

⁸The innovative contribution of Oury, Lacan's student, to psychiatry was to allow patients to participate in the management of *La Borde*. Oury would introduce the anti-psychiatry movement to Guattari.

⁹*Recherches* was the house journal of the CERFI (Centre d'Études, de Recherches et de Formation Institutionnelles), an organization where Félix Guattari wanted to give a space to the plurality of the political Left, engaging in political projects such as the one of the MLF (Mouvement de Libération des Femmes) or the gay-rights movement.

¹⁰The *Théâtre de L'Odéon* in Paris was occupied in 1968. In May 1968, in the midst of the social and student uprising, Jean-Louis Barrault opened the Odéon to the students. This produced a month of lively occupation. Artists and intellectuals, and an anonymous crowd of people gave speeches on the Odeon's stage. The motto was written in the foyer: "When the national assembly becomes a bourgeois theatre, all the theatres should turn into national assemblies!" Guattari became actively involved in the events of the antiauthoritarian protest. However, Deleuze was not a revolutionary militant during the two months of protests, despite publicly declaring his support for the movement. His post as a lecturer at the University of Lyon, his aim to finish his doctoral thesis and his health problems kept him away from Guattari's activism. After Deleuze's doctoral thesis defense in 1969 and a serious operation, Deleuze and Guattari finally met.

¹¹Gary Genosko in *Félix Guattari: An Aberrant Introduction* (2002) and Ian Buchanan's *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus: A Reader's Guide* (2008) provide background information about Deleuze and Guattari's positioning within scholarship and describe Deleuze and Guattari's careers before they met. Genosko claims that Guattari's 'activist-intellectuality' constituted an attempt to find concepts adequate to the expression of connections between diverse militant causes; a move from interdisciplinarity to transdisciplinarity, away from institutions.

to homosexuality in France, ‘Trois milliards de pervers: Grande Encyclopédie des Homosexualités.’¹² All the copies of the issue were ordered to be destroyed and still today access to the issue is restricted.¹³ Guattari expressed his views about the potential that gay activism could have in critiques about the field of sexuality as a whole and these views became what Deleuze and Guattari defined as becoming-minoritarian in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980).

Despite his direct contact with feminist politics, Guattari’s notion of becoming-woman aroused many suspicions among feminists.¹⁴ This did not occur with his theoretical interventions about homosexuality, which were received with sympathy. The first formulations of becoming-woman are to be found in *Molecular Revolution* published in 1977, where Félix Guattari devotes a chapter to the concept. But before focusing on becoming-woman we need to trace the genealogy of this term. The following section tries to draw together the basic elements of Deleuze and Guattari’s project related to the process of subject formation and will focus on those elements related to gender and sexuality.

2.2.2 *Anti-Oedipus*: Dismantling fixed molar Oedipal subjectivity

*Anti-Oedipus*¹⁵ is the first collaborative work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, which presents a critique of the Freudian Oedipus complex as inscribed in the negotiations and demands of capitalist society.¹⁶ The work is divided into

¹²‘Three Billion Perverts on the Stand’, trans. Sophie Thomas, in G. Genosko (ed.) *The Guattari Reader*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996) pp. 185-92.

¹³Gary Genosko provides a full account of the impact and repercussions of this issue in ‘Busted: Félix Guattari and the Grande Encyclopédie des Homosexualités’ in *Rhizome* 11:12 (2005-6).

¹⁴It is only since the 1990s that feminism and gay/lesbian studies have turned towards Guattari’s body of work in relation to gender and sexuality (Braidotti, 1991, 1994a, 1994b; Grosz, 1994a, 1994b; Watson & Colebrook, 2005-2006; Conely, 2009).

¹⁵*Anti-Oedipus* was published in 1972. François Dosse (2007: 206) describes the impact and context of this work as follows: “In the spring of 1972, a bomb dropped in the intellectual and political world. Coming a mere four years after May ’68, *Anti-Oedipus* still bore the marks and effects of the period. Daily demonstrations of public unrest kept the events of May ’68 fresh in the popular imagination.” *Anti-Oedipus* sold out in three days. There was a great variety of reactions from intellectuals. On the one hand, Lacan radically opposed the book by distancing the Freudian School from the debates generated around it. On the other hand, other theorists, as Girard, Lyotard, and Foucault, praised and supported Deleuze and Guattari’s work.

¹⁶They analyse the mechanisms of the psyche and harshly criticise the Oedipus complex as an original phenomenon for subject formation and instead analyse its origins in capitalism. My main concern here is to show how Deleuze and Guattari affirm that capitalism repro-

four chapters: The first deals with the unconscious and its productive relation with society; the second presents a critique of Freudian psychoanalysis focusing on the Oedipal complex; the third inscribes the Oedipal in the capitalist scheme by re-reading Karl Marx's historical materialism; and finally, the last section develops Deleuze's and Guattari's critical practice, schizoanalysis.

In *Anti-Oedipus* (1972), Deleuze and Guattari attack Freud's construction of the subject within the Oedipal triangle. Deleuze and Guattari proclaim the potential of desire to break away from social and psychic repression, against the classic Freudian notion of subject formation containing and undermining desire and establishing a fundamental lack in the subject as constitutive. *Anti-Oedipus* attempts to dismantle the principles of modern subjectivity.¹⁷ Deleuze and Guattari revisit the concept of difference (productive difference) by renovating the psychoanalytic concept of the unconscious (an extra-linguistic machine¹⁸ which is productive) and substituting the concept of 'complex' for the notion of 'assemblage'¹⁹ which operates trans-individually beyond the molar-

duces patriarchy by producing hierarchical gendered subjects through mechanisms such as the Oedipus complex.

¹⁷By modern subjectivity, I am referring here to modern European philosophical tradition starting from the Cartesian subject (*cogito ergo sum*), unified through a conscious awareness of the self, which poses the dual distinction between thought (mind) and extension (body) — Descartes's idea that humans are rational, autonomous individuals — and the Hegelian opposition between being and non-being which expresses Hegel's negative ontology of the subject; in other words, the formative centrality of negativity in the development of such aspects of the subject as desire and the ego. According to Hegel, in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), the relationship between self and otherness is the fundamental defining characteristic of human awareness and activity, based on the desire for objects as well as on the estrangement from those objects. The subject is constituted out of his/her relationship with the object, a relationship which is defined by negativity and reciprocity. The subject and the object are related in opposition; the subject and the object negate one another as a result of their differences. The otherness that consciousness experiences as a barrier to its goal is the external reality of the natural and social world. This is how desire takes place. The individual desires to possess what he/she is lacking. Under the influence of Alexandre Kojève (Russian-born French philosopher interpreter of Hegel), Lacan's use of the Other is close to Hegel's.

¹⁸The technological machine is only one instance of machinism. There are also technical, aesthetic, economic, social, among many other machines. The productive potential of machines provide the grounds for Deleuze and Guattari's new definition of subjectivity as a process. For Deleuze and Guattari, desire is like a machine. Both are productive. A desiring-machine produces libidinal energy and subjectivity is considered an effect of production.

¹⁹An assemblage is any number of things or pieces of things gathered into a context, a collection. This term describes heterogeneous structures, consisting of human as well as nonhuman elements. Assemblage is a process of becoming as much as a state of being. Deleuze and Guattari define assemblage by their definition of book: "A book has neither object nor subject; it is made of variously formed matters, and very different dates and speeds...In a book, as in all things, there are lines of articulation or segmentary, strata and territories;

ity of structures. They rethink difference in terms of desiring-machines instead of the Oedipal complex. While the basic premise of the Oedipal complex is central to classical psychoanalysis, schizoanalysis²⁰ tries to move beyond these boundaries.

The starting point for the *Anti-Oedipus* is to break with the foundational Oedipal complex²¹ in relation to the process of subjectivation. I would like,

but also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification. Comparative rates of flow on these lines produce phenomena of relative slowness and viscosity, or, on the contrary, of acceleration and rupture. All this, lines and measurable speeds, constitutes an *assemblage*.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 3-4) Assemblages are multiplicities; they are composed of heterogeneous elements or objects (physical objects, events, states of things or signs, utterances, modes of expression) that are related with one another. Assemblages are thus heterogeneous entities that consist of bodies and objects, as well as nonmaterial entities, such as statements. Assemblages are formed by multiplicities of multiplicities. There are multiplicities of multiplicities operating in the same assemblage.

²⁰Deleuze and Guattari give several definitions throughout *Anti-Oedipus*, the more general is: “Schizoanalysis is at once a transcendental and materialist analysis. It is critical in the sense that it leads the criticism of Oedipus, or leads Oedipus, to the point of its own self-criticism. It sets out to explore a transcendental unconscious, rather than a metaphysical one; an unconscious that is material rather than ideological; schizophrenic rather than Oedipal; nonfigurative rather than imaginary; real rather than symbolic; machinic rather than structural — an unconscious, finally that is molecular, microphysical and micrological rather than molar or gregarious; productive rather than expressive.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a: 109-110) The main objective of schizoanalysis is to analyse the process of production of the unconscious.

²¹Freud first mentioned the Oedipus complex in ‘The material and sources of dreams’ (chapter 5) in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) where he introduces the tragedy by Sophocles and Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*: “It is far more probable — and this is confirmed by occasional observations on normal children — that they are only distinguished by exhibiting on a magnified scale feelings of love and hatred to their parents which occur less obviously and less intensely in the minds of most children. This discovery is confirmed by a legend that has come down to us from classical antiquity: a legend whose profound and universal power to move can only be understood if the hypothesis I have put forward in regard to the psychology of children has an equally universal validity. What I have in mind is the legend of King Oedipus and Sophocles’ drama which bears his name. Oedipus, the son of Laius, king of Thebes, and of Jocasta, was exposed as an infant because an oracle had warned Laius that the still unborn child would be his father murderer. The child was rescued, and grew up as a prince in an alien court, until, in doubts as to his origin, he, too, questioned the oracle and was warned to avoid his home since he is destined to murder his father and take his mother in marriage. On the road leading away from what he believed was his home, he met King Laius and slew him in a sudden quarrel. He came next to Thebes and solved the riddle set him by the Sphinx, who barred his way. Out of gratitude the Thebans made him their king and gave him Jocasta’s hand in marriage. He reigned long in peace and honour, and she who, unknown to him, was his mother bore him two sons and two daughters. Then at last a plague broke out and the Thebans made enquiry once more of the oracle. It is at this point that Sophocles’ tragedy opens. The messengers bring back the reply that the plague will cease when the murderer of Laius has been driven

first, to address Freud's view about the Oedipus complex in order to understand Deleuze and Guattari's critique and rejection of the Oedipus complex as a foundational element for the individual. Bearing in mind the purpose of this thesis I will draw my attention especially to these issues in the individual concerning gender and sexuality.

The Oedipus complex is central to Freud's writings in relation to family, sexuality and sexual difference (as it is for Lacan²²). Psychoanalysis describes sexual identities as founded on the Oedipal encounter and the access to the genital phase (For Lacan the post-mirror stage; the Symbolic order). It is not until the Oedipus complex that the boy and the girl are differentiated.

Freud's psychosexual development theory is based on sexual drives or 'libido development.'²³ He established a rigid model for 'the normal' sexual develop-

from the land ...The action of the play consists simply in nothing other than the process of revealing, with cunning delays and ever-mounting excitement — a process that can be linked to the work of a psychoanalysis — that Oedipus himself is the murderer of Laius, but further that he is the son of the murdered man and of Jocasta. Appalled at the abomination which he has unwittingly perpetrated, Oedipus blinds himself and forsakes his home. The oracle has been fulfilled." (Freud, [1900]1982: 261-262) He adds that Sophocles' tragedy is based on sexual impulses that the child undergoes according to his psychosexual development theory: "the legend of Oedipus sprang from some primeval dream-material which had as its content the distressing disturbance of the child's relation to his parents owing to the first stirrings of sexuality." (Freud, [1900]1982: 263-263)

²²Lacan, the pre-eminent French psychoanalyst, reformulates Freud's theory of the psychosexual development theory. Lacan's version distances from Freud's emphasis on the organ (the penis) by focusing on the phallus related to the symbolic father. Lacan elaborated that sexual identity is a question of the structuring function of language, not biological anatomy/body. The Oedipus is related to the acquisition of language. Lacan does not talk about castration complex. For Lacan, castration is a symbolic operation that organises the structure of the subject, whose function is to normalise (not homogenising) the sexual subject position. As a symbolic operation, it has a real agent (the father) and an imaginary object (the phallus), which becomes a transcendental signifier. In this linguistic system the phallus stands for anything the subject loses in his entrance into language and the power associated with the Name-of-the-father (social structures such as laws, control, knowledge). The resolution of the Oedipus will determine the subject position in front of the phallus, by either assuming castration or not. The first other that the child encounters is the nurturer (generally the mother). Therefore, in this first stage the child, carried away by the enigma of the mother's desire (e.g. presence and absence of the mother as something capricious), tries to fulfill her by becoming the phallus. The child becomes aware of the father's presence prohibiting force to the infant's merging with the Other, the mother. It is then when the child acknowledges that he/she *is not* and *has not got* the phallus and locates himself/herself in a masculine or feminine subject position.

²³Freud defines the concept of libido as "a quantitatively variable force which could serve as a measure of processes and transformations occurring in the field of sexual excitation. We distinguish this libido in respect to underline mental processes in general, and we thus also attribute a *qualitative* character to it. In thus distinguishing between libidinal and other

ment. Freud takes infantile sexuality as his point of departure for his psychosexual theory.²⁴ According to Freud, infantile pre-Oedipal sexuality is auto-erotic, polymorphous²⁵ and it is primarily incestuous. During the child's pre-Oedipal sexual development, there are three phases that correspond to three erotogenic zones: oral, anal, and phallic.²⁶ These three phases are linked to the three basic bodily functions; eating, defecating and urinating. There are not major differences in these processes between boys and girls according to Freud.

At the Oral stage, the child's desire is oriented to the mouth and the lips, which, despite representing a nurturing means, become a source for sexual pleasure through the act of sucking.²⁷ The first object of desire at this stage is the mother's breast, and ultimately, in the following stages, the mother herself becomes the first 'love-object.'

The anal stage is split between active and passive impulses. The new auto-erotic object at this stage is the anus. Defecation provides the child with a pleasure that Freud connects with the pleasure of creating something of his/her own, which is, at the same time, also physiologically passive. On the one hand, producing faeces, the child can express his/her active "compliance with the environment and, by withholding them, his disobedience." (Freud,[1905]1995a: 186) On the other hand, the retention of his/her faeces can serve as a masturbatory stimulus in the anal zone. Freud points out:

A second pregenital phase is that of the sadistic-anal organization. Here the opposition between two currents, which runs through all

forms of psychical energy we are giving expression to the presumption that the sexual processes occurring in the organism are distinguished from the restrictive process by a special chemistry." (Freud, [1905] 1995a: 217) According to Freud every human action is based on instincts. There are two basic drives: the sexual drive and the drive for self-preservation.

²⁴Freud was convinced that sexual impulses take place at an early stage in childhood: "There seems no doubt that germs of sexual impulses are already present in the new-born child and that these continue to develop for a time, but are then overtaken by a progressive process of suppression." (Freud, [1905] 1995a: 176)

²⁵"...children can become polymorphously perverse, and can be led into all possible kinds of sexual irregularities. This shows that an aptitude for them is innately present in their disposition. There is consequently little resistance towards carrying them out, since the mental dams against sexual excesses —shame, disgust and morality — have either not yet been constructed at all or are only in course of construction, according to the age of the child." (Freud, [1905] 1995a: 191)

²⁶"We shall give the name of 'pregenital' to organizations of sexual life in which the genital zones have not yet taken over their predominant part." (Freud, [1905] 1995a: 198)

²⁷"...thumb-sucking or sensual sucking has already given us three essential characteristics of an infantile sexual manifestation. At its origins it attaches itself to one of the vital somatic functions, it has as yet no sexual object, and is thus auto-erotic; and its sexual aim is dominated by an erotogenic zone." (Freud, [1905] 1995a: 182-183)

sexual life, is already developed: they cannot yet, however, be described as ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’, but only as ‘active’ and ‘passive’. The *activity* is put into operation by the instinct of mastery through the agency of the somatic musculature; the organ which, more than any other, represents the *passive* sexual aim is the erotogenic mucous membrane of the anus...In this phase, sexual polarity and an extraneous object are already observable. But organization and subordination to the reproductive function are still absent.²⁸(Freud, [1905] 1995a: 198-199)

According to Freud, for ‘normal’ femininity to take place, women must accept their role as passive beings and will forever more be the passive being in relation to the activity of masculinity.

The phallic phase²⁹ is the last stage of the pre-Oedipal, when the boy’s phallic sexuality is centred on his penis and the girl’s on her clitoris. The clitoris is considered her active/phallic/masculine organ³⁰ during the phallic phase. In this phase the phallic organs are the ones to provide pleasure and they are still not identified with genitalia at the beginning; although children understand that there are differences between men and women, they do not yet

²⁸Freud attributes an ‘active energy’ to the masculine and a ‘passive’ one to the feminine from a biologist point of view. That is something that he asserts in his analysis of female sexuality: “The turning-away from her mother is an extremely important step in the course of a little girl’s development. It is more than a mere change of object...we may now add that hand in hand with it there is to be observed a marked lowering of the active sexual impulses [underpinned by the phallic clitoris] and a rise of the passive ones.” (Freud, [1931] 1995k: 239)

²⁹In a footnote added to “Three Essays on Sexuality” in 1924 Freud wrote that he inserted a third phase in the development of childhood, subsequent to the two pregenital organizations which knows only one kind of genital: the male one. That is why he called it the phallic phase. (Freud, [1905] 1995a:199-200)

³⁰When the male child first realises a girl’s absent penis, he first disavows the fact and he sees a penis: “Anatomy has recognized the clitoris within the female pudenda as being an organ that is homologous to the penis; and the physiology of the sexual processes has been able to add that this small penis which does not grow any bigger behaves in fact during childhood like a real and genuine penis — that it becomes the seat of excitations which lead to its being touched, that its excitability gives the little girl’s sexual activity a masculine character and that a wave of repression in the years of puberty is needed in order for this masculine sexuality to be discarded and the woman to emerge.” (Freud, [1908] 1995b: 217) Freud adds in his essay “Infantile Genitalia Organization”: “...the main characteristic of this ‘infantile genitalia organization’ is its *difference* from the final genital organization of the adult. This consists in the fact that, for both sexes, only one genital, namely the male one, comes into account. What is present, therefore, is not a primacy of the genitals, but a primacy of the *phallus*.” (Freud, [1923] 1995g: 142)

relate these differences to genitalia.³¹ Both the boy and the girl still locate the mother as their ‘love-object.’

The turning-point takes place in this phallic phase when the child’s desire for the mother becomes unattainable:

At a very early stage the little boy develops an object-cathexis for his mother, which originally related to the mother’s breast and is the prototype of an object-choice on the anaclitic model; the boy deals with his father by identifying himself with him. For a time these two relationships proceed side by side, until the boy’s sexual wishes in regard to his mother become more intense and his father is perceived as an obstacle to them; from this the Oedipus complex originates. (Freud, [1923] 1995f: 31-2)

It is then, that differences between the boy and the girl take place in their different encounters with the Oedipal complex. The Oedipal complex is familial and it is through the structures of the family that the child will enter the social, and encounter or create his super-ego,³² what Lacan will call the Law of the Father, the access into the linguistic, the Symbolic order.

The Oedipus complex marks the access to the genital phase — after ‘latency stage’³³ —and its ‘normal’ resolution will repress parricide and incest drives in

³¹“The small boy undoubtedly perceives a distinction between men and women, but to begin with he has no occasion to connect this with a difference in genitals. It is natural for him to assume that all other living beings, human and animals, possess a genital like his own;” (Freud, [1923] 1995g: 142)

³²The ego-ideal or super-ego forms part of ‘the structural model’ — the id-ego-super ego triangle— of the psyche first discussed in 1920 in “Beyond the Pleasure Principle” and developed later in 1923 in “The Ego and the Id.” The super-ego is the mechanism to repress the Oedipus complex. It includes the individual ego ideals that prohibit and control personal drives: “The child’s parents, and especially his father, were perceived as the obstacle to a realization of his Oedipus wishes; so his infantile ego fortified itself for the carrying out of the repression by erecting this same obstacle within itself...The super-ego retains the character of the father, while the more powerful the Oedipus complex was and the more rapidly it succumbed to repression (under the influence of authority, religious teaching, schooling and reading), the stricter will be the domination of the super-ego over the ego later on.” (Freud, [1923] 1995f: 34-35)

³³By the end of the phallic stage, Freud describes the ‘latency stage’ where no new organisation of sexuality develops. It originates when the Oedipus complex is resolved. The child realises that his/her wishes and longings for the parent of the opposite sex have to be repressed and s/he starts to identify with the parent of the same sex by acquiring cultural gender constructions. Freud asserts that “It is during this period of total or only partial latency that are built up the mental forces which are later to impede the course of the sexual instinct and, like dams, restrict its flow — disgust, feelings of shame and the claims of aesthetic and moral

the unconscious; “To an ever-increasing extent the Oedipus complex reveals its importance as the central phenomenon of the sexual period of early childhood. After that, its dissolution takes place; it succumbs to repression, as we say, and is followed by the latency period.” (Freud [1924] 1995h: 173) The Oedipus Complex marks the differentiation between the boy and the girl. Although both boys and girls endure an Oedipus complex, their experience is completely different and this inscribes them in oppositional subject positions.

When the boy encounters the other and he becomes aware of female genitals—facing the absence of penis—, he suffers from the fear of castration.³⁴ The lack of a penis is regarded as a result of castration. Coming from the phallic stage where the penis stands as the focused erotogenic zone, the boy fears the loss of his penis. The threat of castration might revisit his experience of loss (of the object of desire—the breast) in the oral phase. When the boy realises that the girl has not got a penis, he attributes that fact to punishment from the law³⁵ of the father and he extends that castration to all women, including the mother. His acceptance of the possibility of castration makes him turn away from the Oedipus complex: “For both of them [male and female] entailed the loss of his penis—the masculine one as a resulting punishment and the feminine one as a precondition.” (Freud [1924] 1995h: 176) The boy, after realising about the absence of penis in the mother, becomes aware that in order to escape from castration, and, therefore, preserve his penis, he needs to turn away from the

ideals.” (Freud, [1905] 1995a: 177) He goes on to say that “On the one hand, it would seem, that sexual impulses cannot be utilized during these years of childhood, since the reproductive functions have been deferred...On the other hand, these impulses would seem in themselves to be perverse...They consequently evoke opposing mental forces (reacting impulses) which, in order to suppress this unpleasure effectively, build up the mental dams that I have already mentioned — disgust, shame and morality.” (Freud, [1905] 1995a: 178) Freud refers to infantile amnesia as the withholding of those early impressions from consciousness and considers the ‘latency period’ as an interruption in the child’s sexual development. (Freud, [1924] 1995h 177)

³⁴“It is self-evident to a male child that a genital like his own is to be attributed to everyone he knows, and he cannot make its absence tally with his picture of these other people...and [this idea] is only abandoned after severe internal struggles (the castration complex).” (Freud, [1905] 1995a: 195)

³⁵Although, as Freud points out in “The Infantile Genital Organization: An Interpolation into the Theory of Sexuality”: “...the child believes that it is only unworthy female persons that have lost their genitals — females who, in all probability, were guilty of inadmissible impulses similar to his own. Women whom he respects, like his mother, retain a penis for a long time. For him, being a woman is not yet synonymous with being without a penis. It is not till later, when the child takes up the problems of the origin and birth of babies, and when he guesses that only women can give birth to them — it is only then that the mother, too, loses her penis.” (Freud, [1923] 1995g: 144-45)

Oedipus complex.

Freud describes the three possibilities the boy is left with in order to resolve his Oedipal complex. Firstly, ‘normal’ masculinity will resolve his desire for the mother by extending desire to other women and he will share a masculine complicity with the father and the privileges of the phallus. By identifying with his father, the boy develops masculine characteristics and identifies himself as a male, and represses his sexual feelings toward his mother.

Secondly, the homosexual male can either identify with the mother³⁶ and transform the father into a desire-object, or feel horror towards feminine castration, thus, being unable to love women.³⁷ In this case, the boy protects himself from castration by avoiding women sexually.

Finally, fetishism can be another way for the boy to resolve his Oedipal complex. A fetish is usually an inanimate object used for sexual purposes which acts as the replacement of the mother’s phallus, to protect the child from recognizing his mother’s castration; “...for if a woman had been castrated, then his own possession of a penis was in danger.” (Freud, [1927] 1995j: 153)

The girl’s encounter with the Oedipus complex is different from that of the boy. When the girl notices the boy’s genitals she suffers from “penis-envy.”³⁸ According to Freud, the girl resents this lack and feels that all women are castrated. This is the main difference between the boy and the girl’s encounter with the Oedipus complex; that is, their different approaches to castration —“The essential difference thus comes about that the girl accepts castration as an accomplished fact, whereas the boy fears the possibility of its occurrence.” (Freud, [1924] 1995h: 178) When the girl becomes aware of her differences from the boy, she suffers from a ‘masculinity complex.’ She assumes she had a penis and, having been castrated, she hopes to obtain a penis some day.

In both cases [boy and girl child] the mother is the original object;
and there is no cause for surprise that boys retain that object in the

³⁶In “The Sexual Theories of Children,” Freud explains how the male child before suffering the castration complex attributes the girl with a penis still to grow, and he develops that those men who are fixed in this stage will seek their sexual object among men, who remind them of women. (Freud, [1908] 1995b: 216)

³⁷Freud describes how the boy after the ‘castration complex’ feels terror towards women because they represent this threat of castration: “The woman’s genitalia, when seen later on, are regarded as a mutilated organ and recall this threat, and they therefore arouse horror instead of pleasure in the homosexual.” (Freud, [1908] 1995b: 217)

³⁸Freud means the phallus, the girl envies the power, the privileges that the transcendental signifier exerts, as a source of authority, “[s]he has seen it and knows that she is without it and wants to have it.” (Freud [1925] 1995i: 252)

Oedipus complex. But how does it happen that girls abandon it and instead take the father as an object? (Freud, [1925] 1995i: 251)

In order to resolve her Oedipal complex, the ‘normal’ girl changes her desire-object from the mother, who is “held responsible for her lack of a penis” (Freud, [1925] 1995i: 254), to the father, who possesses the phallus.³⁹ As she will not obtain her father as her desire-object, Freud argues that the only way for her to obtain the phallus is by having a male child. Whereas the boy has something to lose through the Oedipalisation — that is, the phallus —, the girl has nothing to lose really, and remains inscribed in a position of lack and inferiority — “After a woman has become aware of the wound to her narcissism, she develops, like a scar, a sense of inferiority.” (Freud, [1925] 1995i: 253)

The girl has three ways to resolve her Oedipal complex. Firstly, the homosexual girl does not accept her lack, she expects to have a penis some day, and suffers from a ‘masculinity complex’ that is fixed by adopting a male role. Secondly, frigidity takes place in women who accept their castration but remain trapped in the phallic stage, trapped in the clitoral and never accede to the vaginal (the genital). Finally, ‘normal’ femininity requires an acceptance of castration. Her resentment towards her mother for that lack transforms her father into the desire-object:

Her new relation to her father may start by having as its content a wish to have his penis at her disposal, but it culminates in another wish — to have a baby from him as a gift. The wish for a baby has thus taken the place of the wish for a penis, or has at all events split off from it. (Freud, [1938] 1995i: 193-194)

The girl will discover that she cannot have her father and she will turn to other men in search of the phallus. She will realise that she cannot have the phallus but that she can have a male child, which will be the equivalent of the penis and its power.

³⁹Freud considers that the phase of an exclusive attachment to the mother, the pre-Oedipal phase, has a greater effect on women than on men because she had to turn away from this primary object of love. In 1931, in his essay “Female Sexuality,” he sketches the whole range of motives for turning away from the mother — “that she failed to provide the girl with the only proper genital, that she did not feed her sufficiently, that she compelled her to share her mother’s love with others, that she never fulfilled all the girl’s expectations of love, and, finally, that she first aroused her sexual activity and then forbade it” (Freud, [1931] 1995k: 234) — and he concludes that the girl’s intense attachment to her mother is really ambivalent. On the one hand, the girl identifies herself with the mother, she takes her place; on the other hand, she rejects her both for jealousy and for not providing her with a penis.

After the transition within the phallic phase and the encounter with the Oedipus complex, puberty represents the beginning of the genital phase, where “a new sexual aim appears [sexual reproduction], and all the component instincts combine to attain it, while the erotogenic zones become subordinated to the primacy of the genital zone.” (Freud, [1905], 1995a: 207) Freud says that since the new sexual aim assigns very different functions to the two different sexes, their sexual development now diverges greatly.

As we all know, it is not until puberty that the sharp distinction is established between the masculine and feminine characters. From that time on, this contrast has a more decisive influence than any other upon the shaping of human life. It is true that the masculine and feminine dispositions are already easily recognizable in childhood. The development of the inhibitions of sexuality (shame, disgust, pity, etc.) takes place in little girls earlier and in the face of less resistance than in boys; the tendency to sexual repression seems in general to be greater; and, where the component instincts of sexuality appear, they prefer the passive form. The auto-erotic activity of the erotogenic zones is, however, the same in both sexes, and owing to this uniformity there is no possibility of a distinction between the two sexes such as arises after puberty. (Freud, [1905] 1995a: 219)

Freud confines women into their passivity from puberty onwards. As we have seen, in pre-genital phases passive and active currents are oppositional currents which run through all sexual life, and it is not until puberty that Freud encodes these as ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine.’

At this final stage in the psychosexual development, sexual urges are re-awakened and, following the premises of the ‘latency stage’ (based on the resolution of the Oedipus complex), the ‘normal’ adolescent directs his/her sexual urges towards the opposite sex, focusing on the genitalia as the main source for pleasure.

The processes at puberty thus establish the primacy of the genital zones; and, in a man, the penis, which has now become capable of erection, presses forward insistently towards the new sexual aim —penetration into a cavity in the body which excites his genital zone. (Freud, [1905] 1995a: 222)

It is important to notice that Freud argues that girls will have to give up “what was originally her leading genital zone —the clitoris— in favour of a new

zone —the vagina.” (Freud, [1931] 1995k: 225) Freud argues in “Female Sexuality” (1931) that the child lives a temporary bisexuality that combines ‘the feminine’ and ‘the masculine’ and he asserts that bisexuality comes to the fore more clearly in women than in men. ‘Normal’ women will reject their primary masculine trend, epitomised by the clitoris, and will enter into their passive feminine genital phase.

In women, therefore, the main genital occurrences of childhood must take place in relation to the clitoris. Their sexual life is regularly divided into two phases, of which the first has a masculine character, while only the second is specifically feminine. Thus in female development there is a process of transition from the one phase to the other, to which there is nothing analogous in the male. (Freud, [1931] 1995k: 228)

Freud’s psychosexual theory establishes a hierarchical binary opposition based upon gender/sexual division. Freudian psychoanalysis is reductive in its account of feminine and masculine sexuality since both are built on the central dominion of the phallus. Both the boy child and the girl child fight to preserve, or to gain, the phallus since the phallus warrants privileges in the family nucleus. For Freud the phallus becomes the central element in the process of subject formation.

Since both femininity and masculinity are organised around phallogocentric principles, —male ideals— Freud’s psychosexual theory seems to be subordinated to sex role expectations within patriarchy, where the source of authority is the father and the mother is relegated to a secondary role — despite being the primary source of life and love.

In this sense, the familial triangle is conceptually patriarchal⁴⁰ since this privileges and perpetuates the patriarchal law and organisation. The child is subordinated to the phallus and expelled from the pre-Oedipal polymorphous desire in as much as s/he is trapped in the patriarchal dynamics of the nuclear family; a patriarchal family with the father at the top and a subordinated passive mother, from whom both the boy and girl child will turn away although for different reasons.

⁴⁰In *This Sex Which is not One* ([1977] 1985b), Irigaray criticises Freud’s phallogocentric scheme, which according to her is: “...informed by the *standardization* of this sexuality according to *masculine parameters*...” (Irigaray, [1977] 1985b: 63) Irigaray argues that female sexuality according to Freud “...is never defined with respect to any sex but the masculine...The “feminine” is always described in terms of deficiency or atrophy, as the other side of the sex that holds a monopoly on value: the male sex.” (Irigaray, [1977] 1985b: 69)

All in all, we can say that Freud's account of sexual difference is founded on the patriarchal scheme of the Oedipal subject. Psychoanalysis does not offer an alternative structure for subjectivity away from patriarchy since the foundational myth of the subject seems to stem from patriarchal family dynamics. In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari reject the Oedipal complex at different levels. They attempt to move beyond Oedipus and its bonds. What follows is an attempt to show the utility of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of subjectivation in order to explore a new paradigm for the subject — away from patriarchy.

To begin with, Deleuze and Guattari reject the **familial** foundation of the Oedipal subject. They reject the foundational principle that psychoanalysis gives to **sexuality** in relation to desire and subject formation. They reject the dualisms that psychoanalysis imposes on the configuration of the subject. Ultimately, they reject **sexual difference** as understood in these oppositional dynamics.

According to Freud, the Oedipal triangle (mommy-daddy-child) establishes the origins of desire. By locating the origin of desire in the family dynamics described above, Freud defines desire within a negative paradigm of repression, prohibition and lack. The boy and the girl desire the mother they are prohibited to have, and their desire creates a succession of repressions. The child wants to replace the father, and, therefore, takes the mother as a sexual object (the boy wants to have his mother and the girl wants to take her mother's place).

It is not a question of denying the vital importance of parents or the love attachment of children to their mothers and fathers. It is a question of knowing what the place and the function of parents are within desiring-production, rather than doing the opposite and forcing the entire interplay of desiring-machines to fit within (*rabat-tre tout le jeu de machines désirantes dans*) the restricted code of Oedipus. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a: 47)

Deleuze and Guattari do not consider the family as the primary object of desire. They consider the family as the agent rather than the cause of psychic repression since it connects desire to the regulations of social production. They reject the family as a central organising category for life, they believe that desire exceeds the familial boundaries. While psychoanalysis assumes that our unconscious contains all our repressed desires from childhood, Deleuze and Guattari do not accept the Oedipal form of psychic repression. They believe that psychic repression is an instrument of social repression and the family is the agent of repression in our society.

The fact is, from the moment that we are placed within the framework of Oedipus — from the moment that we are measured in terms of Oedipus — the cards are stacked against us, and the only real relationship, that of production, has been done away with. The great discovery of psychoanalysis was that of the production of desire, of the productions of the unconscious. But once Oedipus entered the picture, this discovery was soon buried beneath a new brand of idealism. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a: 24)

Deleuze and Guattari preserve the basic model of the Freudian **unconscious**⁴¹ but they redefine its internal dynamics. They substitute *id* for *desiring-production*. They focus on Freud's *id* before encountering Oedipus. Whereas Freud conceived the unconscious to be the site for the repressed,⁴² Deleuze and Guattari consider the unconscious to be a productive process, which gives rise to machines, which, at the same time, become the connection to reality.

They describe the machinic nature of desire as a kind of 'desiring-machine' that is inscribed in a whole network of connected machines. They begin *Anti-Oedipus* by affirming: "Everywhere it is machines — real ones, not figurative ones: machines driving other machines, machines being driven by other machines, with all the necessary couplings and connections" (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a: 1)

For Deleuze and Guattari, desire is to be identified with production, with desiring production in the social field. desire is a force, a series or acts that connect people and objects together, which may not necessarily belong together but can produce something new and different, yet to become. Desiring machines are the site of production. Every machine is a machine connected to another machine. Every **machine** functions as a break in the flow⁴³ in relation to the machine to which it is connected, but it is, at the same time, also a flow itself, or the production of a flow. The flow is simply transformed through

⁴¹"...*exemption from mutual contradiction, primary process (mobility of cathexes), timelessness, and replacement of external by psychical reality* — these are the characteristics which we may expect to find in processes belonging to the system *Ucs.*" (Freud, [1915] 1995d: 187)

⁴²In "The Unconscious" (1915) Freud states that "[w]e have learnt from psycho-analysis that the essence of the process of repression lies, not in putting an end to, in annihilating, the idea which represents an instinct, but in preventing it from becoming conscious. When this happens we say of the idea that it is in a state of being "unconscious," and we can produce good evidence to show that even when it is unconscious it can produce effects, even including some which finally reach consciousness. Everything that is repressed must remain unconscious." (Freud, [1915] 1995d: 166)

⁴³"A machine may be defined as a system of interruptions or breaks." (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a: 73)

the interruption and it is unlimited. The flow is non-personal, although the connections between desiring machines produce subjectivity.

They understand the unconscious to be a creative force. It is productive inasmuch as it can operate as a produced network, or field of operations. Desire is real, it is not repressed, it is not a fantasy to be kept in the unconscious. Their understanding of the unconscious enables the possibility of a multiplicity of desires that may be Oedipal, non-Oedipal and even further, beyond the Oedipal. Consequently, their redefinition of the unconscious dynamics brings in a new process of individuation that breaks away from the tentacles of the Oedipal. In order to understand their definition of the subject we need to analyse their model of the psyche as described by means of the three syntheses of desire.⁴⁴

Deleuze and Guattari present a model of the psyche based on the machine, or a set of machines; desiring-machines. In their schema, the productive unconscious is a synthesising machine⁴⁵ and desiring production is the Real conceived as a process, a result of passive syntheses of desire. **Passive syntheses** are prior to the unconscious, to all memory and reflection.

Desiring-machines operate according to three syntheses. As Deleuze and Guattari describe in chapter two of *Anti-Oedipus*, passive syntheses combine three operations that become the three modes of desire understood as machine: synthesis of connection, synthesis of disjunction, and synthesis of conjunction (production, recording, and consumption, which are related to machine, body-without-organs, and subject). The syntheses are ways of processing or constituting experience. They represent the collision of different things, which preserves the multiplicity of the individual. The Deleuzo-Guattarian schema counteracts the static and fixed Freudian pattern of subject formation, and offers instead infinite modalities, multiple meanings and aleatory on-going subjectivities. A description of the three syntheses will give us a clear picture of these differences.

The synthesis of connection or the connective synthesis of production is a site for production and motion where continuous flows of desire

⁴⁴This pattern is partly based and contesting Kant's synthesis of apperception from *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), where Kant defines "synthesis" as the action of putting different representations together with each other and comprehending their manifoldness. The combination of intuitions received by our minds makes these intuitions significant. According to Kant, when considering synthesis as a mental process it is often an unconscious mechanism of mind.

⁴⁵The synthesising machine is a concept based on Deleuze's notion of the three syntheses of time in "Repetition for itself" in *Difference and Repetition* (1968). Deleuze distinguishes three levels of time where repetition takes place: passive synthesis (habit), active synthesis (memory), and empty time (death).

are coupled with partial objects.⁴⁶ Productive desire makes connections that connect partial objects (not only organs): the child's mouth and a breast, the child's eye and a finger, a mouth and the atmosphere. Connective syntheses produce links between the multiplicity of constituents in our bodies, the multiplicity of elements in the natural environment, the multiplicity of individuals in our personal lives, our social interactions, our world, the planet, the universe in *ad infinitum* series.

This is the pre-Oedipal stage, where desire is polymorphous in Freud's psychosexual theory; the production of connections corresponds to Freudian 'drives' and 'instincts.' The only subject is desire itself:

The only subject is desire itself on the body without organs, inasmuch as it machines partial objects and flows. Selecting and cutting the one with the other, passing from one body to another, following connections and appropriations that each time destroy the factitious connections and appropriations that each times destroy the factitious unity of a possessive or proprietary ego (anoedipal sexuality). (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a: 72)

In this synthesis desire flows freely, producing connections and intensities that produce new connections and intensities in a dynamic continuum that is constantly transforming and creating. Nothing is fixed, nothing is rigid, nothing becomes a unity.

There is no desire for a complete object since pre-established objects prevent desire from flowing in a polymorphous way. The connections made by the synthesis of production are multiple and partial objects give or get a charge

⁴⁶'Partial objects' is the term that Deleuze and Guattari use for the matter or materials of desire, matter that is able to flow and be assembled by flows. Desire assembles these materials. Partial objects are never already organised, they are never already attached as organs of bodies or parts of objects for the life span of these subjects and objects, groups and societies. Partial objects are able to flow because they are not parts of a complete object. Deleuze and Guattari state: "...partial objects that enter into indirect syntheses or interactions, since they are not partial (*partiels*) in the sense of extensive parts but rather partial ("*partiaux*") like the intensities under which a unit of matter always fills space in varying degrees (the eye, the mouth, the anus as degrees of matter); pure positive multiplicities where everything is possible, without exclusiveness or negation, syntheses operating without a plan, where the connections are transverse, the disjunctions included, the conjunctions polyvocal, indifferent to their underlying support, since this matter that serves them precisely as a support receives no specificity from any structural or personal unity, but appears as the body without organs that fills the space each time an intensity fill it." (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a: 309) Desire needs to be kept away from any pre-established object in order to flow, and partial objects are the means to do so.

of flow of energy through the connection. Partial objects are connected in a continual flow.

Deleuze and Guattari criticise psychoanalysis for imposing a common-universality in the name of Oedipus so as to introduce lack into desire. The first illegitimate use of the synthesis, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is the concept of lack and the placing of the phallus as a transcendental signifier (due to castration), notions which are not considered productions of the unconscious: “We do not deny that there is an Oedipal sexuality, an Oedipal heterosexuality and homosexuality, an Oedipal castration, as well as complete objects, global images, and specific egos. We deny that these are productions of the unconscious.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a; 74)

They consider that an illegitimate use of the connective synthesis is the illegitimate extrapolation of global persons as complete objects from partial-object relations; that is to say, the identifications of the series penis-phallus-father. Psychoanalysis relates partial objects to complete objects from the early stages of psychosexual development. By establishing the phallus as the transcendental signifier on which subjectivity depends, psychoanalysis confines desire in a logic of ‘lack,’ fixing this in the breaking of a flow. Deleuze and Guattari do not agree with the fixating of ‘lack’ to partial objects since they consider partial objects to be assembled by flows of desire. There is no negativity in this assemblage but a connection, an affirmation, a series of “and...and then...and then...”

They introduce **the synthesis of disjunction or the disjunctive synthesis** of recording (or separation phase) as follows:

A disjunction that remains disjunctive, and that still affirms the disjoined terms, that affirms them throughout their entire distance, *without restricting one by the other or excluding the other from the one*, is perhaps the greatest paradox. “Either...or...or,” instead of “either/or.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a; 76)

The disjunctive synthesis of recording selects and networks signs of organ-machines produced by connective synthesis, in an open-ended series: “either...or...or.” To account for recording processes in the psyche, Deleuze and Guattari develop the concept of ‘the Body without Organs.’⁴⁷ Stemming from Deleuze’s concept of original difference and multiplicity, they define a counter-force that

⁴⁷This concept is founded on the philosophical basis of *Difference and Repetition*, which main objective was to revisit the concept of ‘difference’ in relation to identity. Deleuze redefined ‘difference’ and multiplicity as original categories, therefore prior to identity contesting to Metaphysical philosophy from Plato to Hegel. This redefinition of difference implies a redefinition of repetition. Repetition is understood by Deleuze not as related to identity, sameness,

allows connective syntheses to be broken and to be replaced by others, so that new and different connections may become possible. This mechanism is what they call ‘anti-production,’ whose effect on the connective syntheses is to de-sexualise desire by neutralizing the organ-machine connections. The result is ‘the Body without Organs,’⁴⁸ a *tabula rasa* that records networks of relations between connections. The interaction between desiring-production and anti-production generates attraction and repulsion between the organ-machine and the body-without-organs where infinite connections are made possible.

This is why ‘the Body without Organs’ is the site for this synthesis; a body which has been dis-organ-ized is capable of producing other forms of organization. The multiplicity existing in the desiring-machine allows new channels and different combinations to realize themselves, and it does so by forming a ‘Body without Organs.’ For Deleuze and Guattari a recording-apparatus, such as the Body without Organs, emerges in the psyche as a transformation of connective energy somewhere in the process of desiring-production by means of multiple becomings. It is then when multiplicity is made possible. A further discussion about this term will be provided in the next section, ‘*A Thousand Plateaus*. Towards a molecularisation of the subject: The Body without Organs and its multiplicity of becomings.’

Deleuze and Guattari consider disjunctive syntheses inclusively. Following their pattern of disjunctive synthesis, eating is not distinct and *exclusive from* but distinct and *included in* the process of sucking, as well as breathing. So coded and recorded, the mouth, which we take to be a sucking machine *or* an eating machine *or* a speaking machine, is not exclusively a site for food or milk or language but inclusively a space for all these flows. By recording

or equivalence among terms, but as related to difference and variation; what is repeated is not the same but different. This scheme opens the psyche to a multiplicity of possibilities. However, the Oedipal subject locates difference a posteriori and bounds its possibilities to the Oedipal triangle: “Oedipus informs us: if you don’t follow the lines of differentiation daddy-mommy-me, and the exclusive alternatives that delineate them, you will fall into the black night of the undifferentiated.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a; 78)

⁴⁸Deleuze and Guattari borrow the term from Antonin Artaud’s radio play “To Have Done with the Judgment of God:”

When you will have made him a Body without Organs,
then you will have delivered him from all his automatic reactions
and restored him to his true freedom. (Artaud, [1947] 1976: 571)

In his radio play, Artaud criticises the body for its constraining effect on individuals. According to Artaud, the body is an externally organised structure. The body is restricted and subjected to forms imposed by the organising structure of its organs. Artaud proposes to disorganise the body through putting its organs to different uses.

these connections, the disjunctive syntheses open up a multiplicity of routes for new flows and new connections (of eating, breathing, speaking, whistling and kissing).

The Oedipalised subject marks the illegitimate or exclusive use of a synthesis of disjunction by establishing oppositional dualisms — the imposition of the Symbolic order over the Imaginary order⁴⁹ and the opposition Self/Other — restricting the multiplicity to an either/or binomial.

To begin with, the familial Oedipus constructs fixed-subject positions out of the restrictive and exclusive identification of the child with the mother or the father in the pattern provided by Freud. Deleuze and Guattari acknowledge Lacan's attempt to de-personalise these choices by distinguishing between the Imaginary order and the Symbolic order, which involve functions rather than figures or images (the object of prohibition or desire and the agent of prohibition or Law). The restrictive use of the disjunctive synthesis has two poles, symbolic differentiations and the undifferentiated Imaginary. The Lacanian scheme establishes a dichotomy at the very moment Oedipus starts operating; the mo-

⁴⁹According to Lacan, the psyche is organised in three major structures: the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and The Real. It is worth noticing that these are concepts that Lacan elaborates, formulates and reformulates throughout his whole career and work. For Lacan the Imaginary marks the unity of the body and identification, which implies the registration of the I. When the child is born, he/she does not distinguish between the I and the other, but he/she perceives an amalgam of fragmented images. In order to counteract this fragmentation, the child takes these images and identifies with them; these external images that have been introjected build the Imaginary order. In the Mirror Stage, the child identifies himself with his own image (the "Ideal-I" or "idela-ego"). This recognition of the self's image precedes language, and sets the grounds for otherness in its self-alienating force. The "Ideal-I" establishes the psychic dynamic (fantasy vs. lack) that will dominate identity. Therefore, following Lacan, the I is formed by means of the identification with an external image, which implies that identity comes from outside, not from within. The Symbolic is this order where the subject encounters language and resolves the Oedipus complex. Influenced by Saussure and Jakobson's theories, Lacan states that the unconscious operates with analogue structures and rules to language (metaphor and metonymy). Lacan emphasises the difference between signifier and signified, whose relationship is not fixed but variable. A signifier may both correspond to different signifieds for each person and form chains of signifiers in each person. Consequently, the sign both reveals a signal and absence, since it points at the meaning it represents, and the absence of it. From the 1950s onwards, Lacan starts elaborating on the Symbolic order. Once the child enters into the differential system of language, s/he enters into the Symbolic order (language, cultural codes and conventions). The child will be inscribed in a symbolic network the moment he/she is born. Language and expectations coming from others are symbolised and form part of this order. According to Lacan the Real is impossible since our entrance into the realm of language means our separation from the Real, which can't, therefore, be expressed by language. However, the Real still plays a role in our psyche through our life. It is that which is left out of the Symbolic and the Imaginary. It is that which is impossible to think, imagine, symbolise, speak; it is the experience itself.

ment the child accedes the Symbolic and enters the linguistic and the dichotomy Self/Other. Consequently, Lacan's disjunctive differentiation is still trapped in the exclusive centrality of the phallus, which has been reconceptualised as the Law of the father. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that rather than an exclusive disjunction; the Imaginary and the Symbolic may be different but not distinct.

The true difference in nature is not between the Symbolic and the Imaginary, but between the real machinic (*machinique*) element, which constitutes desiring-production, and the structural whole of the Imaginary and the Symbolic, which merely forms a myth and its variants. The difference is not between two uses of Oedipus, but between the anoedipal use of the inclusive, non-restrictive disjunctions, and the Oedipal use of exclusive disjunctions, whether this last use borrows from the paths of the Imaginary or the values of the Symbolic. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a; 83)

They believe that desiring-machines precede the imposed regime of the Imaginary and the Symbolic, and they situate difference in the desiring-machine itself. In that sense, desiring-machines are able to produce and create new connections by the use of inclusive disjunctions.

Deleuze and Guattari take their argument further and criticise the exclusive disjunction of the division of sexes; the child becomes either male or female. They reject the exclusive 'female-or-male' opposition and argue for a poly vocal conception of sexuality based on multiplicity. I am going to devote a whole section ('The *n*-becomings of gender/sexual difference') to sexual/gender difference where this will be further developed. First, I need to address Deleuze and Guattari's concept of difference and multiplicity analysed in terms of a synthesis of conjunction.

The synthesis of conjunction or conjunctive synthesis of consumption-consummation is the result of the interaction between 'the Body without Organs' and the desiring machine. The subject emerges as an after-effect, a result of desire after disjunctive and connective syntheses, and as a residual subject of machines, as a passive self. The productions and anti-productions of desire precede the subject.

...the subject is produced as a mere residuum alongside the desiring-machine, or that he confuses himself with this third productive machine and with the residual reconciliation that it brings about: a conjunctive syntheses of consummation in the form of a wonder-

struck “*So that’s* what it was!” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a; 17-18)

‘The Body without Organs’ becomes in this final synthesis the source of a subject formation, since it is the site where the connective synthesis has been recorded. This last synthesis is also dynamic —as well as the connective synthesis is continual and the disjunctive synthesis is open-ended— since it produces a subject always different in itself on the Body-without-Organs: “Thus this subject consumes and consummates each of the states through which it passes, and is born of each of them anew...” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a; 41)

The subject of the conjunctive synthesis is nomadic and intermittent. It neither endures through time, nor remains fixed in space. It is always in process, always in passage, always dying and being reborn: “Phenomena of individualization and sexualisation are produced within these fields [fields of potentials]. We pass from one field to another by crossing thresholds: we never stop migrating, we become other individuals as well as other sexes, and departing becomes as easy as being born and dying.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a; 85)

The nomadic subject affirms both the forces of attraction and repulsion, and does not get fixed in the finished products recorded from the connective syntheses. On the contrary, the connective syntheses are adopted in a Body without Organs, which produces multiple states by means of the multiple ramifications generated in the disjunctive syntheses, at a time that a subject consummates infinitely an on-going renewed subject.

...the proportions of attraction and repulsion on the body-without-organs produce, starting from zero, a series of states...and the subject is born of each state in the series, is continually reborn of the following state that determines him at a given moment, consuming-consummating all these states that cause him to be born and reborn (the lived state coming first, in relation to the subject that lives it). (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a; 20)

That is how subjectivity is understood as an on-going process of subject-states that do not form a static identity but a dynamic multiplicity of states. Deleuze and Guattari draw a very clear picture of this process:

...the points of disjunction on the body without organs form circles that converge on the desiring-machines; then the subject —produced as a residuum alongside the machine, as an appendix, or as a spare part adjacent to the machine— passes through all the degrees of the

circle, and passes from one circle to another. This subject itself is not at the center, which is occupied by the machine, but on the periphery, with no fixed identity, forever decentered, *defined* by the states through which it passes. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a; 20)

An illegitimate use of the synthesis of conjunction takes place if we identify ourselves with the institutions of power in the familial way. Deleuze and Guattari consider that Oedipalised subjects and Oedipal representations of desire fixed in the familial institution are only an example of other social institutions that produce fixed subjectivities. An illegitimate use of the conjunctive synthesis restricts nomad subjectivities to identifications with one single set of subjectivities. That is the case of fixed identities of gender, race, nationality, religion, class, and so forth. Using segregation as an exclusive mechanism the subject positions itself in the hierarchical pyramid of the One and the Other: “There is, therefore, a *segregatory use* of the conjunctive syntheses of the unconscious...it is the use that brings about the feeling of “indeed being one of us”, of being part of a superior race threatened by enemies from outside.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003; 103)

The Oedipal subject is exposed to a reduced version of the multiplicity of subject-positions within the nuclear family; the mother and the father, as the object of desire and the agent of its prohibition. The subject, therefore, is left with these two options that seem to be a simplification of a wider range of subject-positions generated in society.

Furthermore, this reduction brings about a second illegitimate use of the synthesis of conjunction; ‘bi-univocalisation.’ Deleuze and Guattari consider this to be the reduction of the complexity of the unconscious to the constraints of the Oedipal family with its socio-historical determinants that are to be perpetuated: “Oedipus is always and solely an aggregate of destination fabricated to meet the requirements of an aggregate of departure constituted by a social formation.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a; 101)

This is also the case of patriarchal gender roles; social-political-historical demands make of the Oedipal family a unity that perpetuates and produces patriarchal dynamics. Here we have the germ of hierarchical binary oppositions in the configuration of the subject since the subject is ascribed to one single set of subjectivities, social groups, which are organised around these segregatory binaries.

In contrasting nomadic subjectivities with Oedipal subjectivity, we can realise how nomadic subjectivities break away from Freudian Oedipus complex.

Deleuze and Guattari articulate their critique on the Oedipus complex by detecting five mistakes in psychoanalysis that they call “the five paralogisms of psychoanalysis.”⁵⁰

The Paralogism of extrapolation operates at two levels. The first level, as I have discussed above when describing an illegitimate use of the connective syntheses, by which psychoanalysis extrapolates complete-objects (even global persons) from partial-objects.⁵¹ Secondly, psychoanalysis breaks the flow of connections by pointing at one partial-object and granting this a transcendental signifier/‘despotic signifier’ for all the rest (the phallus):

...the extraction of a transcendent complete object from the signifying chain, which served as a despotic signifier on which the entire chain thereafter seemed to depend, assigning an element of lack to each position of desire, fusing desire to a law, and engendering the illusion that this loosened up and freed the elements of the chain. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a; 110)

Psychoanalysis applies the Oedipal-triangular scheme to everything. In doing so, it constrains the complexity of social determination in the narrow structures of the Oedipus complex. Deleuze and Guattari credit psychoanalysis for having hinted at the main mechanism of the unconscious; free-association, which is very close to the legitimate use of connective syntheses, where innumerable series of connections are generated under the pattern “and...and then...and then....”

Nonetheless, they believe that the psychoanalytic interpretations of these connections fix the polyvocal connections of free-association in bi-univocalisation; everything is related to the father, the mother, lack and the phallus. The Oedipalisation of everything implies an illegitimate use of the synthesis of connection since, by prioritising or elevating some elements of the series, this breaks the chain of connections. The elevation of a transcendent term responds, furthermore, to a social demand; patriarchal complicity. The phallus, and not the mother’s breast — to mention another partial-object that could be taken as

⁵⁰Paralogism is a term borrowed from Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* (1788). It is a fallacious or illogical argument or conclusion. In the chapter entitled “The Paralogisms of Pure Reason,” Kant analyses four paralogisms that pure reason has carried out when thinking that there is an immortal Soul in every person. In *Anti-Oedipus* (1972), Deleuze and Guattari use this term to detect five fallacious conclusions in psychoanalysis.

⁵¹Deleuze and Guattari endorse Melanie Klein’s work — *The Psychoanalysis of Children* (1960) — on the ‘pre-Oedipal’ relations. She defines the pre-Oedipal as the period when the child’s experience is related to ‘part-objects’. However, Deleuze and Guattari do not believe that the conversion to complete-objects can be complete, since subjectivity emerges as an after effect-of desiring-machines. They reject Klein’s conclusion of a unified subjectivity.

definitory — has been constituted as the transcendental signifier for the subject due to the patriarchal structure of society, where the law of the father organises every single subject.

Paralogism of double bind. One of the illegitimate uses of the conjunctive synthesis that Deleuze and Guattari point out is to restrict the open-ended subject-positions offered to the subject to the exclusive ‘either/or’ identification with the father or the mother. As a result, the paralogism, pointed at here, is the only two possible ways that psychoanalysis (both Freud and Lacan) offers for the Oedipus complex to present. It demonstrates how Oedipus proceeds: either by resolution or fixation. A subject either internalises the submission towards the Oedipal authority (incest-taboo triangle) or it remains fixated on the original family (Imaginary fixation or symbolic resolution⁵²) —“Oedipus as either problem *or* solution is the two ends of a ligature that cuts off all desiring-production.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003; 79)

Again, a dualism is imposed to the Oedipal subject where nomadic subjects, by means of inclusive disjunctive syntheses, are constructed from within difference and multiplicity. Difference and repetition, as understood by Deleuze and Guattari, generate subjectivities beyond the binary opposition of exclusive difference. Nomadic subjects may identify themselves with their parents, as they will identify themselves with multiple subject-positions beyond the Oedipal family.

Paralogism of biunivocal application. Deleuze and Guattari affirm that a nomadic and polyvocal use of the conjunctive syntheses is opposed to the segregative and biunivocal use made of them.⁵³ As has been pointed out an illegitimate use of the conjunctive synthesis is biunivocalization:

The Oedipal operation consists in establishing a constellation of bi-univocal relations between the agents of social production, reproduction, and antiproduction on the one hand, and the agents of the so-called natural reproduction of the family on the other. This operation is called an *application*. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a: 100-101)

This biunivocal use has two moments: First, a segregative moment based

⁵²Although Lacan distances himself from the actual incest-taboo triangle, he refers to the phallus as a differentiating function. Instead of considering the Symbolic and the Imaginary as distinct, Deleuze and Guattari offer an inclusive disjunction based on their concept of difference-in-itself (an affirmation rather than a negation).

⁵³“*The nomadic and polyvocal use of the conjunctive syntheses is in opposition to the segregative and biunivocal use.*” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a: 105)

on hierarchical binary oppositions attached to a reduced and fixed set of states (such as racism, nationalism, religion, gender, etc.), that constitutes an aggregate of departure for the Oedipus; and second, a familial moment that constitutes the aggregate of destination by an application.

Every collective agent will be interpreted as derivative of, or substitute for daddy-mommy parental figure. This fact will impose biunivocal relationships that will not allow the free flow of desire to produce a nomadic subject opened to multiple connections.

Paralogism of displacement. Deleuze and Guattari criticise the Oedipus complex as being founded on prohibition, which positions desire in the ‘paralogism of displacement’ by which desire comes from what is prohibited; subjects discover desire at the same time as they discover that they cannot have it. This, according to Deleuze and Guattari offers a falsified representation of desire because:

...we are not witness here to a system of two terms, where we could conclude from the formal prohibition what is really prohibited. Instead we have before us a system of three terms, where this conclusion becomes completely illegitimate. Distinctions must be made: the repressing representation which performs the repression; the repressed representative, on which the repression actually comes to bear; the displaced represented, which gives a falsified apparent image that is meant to trap desire. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a; 115)

They claim that prohibition (‘incest’) generates a correspondence with the ‘displaced represented’ in the form of the Oedipus complex that results in ‘the repressed representative,’ which is not desire anymore but desire as represented in the prohibitive system of representation. Deleuze and Guattari conclude that Oedipal desire is produced by the very same prohibition that is supposed to be repressing it: “Oedipus is not a state of desire and the drives, it is an *idea*, nothing but an idea that repression inspires in us concerning desire...an idea in the service of repression, its propaganda, or its propagation.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a:115) That is how, psychoanalysis restricts desire to Oedipal desire as a response to social-historical requirements with the family as “the delegated agent of psychic repression.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003:119) The family is involved in the production of desire and will perform a displacement, a repression of desire that starts at the earliest age of the child.

Deleuze and Guattari affirm that the real causes on which the Oedipal triangle depends are the forces of social repression; that is to say, psychic repres-

sion services social repression. Consequently, when considering desire from a molecular perspective “...no society can tolerate a position of real desire without its structures of exploitation, servitude, and hierarchy being compromised.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a:116)

Their concept of the unconscious is not structured in a single-sign system but in many different systems.⁵⁴ According to Deleuze and Guattari the relationship of the signifier and the signified is multidimensional and the theories of the signifier (Lacan’s use of Saussure) reduce language to expression and expression to form. That is why the machine-connections of desire cannot be held by representations without being distorted or reduced to this two-dimensionality.

Paralogism of afterward. It is the paralogism that incorporates elements of the previous four paralogisms. This paralogism makes an illegitimate use of the three syntheses: connective syntheses that restrict specific whole-object connections to persons in the family, disjunctive syntheses that exclude connections and impose binary oppositions, and conjunctive syntheses that construct subjects from a reduced set of subjectivities.

The family is a social institution, a capitalist institution. Deleuze and Guattari argue that the family seems to meet the requirements of capitalism. In positioning the origin of desire within the Oedipal family, capitalism traps desiring-production in a falsified image of desire, where repression is a result of capitalist social-production. Deleuze and Guattari do not consider the psychic repression

⁵⁴Deleuze and Guattari refer here to Lacan’s definition of the unconscious. According to Lacan, the unconscious ideas are repressed. For Lacan, the Subject is always split by that which is other, unknown to him or her, yet something the Subject experiences as something lacking, missing, which in turn creates desire. The Subject strives to fill this lack. The Subject will project his own desire onto the Other, and the other will see himself in the Subject: “the unconscious is the discourse of the Other.” The way the Subject projects upon and views an other will provide clues concerning his or her relationship to unconscious desires. According to Lacan, human existence is not accessible; human beings are deprived of their own intimacy. That is why he believes we are strangers to ourselves: “...this dimension of the unconscious that I am evoking...had closed itself up against his message thanks to those active practitioners of orthopaedics that the analysts of the second and third generation became, busying themselves, by psychologising analytic theory, in stitching up this gap. Believe me, I myself never re-open it without great care. Now, of course, at this stage in my life, I am in a position to introduce into the domain of cause the law of the signifier, in the locus in which this gap is produced. Nevertheless, we must, if we are to understand what it means in psycho-analysis, go back and trace the concept of the unconscious through the various stages of the process in which Freud elaborated it —since we can complete that process only by carrying it to its limits...Impediment, failure, split. In a spoken or written sentence something stumbles...There, something other demands to be realized...What occurs, what is *produced* in this gap, is presented as *discovery*...namely surprise, that by which the subject feels himself overcome...” (Lacan, [1977] 1998: 23- 25)

in the Oedipal complex to be primary and universal, and social repression a result of it; on the contrary, they identify the Oedipus complex as the form of social repression contained in capitalism. The Oedipal family produces obedient fixed subjects ready to perform the exchanges required by capitalism.⁵⁵

The revolutionary force of the *Anti-Oedipus* resides in the question of how **desire** can work and be productive in society. In the first place, Deleuze and Guattari suggest a new definition of desire that is positive desire. Traditionally, desire has been defined as a lack. They offer an alternative to the traditional notion of desire as conceived by Plato through Lacan.⁵⁶

To a certain degree, the traditional logic of desire is all wrong from the very outset: from the very first step that the Platonic logic of desire forces us to take, making us choose between production and acquisition. From the moment that we place desire on the side of acquisition, we make desire an idealistic (dialectical, nihilistic) conception, which causes us to look upon it as primarily a lack: a lack of an object, a lack of the real object. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a:25)

Deleuze and Guattari denounce three errors made in psychoanalysis concerning desire: lack, law and signifier. According to Deleuze and Guattari, desire has been seen as other than life (the Real), or as something to be interpreted;

⁵⁵Chapter three of *Anti-Oedipus*, “Savages, Barbarians, Civilized Men,” provides a historical analysis of the Oedipal, what Deleuze and Guattari call the external critique of the Oedipal.

⁵⁶The traditional understanding of desire has assumed an exclusive distinction between ‘production’ and ‘acquisition,’ which has related desire to the acquisition of an object that it lacks. In this tradition that reaches from Plato to Lacan and beyond, desire has been understood as negative, a lack at the level of ontology itself, a lack in being that aims to be filled through the (impossible) attainment of an object. Hegel’s dialectics is representative of this tradition. In the *Phenomenology of Mind* (1806) Hegel understands desire as the longing for a state of completeness, to fulfill the merger of subject and object. According to Hegel the lack of the object (of desire) is the necessary condition for the maintenance of desire. Following Hegel, for Lacan we are not even in control of our own desires since those desires are separated from our actual bodily needs. Desire has little to do with material sexuality for Lacan. Once the subject enters into the Symbolic order through language, desire is caught up in social structures, in the fantasy version of reality, which Lacan calls the discourse of the Other. The desire of the subject is never his/her own, but it is created by fantasies dominated by cultural conventions. In this sense, desire relies on lack insofar as there is no correspondence between fantasy and the real. Since desire is articulated by fantasy (a misrecognition/projection of completeness) it becomes impossible, and it is its inherent lack, what ensures desire. It is clear that for Deleuze, desire implies neither alterity nor a lack. For Deleuze and Guattari, desire is a process of production.

we desire what we do not have, and our desires are ‘images, ‘fantasies’ or ‘representations.’ Whenever lack operates within desire, all of desiring-production is reduced to the production of fantasy. Likewise, whenever desire is made to depend on the signifier it is submitted to the law (as for example in the phallus-law of the father scheme). They argue that “The sign of desire is never signifying” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003:112) since desire exists in the thousands of productive breaks-flows that are not possibly signified.

Desire is not desire of an object. It is not a drive in the Freudian sense and it is not a structure as language (as for Lacan). However, desire, according to Deleuze and Guattari is a productive and creative energy. All life is desire, a flow of positive difference, a series of productive connections. desire is pre-personal; it is the flow and force of life, prior to any organised identity or representation. It is revolutionary because it is not ruled by any structure, organisation and extended system. desire is active and it is related to the encounter of multiple forces and the creation of new possibilities of empowerment.

If desire produces, its product is real. If desire is productive, it can be productive only in the real world and can produce only reality...The real is the end product, the result of passive syntheses of desire as autoproduction of the unconscious. desire does not lack anything; it does not lack its object...desire is a machine, and the object of desire is another machine connected to it. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a: 26)

Desire is always a point-sign of many polyvocal dimensions. Nevertheless, Freudian psychoanalysis, as has been argued before, ties desire to sexuality and sexuality to the Oedipal with the phallus at its centre. By attributing power to the phallus it is implied that desire is motivated by lack and not plenitude. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the mother and child relationship is not the beginning of desire, since desire begins collectively and impersonally, from a multiplicity of investments, which are trans-personal. When the figure of the mother appears in the child’s life, she is a contraction of all historical and political investments.

In their reconceptualisation of desire, this is located around an affirmative notion of production, rejecting the negative notion of desire as lack or need. Their notion of desiring-production is a positive understanding of desire: a desire that connects objects to other objects in an innumerable series.

2.2.3 *A Thousand Plateaus*. Towards a molecularisation of the subject: The Body without Organs and its multiplicity of becomings

In order to understand this positive flow of desire, Deleuze and Guattari revisit the concept of body, defined by psychoanalysis as genital after the resolution of the Oedipal complex (dominated by the phallus and codified according to ‘natural’/biological functions).⁵⁷ They introduce the concept of the **Body without Organs**⁵⁸ to dismantle the Oedipal notion of body in *Anti-Oedipus* and they develop it in their chapter ‘How do you Make Yourself a Body without Organs?’ in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980).⁵⁹ Their intention is to move away from the Oedipalisation of the body and to explain the multiple connections between different parts of the body and the external world. They describe it as follows:

...the body without organs was [is] in fact an egg, crisscrossed with axes. Banded with zones, localized with areas and thresholds, measured off by gradients, traversed by potentials, marked by thresholds...It is a matter of relationships of intensities through which

⁵⁷Freudian psychoanalysis describes how the subject moves from the polymorphous perversity of the child’s body to an overcoded body with hierarchical erogenous zones. The subject, as I have explained in the previous section devoted to Freud’s psychosexual theory, forms his or her sexual identity from Oedipal relations. Lacan, in his essay “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function” ([1945] 2006) describes this passage as the movement from organs without a body to the construction of socio-sexual identity. His definition of the interaction between the body and the outside is far beyond Freud since he takes into account the outside in the configuration of sexual identity. However, for Deleuze and Guattari, the Oedipal alternatives of phallus-castration, plenitude-lack, identity-undifferentiation are retrospective fantasies projected on the body.

⁵⁸In fact, Deleuze and Guattari claim the Body without Organs to be a practice: “It is not at all a notion or a concept but a practice, a set of practices” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b:149-150)

⁵⁹After eight years of their polemical *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari published the more positive second volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. *A Thousand Plateaus*. This book is organised in plateaus, which are not to be considered chapters due to the absence of a clear beginning or end. Each plateau is entitled by a date that refers to the chapter’s historical eponymous event. François Dosse describes the impact of the book as follows: “Devoted readers of *Anti-Oedipus* waited eight years for it, and when it came out, it was considered too difficult and confusing; it was generally poorly received. Given its target, *Anti-Oedipus* was an immediate bestseller, whereas *A Thousand Plateaus* was greeted with relative indifference, both because of its density and because it ran against the grain. It was 1980; “new philosophers” were being celebrated, and the book’s concepts were derided for being “as enormous as false teeth.” The sophistry that Deleuze and Guattari refined did not, when it was published, create stir.” (Dosse, 2007: 250-251)

the subject passes on the body without organs, a process that engages him in becomings, rises and falls, migrations and displacements. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a: 84)

The BwO is not an actual body that has no organs. It is not a ready-made, pre-existing body, but a ‘virtual’⁶⁰ body that can be formed and made, and is always being formed and made anew. The subject cannot reach the BwO;⁶¹ it is ‘a limit.’ One is in a continual process towards it, “you are forever attaining it.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 150)

Phenomena of individualization and sexualization are produced within these fields [fields of intensities and potentials]. We pass from one field to another by crossing thresholds: we never stop migrating, we become other individuals as well as other sexes, and departing becomes as easy as being born or dying. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a: 85)

They criticise the understanding of the body as a unified consolidation, a whole/complete unit. They consider that the body has been inscribed in a system of representation that binds it into the hierarchical structure of its organs. In this sense, they detect three elements that bind the body: organism, significance, and subjectification (the body as an organism, as a sign, and as a subject).

⁶⁰Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between ‘the actual’ and the ‘virtual.’ The virtual is the condition for real experience, but it has no identity; identities of the subject and the object are products of processes that resolve, integrate, or actualise a differential field. The Deleuzo-Guattarian virtual is not the condition of possibility of any rational experience, but the condition of genesis of real experience. The distinction between the possible and the real assumes a set of predefined forms (or essences) which acquire physical reality as material forms that resemble them. The distinction between the virtual and the actual, on the other hand, does not involve resemblance of any kind and it does not constitute the essential identity of a form; intensive processes subvert identity. The virtual is genetic ground of the actual. The virtual is composed of “Ideas” or “multiplicities” involving differential relations among heterogeneous components. In *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), Deleuze and Guattari call the virtual “the Earth” and the intensive is called “consistency,” and the actual is called “the system of the strata.” Any concrete system is composed of intensive processes tending toward the (virtual) plane of consistency and/or toward (actual) stratification. We can say that all that exists is the intensive, tending towards the limits of virtuality and actuality. For further references to the virtual see Manuel De Landa’s *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy* ([2002] 2005).

⁶¹Deleuze and Guattari use this acronym in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980) to refer to the Body without Organs indistinctively.

You will be organized, you will be an organism, you will articulate your body — otherwise you're just depraved. You will be signifier and signified, interpreter and interpreted — otherwise you're just a deviant. You will be a subject, nailed down as one, a subject of the enunciation recoiled into a subject of the statement — otherwise you're just a tramp. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 159)

Deleuze and Guattari oppose body to organism, meaning the organisation of the organs, the way organs are organised in the body within a fixed structure. They affirm that "...It is necessary to annul the organs, to shut them away so that their liberated elements can enter into the new relations..." (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 260) They argue against the body being defined in language and its dualisms. Likewise, they do not consider the body to be a subject (the body defined by its identity) since they criticise identity as an imposing structure that binds subjects to a reduced set of their multiple positions.

Instead of giving primacy or hierarchy to the body's organs, as in Freudian psychoanalytic sexuality (with the penis at the top of the hierarchy), the Body without Organs is decentred.⁶² Deleuze and Guattari criticise the oppositional thinking of the body. They suggest reconstructing the body as a Body without Organs in order to become something different and multiple, beyond any dichotomy imposed on the process of individuation.

The question is not, or not only, that of the organism, history, and subject of enunciation that oppose masculine to feminine in the great dualism machines. The question is fundamentally that of the body — the body they *steal* from us in order to fabricate opposable organisms. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 276)

They claim for a body that is freed from these constraints; a body that is multidimensional and an on-going process rather than a defined unit. However, they distinguish between the empty and the full BwO. Whereas a full BwO is capable of making these connections, conjunctions, intensities, opening the

⁶²When analysing the rhizome in their introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari oppose any measure that constrains multiplicity: "We do not have units (*unités*) of measure, only multiplicities or varieties of measurement. The notion unity (*unité*) appears only when there is a power takeover in the multiplicity by the signifier or a corresponding subjectification proceeding: This is the case for a pivot-unity forming the basis for a set of biunivocal relationships between objective elements or points, or for the One that divides following the law of a binary logic of differentiation in the subject." (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 8)

process of individuation to the never-ending becomings, the empty BwO is condemned to death (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 161). They warn about the risk of becoming an empty BwO, thus, ceasing to become. Their suggestion is to keep some of the strata of that organism, sign, and subject, and from there respond to them:

You have to keep enough of the organism for it to reform each dawn; and you have to keep small supplies of significance and subjectification, if only to turn them against their own systems when the circumstances demand it, when things, persons, even situations, force you to; and you have to keep small rations of subjectivity in sufficient quantity to enable you to respond to the dominant reality. Mimic the strata. You don't reach the BwO, and its plane of consistency, by wildly destratifying. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 160)

The point of departure is then the body. Every 'actual' body has a 'virtual' dimension, an infinite collection of potentialities (connections, affects, flows, intensities, and so on and so forth). By activating these virtual potentials the body becomes the BwO. Consequently, the Body without Organs becomes a connection of desires, a conjunction of flows and collectivities. These potentials are underpinned through conjunctions by means of becomings. The BwO copes with this multiplicity that does not separate the One from multiplicity, but rather places it in a continuum of multiplicities: "The uninterrupted continuum of the BwO." (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 154)

Deleuze and Guattari present their theory of **becomings** as the opening for a new understanding of the process of individuation, which inscribes the subject in the multiplicity of difference. Deleuze and Guattari criticise the structuralist approach⁶³ of the world, which understands this process of individuation as a connection of relationships of series and structures. Deleuze and Guattari challenge structuralism, according to which we know and experience our world by means of imposed structures of representation, and they turn their attention to what bodies can do through the politics of the virtual. It is through their

⁶³Structuralism is a theoretical paradigm, whose main belief is that things cannot be understood in isolation but in the context of the larger structures they are part of. These structures are those imposed by our way of perceiving the world and organising experience, rather than pre-existing objective entities. Structuralism has its origins in the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) and other scholars in the humanities, such as the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009), the linguist Roman Jakobson (1896-1982), and the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (1901-1981), who borrowed some Saussurian concepts to apply to their respective fields of study.

theory of becomings that Deleuze and Guattari show that man, the subject of enunciation, is no longer the eminent term of a series because any structure of representation, category or signifier, such as identity, prevents the flow of becomings from keeping moving.

To begin with, Deleuze affirms in *Dialogues* with Claire Parnet in 1977:

...there are no more subjects but dynamic individuations without subjects, which constitute collective assemblages⁶⁴ ...Nothing becomes subjective but hecceities take shape according to the compositions of non-subjective powers and effects...(Deleuze & Parnet, [1977] 1987: 93)

Deleuze is pointing at the dynamism of individuation. Subjectivity is no longer understood as a finite, stable formation but as a dynamic process of intensities and assemblages. Deleuze and Guattari have a cosmic vision of becomings. They postulate that each multiplicity is symbiotic: “...becoming ties together animals, plants, microorganisms, mad particles, a whole galaxy.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 250) They describe a mode of individuation that is beyond the subject, which they call haecceity,⁶⁵ a ‘thisness’ that consists of relations of movement and depends on molecules or particles, capacities to affect and be affected.

Becoming, which implies always becoming-different, describes the continual production of difference. Becomings are formulated in a progressive tense. Rather than fixing a result, a fixed state, a stable identity, becoming is an ongoing process that has no end-state. Every event is unique in a continual flow of changes in the cosmos, according to Deleuze and Guattari, and the subject emerges out of these flows, which keep changing *ad infinitum*. Becomings are, therefore, creative because they create and produce something new and different and are always changing.

A becoming is not an imitation, identification, a progress or regress on a series or structure, it is something beyond our imagination, it is something still to come; the affect — the response and experience — yet to be seen.

⁶⁴Deleuze and Guattari coin the term ‘assemblage,’ which had already been used by Deleuze with Parnet in *Dialogues* (1977), in *A Thousand Plateaus* to refer to the flow of desire that was referred as desiring machines and desiring production in the *Anti-Oedipus*.

⁶⁵In a footnote to the tenth plateau they explain the origin of this term: “This is sometimes written ‘ecceity’, deriving the word from ecce, ‘here is’. This is an error, since Duns Scotus created the word and the concept from haec, ‘this thing’. But it is a fruitful error because it suggests a mode of individuation that is distinct from that of a thing or a subject...” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 540-41)

A becoming is not a correspondence between relations. But neither is it a resemblance, an imitation, an identification...To become is not to progress or regress along a series. Above all, becoming does not occur in the imagination...Becoming produces nothing other than itself...A becoming lacks a subject distinct from itself; but also [that] it has no term, since its term in turn exists only as taken up in another becoming of which it is subject, and which coexists, forms a block, with the first. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 237-8)

Becomings challenge the binary oppositional system; they produce nothing other than themselves. They are already unique and specific; they are not distinct but different. They stem from a legitimate use of the three syntheses, so they do not impose any hierarchy or dualism in their flow. Furthermore, becomings are rhizomatic,⁶⁶ they are networks of connections that bring about new states, and they are open-ended productive machines since they have no hierarchical order in their connections. Rhizomatic becomings are opposed to arborescent (tree-structured) beings since they are not static and are not rooted vertically forming a unit. They do not operate upon a centralised ‘Self’ but on a non-unitary, multilayered, dynamic process of individuation.

⁶⁶Deleuze and Guattari borrow this term from the field of biology. The term describes a horizontal stem of a plant that is usually found underground. Its horizontal root system creates new plants from its nodes. They oppose the rhizome to the tree structure, which they consider vertical and hierarchical: “...any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be. This is very different from the tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 7) The rhizome emphasises the possibility of multiplicity and it can be useful to transform rigid structures when applied to a social and political level. On the contrary, arborescence refers to the tree-structured order of entities that are organised according to rigid dichotomies. At a social and political level, arborescence is characterised by homogeneity; that is to say, a molar individual is the dominated term in a relation of power, but at the same time it is dominated by a commonality that does not allow its multiplicity to flow. Deleuze and Guattari describe the main characteristics of the rhizome as follows: “...unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states. The rhizome is reducible to neither the One or the multiple. It is not the One that becomes Two or even directly three, four, five etc. It is not a multiple derived from the one, or to which one is added ($n+1$). It is comprised not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion. It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (*milieu*) from which it grows and which it overflows. It constitutes linear multiplicities with n dimensions having neither subject nor object, which can be laid out on a plane of consistency, and from which the one is always subtracted ($n-1$). When a multiplicity of this kind changes dimension, it necessarily changes in nature as well, undergoes a metamorphosis.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 21)

In that sense, a becoming is not an evolution, but an involution; that is, the conjunction of evolution and involving. It is an event of the middle. It is not a linear process; becomings involve the assemblage of unrelated entities. There is an element of ‘in-betweenness’ in a becoming, since the important effect is the process itself, no longer the outcome.

...the term we would prefer for this form of evolution between heterogeneous terms is “involution”...Becoming is involutory, involution is creative. To regress is to move in the direction of something less differentiated. But to involve is to form a block that runs its own line “between” the terms in play and beneath assignable relations. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 238-9)

Deleuze and Guattari use the term involution to refer to the in-betweenness of becomings, where unrelated entities connect never forming a unit, an end-product, but generating at the same time new connections.

All becomings are already molecular. There are several organising lines in the social field; the molar⁶⁷ is according to Deleuze the sedentary, majority, hegemony, stable line modes, whereas the molecular constitutes the nomadic, minority, multiple and mobile line modes which open the way for revolutionary potentialities. A becoming produces nomadic processes of individuation in their departure from the ‘actual’ body towards the ‘virtual’ plane of potentials.

...becoming is not to imitate or identify with something or someone. Nor is it to proportion formal relations. Neither of these two figures of analogy is applicable to becoming: neither the imitation of a subject nor the proportionality of a form. Starting from the forms one has, the subject one is, the organs one has, or the functions one fulfils, becoming is to extract particles between which one establishes the relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness that are *closest* to what one is becoming, and through which one becomes. This is the sense in which becoming is the process of desire. This is principle of proximity...(Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 272)

⁶⁷The relationship between molarity-molarity and majoritarian-minoritarian will be discussed further in the section (“The rhizome on a social plane: Towards a micropolitics of gender”). In order to understand that all becomings are molecular, we need to take into account that molarity refers to unified, pre-given subjects whereas molecular becomings are rhizomatic. Becomings cannot signify because they are not unified entities.

Among all the becomings⁶⁸ that Deleuze and Guattari analyse in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), I am going focus on becoming-woman and the repercussions that this notion might have for gender studies and gender politics.

2.2.4 Becoming-woman: A challenge against the dichotomous thought of gender

The becoming-woman is also molecular, which means that we are not talking about flesh-and-boned women but the reference to ‘woman’ is rather a reference to socio-symbolic constructions, affective states in Deleuzo-Guattarian terms.

There is a becoming-woman, a becoming-child, that do not resemble the woman or the child as clearly distinct molar entities (although it is possible — only possible — for the woman or child to occupy privileged positions in relation to these becomings)...becoming-woman is not imitating this [molar] entity or even transforming oneself into it...but emitting particles that enter the relation of movement and rest or the zone of proximity, of a microfemininity, in other words, that produce in us a molecular woman, create the molecular woman. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 275)

Becoming-woman differs from ‘being a woman,’ since being a woman implies the molar category of woman. Instead, becoming-woman is the tendency towards the molecular woman, the virtual woman that emanates from the actual woman; the potentials, the connections, the assemblages produced within the process of becoming-woman. Why do Deleuze and Guattari suggest a ‘becoming-woman’ rather than a ‘becoming-man’ for their nomadic process of individuation?

Although all becomings are already molecular, including becoming-woman, it must be said that all becomings begin with and pass

⁶⁸Deleuze and Guattari describe in their tenth plateau different becomings: becoming-woman, becoming-child, becoming- animal, and “On the far side, we find becomings-elemental, -cellular, -molecular, and even becomings-imperceptible.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 248) Becomings interact in a continuum of becomings: “A kind of order or apparent progression can be established for the segments of becoming in which we find ourselves; becoming-woman; becoming-child; becoming-animal, -vegetables, or -mineral; becomings-molecular of all kinds, becomings-particles. Fibers lead us from one to the other, transform one into the other as they pass through doors and across thresholds.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 272)

through becoming-woman. It is the key to all the other becomings.
(Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 277)

Man, as the hegemonic Standard, the socially established measure unit in opposition to which individuals are defined, is molar. As the main representation of the molar and majoritarian, the category 'Man' cannot be molecular or rhizomatic. He stands as the root for the 'tree' of subjectivity. Guattari affirms that due to their alienation and marginalisation in terms of power, women have a closer access to desire, thus, to becomings: "...because of her alienation woman is relatively closer to the situation of desire. And in a sense, perhaps from the point of view of representation, to accede to desire implies for a man first a position of homosexuality as such, and second a feminine becoming." (Guattari, 1996: 205)

Homosexuals, transvestites, and women share a common struggle in their relation to the body; they have all been displaced from the discourse of patriarchy as we have seen in my analysis of the Oedipal subject. Therefore, they might occupy a privileged position in relation to becomings.

Women — as well as homosexuals and transvestites, according to Guattari — are possibly closer to work out a haecceity, closer to move from the molar to the molecular, by breaking the rigid gender binary opposition, since the female occupies a peripheral position in patriarchal society, where the male subject is positioned as 'the subject of enunciation.'

Deleuze and Guattari criticise the rigid constraints of the arborescent subject, and they acknowledge its androcentrism. They claim that women should have a 'molar politics' related to female subject specificity and a 'molecular politics' that goes beyond the constrictions of subjectivity in order to become out of the logics of the patriarchal law; according to Deleuze the configuration of female subjectivity must not oppose man but define itself apart from him.

We do not mean to say that a creation of this kind is the prerogative of the man, but on the contrary that the woman as a molar entity *has to become-woman* in order that the man also becomes — or can become-woman. It is, of course, indispensable for women to conduct a molar politics, with a view to winning back their own organism, their own history, their own subjectivity: "we as women..." makes its appearance as a subject of enunciation. But it is dangerous to confine oneself to such a subject. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 275-276)

For Deleuze and Guattari, becoming-woman presents the destabilization of molar feminine/masculine identity. In other words, becoming-woman is an opportunity for both women and men to get freed from the rigid and hierarchical constraints of gender subjectivity since they point out that the subject has been defined taking male supremacy for granted.

In *Molecular Revolution* (1977), Guattari argues against the molar categories of gender and sexuality: “It seems to me important to destroy such gross concept as ‘woman’, ‘homosexual’ and so on. Nothing is ever as simple as that. When we reduce people to categories — black or white, male or female — it is because of our own preconceptions, our need to ensure our power over them by a process of dualizing reduction.” (Guattari, [1977]1984: 235) Guattari opposes gender/sexual identities since he considers that they are based on hierarchical dichotomies, which underlie stratified power relations (patriarchal pyramid).

Following the same train of thought, Deleuze and Guattari consider that ‘Woman’ is also a molar category of structural identification, while ‘becoming-woman’ is a molecular, rhizomatic and minoritarian process that exceeds the molar distinctions of gender or subject formation. As a result, women need to become-woman as well.

Although women are placed in a subordinate and oppositional position in relation to the Male Standard,⁶⁹ they also have a molar identity; a molar identity that is defined in opposition to the molar subject (male). The molar category of woman consists of the series of social expectations that construct socially accepted femininity. This sub-Standard feminine identity is, therefore, imposed upon the feminine bodies, even if they react against this. That is how the feminine molar subject is trapped in the double bind of the arborescent subject; both placing the feminine as a sub-Standard that regulates the female process of individuation and as a primary reference for subjectivation.

Paradoxically, it is this double bind what makes women be closer to becoming than men, since in the binary opposition they will always be minoritarian; they will always be the Other at the very end of the social scale. Deleuze and Guattari suggest “In this sense women, children, but also animals, plants, and molecules, are minoritarian. It is perhaps the special situation of women in relation to the Man-Standard that accounts for the fact that becoming, being minoritarian, always pass through a becoming-woman.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 291) The special situation in relation to the Man-Standard that Deleuze and Guattari are referring to here is, precisely, the binary opposition dominance/subordination imposed upon men and women within the patriarchal

⁶⁹By capitalising Male/Man/Woman I want to highlight them as molar categories.

schema.

In addition, Deleuze and Guattari insist that there is no becoming-man:

Why are there so many becomings of man, but no becoming-man? First because man is majoritarian par excellence, whereas becomings are minoritarian; all becoming is minoritarian. When we say majority, we are referring not to a greater relative quantity but to the determination of a state or standard in relation to which larger quantities, as well as the smallest, can be said to be minoritarian: white-man, adult-male, etc. Majority implies a state of domination, not the reverse. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 291)

There is no possible becoming-man because ‘Man’ is majoritarian and all becomings are becoming-minoritarian. There is no becoming-man because the molar subject is Man. Deleuze and Guattari argue that majority implies a state of dominion ‘White-man, adult-male, heterosexual, property-owning, etc.’ Consequently, those individuals who are not inscribed in this category, at any of its layers, are not majoritarian, therefore, are not ‘Man,’ but are becoming other than Man; they are becoming-woman.

Deleuze and Guattari do not obviate the fact that ‘Man,’ as the molar category, consists of people and groups that are marginalised despite the privilege of ‘Masculinity.’ What they claim is that these people or groups that are marginalised within the ‘Man’ category are still affirming the dominance and supremacy that man has, since their frame of reference is still the arborescent subject. This is the case of homosexuality, which, despite its attack on molar masculinity, is caught up in a relation of exclusive disjunction with heterosexuality. The tree-root structure is still the Majority; that is to say, homosexuality cannot be considered a becoming since it revolves around the very molar identity of man, calling at the dominance of masculinity.

There is no becoming-man because man is the molar entity par excellence, whereas becomings are molecular. The faciality function showed us the form under which man constitutes the majority, or rather the standard upon which the majority is based: white, male, adult, “rational”, etc., in short, the average European, the subject of enunciation. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 292)

Deleuze and Guattari affirm that there is no becoming-man, but by this they do not mean that men are not able to become. On the contrary, molar men, who have a molar identity, will need to cross through a multiplicity of thresholds

and becomings in order to become-minoritarian, just as minoritarian women, who still have a molar identity that requires becomings.

One reterritorializes, or allows oneself to be reterritorialized, on a minority as a state; but in a becoming, one is deterritorialized. Even blacks, as the Black Panthers said, must become-black. Even women must become-woman. Even Jews must become Jewish...But if this is the case, then becoming-Jewish necessarily affects the non-Jew as much as the Jew. becoming-woman necessarily affects men as much as women. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 291)

Deleuze and Guattari look for the minoritarian outsiders of a hierarchical society in order to work on that new process of individuation. However, they suggest stemming from that otherness to deterritorialise that position too, since this very same position is still trapped in the same molar frame of reference. They suggest that one can reterritorialise or be reterritorialised on a minority as a state but, in order to become, this minority needs to be deterritorialised. As part of a great machinery of relations they affirm that those deterritorialisations will have an effect on both, the one and the other.

In the case of men and women, it is only by breaking away from the majoritarian Man-Standard that we will be able to forge those new becomings. Since the subject of enunciation is phallogentric, Deleuze and Guattari suggest a move towards the periphery in order to de-centre the hegemony of the subject, in order to dismantle the principles that constitute the male subject as a privileged individual. The master-narrative of gender can be qualified as molar in Deleuzo-Guattarian terms. In that sense, new masculinities will need to start from molecular standards in order not to be reduced to the hierarchical and oppressive tentacles of patriarchy.

We should not forget that becomings are processes characterised by a quality of *intermezzo*. As has been discussed before, becomings are events in-between. Deleuze and Guattari consider all becomings are always 'in the middle,' where unrelated entities connect never forming a unit, an end-product, but generating at the same time new connections. When referring to gender, this in-betweenness implies a complete disavowal of Man-Standard and Woman-sub-Standard categories. becoming-woman will activate gender potential towards new states and becomings. Deleuze and Guattari put the example of girls who are not women neither men, nor an age group but multiple becomings.

Thus girls do not belong to an age group, sex, order, or kingdom: they slip in everywhere, between orders, acts, ages, sexes; they pro-

duce n molecular sexes on the line of flight in relation to the dualism machines they cross right through. The only way to get outside the dualisms is to be-between, to pass between, the intermezzo — that is what Virginia Woolf lived with all her energies, in all her work, never ceasing to become. The girl is like the block of becoming that remains contemporaneous to each opposable term, man, woman, child, adult. It is not the girl who becomes a woman; it is becoming-woman that produces the universal girl. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 277)

Girls and Virginia Woolf are examples of processes of individuation that are in the middle, beyond binary oppositions. Girls do not belong to any age group, sex, order, or kingdom. As referred at some other point in the tenth plateau, Orlando⁷⁰ operates by blocks of ages, blocks of epochs, blocks of the kingdom of nature, blocks of sexes, a position in-between that enables this character to underpin multiple becomings. In this case, both the girl and Orlando form endless becomings, project multiple potentials.

Nevertheless, the girl's body is soon over coded and changed by the Law of arborescence (the Law of the Father) and it is inscribed in the scheme of binary oppositions:

The question is fundamentally that of the body — the body they *steal* from us in order to fabricate opposable organisms. This body is stolen first from the girl: Stop behaving like that, you're not a little girl anymore; you're not a tomboy, etc. The girl's becoming is stolen first, in order to impose a history, or a prehistory, upon her. The boy's turn comes next, but is it by using the girl as an example, by pointing to the girl as the object of his desire, that an opposed organism, a dominant history is fabricated for him too. The girl is the first victim, but she must also serve as an example and a trap. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 276)

Deleuze and Guattari criticise the Oedipal complex as the beginning of fixed molar gender identities; both molar categories 'man/woman.' Despite her potential for becoming, once the girl's body is stolen by a phallogocentric society

⁷⁰“(Orlando already does not operate by memories, but by blocks, blocks of ages, block of epochs, blocks of the kingdoms of nature, blocks of sexes, forming so many becomings between things, or so many lines of deterritorialization.)” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 294) A whole section will be devoted to Deleuze and Guattari's account of Woolf ('Deleuze and Guattari's passion for Woolf'). This section will develop on the relevance of their work for the understanding of Woolf's concept of gender.

and she is defined as a lacking subject, the boy defines himself in opposition to her. This is how opposable organisms are fabricated (binary oppositions).

Deleuze and Guattari's theories about the becoming-woman constitute a fresh challenge to the constrictions of the deeply rooted binary oppositions of gender and sexuality. Their project of becomings de-centres and breaks away from the hierarchy of dichotomic thought and goes further into the field of sexuality. When Deleuze and Guattari talk about sexuality, they insist on its polymorphous intensities. They regard sexuality as an assemblage of multiple becomings.

The same applies for sexuality: it is badly explained by the binary organization of the sexes, and just as badly by a bisexual organization within each sex. Sexuality brings into play too great a diversity of conjugated becomings; these are like n sexes, an entire war machine through which love passes...Sexuality is the production of a thousand sexes, which are so many uncontrollable becomings. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 278)

Deleuze and Guattari's attempt to break with gender fixities is not a claim for bisexuality. Bisexuality implies being still trapped in this molar duality of men and women defined in opposition to each other. They believe that the sexual dichotomy male/woman is a contraction or simplification of a more diverse range of multiplicity. From all possible sexual and genetic variations, society codes bodies into the binary opposition 'male/female.' Deleuze and Guattari believe sexuality produces multiple becomings that generate n sexes.

Finally, the ultimate goal of human becomings is becoming 'imperceptible.' The becoming 'imperceptible' is the immanent end of becoming, its cosmic formula: "For everybody/everything is the molar aggregate, but *becoming everybody /everything* is another affair, one that brings into play the cosmos with its molecular components." (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 279-280) Becoming imperceptible is 'to world,' to make the world a becoming, producing a world in which it is the world that becomes. Yet, by becoming-imperceptible, becoming-invisible, Deleuze and Guattari do not mean to erase difference. By becoming-imperceptible they mean becoming undifferentiated, undefinable by molar identity categories. Instead of blurring differences they believe that by becoming-imperceptible differences are opened up to a wider range of multiplicities.

As far as gender is concerned, Deleuze and Guattari's claim for imperceptibility brings about the need for the undoing of sexual/gender differentiation.

Becoming-imperceptible implies removing all the identity layers of the subject, including gender and sexuality. Although this may seem an attempt to empty and homogenise the gendered subject, by undoing sexual/gender differentiation, Deleuze and Guattari do not mean to neutralise sexual difference; but, on the contrary, they aim to free difference from the reductive constraints of the binary oppositional system of representation.

Consequently, becoming-imperceptible challenges gender politics. The following section tries to demonstrate how Deleuze and Guattari extend their project of becomings to the social plane, by promoting micropolitics of difference that allow for an on-going process of individuation to break away from rigid patterns of identity.

2.2.5 The rhizome on a social plane: Towards a micropolitics of gender

Deleuze and Guattari do not believe in representation.⁷¹ In their understanding of difference as multiple and infinite, singularities cannot be represented by universalisations. A politics of difference will require, according to Deleuze and Guattari, specifications of differences. Their concepts of minorities and majority are useful for this kind of politics.

The opposition between minority and majority is not simply quantitative. Majority implies a constant, of expression or content, serving

⁷¹As has been mentioned in the previous section, the sign (signifier/signified) constrains the body into a reduced set of identifications. According to Deleuze and Guattari, representation fixes the flow of becomings. It offers a restricted version of difference, denying multiplicity. Deleuze catalogues the world as simulacra taking the argument from Nietzsche and Bergson in *Difference and Repetition* (1968). He considers representation the masking of an on-going process that cannot be fixed into representation. Deleuze affirms that assemblages are incommensurable and cannot be represented: “The minimum real unit is not the word, the idea, the concept or the signifier, but the assemblage. It is always an assemblage which produces utterances. Utterances do not have as their cause a subject which would act as a subject of enunciation, any more than they are related to subjects as subjects of utterance. The utterance is the product of an assemblage — which is always collective, which brings into play within us and outside us populations, multiplicities, territories, becomings, affects, events.” (Deleuze & Parnell [1977] 2002: 51) In *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), Deleuze and Guattari attack the linguistic model of representation and they argue against its simplification: “Our criticism of these linguistic models is not that they are too abstract but, on the contrary, that they are not abstract enough, that they do not reach the *abstract machine* that connects a language to the semantic and pragmatic contents of statements, to collective assemblages of enunciation, to a whole micropolitics of the social field.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 7)

as a standard measure by which to evaluate it. Let us suppose that the constant or standard is the average adult-white-heterosexual-European-male-speaking a standard language (Joyce's or Erza Pound's Ulysses). It is obvious that "man" holds the majority, even if he is less numerous than mosquitoes, children, women, blacks, peasants, homosexuals, etc...Majority assumes a state of power and domination, not the other way around. It assumes the standard version, not the other way around. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 105)

Deleuze and Guattari describe majority and minority in terms of collectivity. These terms have nothing to do with quantity since a majority group must be less numerous than a minority group, but still be majoritarian. On the one hand, the majority occupies a hegemonic position in the social scale since it is established as the standard measure for everything and it assumes a state of power and domination. On the other hand, the minority is non-hegemonic since it is defined from those states that differentiate it from the majority. This differentiation is not binary, but it is multiple.

Whereas majority is defined by "a constant, of expression or content, serving as a standard measure by which to evaluate it" (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 105), that is, a fixed formulation and universalisation, minority is defined from its singularities and is subject to a continuous process of 'becoming-minoritarian,' becoming different-in-itself. That is why they assert that "...we must distinguish between: the majoritarian as a constant and homogeneous system; minorities as subsystems; and the minoritarian as a potential, creative and created, becoming." (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 105-6) All becomings are minoritarian; majority is never becoming, it is fixed. Becomings are de-centred and, in that sense, peripheral.

In gender terms, Deleuze and Guattari acknowledge the centrality of the male as majority and female as minority. They define the majoritarian standard as "the average adult-white-heterosexual-European-male-speaking a standard language." Women, however, are to be considered a minority:

Women, regardless of their numbers, are a minority, definable as a state or subset; but they create only by making possible a becoming over which they do not have ownership, into which they themselves must enter; this is a becoming-woman affecting all of human-kind, men and women both. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 106)

By being in a minority, women's power might not be measured by their access into the majority system. Their power may reside in a potential to create

new states through the process of becoming minor, which will dismantle or deterritorialise the standard majority. Here is where we can position Deleuze and Guattari in the politics of difference. They do not obviate the importance for minorities to achieve majority states, “on the contrary, it is determining (at most diverse levels: women’s struggle for the vote, for abortion, for jobs...” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 471) They insist, however, on the transformational potential that minorities have in their ‘becoming’ potential and, therefore, claim for both men and women to become-minoritarian to create infinite new states and social dynamics.

‘The molar’ and ‘the molecular’ are two other distinctions that Deleuze and Guattari apply to political bodies in *A Thousand Plateaus*, and are, therefore, two useful terms to consider in relation to a politics of difference. molar entities are part of the State, have a structure, and are often massive. molecular entities are micro-entities which are imperceptible.

This microscopic perspective has a political dimension. Molecularity is the basis for ‘micropolitics.’ While the politics of molarisation refers to structures and principles that are based on fixed codifications, the molecular fosters a multiplicity of connections focused on singularities. A molar politics promotes standardization and homogeneity, whereas micropolitics, by focusing on singularities, on specificities, constructs dynamic desiring machines. Micropolitics tries to avoid the repetition of the non-different, it does not trust identity, and it avoids commonality. It transforms our sense of belonging and affiliation to groups and communities by means of a non-segregatory use of the synthesis of conjunction.

It allows desire to flow by bringing together becomings, minorities, assemblages. Therefore, micropolitics are presented as a chance to shake the structures of the *status quo*; a chance to break away from a segregatory use of the conjunctive syntheses of the unconscious,⁷² which subjugates dynamic modes of individuation to fixed identity-groups (nation, gender, class, race, and so and so forth) grounded on the principle of commonality and sameness. Moreover, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that micropolitics will create new collective solidarities based on the productivity of multiplicity.

They turn to a notion of political struggle which is decentred, molecular, and multiple in nonhierarchical, rhizomatic connections with other multiplicities — that is, not only collectivised or group actions but struggles that underpin many

⁷²By segregatory use of the conjunctive synthesis of the unconscious I mean to refer to what I called an illegitimate use of the synthesis of conjunction; that is to say, a reduction or restriction of nomadic subjectivities to identifications with one single set of subjectivities. That is the case of fixed identities of gender, race, nationality, religion, and class.

other becomings. This politics of difference from and towards multiplicity meets the agenda of feminists of difference, such as Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva, and Luce Irigaray in their attempt to pull down the patriarchal binary oppositions.⁷³

⁷³Hélène Cixous, as a theoretician of difference (sexual differences as she refers), connects the hierarchical gender opposition that makes woman the dialectical inverse of man with the logocentric and phallogocentric thought characterised by the negation of the feminine in her feminist manifesto “The Laugh of the Medusa” (1975). She criticises the language of power as resting on a system of dualistic thought that relegates women to the status of ‘Other.’ Her concept of *Écriture Féminine*, the return of the repressed of phallogocentric culture, the subversive, all-transcending force that displaces the binary opposition of Western thought, defines the decentred subject as ‘feminine’ and it can be related to Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘becoming-woman.’ Cixous argues that women are closer than men to let the unconscious flow insofar as they have been detached from the *logos*: “...the repression of women has been perpetuated, over and over, more or less consciously; and in a manner that’s frightening since it’s often hidden or adorned with the mystifying charms of fiction; that this locus has grossly exaggerated all the signs of sexual opposition (and not sexual difference), where woman has never *her* turn to speak — this being all more serious and unpardonable in that writing is precisely *the very possibility of change*, the space that can serve as a springboard for subversive thought, the precursory movement of a transformation of social and cultural structures.” (Cixous, [1975] 2010: 31) Cixous suggests that women are closer than men to recognise the presence of the Other in themselves. The concept of ‘Body without Organs’ is quite close to Hélène Cixous’s ‘Newly Born Woman,’ who continually engenders herself through passages of the Other in herself and of herself in the Other. Cixous proclaims that a new age for women is to come: “It is the time to liberate the New Woman from the Old by coming to know her — by loving her for getting by, for getting beyond the Old without delay, by going out ahead of what the New Woman will be...” (Cixous, [1975] 2010: 30) Both Deleuze & Guattari and Cixous emphasise multiplicities and militate against the Oedipal power that benefits those in power. Both share notions of becoming, intensity, production of positive desire, the absence of a logic of meaning, and both write against Oedipus as a masculine invention: “Here we encounter the inevitable man-with-rock, standing erect in his old Freudian realm, in the way that, to take the figure back to the point where linguistics is conceptualizing it “anew”, Lacan preserves it in the sanctuary of the phallos ...“sheltered” from *castration’s lack!* Their “symbolic” exists, it holds power —we, the sowers of disorder, know it only too well.” (Cixous, [1975] 2010: 37) For both identity is imposed from the outside and produces constraints, in a historical context, from which one has to turn away. The body is less the visible phenomenological entity than a locus producing an effect; bodies are situated in a context. According to Cixous “By writing her self, woman will return to the body which has been more than confiscated from her, which has been turned into the uncanny stranger on display — the ailing or dead figure, which so often turns out to be the nasty companion, the cause and location of inhibitions (Cixous, [1975] 2010: 32). Julia Kristeva sees the feminist urge as the search for a new definition of the subject, that would take sexual difference into account. Despite following a Lacanian paradigm, Kristeva offers a more central role for the maternal and the feminine in the subject’s psychosexual development, looking for a less sexist and phallogocentric model for the subject. Following Melanie Klein, Kristeva emphasises the maternal function and its importance in the development of subjectivity and access to culture and language. She focuses on the stage prior to Freudian Oedipal and Lacanian mirror stage. Kristeva argues that maternal regulation is the law before the Law, before Paternal Law in *Tales of Love* (1987). She calls for a new

2.2.6 The *n*-becomings of gender/sexual difference

Deleuze and Guattari consider the production of hierarchically gendered subjects a direct result of an illegitimate use of the syntheses of connection, disjunction, and conjunction — such as for example the Oedipus complex in the nuclear family with the five paralogisms⁷⁴ that have been discussed in the previous section, ‘*Anti-Oedipus*: Dismantling fixed molar Oedipal subjectivity.’ The most common binary oppositions imposed upon gender and sexuality are male/female, heterosexual/homosexual, and object-choice/identification. When these dualisms are dealt by means of exclusive disjunctions, the molar subject is brought to the fore. These molar subject formations fix the flows of desire that generate nomadic subjectivities.

Deleuze and Guattari stress the importance of thinking difference not as the reactive pole of a binary opposition organised so as to affirm the power and primacy of the same, but as the affirmation of difference in terms of a multiplicity of possible differences; difference as the positivity of differences. In ‘Difference in itself,’ the first chapter of *Difference and Repetition* (1968), Deleuze introduces the notion of a productive and potentially individuating difference. He redefines difference as something that is not the result of anything external (difference in relation to other things) but as something that exists internally *a priori* of the subject, beyond identity, analogy, opposition, and resemblance; thus, something that should be affirmed rather than negated.

The difference ‘between’ two things is only empirical, and the corresponding determinations are only extrinsic. However, instead of something distinguished from something else, imagine something which distinguishes itself — and yet that from which it distinguishes

discourse of maternity that acknowledges the importance of the maternal function in the development of subjectivity and in culture. The maternal body is the very embodiment of the subject in process/on trial. It cannot be neatly divided into subject and object. It is the embodiment of alterity within. Maternity is the most powerful model of alterity within because it exists at the heart of the social and the species. In her essay “Women’s Time” in *New Maladies of the Soul* (1979), like Deleuze and Guattari, she believes that the truly revolutionary feminism must overcome the boundaries of femininity to become other than woman. What will occur through feminism according to her is not simply the end of the oppression of women, but a complete revolution of the cultural order. Kristeva’s arguments have much in common with the idea that makes the ‘becoming-woman’ of culture a necessary stage in the cultural evolution — involution in Deleuze’s terminology. In the section ‘Feminist Intersections,’ Luce Irigaray’s arguments are contrasted with Deleuze and Guattari’s.

⁷⁴Deleuze and Guattari’s analysis of the five fallacious conclusions of psychoanalysis: paralogism of extrapolation, paralogism of double bind, paralogism of biunivocal application, paralogism of displacement, paralogism of afterward.

itself does not distinguish itself from it...We must say that difference is made, or makes itself, as in the expression ‘make a difference.’ (Deleuze [1968] 2004: 36)

Deleuze distinguishes between the distinct and the different. Whereas the distinct depends on something external to be defined in opposition to (to be distinguished from), the different is already different before being compared with anything else.

Deleuze considers difference something multiple that constitutes life. It is intense and cannot be codified by “a selective test which must determine which differences may be inscribed within the concept in general.” (Deleuze [1968] 2004: 38) When difference is understood in terms of ‘a selective test,’ such as identity, analogy, opposition and resemblance, these relations determine groupings that contract the multiple potential of difference. Gilles Deleuze does not believe in a pre-existing unity, he believes that reality displays difference, and difference is primary. By difference he understands, then, the ‘singularity,’ specificity or uniqueness of every single state of an object, individual, conception...every single energy of the universe.

If we follow this definition of difference, then sexual difference is a contraction and normalisation of a wider and multiple range of subjectivities. Deleuze and Guattari attack Freud’s reductive disjunctions between the sexes.⁷⁵ According to Deleuze’s concept of difference, an individual is not constructed upon generality or commonality, but in a process of individuation set on specific differences, infinite connections and interactions.

Deleuze and Guattari present a project in which difference is not hierarchical. They surpass the division of humanity into two sexually differentiated groups; a division that underlies a wide range of social investments instigated in power relations that control and monopolise the space of subjectivity. They present a nomadic mode of subjectivity as an alternative to Oedipal subjectivity.

They criticise Freud’s acknowledgement of commonality between the two sexes at the level of castration in their sexual development — ‘penis envy’ in the case of girls and fear of castration in the case of boys —, which will be resolved in their encounter with the Oedipus complex with renunciation and

⁷⁵“Such is always the case with Freud. Something common to the two sexes is required, but something that will be lacking in both, and that will distribute the lack in two nonsymmetrical series, establishing the exclusive use of the disjunctions: you are a girl or boy! Such is the case with Oedipus and its ‘resolution’, different in boys and in girls. Such is the case with castration, and its relationship to Oedipus in both instances.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a: 59)

the repressed in the unconscious. Their point of departure is not lack but the multiplicity of difference:

Nothing is lacking, nothing can be defined as a lack; nor are the disjunctions in the unconscious ever exclusive, but rather the object of a properly inclusive use that we must analyze. Freud had a concept at his disposal for starting this contrary position: the concept of bisexuality; and it was not by chance that he was never able or never wanted to give this concept the analytical position and extension it required. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a: 60)

Deleuze and Guattari call attention to Freudian primary bisexuality as a concept that could have been used in his psychosexual theory. Bisexuality (polymorphous sexuality), as understood by Freud in the early stages of child psychosexual development, can be related to the Deleuzian conception of difference and multiplicity when applied to sexual difference. Freud's definition of the infant polymorphous sexuality is similar to Deleuze and Guattari's claim for 'a thousand sexes' since, at that stage, Freud acknowledges the multiplicity of connections and intensities that take place in the core of the child's sexuality.

Deleuze and Guattari criticise Freudian psychosexual theory since this implies a subject who is defined as a fixed ego, of one sex or the other, and who experiences as 'lack' his/her subordination to 'the tyrannical complete object.' molar representations of gender identities are a product of an exclusive disjunction. A molar subject is sexualised and engendered by choosing from a reductive set of subjectivities; male/female for its identification, male/female for its object-choice, homosexuality/heterosexuality for its orientation. The molar subject is patriarchal since it is both produced and reproduces patriarchal dynamics that privilege the phallus, the Law of the Father, that is, the male subject position.

The molar patriarchal subjectivity is formed by an illegitimate use of the conjunctive synthesis, which produces a hierarchical gendered division. Segregative conjunctions generate subjects attached to reduced sets of subjectivities, inscribed in the hierarchical binary opposition of the One and the Other. The Oedipal subject, for instance, offers two possibilities for the male and the female subject to identify with. On the one hand, the male child will identify himself with the authoritarian father. On the other hand, the girl child will assume the subordinated role identified in the mother. The nuclear family, consequently, gives superior value to male supremacy than to female subordination.

Very differently, nomadic subjectivities are dynamic, inclusive, multiple and non-hierarchical:

So that at the level of elementary combinations, at least two men and two women must be made to intervene to constitute the multiplicity in which transverse communications are established — connections of partial objects and flows; the male part of a man can communicate with the female part of a woman, but also with the male part of a woman, or with the female part of another man, or yet again with the male part of the other man, etc...In contrast to the alternative of the ‘either/or’ exclusions, there is the ‘either...or...or’ of the combinations and permutations where the differences amount to the same without ceasing to be differences. We are statistically or molarly heterosexual, but personally homosexual, without knowing it or being fully aware of it, and finally we are transsexual in an elemental, molecular sense. (Deleuze Guattari, [1972] 2003a: 69-70)

Deleuze and Guattari reject the binary categories male/female, homosexual/heterosexual. They believe that no one is exclusively male or female, homosexual or heterosexual. Subjectivities produced by inclusive syntheses break with these binary oppositions and open them to n possibilities, affirming difference and its multiplicities. Desiring-production treats these oppositions as limits that form intervals which contain a wide range of different states. That is why the molecular subject is transsexual in a molecular sense, dynamic in its tendency towards an n gender position.

Following Deleuze and Guattari, exclusive gender disjunctions are proved to fail to cope with such gender multiplicity and impose binary sexuality, as suggested by Eugene W. Holland (1999).⁷⁶ Even within the nuclear family structure an exclusive gender disjunction does not work if we focus on the multiplicity of difference. The Oedipal family stems from a binary sexuality (female and male) but if we add to this binary a second layer, such as sexual orientation then this binary might be opened up to more subject positions (female heterosexual, male heterosexual, female homosexual and male homosexual), and if we take into account their differing object-choices and gender identifications there are potentially multiple possibilities. Then sexuality becomes polyvocal and polymorphous.

⁷⁶Eugene W. Holland analyses the Deleuzo-Guattarian concept of multiplicity in relation to gender subject positions. In his section “feminism and gender” in *Deleuze and Guattari’s Anti-Oedipus: Introduction to schizoanalysis* (1999), Holland tries to establish intersections between the Deleuzo-Guattarian project in the *Anti-Oedipus* and feminism by analysing their arguments against binary oppositions concerning gender identities.

...everywhere a microscopic transsexuality, resulting in the woman containing as many men as the man, and the man as many women, all capable of entering — men with women, women with men — into relation of production of desire that overturn the statistical order of the sexes...Desiring-machines or the non human sex: not one or even two sexes, but n sexes...the schizoanalytic slogan of the desiring-revolution will be first of all: to each its own sexes. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a: 295-296)

While the Oedipal schema of sexual difference remains at the molar level by imposing a restrictive set of binary oppositions, Deleuze and Guattari argue that at the molecular level sexual ‘identity’⁷⁷ comprises a multiplicity, which is not hierarchical. This multiplicity of states, traits and characteristics, produces a wide range of sexualities that do not prioritize one differential trait over another, but take into account multiplicity-in-itself.

In gender terms, then, we may talk about a multiplicity of gender positions in which ‘being a man or a woman’ cannot be reduced to two sexual identities. On the contrary, these two categories open up to a multiplicity of states that generate n gender positions, affirming a multiplicity of infinite differences. The legitimate use of the disjunctive synthesis, therefore, leads us to a conception of sexual difference that no longer consists of being ‘either/or...’ but of exploring alternatives always in the flow of becoming-other in the logics of ‘either...or...or...or...’

For us, on the other hand, there are as many sexes as there are terms in symbiosis, as many differences as elements contributing to a process of contagion. We know that many beings pass between a man and a woman; they come from different worlds, are borne on the wind, form rhizomes around roots; they cannot be understood in terms of production, only in terms of becoming...(Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 242)

Nomadic subjects are formed in an on-going process of becomings that stem from the multiplicity produced by desiring-machines and form the legitimate

⁷⁷Deleuze and Guattari do not talk about sexual identity insofar as they do not trust the constraining effects that identity has on their on-going understanding of subjectivation. I am using the term gender and sexual identities, as terms commonly used by gender studies, to amplify and implement the meaning generated by them with Deleuze and Guattari’s views on the process of individuation and sexuality.

use of the syntheses — partial-object connections rather than complete global-person connections, inclusive disjunctions and nomadic conjunctions rather than segregative conjunctions. Deleuze and Guattari replace the dichotomy ‘being woman or being man’ by the action of the ‘becoming-woman’ as has been developed in the previous section.

No actual body coincides entirely with either the category ‘Man’ or the category ‘Woman.’ These categories are more a form of approximation than an actual state. ‘Man’ and ‘Woman,’ as such, are the result of habit-formations. They are social constructions that respond to patriarchal demands. They represent a rigid set of clichés defining bodies.

Bodies are gendered within society. Therefore, gender stands as a socially functional limitation of a body’s connective and transformational potential. In that sense, gender can be considered the actual limitation of a body’s potentialities. In order to return to the body’s potentials, connections, and assemblages, Deleuze and Guattari propose the becoming-woman for both men and women. In order to move towards a molecular mode of individuation, towards an n gender position, we need to dismantle sexed and gendered identities for they have been founded on the basis of the arborescent subject. Furthermore, the configuration of the Majoritarian Subject is strictly related to sexed and gendered identities, which are fundamental for the stabilization required by patriarchy.

...The becoming of the female body must not be confused with the category of woman as considered in marriage, the family and so on. This kind of category can only exist within the particular social field that defines it, in any case. Woman as such does not exist at all. There is no absolute motherhood, no eternal feminine. The difference between men and women is even more necessary as a foundation of our social order than distinctions of class or caste or anything else. (Guattari, [1977] 1984 : 234)

Félix Guattari affirms that Woman as such does not exist at all. He argues for the destruction of categories — Woman, Man, Black, White, queer, straight, deviant — and he suggests, instead, a notion of distributed sexuality, n -sexes, without definition or border, temporal endurance or specificity.

According to Guattari, sexual liberation will occur when sexuality becomes desire and it will allow the subject to be something else at the same time.

Once desire is specified as sexuality, it enters into forms of particularized power, into the stratification of castes, of styles, of sexual classes. The sexual liberation — for example, of homosexuals, or

transvestites, or sadomasochists — belongs to a series of other liberation problems among which there is an *a priori* and evident solidarity, the need to participate in a necessary fight. But I don't consider that to be a liberation as such of desire, since in each of these groups and movements one finds repressive systems. (Guattari, 1996: 204)

Guattari turns to the Freudian terms 'inverts' and 'sexual aberrations,'⁷⁸ minoritarian groups, and explores the way in which such groups can contribute to an alternative conception of sexuality. As has been discussed in the previous section, all becomings are minoritarian. However, these minorities have to be very cautious not to fall in the same constraining identity systems that share a molar frame of reference. The diversity of gender roles and sexual orientations generated at the molecular level undermines any fixed agenda promoted by gender politics that aims at categorizing any social group.

For example, no "gay liberation movement" is possible as homosexuality is caught up in a relation of exclusive disjunction with heterosexuality, a relation that ascribes them both to a common Oedipal and castrating stock, charged with ensuring only their differentiation in two noncommunicating series, instead of bringing to light their reciprocal inclusion and their transverse communication in the decoded flows of desire (included disjunctions, local connections, nomadic conjunction). (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a: 350-51)

The category homosexuality is defined in opposition to the category heterosexuality. This opposition establishes homosexuality in dichotomic commonalities, and, at the same time, relates them both — homosexuality and heterosexuality — to the Male-Standard. Deleuze and Guattari assert that this relationship does not allow gay men to produce multiple connections and carry out inclusive, non-segregative syntheses of desire so as to become nomadic subjects and produce all the virtual potentials that they can generate as molecular bodies.

Deleuze and Guattari have a revolutionary conception of sexuality and gender performance. They consider gender an overcoded, abstract faciality projected on actual bodies, which can only signify within molar constraints. Gender

⁷⁸In the "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality" ([1905] 1953), Freud establishes an opposition between what he calls deviant or invert sexual practices — that includes homosexuals, hermafroditas, sado-masochists — and 'normal' sexuality.

imposes rigid patterns upon the process of individuation and prevents becomings from flowing. Instead, they argue for a wider scope of gender that opens up to n -gender positions. Their proposal is to become-woman in order to enter the micropolitics of becoming-molecular in order to cope with the multiplicity of difference-in-itself.

I would say first that there is only one sexuality, it is homosexuality; there is only one sexuality, it is feminine. But I would add finally: there is only one sexuality, it is neither masculine, nor feminine, nor infantile; it is something that is ultimately flow, body. (Guattari, 1996: 205)

Becomings can be considered as either a useful tool to deconstruct dominant subject positions (masculine/white/heterosexual/speaking standard languages/property owning/urbanised and so on and so forth); or else, becomings could be understood as dangerous weapons to depersonalise and neutralise different subjectivities, turning back, once again, to the majoritarian Male-Standard.

Those are the general positions that feminism has adopted when considering the Deleuzo-Guattarian project of individuation. The next section presents the most representative voices of feminist theory, related to difference politics, and their *philia* and *phobia* towards Deleuze and Guattari's project.

2.3 Feminist intersections: towards a Deleuzo-Guattarian feminist politics

When we talk about feminism and Deleuze and Guattari,⁷⁹ we are neither talking about the first-wave⁸⁰ which fought for the liberation of women in terms of material conditions by focusing mainly on legal obstacles to gender equality, nor about the second-wave⁸¹ which focused on women's specific identities,

⁷⁹I would like to highlight, as Massumi has claimed in *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari* (1992), that it could be argued that Guattari has been overlooked by the great majority of feminists and theorists in general. Even when considering their collaborative work, Guattari has been left aside and forgotten by most feminists, including great defenders of their work such as Braidotti and Claire Colebrook. It is my intention to refer to both of them insofar as Félix Guattari is a key figure for Deleuzian political thought.

⁸⁰First-wave feminism refers to the organised feminist activity which evolved in Britain and the USA during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, from Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the rights of Woman* (1792) to the suffragette movement.

⁸¹Second-wave feminism stemmed from Simone de Beauvoir's concern about women's oppression as their socially constructed status of Other to men in *The Second Sex* (1949). It

but rather about a third wave,⁸² which perceives identity as constructed rather than given and multiple rather than simple. This last wave might be the one to assess in relation to Deleuze and Guattari's work. The following section will delineate chronologically the major voices, who are mainly difference feminists,⁸³ who have written supporting and attacking the Deleuzo-Guattarian project. I will focus on the commonalities and differences between difference feminists and Deleuze and Guattari concerning gender and sexual matters.

Deleuze and Guattari replace the psychoanalytic pattern of the subjectivity of the One vs. the Other with a multiple, mobile and connected individuation that breaks that dual system. They take as a point of departure the pole of alterity to the mainstream standard; a minoritarian position from where to demolish the supremacy of the One. Their reformulation of the subject starts from 'the Other-position.' By doing so, they are not only de-centering the One but they are erasing it, they are overcoming it by suggesting a new paradigm where the Other does not exist anymore, neither as the core of the equation, nor as the frame of reference. An immediate result of their approach is the break down of the two molar categories sustaining the sexual dichotomy; 'man' and 'woman.'

It is, then, not surprising that Deleuze and Guattari's theory of becomings has been received with scepticism by some feminist theorists. Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-woman brings about a paradoxical encounter between feminist claims for women's subject-position and Deleuzo-Guattarian distrust about identity projects. Their call for the dissolution of all identities based on the phallus, including the feminine, seems problematic for a feminist perspective based on sexual difference.

On the one hand, some feminists, such as Luce Irigaray and Alice A. Jardine,⁸⁴ warn that 'becomings' pose the risk of women's 'disappearance;' how

embraces feminist activity from the late 1960s onwards, coinciding in time with the Women's Liberation Movement, with two theoretical touchstones; Betty Friedan's *The Feminist Mystique* (1963) and Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1970).

⁸²Third-wave feminism emerged in the mid-1990s and it seeks to challenge second-wave's "essentialist" definitions of femininity by embracing diversity and change. It celebrates women's multiple identities. This is why it uses queer theory, postcolonial theory, postmodernism, post-structuralism, ecofeminism, transgender politics, among other fields of study, with representatives such as Judith Butler and Luce Irigaray.

⁸³Sexual difference theory claims for women's structural need to posit themselves as female subjects, corporeal and sexed beings (Irigaray, Jardine, and Braidotti).

⁸⁴Luce Irigaray is a contemporary French feminist theorist, student of Jacques Lacan, who combines philosophy, psychoanalysis and linguistics. Her work has influenced the feminist movement in France and Italy for several decades. Her theory of "sexual difference" is specially relevant. According to this theory, the subject in Western philosophy and psychoanalytic

can women deconstruct a subjectivity that they have always been denied? They question whether Deleuze and Guattari's attempt to move away from the boundaries of the subject of enunciation is not just another attempt to neutralise the female subject and to frame it, once again, in the paradigm of phallogentrism.

On the other hand, Deleuze and Guattari's rejection of molar binary oppositions declares the whole binary scheme of sexuality as conceptually empty, as a mere reproduction of patriarchal codifications and as a reduction of a further sexual multiplicity. This second approach provides feminism (for example, feminists such as Claire Colebrook and Elisabeth Grosz⁸⁵) with the opportunity to free the subject from the rigid regime of one sex oppressing the other and to access to new tools for a political change.

All in all, both Deleuze and Guattari and difference feminists oppose bi-

theory reflects the interests and perspectives of men, while women are associated with the non-subject (the Other) or with matter and nature. In an interview with Elizabeth Hirsh and Gary A. Olson, "Je—Luce Irigaray: A Meeting with Luce Irigaray" (1995), she conceives of her work as comprising three phases: the first phase demonstrates the masculine perspective that has dominated Western discourse, a critique of the masculine subject — *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974) and *This Sex Which is Not One* (1977)—; the second sketches possibilities for the construction of a feminine subject; and the third aims to develop the social, legal, and ethical conditions necessary for relations between two differently sexed subjects.

Alice A. Jardine is Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures and of Studies on Women, Gender, and Sexuality at Harvard University. She has translated many of Julia Kristeva's writings. She is the coeditor (with Hester Eisenstein) of *The Future of Difference* (1985), the coeditor (with Paul Smith) of *Men in Feminism* (1987), and the coeditor (with Anne M. Menke) of *Shifting Scenes: Interviews on Women, Writing, and Politics in Post-68 France* (1991). She is author of *Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity* (1986).

⁸⁵Claire Colebrook has written articles on philosophy, visual culture, poetry, literary theory, queer theory and contemporary culture. She is the author of *New Literary Histories* (1997), *Ethics and Representation* (1999), *Deleuze: A Guide for the Perplexed* (1997), *Gilles Deleuze* (2002), *Understanding Deleuze* (2002), *Irony in the Work of Philosophy* (2002), *Gender* (2003), *Irony* (2004), *Milton, Evil and Literary History* (2008), *Deleuze and the Meaning of Life* (2010), and *William Blake and Digital Aesthetics* (2011). She co-authored (with Tom Cohen and J. Hillis Miller) *Theory and the Disappearing Future* (2011), and co-edited (with Ian Buchanan) *Deleuze and Feminist Theory* (2000), co-edited (with Jeff Bell) *Deleuze and History* (2008), co-edited (with Jami Weinstein) *Deleuze and Gender* (2009) and co-edited (with Rosi Braidotti and Patrick Hanafin) *Deleuze and Law* (2009).

Elizabeth Grosz is an Australian feminist scholar. She is Professor of Women's and Gender Studies at Rutgers University. She also teaches gender studies and architecture at the University of Bergen, Norway, and The University of Sydney, Australia. She is known for her philosophical interpretations of the work of French philosophers Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, as well as, her readings of the works of French feminists, Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva and Michele Le Doeuff. She has written widely on the body, sexuality, space, time, and materiality. Among her best known works we can point out *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (1994) and *Space, Time and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies* (1995).

nary oppositions, which they feel privilege the Man-Standard and foster female subordination. In this sense, they both share a common cause. However, the Deleuzo-Guattarian project of individuation raises major theoretical controversial questions for feminism. As Claire Colebrook underlines in her introduction for *Deleuze and Feminist Theory* (2000), the two main problems that Deleuzo-Guattarism⁸⁶ has come across are the fact that their philosophy does away with the subject, precisely when feminism has gained some sense of identity, and the fact that the elevation of becoming-woman can be just another form of subordination to male reason. Consequently, there are two basic concepts in their approach that constitute the clear domain around which feminist criticism and intersections have been built. These are: their notion of difference and their notion of becomings, with resulting notions concerning the body and micropolitics.

Of course, the point here is not to defend Deleuze and Guattari as post-structuralist feminists — they themselves do not talk about gender since they reject identity as a restrictive imposition of representation —, although they do align themselves with feminist struggles in their fight against patriarchy.⁸⁷ What I wish to do is to consider **their criticism of patriarchy** and their claim for a new strategy for subjectification away from the **binary oppositional system**. The positive use that feminism can make of Deleuze and Guattari's thinking is to focus on their withdrawal from dichotomous thinking and their complete disapproval of the hegemonic male-dominant discourse.⁸⁸

While some feminist voices reacted negatively against their notion of individuation, specially, the becoming-woman in the late 1980s, from the mid-1990s onwards, there has been a more generalised acceptance of their approach and a more fruitful relationship between Deleuzo-Guattarian thought and feminism.⁸⁹ The initial feminist response led by Luce Irigaray and reinforced by Alice Jardine was that of considering that Deleuze and Guattari 'dismembered' the body. They feared that Deleuze and Guattari's reading of the body from a virtual di-

⁸⁶Colebrook uses the term Deleuzanism but I am going to choose the term Deleuzo-Guattarism insofar as Colebrook is referring to their collaborative work.

⁸⁷Although they recognise feminism as one of the new potential revolutionary practices, for them the Women's Liberation movement runs the risk of becoming arborescent by calling upon molar categories such as man and woman.

⁸⁸According to Marta Zajac (2003), the theory of becomings offers useful — though only theoretical — tools for feminists and for the political improvement of the social scene.

⁸⁹A number of feminists associated with the corporeal feminism movement have drawn positive connections with Deleuze and Guattari in order to develop on bodily potentials (Braidotti, 1994, 2002; Gatens, 1996; Grosz, 1994, 2005; Olkowski, 1999b; Lorraine, 1999; and the essays in Buchanan and Colebrook, 2000).

mension would erase factual bodies and, thus, deny a feminist politics concerned with corporeality and sexual difference.

Irigaray is critical of Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of becoming-woman and BwO. She affirms, in *The Sex Which is Not One* (1977), that female sexuality has been invisibilised: "...there is no place for the "feminine," except the traditional place of the repressed, the censured." (Irigaray, [1977] 1985b: 68) She analyses the roots of female marginalisation and challenges feminism to elaborate new discursive practices to account for female sexual difference.

In *The Sex Which is Not One* (1977) she revises Freudian psychosexual theory to prove its phallogocentric foundation. Irigaray (as Deleuze and Guattari) criticises the psychoanalytic definition of desire as lack. She insists that women are defined as lacking the phallus and, hence, they are objectified by patriarchal desire; thus, becoming the object of masculine desire. What is more, she adds that female desire has been masculinised insofar as it is claimed to be a desire for the phallus. She asserts that women have become objects of exchange, 'commodities' between men (father-husband) and have been relegated to an inferior position. She analyses the effects of the Freudian Oedipal Complex on female sexuality and the controversies over female sexuality in psychoanalysis.

When I ask what may be happening on the women's side, I am certainly not seeking to wipe out multiplicity, since women's pleasure does not occur without that. But isn't a multiplicity that does not entail a rearticulation of the difference between the sexes bound to block or take away something of woman's pleasure? In other words, is the feminine capable, at present, of attaining this desire, which is *neutral* precisely from the viewpoint of sexual difference? Except by miming masculine desire once again. And doesn't the 'desiring machine' still partly take the place of woman or the feminine?...This is, to a pleasure different from an abstract — neuter? — pleasure of sexualized matter. That pleasure which perhaps constitutes a discovery from men, a supplement to enjoyment, in a fantasmatic 'becoming woman', but which has long been familiar to women. (Irigaray [1977] 1985b: 140-41)

Irigaray does not trust Deleuze and Guattari's desiring machine, which she considers to have taken the location of the feminine. She insists on the importance of rearticulating the difference between the sexes. Irigaray conceives women as always being multiple, but she opposes the neutralisation of desire, since neutrality in the unbalanced patriarchal scheme would result in favouring

the masculine over the feminine. Irigaray denounces the work of Deleuze and Guattari — without referring to them explicitly — as an attempt to eliminate sexual difference. She considers that becomings are neutral since both man and woman must undergo a becoming-woman. For Irigaray, Deleuze and Guattari overlook the fact that women occupy a different subject position within the social structure. In addition, she claims that women are neutralised by becoming-woman, thus, being inscribed in a masculine discourse. Irigaray notes the risk of invisibilisation that women run by eliminating or neutralising sexual difference. Likewise, she also rejects the concept of BwO.

For them isn't the organless body a historical condition? And don't we run the risk once more of taking back from woman those as yet unterritorialized spaces where her desire might come into being? Since women have long been assigned the task of preserving 'body-matter' and the 'organless', doesn't the 'organless' come to occupy the place of their own schism? Of the evacuation of women's desire in woman's body? Of what remains endlessly "virginal" in woman's desire? To turn the 'organless body' into a 'cause' of sexual pleasure, isn't it necessary to have had a relation to language and to sex — to the organ — that women never had? (Irigaray [1977] 1985b: 141)

Irigaray affirms that the female body, female sexuality, has been 'organless,' insofar as the female has not had a relationship to language and to sex. For Irigaray, as Alice A. Jardine highlights "the BwO is nothing other than the historical condition of woman." (Jardine (1985): 213) Irigaray points out that in order to become a BwO you need to be a body. She claims that the female body has never been defined as such; female sexuality and female desire have been denied within phallogocentrism. Irigaray suggests that the BwO does not account for woman as a separate entity, it does not allow women to access their own desire, and, in that sense, it plays upon female devaluation and marginalization.

For Irigaray, woman is not One because she is always multiple. As opposed to the idea that woman is not,⁹⁰ she brings to the fore the idea that woman is not yet, just as no language yet exists which is capable of affirming the multiplicity of the feminine. Similarly, Deleuze and Guattari claim for the non-Oedipal woman, a woman that draws on polysexuality, and 'be' all the sexes of which she has been deprived in order to become socialised as woman. Irigaray, however, insists that women do not exist within the discursive framework of subjectivity and they have to claim their own specificity:

⁹⁰Here I am referring to Deleuze and Guattari's criticism of 'the molar' category 'woman.'

...the feminine has never been defined except as the inverse, indeed the underside, of the masculine. So for woman it is not a matter of installing herself within this lack, this negative, even by denouncing it, nor of reversing the economy of sameness by turning the feminine unto the standard for 'sexual difference'; it is rather a matter of trying to practice that difference. (Irigaray [1977] 1985b: 159)

Here Irigaray conceives the subject from a post-structuralist approach. She attacks the classical male-centred system of representation that positions unified subjects in hierarchical binary oppositions. Therefore, despite her aim to deconstruct phallogocentrism, Irigaray does not believe that the solution resides in inverting the binary opposition, by making women the new subject of enunciation, the new standard in the sexual binomial. She believes, instead, in the possibility of another system that accounts for female specificity. Irigaray claims the necessity of a space of experimentation by women of their desires and specific morphology. Here it is where Irigaray and Deleuze and Guattari may seem to diverge.

Irigaray's strategy consists in restoring particularity and sex-specificity. Her aim is to deconstruct the 'molar' subject position of woman as the paradigmatic Other of the subject of enunciation, by moving towards 'the other of the Other.'⁹¹ Furthermore, she regards what she calls sexual in-difference as a patriarchal manoeuvre to reduce the other to the same (the One). This is why she rejects Deleuze and Guattari's claim for polysexuality, 'the molecular woman,' and the BwO. Insofar as these terms stand beyond gender division, Irigaray assumes that Deleuze and Guattari's vision of gender and sexuality universalises and neutralises difference.

Likewise, Alice A. Jardine highlights the impossibility of reconciling the feminist project with Deleuzo-Guattarian theories by reinforcing Irigaray's criticism. Jardine analyses poststructuralist philosophers, such as Derrida, and accuses them of falsifying and mystifying 'woman' in their attempt to respond to the 'crisis of modernity,'⁹² in *Gynesis: Configurations of woman and Moder-*

⁹¹This is a term used by Rosi Braidotti in "Becoming Woman: or Sexual Difference Revisited" when referring to Irigaray on sexual difference: "The feminine for Irigaray is the effect of a project, a political and conceptual project of transcending the traditional ('molar') subject position of Woman as Other of the Same, so as to express the other of the Other." (Braidotti 2003: 44) Woman is no longer regarded as the complementary and specular other of man. Woman, then, becomes a subject-in-process, a mutant, the other of the Other.

⁹²In a very similar way, Rosi Braidotti in her early work states: "It seems to me that the crisis of the subject — and the suggested ways out — intensify a very ancient habit: the abstracting, setting aside and metaphorization of the feminine as founding gesture of the

nity (1985). She problematises the subject of becoming-woman as just another effort of male-dominant philosophy to make the figure of women invisible in the name of a new mode of individuation still to come. In that sense, women are relegated, according to Jardine, to a 'limbo-position';⁹³ that is, women are denied a subjectivity of their own in any case, either in their impossibility to become subjects of enunciation or if they are to become-woman. In both cases, women are suspended in a void subject position. Jardine affirms: "Man is always the subject of any becoming, even if 'he' is a woman." (Jardine, 1985: 217) Woman, then, is never a subject but a limit.

...to the extent that women must 'become woman' *first* (in order for men, in D+G's words, 'to follow her example'), might that not mean that she must also be the first to disappear? Is it not possible that the progress of 'becoming-woman' is but a new variation of an old allegory for the process of women becoming obsolete? There would remain only her simulacrum: a female figure caught in a whirling sea of male configurations. A silent, mutable, head-less, desire-less, spatial surface necessary only for His metamorphosis? (Jardine, 1985: 217)

Jardine accuses Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-woman as just another attempt to erase female subjectivity by turning the feminine into an allegory, a metaphor. Jardine criticises Deleuzo-Guattarian becomings for not opening a space for new becomings of women's bodies and desires. She concludes this mode of becomings reiterates and reinforces women's subordinate position. Women, according to Jardine, are once again being marginalised by a phallogocentric discourse. She articulates 'the anxieties posed for feminists'⁹⁴ by Deleuze's radical concepts of planes, intensities, flows, becomings, through the feminine.

However, in my opinion, the Irigarayan strategy and the Deleuzo-Guattarian approach to sexuality and gender share a common ground. Both approaches foster difference-in-itself beyond any binary opposition. Both Irigaray's notion of the feminine and Deleuze and Guattari's nomadic processes of individuation attempt to deconstruct the phallogocentric majoritarian, molar, arborescent subject of enunciation.

order of discourse." (Braidotti, 1991: 140) The following section examines Braidotti's position on this subject matter.

⁹³This expression is taken from Jardine's 'Women in Limbo: Deleuze and His Br(others)' in 1984, in the *SubStance* special issue, 'Gilles Deleuze,' the first special issue on Deleuze in English, where she denounces Deleuze and Guattari's work as not offering tangible alternatives for feminism due to their body less and ungenerated mode of individuation.

⁹⁴I am using here an expression phrased by Elizabeth Grosz (Grosz, 1994a: 162).

Firstly, Deleuze's concept of difference, as developed in *Difference and Repetition* (1968), has nothing to do with neutralisation whatsoever. On the contrary, Deleuze opens difference to an endless range of multiplicities that affirm every difference in-itself, every specificity, every singularity, every uniqueness of every state. Deleuze and Guattari stress the importance of thinking difference, not as the reactive pole of a binary opposition organised so as to affirm the power and primacy of the same, but as the affirmation of difference in terms of a multiplicity of n -possible differences. Deleuze reformulates the concept of difference to eradicate its conceived intrinsic negation. He refers to an idiosyncratic difference prior to the representation of concepts. 'Pure difference' embraces opposite concepts in juxtaposition, confronted but not opposed or antagonised. This notion of difference implies the notion of multiplicity, which becomes an ever-changing assemblage capable of undergoing permutations and transformations in connection with other multiplicities.

Deleuze and Guattari attribute to difference a positivity that emancipates it from the dialectic of negation. It becomes the sign for the positivity of multiple differences, as opposed to the one-way system of meaning. They claim that the relation between meaning and non-meaning, positive and negative, active and reactive cannot be reduced to dialectical exclusion. Difference is positive, it is not based on anything other than itself.

Secondly, Deleuze and Guattari's definitions of becomings stem from the minoritarian. They do not obviate women's asymmetrical position in gender dichotomies.⁹⁵ On the contrary, this is precisely why they consider that minorities — different from the subject of enunciation, which is defined as "the average adult-white-heterosexual-European-male-speaking a standard language" — occupy a privileged position in becomings. Women have a special role to play in this process because they have been the referents for the structural other of classical system of representation. This affirmation of difference from inclusive disjunctive syntheses comes from the margins, the molecular, where de-centred

⁹⁵Zajac (2003) responds to those feminists that claim that 'becoming' ends up in women's disappearance, by stating that Deleuze and Guattari make it plain that "there are many becomings of man, but no becoming-man.' The woman as a molar entity has to become-woman in order that man also becomes or can become-woman. She argues that women's privileged status in the order of becomings ratifies her subjection to man and that the unbalance between man's and woman's position in becomings reflects the present social scene: "man is majoritarian par excellence, whereas becomings are minoritarian." The eradication of man from the plane of becomings is a result of his privileged, centred, hegemonic social and cultural status. In that sense, Zajac defends Deleuze and Guattari's theory for recognising, addressing and developing as a reaction to the same social context of feminism, despite its abstract and distant-from-practical-issues nature.

processes of individuation underpin a multiplicity of different states. That is how they foster micropolitics, which focuses on singularities, on specificities, which constructs dynamic desiring machines. Micropolitics tries to avoid the repetition of the non-different, it does not trust identity, and it avoids commonality. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that micropolitics will create new collective solidarities based on the productivity of multiplicity.

Finally, Deleuze and Guattari's demand for the undoing of sexual/gender differentiation responds to the logics of their becoming-imperceptible, undifferentiated, undefinable by molar identity categories. Neither does this imply an eradication of sexual difference, nor does it create empty and homogenised gendered subjects. They are certainly opposed to neutrality and sameness since *becomings*, *becoming-woman*, *child*, *animal*, *molecular* are the process by which molar identities are complicated. As they specify, a proliferation of multiplicities and differentiations in becoming, they aim to free difference from the reductive constraints of binary oppositional systems of representation. From Deleuze and Guattari's point of view, social codes do not differentiate meaningless human bodies. On the contrary, they argue, we stem from a multiplicity of differences (not just linguistic, but genetic, geographical, etc.). They claim that the differentiation between the two sexes is a reduction, insofar as we should be talking about a 'thousand tiny sexes' instead. They argue that from all possible sexual and genetic variations, we have coded bodies into the binary difference of male and female.

The process of subversion that Deleuze and Guattari suggest is not a claim for a mere reversal of the balance of power, but rather advocates overcoming the dialectics of identity-otherness of the classical system of representation.

The main difference between Irigaray and Deleuze and Guattari resides in their political position in the face of sexual difference. Both talk about multiplicity. Irigaray's call for both men and women's claim for a non-phallic sexuality and a resignification of their desire might be connected to Deleuze and Guattari's *becoming-woman* and micropolitics. Nevertheless, for Irigaray, as for Jardine, it is vital for feminism to preserve the female position in order to avoid a reduction into the invisible. Irigaray alerts us of the dangers of erasing the feminine. She thinks that Deleuze and Guattari's multiple sexuality eradicates sexual difference, when, in my opinion, their approach to sexuality actually affirms sexual difference by decompressing dichotomous sexual reductionism.

Rosi Braidotti's work acts as a bridge between the first feminist reactions towards Deleuze and Guattari's work in the 1980s and late 1990's feminists. As

Pelagia Goulimari⁹⁶ concludes in her essay “A Minoritarian Feminism? Things to do with Deleuze and Guattari” (1999), there are two tendencies in Braidotti: a ‘majoritarian’ feminism and a ‘minoritarian’ feminism (an internally decentered feminism that interacts with other minoritarian movements rather than being separatist). While Braidotti’s earlier work is harshly critical about the concept becoming-woman, her more recent work establishes connections between feminism and Deleuze [and Guattari] by focusing on becoming-minoritarian. Nevertheless, Braidotti’s position on Deleuzo[-Guattarian]ism is ambiguous. She seems to be torn between an absolute rejection and a deepest respect and admiration for their work.

Braidotti published *Patterns of Dissonance: A Study of Women and Contemporary Philosophy* in 1991, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* in 1994, *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* in 2002 and *Transpositions* in 2006.

Only a man would idealize sexual neutrality, for he has by right — belonging as he does to the masculine gender— the prerogative of expressing his sexuality, the syntax of his desire, he has his own place of enunciation as the subject. This fundamental opportunity has always been refused woman, who are still at the stage of trying to assert themselves as subjects of emancipation, sexed bodies, and still trying to assert their entitlement to the position of subjects. (Braidotti, 1991: 121)

Braidotti claims that Deleuze (meaning also Guattari) idealises sexual neutrality because of the masculine subject position from which they write, which, according to Braidotti, makes them overlook the fact that women have not gained yet a position of subjects of emancipation.

In *Patterns of Dissonance: A Study of Women and Contemporary Philosophy* (1991), Rosi Braidotti, following an Irigarayan train of thought, rejects the Deleuzo[-Guattari]an concept of becoming-woman.⁹⁷ She warns about the per-

⁹⁶Pelagia Goulimari, Chair of Women’s Studies at the Faculty of English, University of Oxford, is a scholar who has written about fiction and non-fiction in English (1790-present), women’s writing, literary theory and criticism, the modern and the postmodern. Among her most recent publication we can point out *Toni Morrison* (2011) and her edited work *Postmodernism. What Moment?* (2007).

⁹⁷There has been a common acknowledgement, coming from outside feminism that Deleuze and Guattari’s point of departure is the position of the masculine subject of the majority. This is the case of Paul Patton in *Deleuze and the Political* (2000), who, despite pointing out their masculine speaking position, claims that Deleuze and Guattari do not suggest that women

ils of the death of the subject; especially, the unbalanced neutralization of gender. Braidotti attacks Deleuze [and Guattari]'s framework as being intrinsically masculine in its claims, insofar as the authors speak from the privileged Man-Standard subject position. With the notion of becoming-woman, Deleuze [and Guattari] presents a new concept of human consciousness that moves away from gender dichotomies. Braidotti questions whether this does not imply women's disappearance from the scene of history and, thus, she condemns their project as an attempt to diminish sexual differentiation.⁹⁸ She claims that this un-specification is once more an act of discrimination and subordination towards women:

Deleuze's multiple sexuality assumes that women conform to a masculine model which claims to get rid of sexual difference. What results is the dissolution of the claim to specificity voiced by women. The gender-blindness of this notion of 'becoming woman' as a form of 'becoming-minority' conceals historical and traditional experience of women: namely of being deprived of the means of controlling and defining their own social and political and economic status, their sexual specificity, their desire and *jouissance*. A 'multiplicity' or polysexuality that does not take into account the fundamental asymmetry between the sexes is but a subtler form of discrimination. It reiterates and reinforces women's subordinate position. (Braidotti, 1991: 121)

Braidotti attacks Deleuze (and Guattari)'s concept of polysexuality for not taking into account women's oppression, and therefore, considers that by calling for multiple sexuality they are perpetuating women's subordinate position.

Braidotti praises Deleuze and Guattari for their view of feminism as a movement against the primacy of the phallus, but she criticises them for obviating women's complex relation to their bodies, which requires still to be assessed positively. Braidotti claims that becoming-woman is a force that appropriates the feminine body: "it perpetuates an ancestral habit of domination as the trait

must take the lead in breaking with the stereotypical assignment of affects and roles. He admits that such a view would be sexist since it places the burden of change primarily upon woman. He argues, however, that Deleuze and Guattari assert the primacy of 'becoming-woman,' not implying that women must 'go first.'

⁹⁸Braidotti affirms that in *Patterns of Dissonance* she "...concluded that Deleuze gets caught in the contradiction of postulating a general 'becoming-woman' which fails to take into account the historical and epistemological specificity of the female feminist standpoint." (Braidotti, 2002: 82)

of the masculine discourse on women. It is still a misogynist mode of thought.” (Braidotti, 1991: 123) According to Braidotti, the proper task of men who intend to deconstruct phallic premises should be to speak as singular men, not as representatives of Mankind. Men should abandon their throne of archetypical human beings, focus on their singularity as men, and develop a new way of thinking masculinity. Here it could be argued that Braidotti is a majoritarian feminist in Deleuze and Guattari’s terms, considering majoritarian feminism that which “classifies, delimits, hierarchizes and excludes” (Goulimari, 1999: 110) and — I would add — stems from the molar frame of reference of gender division.

As has been argued in the previous sections, Deleuze and Guattari believe that, whereas majority is defined by a fixed formulation and universalisation, minority is defined from its singularities and is subject to a continuous process of ‘becoming-minoritarian,’ becoming different-in-itself. That is why, despite defining a ‘new nomadism’⁹⁹ that is compatible with Deleuze [and Guattari]’s becoming-minoritarian, Rosi Braidotti seems to be very reticent to de-totalise the force of feminism as a majoritarian movement.

However, despite her suspicion of their misogyny, Braidotti values Deleuze [and Guattari]’s new mode of individuation as a useful alternative to the subject of enunciation. Although she criticises Deleuze and Guattari’s androcentrism, Braidotti accepts: “It [becoming-minority] restores to thinking the creative freedom it needs in order to articulate itself with current political conflicts, and thus provides a theoretical and political support for the feminist project.” (Braidotti (1991): p.125) She analyses the Foucauldian and Derridean ‘un-

⁹⁹Rosi Braidotti inspires her ‘nomadic subject’ in Deleuze and Guattari’s work on lines of escape and becomings. Her ‘nomadism,’ which is theoretically developed in *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (1994), constitutes an attempt to develop new kinds of figurations (new modes of individuation), so as to escape hegemonic andocentric modes of representation: “...the nomadic condition that I am defending is a new configuration of subjectivity in a multidifferentiated non-hierarchical way.” (Braidotti, 1994a: 146) Nomadism entails a constant state of ‘in-process’ or ‘becoming,’ which Braidotti refers to as the philosophy of as-if. The practice of ‘as-if,’ for Braidotti, is a “technique of strategic re-location in order to rescue what we need of the past in order to trace paths of transformation of our lives here and now.” (Braidotti, 1994a: 6) Braidotti also understands ‘as-if’ as “the affirmation of fluid boundaries, a practice of the intervals, of the interfaces, and the interstices.” (Braidotti, 1994a: 6) While taking conceptually the framework of postmodernist and poststructuralist theory, Braidotti brings theory to the practice of everyday politics. For Braidotti, ‘The philosophy of as if’ has to be useful and refer to specific experiences. To map out these experiences nomadic thought has to constantly revise itself: “Nomadic cartographies need to be redrafted constantly; as such they are structurally opposed to fixity and therefore to rapacious appropriation. The nomad has a sharpened sense of territory but no possessiveness about it.” (Braidotti, 1994a: 35-36)

Cartesian route of subjectivity'¹⁰⁰ and praises the Deleuzo-Guattarian project for its de-centering of molar identities towards rhizomatic becomings.¹⁰¹ It is precisely her 'nomadism' that makes her work evolve towards a more sympathetic understanding of Deleuzo-Guattarism.

In *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (1994), owing to her scepticism about high theory,¹⁰² in order to reflect about key questions such as phallogocentrism, ethnocentrism, and the positivity of difference, Braidotti tries to reconcile the nomadic thought with feminism. She states: "The challenge for feminist nomads in particular is how to conjugate the multilayered, multicultural perspective, with responsibility for and accountability to their gender." (Braidotti, 1994a: 32)

Braidotti, while still very critical with Deleuze [and Guattari], expands her assessment of becoming-woman to the notion of a BwO. In her chapter 'Organs without Bodies,'¹⁰³ she develops a feminist politics of embodiment and sexual difference by focusing on biotechnology, inscribing the body in the framework of scientific discourse and its supporting cultural collective thought. Braidotti argues that there is a phallogocentric agenda behind biotechnology.¹⁰⁴

Biotechnology is being used to escape the body, to have a life that is outside and unconnected to the body. The body and materiality are of vital impor-

¹⁰⁰'Un-Cartesian Routes' is the title of the third chapter of *Patterns of Dissonance: A Study of Women and Contemporary Philosophy* (1991).

¹⁰¹Among different post-structuralist philosophers, Braidotti considers Deleuze [and Guattari] the "least harmful to women." (Braidotti, 1991: 124) In 1996 in her article 'Nomadism with a Difference: Deleuze's Legacy in a Feminist Perspective', she admits: "In the complex landscape of poststructuralist philosophies of difference, Deleuze's thought strikes a uniquely positive note. His theory of nomadic subjectivity stresses the affirmative structure of the subject and therefore distances Deleuze from the more nihilistic or relativistic edge of contemporary philosophy." (Braidotti, 1996: 305)

¹⁰²Rosi Braidotti believes that high theory, specifically philosophy, and any theoretical discourse cannot act in a nonhegemonic manner because of the normativisation and codification that it implies. While she alerts us to the risk that nomadic consciousness runs under a theoretical framework, she considers that the fluidity of nomadic thought can better be represented in the field of politics. For Braidotti the nomadic consciousness lies at the heart of the project of women's studies (Braidotti, 1994a: 28-36).

¹⁰³Rosi Braidotti uses the formulation organs without bodies "...to refer to this complex strategic field of practices connected to the discursive and normative construction of the subject in modernity." (Braidotti, 1994a: 47) Following Foucault, Braidotti considers the body as "the object of proliferation of discourses." She believes bodies to be modes of normativity and normalization that invest the political and scientific fields simultaneously.

¹⁰⁴"I fear in fact that the dislocation of sexual differences, the new hiatus between reproduction and sexuality and the biotechnical appropriation of procreation, occurs precisely at the time in history when women have explicitly revindicated political control over their body and their sexuality." (Braidotti, 1994a: 55)

tance for difference feminism since it is the body which has been associated with woman in binary logic.¹⁰⁵ Women, traditionally held to be merely bodies by the classical vision of the subject of knowledge, are now reduced to less than their bodies, to ‘organs without bodies’ (OwB). OwB address the advancements of science such as new reproductive technologies (in vitro fertilization), where the interchangeability of organs presupposes the patriarchal fantasy of sexual symmetry — Braidotti describes this phenomenon as, what she calls, the triumph of the image of androgynous, sexless, angelic, unisexed bodies in the cultural imaginary of our century.

The fantasy of being “beyond sex”...is one of the most pernicious illusions of our era. Blurring sexual difference, desexualizing masculinity precisely at the historical moment when the feminism of sexual difference is calling for the sexualisation of practices seems to me an extraordinary dangerous move for women. (Braidotti, 1994a: 54)

Braidotti insists, once again, on the unavoidable one-way route, that the elimination of sexual difference leads towards the appropriation, elimination, or homologation of the feminine in/of women; that is, the objectification of the female body.

Her alternative is to call for a subjectivity located in embodiment, which forces specificity, multiplicity, and complexity without falling into relativism. Instead of organs without bodies, Braidotti argues for specifically located bodies that are more than the sum of their organs, and where bodies are an integral part of their selves and lived experience. She insists that she is not claiming to move back to a unified vision of the body, yet she affirms: “I would rather like to rest on this analysis of the embodied subject in order to argue for forms of representation of his/her multiplicity, discontinuity, and highly technologized complexity, which would empower alternative forms of feminist epistemological and political agency.” (Braidotti, 1994a: 54) Isn’t this notion of the body very close to Deleuze and Guattari’s BwO? Deleuze and Guattari, as has been analysed in the previous section, claim for a body that is freed from classical organ-isation, a body that is multidimensional and an on-going process rather than a defined unit.

Braidotti acknowledges that Deleuze [and Guattari] shares with feminism a common concern for the necessity to re-define, re-invent theoretical practice. In

¹⁰⁵Braidotti refers here to the classical vision of the subject of knowledge that fixed the subject in a series of hierarchical binary oppositions: body/mind, passion/reason, nature/culture, feminine/masculine.

their determination to undo the Western style of theoretical thought,¹⁰⁶ they move beyond the binary oppositions that constitute the discourse of phallogocentrism. She regards Deleuze [and Guattari]’s notion of ‘becoming’ as an active, dynamic process of thinking and transformation, and an affirmation of difference¹⁰⁷ as a positive ground to build her new embodiment of the subject.

However, Braidotti pinpoints her contradictory relationship with the Deleuze[Guattarian] theories of subjectivity: “On the one hand, the becoming-minority/nomad/molecular/woman is posited as the general figuration for the new philosophical subjectivity. On the other hand, however, not all the forms taken by the process of becoming are equivalent.” (Braidotti, 1994a: 114) She questions Deleuze [and Guattari]’s writings for not taking into account sexual difference. According to Braidotti, their theories of multiplicity and becoming-minority are opposed to feminist theories of sexual difference and of becoming subject of women, since one of the starting points of their new mode of individuation is the dissolution of gender dichotomies and gender identities defined accordingly.

Braidotti’s main preoccupation is the experience and the potential becoming of real-life women. She poses two questions: “How to free woman from the icon function to which phallogocentrism has confined her?” and “How to express a different, positive vision of female subjectivity?” (Braidotti, 1994a: 115) For Braidotti, as for Irigaray, this pattern of woman-as-Other in relation to male-as-One is problematic because it defines the feminine in relation to the masculine. This leads us to three other inconsistencies in the Deleuze-[Guattarian] position indicated by Braidotti:

- ...(1) an inconsistent approach to the issue of the “becoming-woman”;
- (2) the reduction of sexual difference to one variable among many, which can and should be dissolved into a generalised and gender-free becoming; and (3) an assumption of symmetry in the speaking stances of the two sexes. (Braidotti, 1994a: 117)

In the first place, Braidotti accuses Deleuze [and Guattari] of being contradictory when introducing the concept of ‘becoming-woman’ in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), insofar as, while arguing for becoming-minoritarian, they draw their attention to the need for women’s molar politics. Braidotti considers

¹⁰⁶Braidotti sees in Deleuze-[Guattarian] rhizomatic style the affective foundations of the thinking process. She applauds their scape from normativity. Their rhizomatic figurations serve as the basis for Braidotti’s nomadic thought (Braidotti, 1994a: 95-102).

¹⁰⁷Braidotti goes a step further than Irigaray in acknowledging the potential of the concept of difference-in-itself.

Deleuze [and Guattari] to be elusive since all becomings aim to become-molecular. She considers that their acknowledgement of women's molar politics is weak and unreliable, it is the position of "yes, but...", or "I know what you mean, but..." (Braidotti, 1994a: 118) Deleuze and Guattari ask feminists to surmount the constraints of molar categories man/woman and to acknowledge a multi-sex-gender approach. However, as Irigaray and Jardine, Braidotti believes that "one cannot deconstruct a subjectivity one has never controlled." (Braidotti, 1994a: 117)

Secondly, as a feminist of difference, Braidotti does not accept sexual difference as one difference among many. She considers sexual difference as a founding, fundamental structural difference, among which other differences rest and that cannot be dissolved easily (Braidotti, 1994a: 118).

Finally, and thirdly, Braidotti attacks Deleuze [and Guattari] for obviating the dissymmetry between the sexes. As Braidotti writes, "Deleuze [and Guattari] consequently omits any reference to and consequently fails to take seriously what I see as the central point of the feminist revindication of sexual difference, namely that there is no symmetry between the sexes." (Braidotti, 1994a: 118) Given that there is no symmetry between the sexes, Braidotti believes that women must speak the feminine. Here again, her sexual/gender politics meets Irigaray's. Braidotti concludes that Deleuzo-Guattarian becomings, which are determined by their location as "...embodied male subject[s] for whom the dissolution of identities based on the phallus results in bypassing gender altogether, toward a multiple sexuality," (Braidotti, 1994a: 121) are not appropriate for female/feminist embodied subjects.

In *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* (2002) Braidotti is much more receptive and open to Deleuzo-[Guattari]anism. Despite not disclaiming all of her earlier critiques, she seems more encouraging about the use of Deleuze [and Guattari] within feminist philosophy. By using a Deleuzo-[Guattarian] conceptual and terminological framework from a political approach, Braidotti's main concern is to analyse "...the deficit in the scale of representation which accompanies the structural transformations of subjectivity in the social, cultural and political spheres of late-post-industrial culture." (Braidotti, 2002: 3) She explores modern figurations (nomadic, cyborg, black, the womanist, the lesbian, etc.)¹⁰⁸ in order to think difference and transformation in non-derogatory terms.

Braidotti brings her main preoccupation about difference close to Deleuzo[-

¹⁰⁸By new alternative subjectivities, Braidotti understands: "...hybrid and in-between social categories for whom traditional descriptions in terms of sociological categories...are...glossily inadequate." (Braidotti, 2002: 13)

Guattari]sm and Irigaray's thought by conjugating their approach to difference and her 'corporeal materialism,' — as she refers to — 'enfleshed materialism.' Difference has been dealt with in pejorative terms as oppositional in oppressive settings to justify the subjugation of marginalised groups of people. Therefore, Braidotti advocates for thinking difference positively, thinking of difference, as it is, 'pure difference.'

Braidotti describes her theory of becoming as a materialist 'philosophical nomadism' that brings about the collapse of phallogocentrism by undermining the Same/Other binary that has characterised Western cultural and philosophical thought. Deleuze and Guattari are referenced as extraordinarily useful theoretical tools for this task. In fact, Braidotti is exceptionally concerned, in this work, with transforming feminist discourse into a discourse of becoming.

Braidotti acknowledges a growing corpus of Deleuzo[-Guattari]an feminism and ascribes herself to it. As Deleuze [and Guattari] are interested in what bodies can do, what they can connect to, in a nomadic mode, they are also cognizant of the effects that texts have and what they can do by means of their nomadic style. Their writings are nomadic in their departure from the traditions of the canon and in their potential to reshape themselves. Their writings are in themselves rhizomatic. Braidotti affirms:

Deleuze redefines the practice of theory-making in terms of flows of affects, and the capacity to draw connections...In juxtaposition with the linear, self-reflexive mode of thought that is favoured by phallogocentrism, Deleuze defines this new style of thought as 'rhizomatic' or 'molecular'. (Braidotti, 2002: 70)

Partly, their nomadic style, their capacity to think differently, is what makes Braidotti think of an alliance between feminist philosophy and Deleuze [and Guattari]; but also their empathy with issues of difference, sexuality and transformation, as well as their investments of the feminine with the positive force of affirmation.

In Deleuze's thought, the 'other' is not emblematic and invariably vampirized mark of alterity — as in classical philosophy. Nor is it a fetishized and necessarily othered 'other', as in deconstruction. It is a moving horizon of exchanges and becomings, towards which the non-unitary subjects of postmodernity move, and by which they are moved in return. (Braidotti, 2002: 69)

A central concern in Deleuze and Guattari's work is the body, and what a body can do beyond the dialectics of identity-otherness of the classical system

of representation. This is a major break with the tradition of ‘high’ philosophy where the mind/body-male/female split is granted. According to Braidotti, Deleuzo[-Guattaria]nism stands as a useful toolbox for feminist political efforts since they are proposing a new and different way of existing and living in a static arborescent world. Braidotti praises their attempt to redefine the embodied subject within its potentialities and their aim at alternative figurations of human subjectivity and its political and aesthetic expressions: rhizomes, BwO, nomads, becomings, flows, intensities and folds, etc).

As a result, the concept of becoming is central to Braidotti’s sexual politics. She praises the nomadic subject for its mobility, changeability and transitory nature. When evaluating Deleuze [and Guattari]’s multi-sexed-gendered approach, Braidotti seems less critical than in earlier works. She points to their emphasis on multiplicity rather than condemning their vision of sexuality as an attempt to neutralise sexual difference:

Compared to feminist discussions of gendered identity, Deleuze’s work does not rest on a dichotomous opposition of masculine and feminine subject positions, but rather on a multiplicity of sexed subject-positions. The differences in degree between them mark different lines of becoming, in a web of rhizomatic connections. It is a vision of the subject as being endowed with multiple sexualities...Multiplicity does not reproduce one single model — as in the Platonic mode — but rather creates and multiplies differences. (Braidotti, 2002: 77)

Likewise, Braidotti turns to becoming-woman more empathically¹⁰⁹ than in her earlier work. Where she saw a misogynistic manoeuvre, now, distancing herself from Irigaray’s radicalism,¹¹⁰ Braidotti attempts to move beyond the dominance of phallogentrism in Deleuze and Guattari’s undoing of binary oppositional thinking. Braidotti considers Deleuzo[-Guattari]anism to share the feminist assumption that sexual difference is the primary axis of differentiation, but she is still reticent about the role that women are assigned to within this radical critique of phallogentrism. She still cannot reconcile Deleuze and Guattari’s nomadic or intensive horizon for subjectivity ‘beyond gender’ and

¹⁰⁹“Deleuze [and Guattari]’s emphasis on the ‘becoming woman’ of philosophy marks a new kind of masculine style of philosophy: it is a philosophical sensibility which has learned to undo the straight-jacket of phallogentrism and to take a few risks.” (Braidotti, 2002: 69)

¹¹⁰Braidotti considers Irigaray’s a radical critique:“Irigaray’s critique of Deleuze is radical: she points out that the dispersal of sexuality into a generalized ‘becoming’ results in undermining feminist claims to a redefinition of the female subject.” (Braidotti, 2002: 76)

polysexuality with the historical asymmetry between the sexes, and she, once again, denounces the inconsistency of their resolution of the problematic role of real-life women in the process of becoming-woman (the position of ‘yes, but...’).

However, I consider Braidotti’s position much closer to minoritarian feminism than in her previous work. She broadens her scope and fosters a more inclusive feminism than, for instance, in *Nomadic Subjects*.¹¹¹

A nomadic becoming-woman entails an opening outwards of the process of redefining female subjectivity. In turn that calls for a broadening of the traditional feminist political agenda to include...a larger spectrum of options...That is precisely the point: the co-existence of feminine specificity with larger, less-specific concerns. Nomadic feminism is about tracing a zigzagging path between them. (Braidotti, 2002: 83)

Braidotti engages in the line of minoritarian and recognises the nomadic subject as the potential location for all exploited, marginalised, oppressed minorities. She states, in a Deleuzo-Guattarian fashion, that what is vital for becoming-Nomad is undoing the oppositional dualism majority/minority by engaging in transformative flows of becomings that destabilise all identities.

She defends Deleuze [and Guattari] from cultural relativism and insists that his [their] nomadic subject attempts to de-territorialise the fixity and pull down the unitary structure of the classical view of the subject, but it is still politically engaged and ethically accountable. She emphasises that both the Majority and minorities will follow asymmetrical lines of becoming since their starting positions are different.

While the Majority will have to undo its central position, minorities, on the other hand, may first need to undergo a phase of ‘identity politics’ (claiming a molar location). She claims the politics of location to be crucial and the point of departure for the ‘molecular’ line. Thus, she explains that if one starts from the Majority position the only possible route passes through the Minority (Other). Here she finds the justification for the Deleuzo[-Guattari]an imperative to become-woman (the feminisation of Man as the deterritorialisation of the dominant subject).

¹¹¹In *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, Rosi Braidotti attacks the field of gender studies “both for its theoretical inadequacy and for its politically amorphous and unfocused nature.” (Braidotti, 1994a: 150) Braidotti blames gender studies for carrying out “...a shift of focus away from the feminist agenda toward a more generalized attention to the social construction of differences *between* the sexes. It is broadening out that is also a thinning down of the political agenda.” (Braidotti, 1994a: 151)

Furthermore, she observes two tendencies open to ‘empirical’ minorities. They either crystallise into a molar position — she provides the example of phallic women —, or they appeal to multiple lines of escape in minoritarian becomings. Moreover, she highlights the importance for the nomadic subject in keeping the process of becoming-minoritarian, flows of transformation, open without any ultimate destination. In my opinion, Braidotti’s position here presents an overt positive acknowledgement of the potential of becomings in opening up the subject of sexual difference and exploring new ‘distributions and recompositions’ of masculinities and femininities.

In *Transpositions* (2006), Braidotti describes the clear connection that exists between the ethics of sexual difference and the ethics of nomadic subjectivity: “The ethics of sexual difference and the ethics of sustainable nomadic subjectivity are two faces of the same coin: that of an enfolded, immanent subject-in-becoming, for whom life is embodied, embedded and erotized.” (Braidotti, 2006a: 182) Their common ground is the embodied subject. She asserts that a Deleuzian positive affirmation of difference is linked to corporeality through the notion of virtual becomings.¹¹²

What is at stake in sustainable ethics is not the feminine as codified in the phallogocentric code of the patriarchal imaginary, but rather the feminine as project, as movement of destabilization of identity and hence of becoming. I call this the ‘virtual feminine’ and I connect it to the social and symbolic project of redefinition of female subjectivity that is undertaken by feminism. (Braidotti, 2006a: 183-4)

Braidotti regards contemporary feminist theory as reacting to a post-industrial social degenderised androgynous drive,¹¹³ by balancing the pull towards traditional or reactive values (molar, sedentary, linear, static) with a more progressive drive towards more innovative solutions (molecular, nomadic, dynamic).

¹¹²Braidotti refers to Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando* and Woolf’s relation with the inspirational characterisation of Vita-Shackesville to describe ‘virtual becomings’. These reference will be used in the following chapter when analysing *Orlando*. In addition Braidotti states that “[in] *The Waves*, for instance, Woolf captures the concrete multiplicity — as well as the shimmering intensity — of becomings. The sheer genius of Woolf rests in her ability to present her life as a gesture of passing through. She is a writer of multiple and intensive becomings, in-between ages, sexes, elements, characters. Woolf’s texts enact a flow of positions, a crossing of boundaries, an overflowing into a plenitude of affects where life is asserted to its highest degree.” (Braidotti, 2006a: 189)

¹¹³Braidotti claims that queering identities is a dominant ideology under advanced capitalism. “This blurring of the boundaries of sexual difference, in the sense of a generalized androgynous drive, is characteristic of post-industrial societies.” (Braidotti, 2006a: 49)

She worries about the complexities ‘real bodies’ carry with them after the intrusion of technology.

One of the points I highlighted in this book is not so much that sexualized, racialized and naturalized differences are over, as that they no longer coincide with sexually, racially and naturally differentiated bodies...By extension it follows that the classical others are no longer the necessary point of reference for the organization of a symbolic division of labour between the sexes, the races and the species. Today they have been transformed in the spectral economy of the dematerialization of difference. (Braidotti, 2006a: 268-69)

By this Braidotti does not mean that the critical function that difference was called to perform is over. On the contrary, the collapse of the former system of marking difference requires us to reassert the principle of alterity and to elaborate nomadic forms. She claims we need an ethics of embodied difference and she rejects the undoing of gender as a functional option. Braidotti advocates a positive metamorphoses, becomings that destabilize dominant power-relations, deterritorialise Majority-based identities and empower a subject that is ‘in-becoming.’ It is in this Deleuzo[-Guattari]an landscape where Braidotti locates gender identities.

Braidotti’s work links with more recent feminists who have been much more open and receptive to the works of Deleuze and Guattari than feminists in the 1980s. Elizabeth Grosz, Claire Colebrook, Tamsin Lorraine, Dorothea Olkowski, and Catherine Driscoll, to mention a few, have proved that Deleuze and Guattari’s theories are of great interest for feminism, although Deleuze and Guattari’s procedures and methods “do not actively affirm or support feminist struggles around women’s autonomy and self-determination.” (Grosz, 1994b: 1992) This new wave of female Deleuzeanism does not see Deleuze and Guattari’s conceptual world and the feminist agenda as mutually exclusive. Deleuzo-Guattarianism might provide us with the theoretical basis of concepts and figurations that help men and women build new positions in our contemporary world.

Without obviating all the controversy and reservations expressed by earlier feminists, more recent feminists consider that by deterritorialising the gender equation and by locating this within the scope of becoming, new gender performances will be triggered, away from the classical repressive modes of representation.

In *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism* (1994), Elizabeth Grosz

proposes a “reconstruction of Deleuze and Guattari’s¹¹⁴ understanding of corporeality in *A Thousand Plateaus*” (Grosz, 1994b: 161).¹¹⁵ She revises Jardine, Irigaray, and Braidotti’s reservations about Deleuze and Guattari’s rhizomatic thinking. She takes into consideration earlier feminists’ claims about Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of ‘becoming woman,’ such as their male appropriation of women’s politics, their desexualisation and neutralisation of women, and their use of masculinist technocratic tropes.

Despite acknowledging the underlying phallocentrism of Deleuze and Guattari’s work, Grosz explores whether rhizomatics may provide a powerful ally and theoretical resource for feminist demands. For this purpose, she analyses the various conjunctions or ‘points of intersection’ between Deleuzo-Guattarianism and feminism: their redefinition of **difference**, their notion of the **body** and **desire**, their deconstruction of **binary oppositional logic**, their concept of **micropolitics**, and the **centrality of ethics**.

First, Grosz argues that the Deleuzean redefinition of **difference** is a very profitable concept for feminism in its underpinning of the process of becoming and multiplicity beyond the reproduction of singular, unified subjectivities. Grosz praises Deleuze for freeing difference from the constraints of identity; what is more, going beyond the four pillars of representation (identity, opposition, analogy, and resemblance).

A difference capable of being understood outside the dominance or regime of the One, the self-same, the imaginary play of mirrors and doubles, the structure of duplication presumed by the notions of signification and subjectification. (Grosz, 1994a: 164)

¹¹⁴Grosz refers to both Deleuze and Guattari in their collaborative works, without prioritising the former and omitting the latter.

¹¹⁵Other feminists have welcomed Deleuze and Guattari’s theories. According to Flieger (2000), for instance, feminist identity and Deleuzean becoming should not be seen as mutually exclusive, but as the molar politics of identities and the molecular politics of becoming, that is, the possibility and the mobilisation of the former. Flieger supports Deleuze’s implications that gendered sexuality implies dichotomous territories that might be reductive. She points out his originality in arguing that ‘becoming’ is a question of interaction of multiple assemblages; that is, an extensive term. Therefore, becoming-woman does not aim at the emancipation of women, it aims at an extended transformation and transgression of identity. There is an element of ‘in-betweenness’ in all this process, focused on this process itself rather than on the outcome of it, which apparently clashes with feminism but following Flieger it does not: “Deleuze might then have no quarrel with feminism and its goals for the individual and collective female subject, but his ‘becoming-woman/animal/intense’ is not concerned with the same level of experience as is the ‘becoming-ourselves’ which is feminism. He invokes an “altogether different conception of the plane.” (Flieger, 2000: 44)

Deleuze and Guattari criticise ‘identity’ and ‘representation’ for having subordinated, homogenised and subjected difference to psychoanalysis and capitalism by means of the Oedipal individual. They locate intrinsic differences in the plane of the prehuman, prelinguistic by means of the abstract machine, chaos, the Body without Organs, difference-in-itself, or as virtual multiplicity.

Deleuze and Guattari talk about becoming as multiplicity, which is generated by contagion not by filiation. A multiplicity is defined by the lines and dimensions it embraces in ‘intension;’ by changing dimensions, you are changing multiplicity. There is a borderline, an anomalous, for each multiplicity. So, in any event, the pack has a borderline and an anomalous position. Thus, packs, or multiplicities, continually transform themselves into each other endlessly. Multiplicities are defined and transformed by the borderline that determines in each instance any number of dimensions.

Second, Grosz considers Deleuzo-Guattarian bodies of great value for feminists by attempting to reconceive bodies outside the binary oppositions imposed by a classical frame of representation. They regard the body as a mobile, multi-functional entity, which is not coded by a transcendental signifier; the phallus. They define the body as the territory of discontinuous, non-hierarchical series of processes, organs, flows, energies and assemblages, which allows us to reconsider bodies outside the binary opposition mind/body, nature/culture, subject/object, and interior/exterior.

Grosz analyses the qualities of the BwO and pays special attention to its productivity. In order to know what a body is, it is essential to know what it is capable of, what relations it establishes and its interactions and effects on other bodies. Grosz sees here an opportunity for feminists to think about alternative versions of corporeality and materiality that overcome phallogocentric representations induced by the dichotomous axiom.

Third, Grosz highlights Deleuze and Guattari’s different, active, affirmative conceptions of desire. Deleuze and Guattari reinterpret the notion of **desire** in positive terms; desire is positive and productive and not a lack or absence to be filled through the achievement of an impossible object in the psychoanalytic sense. Desire produces the real and it is experimental. According to Grosz, women, being the object of desire perpetuated along history, can deterritorialise that position to re-invent themselves as desiring machines.

Such a notion of desire cannot but be of interest to feminist theory insofar as women have been the traditional repositories and guardians of the lack constitutive of (Platonic) desire, and insofar as the opposition between presence and absence, reality and fantasy, has tradi-

tionally defined and constrained women to inhabit the place of man's other. Lack only makes sense insofar as some other, woman, personifies and quite literally embodies it for man. Any model of desire that dispenses with its reliance on the primacy of lack in conceiving desire seems to be a positive step forward, and for that reason alone worthy of careful investigation. (Grosz, 1994a: 165)

Fourth, Grosz applauds Deleuze and Guattari's attempt to overcome **the binary opposition system**. In their endeavour to change paradigms, they look for alternatives, which contest or surmount metaphysical and theoretical models. They challenge the supremacy of a system of thought based on the centrality of the subject; a subject that has been built as the recipient of hegemonic discourses. They invent a new language, where the foundational frame of reference is vanquished by its others, in order to project themselves into a new plane of potentialities.

Given that it is impossible to ignore binarized or dichotomous thought, and yet, given that such theoretical paradigms and methodologies are deeply implicated in regimes of oppression and social subordination — of which the oppression of women is the most stark — any set of procedures including rhizomatics, which seeks to problematize and render them anachronistic may well be worth closer to feminist inspection. (Grosz, 1994b: 191-192)

Fifth, Grosz sees a clear connection between Deleuze and Guattari's notion of **micropolitics** and some existing or potential forms of feminist political struggles. Their notion of micropolitics comes to be decentred, molecular, multiple in nonhierarchical, rhizomatic connections with other multiplicities — that is, not only collectivised or group actions but struggles that underpin many other becomings. They counterpoise micropolitics to macropolitics, by fostering the first, which is the only one able to escape from the old discursive paradigm. This emanating power of micropolitics is quite close to some forms of feminist political struggle which transcend the 'purely feminist' cause and constitutes, according to Grosz, a line of flight for future gender politics.¹¹⁶

Finally, Grosz finds that Deleuze and Guattari relaunch the **centrality of ethics**. They question ethics and the encounter with otherness by redefining

¹¹⁶In a similar fashion Verena Andermatt Conley states: "It is important for women to remain vigilant, to avoid a becoming molar of feminisms, to turn away continually from present contexts and to continue to draw new lines of flight." (Conley, 2000: 37)

relations between the mainstream and the margins, dominant and subordinated groups, oppressor and oppressed, self and other, and between and within subjects.

Grosz calls attention to Deleuze's distinction between the three types of 'lines' in the relation between the individual and the social; the molar line, which is the one that imposes hierarchies (regulates by means of binary oppositions); the molecular line, which is more fluid and attempts to move beyond the rigidity of the previous one; and the nomadic line, which constitutes the new plane of the becoming-imperceptible. Grosz adopts a Deleuzo-Guattarian perspective and analyses divisions of classes, races, and sexes as stabilizing, fixing identities. These divisions are counteracted by molecular becomings, a force that destabilizes within and through these molar unities. In order to move away from molar gender structures, the becoming-woman of men and women becomes a process of multiplication of sexualities towards a line of becoming-imperceptible. Grosz, more openly than Braidotti, sees feminists' struggle meeting at the level of the molecular.

Adopting this conceptual framework, Grosz approaches sexual difference in multiple and non-oppositional terms. As difference is itself different in each of its affirmations, sexual difference between bodies is different in each case. She acknowledges that sexual difference can be regarded as the expression of bodies and body-parts and not as a meaning imposed upon bodies. Socio-politically speaking, Deleuze and Guattari reject the use of exclusive disjunctions, by preferring an immanent disjunction, which is inclusive. Grosz is determined to explore their concept of polysexuality. Although she is aware of the fact that, from a feminist position, this is a hard task to carry out, she feels this is a great opportunity for feminist politics to challenge the *status quo*:

...it is crucial to recognize the micro-segmentarities we seize from or connect with in others which give us traits of "masculinity" and "femininity" whether we "are" men or women. In my opinion, this is politically dangerous ground to walk on, but if we do not walk in dangerous places and different types of terrain, nothing new will be found, no explorations are possible, and things remain the same. (Braidotti, 1994a: 173)

Grosz reformulates 'becoming-woman' in much more supportive terms than any other earlier feminist preceding her. She not only praises its transgressive and transformative potential —"becoming-woman means going beyond identity and subjectivity, fragmenting and freeing up lines of flight, "liberating"

multiplicities, corporeal and otherwise, that identity subsumes under the one.” (Grosz, 1994a: 178) Grosz responds to Irigaray’s and Braidotti’s claims that becoming-woman is an elusive term with regard to women’s struggles, by supporting Deleuze and Guattari’s idea that feminism must not content itself with a final goal, in the molar line, insofar as political struggles are endless and ever-changing, therefore, molecular.

Grosz elaborates a defence of a Deleuzian framework based on what she considers a radical shift from psychoanalytic and semiotic perspective. Grosz has six key arguments. First, Deleuzo-Guattarianism frees the process of subjectivation from systems of ideology or representation by means of desiring-machines. Second, it rejects ‘the duplication of the world’ into the real and its representation. Third, it poses an alternative to binary thinking, by substituting the either-or choice by a ‘both-and relation.’ Fourth, it focuses on microprocesses and consequently demassifies categories of sex, race, class, and sexual preference, where multiple specificities arise. Fifth, it reads bodies in terms of their effects away from the paradigm of meaning (such as the phallus in psychoanalysis). And sixth, it offers an alternative by redefining the feminine in positive terms.

Grosz criticises Deleuze and Guattari’s androcentrism. She underlines the fact that they do not take into account their own masculine position. She argues that women’s specificity and particularity still remains obscured. And finally, she considers that: “...until it becomes clearer what becoming-woman means for those beings who are women, as well as for those beings who are men, the value of their work for women and for feminism remains unclear.” (Grosz, 1994a: 182) Despite these drawbacks, Grosz strongly believes that Deleuzo-Guattarianism has a lot to offer to feminism and any other political thought.

Feminists need to be wary of Deleuze and Guattari’s work — as wary as of any theoretical framework or methodology. But it clearly does not mean that their work needs to be slumped, avoided, or ignored because of some risk of patriarchal contagion. (Braidotti, 1994b: 209)

Claire Colebrook builds on Grosz’s positivity about Deleuze and Guattari’s work and the main points of intersections between their theories and feminism that Grosz develops. Grosz moves away from metaphysical foundations and focuses on the need to create new concepts.

In her introduction to *Deleuze and Feminist Theory* (2000), Colebrook focuses on the notion of becomings, and supports Deleuze and Guattari’s view

that any assertion of woman as a subject must not double or simply oppose man, but must affirm itself as an event in the process of becoming. She locates the main questions that Deleuze [and Guattari] poses to feminism; questions beyond determinations of identity, essentialism, emancipation and representation.

In her book *Gilles Deleuze* (2002), she demonstrates how Deleuze and Guattari have created theories that have transformed not only philosophy and feminist theory, but also the study of cinema and literature. Colebrook underlines their critique of the binary being/identity and their new ways of thinking of becomings, desire and difference beyond any dualism. She demonstrates how feminists can use Deleuze [and Guattari] as a way of thinking and living beyond the Oedipal process. In *Understanding Deleuze* (2002), Colebrook addresses issues related to sexual difference and micropolitics by contrasting the structuralist definition of sexual identity. In a Groszian mode, in their introduction to *Deleuze and Gender* (2008), Colebrook and Jani Weinstein position themselves, with no reservation, in favour of the undoing of gender and stress the relevance of the philosophical concepts that becoming-woman and sexual difference produce:

...we need to undo sexual difference once we finally conceived it, in order not to remain egotistically anthropocentric. But this undoing is not a return to the state we are now in, where women are lack or merely 'difference from a norm', it is not a return to the humanism of the past with its hidden and untheorized phallogentrism. It is a repetition of difference, pure difference, not a repetition of the same. (Colebrook & Weinstein)¹¹⁷

The outcome of this merging vision beyond gender dualisms might be found in 'On the Very Possibility of Queer Theory' (chapter1) in *Deleuze and Queer*

¹¹⁷More contemporary feminists have found how useful Deleuze and Guattari are for theorizing the body, difference, desire and politics, through their new ways of thinking and terminologies. This does not necessarily resolve the subject of sexual difference. Many feminists believe that sexual difference is necessary, an opinion voiced by Tamsin Lorraine in *Irigaray and Deleuze: Experiments in Visceral Philosophy* (1999) and Olkowski in "Body, Knowledge and : Morphologic in Deleuze and Irigaray" (2000). Both Lorraine and Olkowski advocate a feminist theory that incorporates sexual difference into becomings, difference and BwO found in Deleuzian theory. Sexual difference in becomings can complicate the various becomings for each sex, and ensure that the becoming-woman of woman is not the same as the becoming-woman of man.

Theory,¹¹⁸ (2009) where Claire Colebrook argues for the becoming-queer of Deleuze and Guattari's theory as a counter narrative for gender.

Similarly, according to Conley in "Thirty-six Thousand Forms of Love: The Queering of Deleuze and Guattari" (chapter 2), from *Anti-Oedipus* (1977) to *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) queering is discussed and performed in the context of the philosophers' attack on 'normality' and enforced behaviour in a capitalist, institutionally bourgeois disciplinary society. (Conley, 2009: 24) Conley argues that queering as becoming has to reinstate a vital desire that experiments with innumerable sexualities. (Conley, 2009: 26) She believes that Deleuze's queering as becoming goes beyond homosexuality to include all minorities, to begin with women who insist on changing language in an effort to transform a capitalist, disciplinary society and its institutions. (Conley, 2009: 30) Conley underlines Guattari's understanding of sexual/gender politics as a necessary widening of the scope of gender studies. New gender identities to become need to be subjected to a queering of molar categories. She insists that, insofar as these categories have been established by a majority as binary oppositions that control the ways a social body thinks of its background, they have to be disconnected from the group in which they were imprisoned so that these categories become in ways unknown to the majority (becoming-minoritarian).

In her introduction to *Deleuze and Queer Theory* (2009), Chrysanthi Nigianni affirms:

...the DeleuzoGuattarian thinking is inherently queer by distancing itself from a representational conception of thinking; hence, a thinking, which far from being reproductive (by representing, recognising) is primarily productive mainly by being expressive of non/extralinguistic forces. (Nigianni & Storr, 2009: 2-3)

Nigianni sees in Deleuzo-Guattarianism a queer potential for the creativity

¹¹⁸*Deleuze and Queer Theory* (2009) explores the crisscrossing between Deleuze and Guattari's body of work and queer theory. Guattari is taken into account in his collaboration with Deleuze and for himself, especially, in "Thirty-six Thousand Forms of Love: The Queering of Deleuze and Guattari" by Verena Andermatt Conley. Before this, Janell Watson and Claire Colebrook co-edited a special issue on Guattari and gender, 16.3 (Winter 2005-2006) in *Women: A Cultural Review*. This is the first work entirely devoted to Guattari and gender studies in contrast to all the body of work that has been produced around Deleuze and feminism. There has been a complete obliteration of the figure of Guattari from gender studies, even when referring to their collaborative work. As I pointed out in the first section of this chapter, Guattari is especially relevant in relation to gender politics since his work and insights bring in a more political dimension than Deleuze's more philosophical work.

of its in-betweenness.¹¹⁹ She praises their project for the focus on the micro, the molecular: Singular acts and practices of a non-referential nature, organs and body-parts in their unnatural, anarchic connection, micro-sexualities, qualitative multiplicities consisting of micro-singularities, pre-constituted differences of a non-linguistic character. She claims that the forces and potentialities of bodies cannot be reduced to their cultural representations and the norms of gender, but are better understood as energy and movement in variations that produce singularities. She no longer locates the body as an issue of sexual orientation, object-choices, lacking desires and gender combinations, but as a productive artefact defined by its capacity for becoming. Nigianni advocates the deconstruction of the arborescent subject so as to explore a multiplicity of molecular processes of individuation.

I do believe that it is worthwhile for us to take the risk and lose the Face, so as to imagine, form and actualise new forms of political agency: instead of communities of an identitarian logic, machinic assemblages, instead of the individual, a ‘crowd’ (Olkowski, this volume); instead of identities, singularities; instead of representations, expressions; instead of interpretations, codings through mappings; instead of signifiers, signs ‘which flash across the interval of a difference.’ (Deleuze 2004: 281)(Nigianni & Storr, 2009: 7)

As has been discussed throughout the whole section, feminists over time have found great utility in Deleuze and Guattari’s theories about the body, difference, desire and politics. However, despite their openness towards Deleuzo-Guattarianism, feminists still find problematic resolving the issue of sexual difference by means of the machinery of becomings. Here it is where queer theory seems to be ready to open up further understandings of gender and a paradigmatic change in gender politics.

It is certainly in this nomadic space between feminism and queer theory that I will position my study of masculinities in Woolf’s novels and film adaptations. My approach will stem from the inclusive molecularisation of gender that Grosz and Colebrook have elaborated on the basis of Deleuzo-Guattarian terminology.

¹¹⁹There have been multiple responses to Deleuze and Guattari’s work from queer theory. Nigianni and Storr’s edited work *Deleuze and Queer Theory* (2009) marks a paradigm shift in queer theory away from discourses on identity and performativity towards a more radical approach that revisits the queer. Another example of this can be found in David V. Ruffolo’s *Post-Queer Politics* (2009), which looks at the work of Foucault, Butler, Bakhtin, Deleuze and Guattari, among others, to redefine the queer from a ‘transversality’ of class, race, sex, gender, sexuality that exceeds the boundaries of the queer subject.

I am aware of the fact that my position might be controversial, especially for feminists of difference such as Braidotti, who fiercely argues against gender studies as follows:

...I think that the main assumption behind “gender studies” is of a new symmetry between the sexes. Which practically results in a renewal of interest for men and men’s studies. Faced with this, I would like to state my open disagreement with this illusion of symmetry and revindicate instead sexual difference as a powerful factor of dissymmetry. (Braidotti, 1994a: 151)

Braidotti firmly believes that there has been a shift of focus, away from the feminist agenda towards a more generalised attention to the social construction of differences between the sexes. She believes that this broadening out implies a narrowing down of the political agenda, when I particular believe that this widening of the approach contributes to bringing about new gender figurations that make us access new and transformative paradigms for gender.

In this project I am analysing gender narratives in a female author by focusing on her male characters. I have chosen to work with Woolf’s male characters because I believe they prove to be good examples of becoming-woman. Woolf, writing from a female-minoritarian position, criticises the Majority Man-Standard, the hegemonic discourse of masculinity, and creates characters that exceed the boundaries of gender binary oppositions — my main cases of study will be Septimus Warren Smith and Orlando.

2.4 A Deleuzo-Guattarian approach to masculinities

How does the study of masculinities fit into the Deleuzo-Guattarian framework? Deleuze and Guattari argue that woman, as the traditional ‘other’ of classical dualism, must repossess her otherness by developing forms of subjectivity and modes of desire beyond the phallic pattern. The so-called ‘new maculinites’ seem to occupy this potential and productive alterity, from where multiple becomings can be made possible.

Gender is a complexity whose totality is permanently deferred (Butler). Bodies struggle with the complexity of their gender throughout their lives. Therefore, gender/sexuality can be considered as a process of endless becomings. Following Deleuze and Guattari, sexuality, and consequently gender, is reduced

to a binary organisation of the sexes, and to a bisexual organisation within each sex.

However, from a Deleuzo-Guattarian perspective, sexuality brings into play a wide diversity of conjugated becomings. This process of becomings can perhaps be thought of as a recurring necessity to position and re-position oneself with regard to discourses of gender operational in specific cultural sites, and beyond that with regard to the binary meta-discourse of masculinity-femininity.

As members of culture and discourse we are inevitably caught up in the molar practices of this gendered and sexual becoming because our social identity is contingent upon appearing to belong to an identifiable sex/gender group. The molar patriarchal subjectivity is formed by an illegitimate use of the conjunctive synthesis, which produces a hierarchical gendered division. Segregated conjunctions generate subjects attached to reduced sets of subjectivities, inscribed in a hierarchical binary opposition of the One and the Other. An important device in this concept of masculinity is the image or ideal of hegemonic masculinity.

Hegemonic masculinity is not so much a lived existence as an imagined existence, a discursive projection. It is defined as the subject of enunciation: 'white/heterosexual/speaking standard languages/property owing/urbanised' and so on so forth. Yet, as Connell points out, even where individual men, to all intents and purposes, intend to surmount the hegemonic ideal, they tend to collaborate in sustaining images of hegemonic masculinity. They are, to varying degrees, in a "relationship of complicity with the hegemonic project." (Connell, 1995: 79) Deleuze and Guattari define this interdependency in terms of binary oppositions; the molar frame of representation defines identities by means of dual systems.

I find the Deleuzo-Guattarian new mode of individuation extremely challenging for the study of masculinities insofar as it presents a new schema from where new masculinities can be figured away from the hegemonic. The becoming-woman of some male characters in Woolf will be the focus of my study. But, what is the connection between Woolf and Deleuze and Guattari? The following section traces Deleuze and Guattari's account of Woolf as an example of becomings.

2.5 Deleuze and Guattari's passion for Woolf

Deleuze and Guattari show a special enthusiasm about the work and life of Virginia Woolf.¹²⁰ In fact, while they make many literary references (paradigmatic figures from modernism, such as Proust and Kafka) in their philosophical discussions, Virginia Woolf is one of the few women that is referred in their philosophical discourse.

In *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980)¹²¹ Deleuze and Guattari use Woolf to reconsider the principles of subjectivity. They use Woolf and her work to suggest new modes of individuation that are multiple rather than dualist, dynamic rather than static, and disperse rather than unitary. They conceive her life experience as a proper line of flight:¹²² “Virginia Woolf experiences herself not as a monkey or a fish but as a troop of monkeys, a school of fish, according to her variable relations of becoming with the people she approaches.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 239)

They praise her work and life for preserving an on-going state of in-betweenness, an *intermezzo* position, where intensities and potentialities are underpinned: “To be fully a part of the crowd and at the same time completely outside it, removed from it: to be on the edge, to take a walk like Virginia Woolf (never again will I say, “*I am this, I am that*”).” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 29)

According to Deleuze and Guattari, Woolf creates characters, or collectivities, that are beyond the constraints of subjectivity. They describe her literary universe as a network of haecceities, a ‘thisness’ that consists of relations of movement and depends on molecules or particles, capacities to affect and be affected.

“...never again will Mrs. Dalloway say to herself, “I am this, I am that.” And “She felt very young; at the same time unspeakably aged. She sliced like a knife through everything: at the same time

¹²⁰An example of this keenness can be detected in the following quote by Guattari taken from *The Guattari Reader* (1996): “I’d like to talk about Virginia Woolf in her relation to becoming as man which is itself a becoming as woman, because the paradox is complete. I’m thinking about a book I like very much, *Orlando*. You have this character who follows the course of the story as a man, and in the second part of the novel he becomes a woman.” (Guattari, 1996: 208-9)

¹²¹Deleuze also uses Woolf and her work as an example to depict his theories in *Dialogues* (with Parnet, [1977] 1987).

¹²²They analyse both her work and her life, by commenting on some significant diary entrances.

was outside, looking on...She always had the feeling that it was very dangerous to live even one day." Haecceity, fog, glare. A haecceity has neither beginning nor end, origin nor destination; it is always in the middle. It is not made of points, only of lines. It is a rhizome. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 263)

They consider the character of Mrs Dalloway a perfect example of becoming, "sliced like a knife through everything," affecting and being affected by her surrounding reality.

Woolf's style can be aligned with Deleuze and Guattari's concept of assemblage. Her representation of subjectivities, her concept of individuation, while using terms like essence or soul,¹²³ is mobile. Woolf's characters are not static, but rather in a process of desiring connections. They are connected events. In their tenth plateau Deleuze and Guattari refer to *The Waves* (1931) as an example of the interconnectedness of collective processes of individuation that relate each other by means of multiplicities:

In *The Waves*, Virginia Woolf...intermingles seven characters, Bernard, Neville, Louis, Jinny, Rhoda, Suzanne, and Percival. But each of these characters, with his or her name, its individuality, designates a multiplicity (for example, Bernard and the school of fish). Each is simultaneously in this multiplicity and at its edge, and crosses over into the others. Percival is like the ultimate multiplicity enveloping the greatest number of dimensions. But he is not yet the plane of consistency. Although Rhoda thinks she sees him rising out of the sea, no, it is not he. "When the white arm rests upon the knee it is a triangle; now it is upright — a column; now a fountain...Behind it roars the sea. It is beyond our reach." Each advances like a wave, but on the plane of consistency they are a single abstract Wave whose vibration propagates following a line of light or deterritorialization traversing the entire plane (each chapter of Woolf's novel is preceded by a meditation on an aspect of *The Waves*, on one of their hours, on one of their becomings). (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 252)

¹²³A good example of this can be found in *The Waves* (1931), through Louis's words: "It is Percival...who makes us aware that these attempts to say. 'I am this, I am that', which make, coming together, like separated parts of one body and soul, are false. Something has been left out from fear. Something has been altered, from vanity. We have tried to accentuate differences. From the desire to be separate we have laid stress upon our faults, and what is particular to us. But there is a chain whirling round, round, in a steel-blue circle beneath." (Woolf, [1931] 2000c: 89)

Deleuze and Guattari underline the potential of the image of the wave for their definition of desiring machines. The wave, as the desiring-machine, is part of a whole network of connected machines (other waves). Every machine functions as a break in the flow¹²⁴ in relation to the machine to which it is connected, but it is, at the same time, also a flow itself, or the production of a flow. Likewise, the wave's vibration propagates following a line of light or deterritorialization that traverses the entire plane. The main characters in *The Waves* (1931) form an amalgam of different haecceities that project themselves to multiple potentialities.

For Deleuze and Guattari, the feminist project should not be confined within the boundaries of molar politics. Although they acknowledge the need for woman to stem from this politics, they claim to abandon molar categories and focus on the virtual potentials that are disseminated from every single body, forming collective assemblages.

When Virginia Woolf was questioned about a specifically women's writing, she was appalled at the idea of writing "as a woman." Rather writing should produce a becoming-woman as atoms of womanhood capable of crossing and impregnating an entire social field, and of contaminating men, of sweeping them up in that becoming. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 276)

Despite highlighting Woolf's subject position as a female writer, Deleuze and Guattari insist on the potential of the becoming-woman of her writing. They applaud the transformative force that this literary skill of contamination releases.

For Woolf, as for Deleuze and Guattari, woman is infinite, a process or event, a speaking position, perhaps, but not a fixed identity. 'Becoming-woman' will activate gender potential and new states and becomings. Deleuze and Guattari use the example of girls who are not women neither men, nor an age group but multiple becomings.

Thus girls do not belong to an age group, sex order, or kingdom: they slip in everywhere, between orders, acts, ages, sexes; they produce n molecular sexes on the line of flight in relation to the dualism machines they cross right through. The only way to get outside the dualisms is to be-between, to pass between, the intermezzo — that

¹²⁴"A machine may be defined as a system of interruptions or breaks." (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a: 36)

is what Virginia Woolf lived with all her energies. In all of her work, never ceasing to become. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 277)

In gender terms, Woolf's androgyny has often been referred to as gender transcendence and neutralisation. As has been hinted in the previous chapter — the whole argument will be developed in the following chapter when analysing *Orlando* (1928) —, my understanding of Woolf's androgyny is related to an affirmation of difference and multiplicity in a Deleuzo-Guattarian sense. Woolf moves beyond androgyny, towards a multiplicity of genders, by claiming that distinguishing two sexes is too restrictive.

Woolf understands gender as multiple and polymorphous formations. Two sexes are not sufficient; there must be "...two sexes in the mind corresponding to the two sexes in the body." (Woolf, [1929] 2000b: 96) Yet, furthermore, she feels reticent to reduce their multiplicity: "if two sexes are quite inadequate, considering the vastness and variety of the World..." (Woolf, [1929] 2000b: 87) Her concept of gender is neither polar, dichotomous, nor fixed, but rather multiple, fluid and merging. Woolf is here very close to Deleuze and Guattari's approach to polysexuality in which "Sexuality is the production of a thousand sexes, which are so many uncontrollable becomings." (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 278-9) I consider these multiple potential becomings of gender to be a common ground between Deleuze and Guattari's theories and Woolf's characters.

Deleuze and Guattari applaud Woolf's exploration of boundaries and in-betweenness, her assemblages, clusters producing momentary and on-going multiple subjectivities. Virginia Woolf explores the intensities and assemblages underpinned by her characters in the field of sexual difference. A paradigmatic example is *Orlando*. *Orlando* can be considered a BwO, a body that is not organised by static organs, but a body that functions with blocks of ages, sexes, epochs, social positions that are always changing. *Orlando* represents multiple virtual potentials, and his/her body is a continuum of becomings.

...(Orlando already does not operate by memories, but by blocks, blocks of ages, block of epochs, blocks of the kingdoms of nature, blocks of sexes, forming so many becomings between things, or so many lines of deterritorialization). (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 294)

2.6 Woolf's passion for the molecular

Had Virginia Woolf and Deleuze and Guattari been contemporary, would their admiration have been reciprocal? As Deleuze and Guattari describe, Woolf creates characters and produces connections between characters that project molecular and rhizomatic dynamics of individuation. Some of her characters present molecular figurations that move beyond molar categories of subjectivation (molecular man/woman vs. molar man/woman).

It is my intention to restage this dialogue between Deleuze and Guattari and Woolf's writing, from the other side. Whereas Deleuze and Guattari use Woolf to explore their new mode of individuation, this thesis aims to use their theoretical framework to understand Woolf's conceptualisation of gender: "For the two sexes imply a multiplicity of molecular combinations bringing into play not only the man in the woman and the woman in the man, but the relation of each to the animal, the plant, etc.: a thousand tiny sexes." (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 213)

Many feminists argue that Deleuze and Guattari's theories of individuation diminish the asymmetry between the sexes, as for example, Irigaray and Braidotti. Moreover, for Deleuze and Guattari no symmetry is taken for granted. On the contrary, there is a special awareness of molar/majoritarian and molecular/minoritarian gender subject-positions in their collaborative work. Furthermore, the main purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate that Deleuze and Guattari's polymorphous approach to gender and sexuality is very close to Woolf's narratives of gender. As has been argued in the previous chapter, Virginia Woolf's male characters might follow two organising lines; a rigid, patriarchal, majoritarian, molar line and a fluid, minoritarian, and molecular line.

'The rigid' men are trapped in a set of rules (hegemonic discourse of gender) that fix their identities and help them to impose their will on those around them. Woolf very often satirises these characters as it will be argued in my analysis of *Mrs Dalloway* with characters such as the Prime Minister, Dr Holmes, or Sir William Bradshaw. She emphasises how such men are represented as tyrannical and narrow-minded, and shows that their actions have devastating effects on others. On the other hand, the fluid men have the capacity to feel and to change and present a potential to become-woman.

The focus of my study will be the fluid male characters in *Mrs Dalloway* and *Orlando*; that is, the becoming-woman of Septimus Warren Smith and Orlando.

2.7 Deleuzo-Guattarian approach to Woolf

There are a few Deleuzo-Guattarian readings of Woolf to date. The two major critics to approach the work of Virginia Woolf from a Deleuze and Guattari's standpoint are Hughes (1997)¹²⁵ and Monaco (2008)¹²⁶ — and Buchanan (2010),¹²⁷ to a certain extent.¹²⁸

In *Lines of Flight: Reading Deleuze with Hardy, Gissing, Conrad, Woolf* (1997), John Hughes dialogues between philosophy and literature, offering an introduction to their body of work and emphasising its multiple possibilities for literary criticism. Hughes analyses the Deleuzo-Guattarian concept of movement and the Bergsonian distinction of space and time in *The Voyage Out* (1915). While Hughes focuses on “...how Woolf's writing in *The Voyage Out* conveys to the reader the characters' participation in modes of relation, and in currents of feeling and perception, that carry them for an indefinite interval outside of their singular identities and their habitual and social ideas of self,” (Hughes, 1997: 157) my thesis focuses on the analysis of Woolf's gender

¹²⁵John Hughes is Lecturer in English and Philosophy at Cheltenham and Gloucester College Higher Education. Hughes's research and teaching interests are in literary theory, Hardy, the relationship between philosophical and literary writings, and the nineteenth century. His publications include *Lines of Flight: Reading Deleuze with Hardy, Gissing, Conrad, Woolf* (1997), *Ecstatic Sound: Music and Individuality in the work of Thomas Hardy* (2001), and a wide range of other publications on literary and philosophical topics.

¹²⁶Beatrice Monaco is Associate Lecturer in English at the University of London, where she gained her PhD.

¹²⁷Bradley W. Buchanan is Associate Professor of English at California State University, Sacramento. In 2007 he published *Hanif Kureishi (New British Fiction)*.

¹²⁸In *Oedipus against Freud: Myth and the End(s) of Humanism in Twentieth-Century British Literature* (2010), Buchanan analyses the Oedipal narratives of authors such as D.H. Lawrence, T.S. Eliot, W.B. Yeats, E.M. Foster, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce. While Hughes and Monaco deal with spatio-temporality in Woolf's narrative from a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach, Bradley W. Buchanan focuses on the analyses of sexuality and gender in relation to the Oedipal in *To the Lighthouse*, in chapter five, 'Oedipus Que(e)ried: Humanism, Sexuality, and Gender in E.M. Foster and Virginia Woolf.' His conclusions are that Woolf cannot escape from the boundaries of the Oedipal subject despite her attempts to destabilise the traditional distinctions between human and nonhuman: “For Woolf...the truth of Freudian claims about Oedipus's universality mattered less than the fact that Oedipus could be relied upon to stand for what human beings had in common, whether it be potentially transgressive sexual desires or a desperate wish for self-knowledge and acceptance.” (Buchanan, 2010: 148) Buchanan states that Woolf appropriates Freudianism and the Oedipus myth, strategically, in order to engage with the problem of humanism and the anxieties of personal life. (Buchanan, 2010: 147-148) Buchanan's analysis of gender relationships in *To the Lighthouse* does not use Deleuzo-Guattarianism as a theoretical background, insofar as he reads these relationships between characters in familial and Oedipal terms. The focus of my analysis of Septimus and Orlando is precisely their potential to break away from the Oedipal realm of subjectivity.

narratives from a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach.

Beatrice Monaco, in *Machinic Modernism: the Deleuzian literary machines of Woolf, Lawrence and Joyce*, (2008) makes a Deleuzo-Guattarian reading of modernism. In chapter two, Monaco analyses the spatio-temporality of *To the Lighthouse*. Monaco states that “Woolf’s narrative metaphysic emerged as a new approach to time, space and consciousness that could respond positively to the mutable, ‘in-between’ boundaries of binaries, and thus to the dynamic nature of experience,” (Monaco, 2008: 18) acknowledging, at the same time, as Hughes, the Bergsonian resonances of her work. Monaco carries out an immanent reading of Woolf’s spatio-temporal narrative of *To the Lighthouse* and explores “metaphysical planes and configurations of perception and consciousness in the textual and human world of the novel.” (Monaco, 2008: 24) Monaco affirms that the gender roles in the novel are not clear cut. According to Monaco, men are presented as “operating transcendentally —usually talking, doing and moving — and yet paradoxically are only able to insert themselves into emotional reality in a limited, aggressive way.” (Monaco, 2008: 25) She explores the character of Mr Ramsay, who, in Monaco’s view, is trapped in representation and determined by lack, law, and the signifier, as the unconscious is trapped by mythical and social structures of an Oedipal culture for Deleuze and Guattari. In opposition, Monaco describes the female in *To the Lighthouse* as the only location for the plane of immanence. Mrs Ramsay and the narrative style operate on this plane. Monaco underlines the potential of the so called stream of consciousness to invoke a “radically mobile space of enunciation” (Monaco, 2008: 31) where the virtual in Deleuzo-Guattarian sense predominates.

Monaco affirms that the narrative of *To the Lighthouse* seems to be structured around the site of becoming, the in-between, “by way of the rhythms of a richly lived emotional life and of physically dynamic narrative style.” (Monaco, 2008: 39) She declares that becoming, as a practice of consciousness, is to be found especially in female characters. According to Monaco, the novel “sets all sorts of machines and deterritorialising impulses into play.” (Monaco, 2008: 51) There is a becoming-woman force both in the text and in the female protagonists that works towards a machinic transformation.

According to Monaco, the first chapter of the novel, ‘The Window,’ experiments with immanence and transcendence, becoming, and the in-between; in the second chapter, ‘Time Passes,’ “[t]he narrative becomes a virtual vortex of time and nature in which the two terms become virtually indistinguishable from one another;” (Monaco, 2008: 52) and finally, the third chapter, ‘The Lighthouse,’ completes the becoming-woman process of the text, when “[b]eing has been restored to time and space and now space and time are free to extend in

qualitative and quantitative symbiosis in the form of the trip to the lighthouse and in artistic practice.” (Monaco, 2008: 53)

In addition, Monaco explores the machinic in both *Orlando* and *The Waves*. She argues that Orlando is a manifestation of the ‘third term:’ neither fact nor fiction, neither man nor woman, neither past nor present; she is ‘in-between.’ Orlando’s life conforms a haecceity: “*Orlando* fashions, in effect, a historiography of flows: haeccities containing bodies, words, weather, buildings and vegetation...” (Monaco, 2008: 157)

Monaco argues that the use of metaphor in *Orlando* replaces the spatio-temporal framework “by embodying a self-supporting ‘materiality’ of narrative.” (Monaco, 2008: 159) She claims that the haecceity of metaphor is the site of the dynamic relations of the third term in narrative, where the duality of inner/outer, material/immaterial and female/male no longer work. Monaco presents *The Waves* as the culmination of this project, where “narrative becomes a blend of the sensible and biological.” (Monaco, 2008: 159) Monaco’s work strikes as a detailed analysis of the machinic spacio-temporality and narrative in *To the Lighthouse*, *Orlando*, and *The Waves*, from a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach. While Monaco hints at the complexity of Woolf’s gender figurations, her study focuses on Woolf’s treatment of space and time, and metaphysics, my thesis focuses on the Deleuzo-Guattarian concept of becoming-woman in relation to Septimus Warren Smith and Orlando’s male figurations to prove Woolf’s molecular concept of polysexuality.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed Deleuze and Guattari’s critique and dismantling of the Oedipal subject and their proposal of nomadic, on-going processes of individuation. A special attention has been devoted to their theory of difference in relation to sexuality and gender. Their radical approach to difference takes into account multiplicity. In this sense, they evaluate sexual difference as a contraction or normalisation of a multiple range of states. They reject the binary categories man/woman, male/female, homosexual/heterosexual, insofar as the desiring-machines treat these oppositions as limits that form intervals which contain n possible states. Exclusive gender disjunctions are proved to fail to cope with gender/sex multiplicity. This is why Deleuze and Guattari break away from gender/sex binary oppositions to focus on a concept of sexual difference that no longer consists of being ‘either/or...’ but of exploring alternatives in the flow of becoming-other in the logics of ‘either...or...or...or...’ Nomadic

subjectivities are dynamic, inclusive, multiple and non-hierarchical. Therefore, Deleuze and Guattari replace the binomial 'being woman or being man' by the potential of the becoming-woman, a process that dismantles rigid sexed and gender identities.

Deleuze and Guattari define the majoritarian standard as 'the average adult-white-heterosexual-European-male-speaking a standard language.' Despite not obviating the importance for minorities to achieve majority states, they believe that minorities have a transformational potential, and, thus, claim for both men and women to become-minoritarian to create new states and social dynamics. Here it is where, as has been discussed in this chapter, feminism adopts either a supporting attitude towards Deleuzo-Guattarism by focusing on the potential of their theories to deconstruct patriarchal dominant subject positions (the Male Standard), or a critical attitude by emphasising the risk that their work takes to neutralise the female subject.

The following chapter analyses Woolf's masculine figurations in *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) and *Orlando* (1928) from a Deleuzo-Guattarian perspective, so as to demonstrate Woolf's rhizomatic approach to gender and sexuality.

Chapter 3

Molar and molecular masculinities in *Mrs Dalloway* and *Orlando*: A rhizomatic approach

3.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses *Mrs Dalloway* and *Orlando* from a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach, paying special attention to gender — male characters in particular. A brief introduction of the genesis of each work is included to provide the reader with background information around characters, plots, narrative technique, and style that supports my understanding of Woolf's character's molecular processes of subjectivation.

Molar gender representations are contrasted with molecular gender figurations mainly embodied by Septimus Warren Smith and Orlando. As has been discussed in chapter 1, Woolf's male characters can be divided into two main types of figurations of masculinity; the fluid men and the rigid men. Woolf's attack to 'the rigid' male characters is counteracted by her proposal of 'the fluid' male characters that break away from arborescent gender structures. Woolf's complex representations of gender challenge the traditionally and socially accepted gender/sex binary oppositions.

This chapter aims to prove how Septimus Warren Smith and Orlando embody molecular processes of individuation that underpin multiple “becomings” and how Woolf’s style and characterisation breaks away from finite subjectivity. Furthermore, through the analysis of the becoming-woman of Orlando and Septimus, I will contrast these two characters as examples of Deleuzo-Guattarian full and empty Bodies without Organs.

3.2 Rhizomatic vision of *Mrs Dalloway*

3.2.1 The genesis of *Mrs Dalloway*: characters, plots, style. A rhizomatic configuration

Mrs Dalloway narrates the story of a single day¹ in June in the lives of several characters in post-World War I London. There are two main plot lines operating and overlapping in the novel. On the one hand, Mrs Dalloway, “a perfect hostess”² in her fifties, is preparing a party, which becomes the major frame, the backbone of the narration. Her thoughts, her interactions with characters from the present and the past will lead us to the ultimate event; her party. On the other hand, the shell-shocked Septimus Warren Smith, whom Clarissa will never meet, but who parallels her day, lives in anguish his last day until he takes his life by throwing himself from a window.

Clarissa Dalloway walks around London in the morning. She buys some flowers for her party in Bond Street and the nice day reminds her of her youth at Bourton. She reflects upon decisions that were made in her past, such as her

¹Virginia Woolf was reading James Joyce’s *Ulysses* when she started writing *Mrs Dalloway*. There is a clear connection to the structure of Joyce’s novel, as well as a Bergsonian version of time and space — *Time and Free Will* (1888). However, in a diary entrance on the 16th of August in 1922, Woolf shows her ambivalence towards it: “I should be reading *Ulysses*, & fabricating my case for & against. I have read 200 pages so far — not a third; & have been amused, stimulated, charmed interested by the first 2 or 3 chapters — to the end of the Cemetery scene; & then puzzled, bored, irritated, & disillusioned as by a queasy undergraduate scratching his pimples.” (Woolf, [1920-1924] 1978b: 188-189) Maria DiBattista argues in *Virginia Woolf’s Major Novels: The Fables of Anon* (1980): “While writing *Jacob’s Room*, Woolf was justifiably anxious that ‘What I’m doing is probably being better done by Mr Joyce,’ but by the time of *Mrs Dalloway*, she was bold and confident enough to engage *Ulysses*, answering Joyce’s patriarchal fiction with her own critique of history, memory, law, and the art of life.” (DiBattistaa, 1980a: 22) In any case, *Mrs Dalloway* seems to be generally acknowledged as a response to Joyce’s *Ulysses*.

²That is how Peter Walsh called her: “She would marry a Prime Minister and stand at the top of a staircase; the perfect hostess he called her (she had cried over it in her bedroom), she had the makings of the perfect hostess, he said.” (Woolf, [1925] 2000a: 5)

marriage — she chose to marry the conservative Richard Dalloway instead of the socialist and passionate Peter Walsh. In the course of the day, Walsh will visit Clarissa on his arrival from India. Clarissa has a sense that perhaps the life she leads has become hollow, absurd and meaningless as she has grown older.

Meanwhile Septimus Warren Smith, a disturbed veteran suffering from shell shock, walks through London, reflects on his life, his experience in the war, the death of his friend Evans, and the absurdity of life and death. After his appointment with the famous nerve specialist Sir William Bradshaw, and recommendation of a psychiatric hospital, Septimus commits suicide. His day, which is placed side by side to that of Clarissa and her friends, finally converges at the party when she hears of his death. The following chapter aims to show how certain male characters (Septimus and Orlando) embody molecular processes of individuation that underpin multiple ‘becomings.’ Taking Deleuze and Guattari’s fluid mode of subjectivation, I intend to prove how Woolf’s style and characterisation allows a departure from the Cartesian subject and its binary oppositions.

The novel was written between 1922 and 1924 and published on the 14th of May 1925, but Woolf had sketched Clarissa and her husband as characters in her first novel *The Voyage Out*.³ Originally, the project of *Mrs Dalloway* was conceived as a book to be called either *The Party* or *At Home*, consisting of six or seven chapters heading to the final event; Mrs Dalloway’s party. Woolf wrote in a manuscript notebook on 6 October 1922:

Thoughts upon beginning a book to be called, perhaps, *At Home*: or *The Party*. This is to be a short book consisting of six or seven chapters, each complete separately. In them must be some fusion. And all must converge upon the party at the end. My idea is to have some character like Mrs Dalloway, much in relief; then to have some interludes of thought or reflection, or moments of digression (which must be related, logically, to the next) all compact, yet not jerked. The chapters might be

1. Mrs Dalloway in Bond Street

³Mr and Mrs Dalloway are introduced in chapter three and chapter four of *The Voyage Out*. Mr Dalloway is described as an arrogant snobbish gentleman by Vinrace: “‘Mr Richard Dalloway’...‘seems to be a gentleman who thinks that because he was once a member of Parliament, and his wife’s the daughter of a peer, they can have what they like for the asking...’” (Woolf, [1915] 1978a: 43) When they join the ship they are described: “Mrs Dalloway was a tall slight woman, her body wrapped to be a middle-sized man of sturdy build, dressed like a sportsman on an autumnal moor.” (Woolf, [1915] 1978a: 45)

2. The Prime Minister
3. Ancestors
4. A dialogue
5. The old ladies
6. Country house?
7. Cut flowers
8. The party

One, roughly to be done in a month; but this plan is to consist of some very short intervals, not whole chapters. There should be fun. (Virginia Woolf quoted in Jane Novak, 1975: 110-111)⁴

Eventually, only three of these “vignettes” were completed by Woolf: “Mrs Dalloway in Bond Street”, “The Prime Minister” and “Ancestors.” By the 14th of October 1922, Woolf would abandon this earlier project to embark on the writing of a new novel. Virginia Woolf writes on her diary: “*Mrs Dalloway* has branched into a book; & I adumbrate here a study of insanity & suicide: the World seen by the sane & the insane side by side — something like that. Septimus Smith? — is that a good name?” (Woolf, [1920-1924] 1978b: 207)

The novel, which was initially called *The Hours*, stemmed from the short stories “Mrs Dalloway in Bond Street” (written in 1922 and published in July 1923) and “The Prime Minister” (also written in 1922, but not published for the first time until 1989 as appendix B of *The Complete Shorter Fiction of Virginia Woolf* edited by Susan Dick), incorporating and amplifying characters, structure and plot.⁵

⁴Woolf’s working notes are preserved at the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library, and her draft in the British Museum. The holograph manuscript for most of the novel is contained in three notebooks in the British Library.

⁵From “Mrs Dalloway in Bond Street” Woolf develops Mrs Dalloway herself, her husband Richard and her daughter Elizabeth, the theme of life and death, war, the party that night, the refrain “Fear no more the heat o’ the sun,” the walking around London, Big Ben’s temporal framework, the alternating movement in and out of characters’ consciousness, the multiplicity of points of view and the recognisable lyrical style. The starting line of the novel was inspired in the first line of “Mrs Dalloway in Bond Street”: “Mrs Dalloway said she would buy the gloves herself.” (Woolf, [1922] 2010: 19) In “The Prime Minister,” Woolf sketches the character of Septimus, who plans to kill the Prime Minister: “...he had got outside society. He would kill himself. He would give his body to the starving Austrians. First he would kill the Prime Minister and J. Ellis Robertson. My name will be on all the placards, he thought. He could do anything, for he was now beyond law.” (Woolf, [1922] 1989: 322)

As Woolf moved on in her writing, the novel was growing in complexity. It was becoming an intricate artefact of relations, an elaborate network of characters, plots, and symbols:⁶ “In this book I have almost too many ideas. I want to give life & death, sanity & insanity; I want to criticise the social system, & to show it at work, at its most intense...” (Woolf, [1920-1924] 1978b: 248)

The novel deals with a social system that is witnessing incipient changes. It is through the characters’ ability/inability to cope with change that Woolf analyses this context: the change from war to peace, changes in the class system and the family, the passing of time (Clarissa has to face the end of her prime), and a debate between old and new gender roles.⁷ As Woolf had written in her essay “Character in Fiction” (1924)⁸ since 1910: “...all human relations have shifted — those between masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children. And when human relations change, there is at the same time a change in religion, conduct, politics, and literature.” (Woolf, [1924] 1988: 422)

Woolf is able to carry out this critical task in *Mrs Dalloway* thanks to her style and her conception of an extended individuation; in other words, Woolf’s characters are assembled in a network of connections forming collectivities. I will draw here on terms from Deleuze and Guattari. Some of Woolf’s characters embody molecular processes of individuation that underpin multiple becomings. Her style and characterisation breaks away from finite subjectivity. There is a general sense of ‘in-betweenness’ set from the very beginning in the novel; this is to say, a sense of becoming, in which unrelated entities connect never forming a unit, an end-product, but generating at the same time new connections; assemblages, clusters producing momentary and on-going multiple subjectivities. The thoughts and actions carried out by characters are continually informed

⁶In a letter to T.S. Eliot she wrote about her project as: “too interwoven for a chapter broken off to be intelligible.” (Woolf, [1923-1928] 1978c: 106)

⁷Peter Walsh’s sense of the social changes in England since the war is primarily related to gender performance; the newspapers are freer in their language, women use make-up in public, and couples are seen embracing: “Those five years — 1918 to 1923 — had been, he suspected, somehow very important. People looked different. Newspapers seemed different. Now, for instance, there was a man writing quite openly in one of the respectable weeklies about water-closets. That you couldn’t have done ten years ago — written quite openly about water-closets in a respectable weekly. And then this taking out of a stick of rouge, or a powder-puff, and making up in public. On board ship coming home there were lots of young men and girls...carrying on quite openly.” (Woolf, [1925] 2000a: 62)

⁸Woolf wrote in 1923 her famous essay “Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown,” which was originally a lecture to the Heretics Club at Cambridge University. Many of the concerns of this essay were also developed in a number of other texts, including “Modern Novels” (1919), “Character in Fiction” (1924) and “Modern Fiction” (1925). In these essays Woolf analyses the major traits of modern novel.

and nourished by the pressures of the past; so that the whole narration floats in an in-between space-time dimension, immersed in what Deleuze and Guattari call rhizomatic dynamics that interweave its characters in a network of multiple connections with their surrounding world.⁹ *Mrs Dalloway* presents characters as dimensions of other characters. In this novel, Woolf develops her “tunnelling technique”¹⁰ which consists of connecting her characters by tunnels that link their unconscious. In a Deleuzo-Guattarian train of thought, the unconscious is considered by Woolf a productive process, which gives rise to machines, which, at the same time, become the connection to reality. That is how, the characters of this novel are connected by a force, series or acts; that is, by desire.

I should say a good deal about The Hours, & my discovery; how I dig out beautiful caves behind my characters; I think that gives exactly what I want; humanity, humour, depth. The idea is that the caves shall connect, & each comes to daylight at the present moment — Dinner! (Woolf, [1920-1924] 1978b: 263)

Woolf’s sophisticated narrative technique — a combination of a flexible omniscient narration together with the overlapping of free indirect speech — responds to a contemporary literary claim for new patterns of narration contemporary to her writing. Woolf required a technique to construct a polyvocal mode of individuation for her characters, beyond Arnold Bennett’s realism, whose method she criticised in her essays “Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown” (1923), “Character in Fiction” (1924) and “Modern Fiction” (1925).¹¹ *Mrs Dalloway*

⁹Elizabeth Abel refers to it as: “In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf superimposes the outlines of multiple, familiar yet altered plots that disrupt a unitarian plan, diffuse the chronological framework of the single day in June, and enable an iconoclast plot to weave its course.” (Abel, 1993: 93)

¹⁰“I think the design is more remarkable than in any of my books. I daresay I shan’t be able to carry it out. I am stuffed with ideas for it. I feel I can use up everything I’ve ever thought. Certainly, I’m less coerced than I’ve yet been. The doubtful point is I think the character of Mrs Dalloway. It may be too stiff, too glittering & tinsely — But then I can bring innumerable other characters to her support. I wrote the 100th page today. Of course, I’ve only been feeling my way into it — up till last August anyhow. It took me a year’s groping to discover what I call my tunnelling process, by which I tell the past by instalments, as I have need of it.” (Woolf, [1920-1924] 1978b: 272) This technique has received great critical attention. Critics such as Susan Dick in “The Tunnelling Process: Some Aspects of Virginia Woolf’s Use of Memory and the Past” (1983) and J. Hillis Miller in “Mrs Dalloway in Fiction and Repetition” (1982) discuss the “tunnelling process.”

¹¹In these three essays, Virginia Woolf criticises Arnold Bennett’s, H.G.Wells’s, and John Galsworthy’s realism and the concept of a central authoritative voice located in the narrator. In “Modern Fiction” she rather claims “to come closer to life, and to preserve more sincerely

displays a polyphony of voices; its narrator focalises through Clarissa, Peter Walsh, Miss Kilman, Elizabeth, Septimus, and Rezia by means of free indirect speech.

Woolf's attempt to fracture the unitary traditional narrative authority, by providing many different voices with discourse and by blurring distinctions between them or between narrator and focaliser, infuses her characters with a cubist dimension. Clarissa Dalloway is presented by means of the fragmentary observations of others, and her own insights and impressions. In my eyes, as a cubist painting, Clarissa is approached from a multiplicity of perspectives, which, at the same time, reveals the complexity of her subjectivation.

Those multiple voices construct Clarissa's self, not as a unitary individual but as a multi-dimensional collectivity that forms part of an assemblage: "...the elements in play find their individuation in the assemblage of which they are a part, independent of the form of their concept and the subjectivity of their person." (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 264) Clarissa's individuation is a part of an assemblage formed by her surrounding reality; a collective network formed by major and minor characters, multiple visions, living and dying, the crowd, streets, parks, shops in London, nature (leaves, trees, birds, fresh air), objects (flowers, gloves, frocks, hats, umbrellas, pocketknives, planes, cars, omnibuses, vans), memories, poetry, Big Ben's strokes.

and exactly what interests and moves them [young writers, such as James Joyce], even if to do so they must discard most of the conventions which are commonly observed by the novelist." (Woolf, [1925]1994: 161) In "Mrs Bennett and Mrs Brown," Woolf analyses the power of characterisation and the importance to free characters from the constraining dictum of a narrator. For that purpose she approaches a hypothetical character, Mrs Brown, and shows how realist modes of characterisation might not access the potential of the character. She argues: "For what, after all is character — the way that Mrs Brown, for instance, reacts to her surroundings — when we cease to believe what we are told about her, and begin to search out her real meaning for ourselves? In the first place, her solidity disappears; her features crumble; the house in which she has lived so long (and very substantial house it was) topples to the ground. She becomes a will-o'-the-wisp, a dancing light, an illumination gliding up the wall and out of the window, lighting now in freakish malice upon the nose of an archbishop, now in sudden splendour upon mahogany of the wardrobe." (Woolf, 1988: 387) In Woolf's opinion, real and convincing characters need to account for the complexity of life, its singularities. She states in "Character in Fiction": "In the course of your daily life this past week you have had far stranger and more interesting experiences than the one I have tried to describe. You have overhead scraps of that filled you with amazement. You have gone to bed at night bewildered by the complexity of your feelings. In one day thousands of ideas have coursed through your brains; thousands of emotions have met, collided, and disappeared in astonishing disorder. Nevertheless, you allow the writers to palm off upon you a version of all this, an image of Mrs Brown, which has no likeness to that surprising apparition whatsoever." (Woolf, 1988: 436) Woolf's method allows these complexities to flow.

Early twentieth century Europe is mainly characterised by its multiformity; there is no sense of uniformity but a diversification of thought fostered by new scientific, political, philosophical, and psychological discourses, which reassess history, time and subjectivity.¹² Consequently, at the beginning of the century, individual subjectivity is no longer understood as a fixed monolithic identity but as a multilayered self, in which dreams, memories, and fantasies are as important as actions and thoughts. Modernist literary works put the emphasis on subjective experience rather than on the seek of objective meaning and truth. Richard Sheppard¹³ in “The Problematics of European Modernism” (1993) affirms that “...a large number of major modernist texts deal centrally with the irruption of a ‘meta-world’ into the ‘middle zone of experience’; with the overturning of an apparently secure, common-sense, bourgeois world by powers which are sub- or inhuman, cosmic, or, at the very least, non-commonsensical.” (Sheppard, 1993: 16) Modernist fragmentary narrations foster this narrative of subjective experience which develops less fixed figurations of the subject through their characters. Sheppard states that:

In such major modernist texts as Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1898-9), Thomas Mann’s *Der Tod in Venedig* and *Der Zauberberg* (1913-24) (translated as *The Magic Mountain*, 1928), Kafka’s *Der Proceß*, D.H. Lawrence’s *Women in Love* (1913-20), Forster’s *A Passage to India* and Jean-Paul Sastre’s *La Nausée* (1931-3) (translated as *The Diary of Antoine Roquentin*, 1949), various central characters suddenly discover that the ‘real’ — i.e. conventional — world of objects and relationships in which they had thought to be securely at home is actually permeated by and subject to elemental power over which they have no final control, but with which they have to come to terms or be destroyed. (Sheppard, 1993: 16-17)

¹²The turn of the century witnessed a series of ideological, cultural, and social changes that redefined the paradigm of modernity. As far as the scientific thought is concerned, new theories on matter and energy (Albert Einstein) and great advances in technology gave rise to a certain sense of superiority of the self, a general belief that humans could dominate matter. In relation to the political thought, evolutionism, the rise of irrationalist and vitalist movements (Shopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Ortega y Gasset, Bergson) and their displacement of Reason, Nietzsche’s “death of God” and “the advent of nihilism,” and Marx and Engels’s socialism posed a new set of values. Regarding subjectivity, Freud’s psychoanalysis supposed the reversal of the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum*, which was based on the supremacy of rationality.

¹³Richard Sheppard is Fellow and Tutor in German at Magdalen College, Oxford, and Lecturer in German at Christ Church, Oxford. He was previously Professor of European Literature at the University of East Anglia. He has published extensively on topics relating to European modernism.

According to Sheppard for these modernist writers reality is not reality as perceived and structured by the Western bourgeois consciousness: "...behind reality...there lies a realm full of dynamic energies whose patterns are alien to liberal humanist or classical notions of order, and to the extent that such patterns exist at all, elusive and mysterious." (Sheppard, 1993: 17) As Sheppard points out, modernist novelists experiment with techniques — distortions of linear causal/temporal order, unreliable narrators, multi-perspectivism, among others — which accentuate the discontinuity between the conventional and fixed understanding of reality and more fluid and complex definitions informed by their works. What I find particularly outstanding about Woolf's style is her intensity, which I will analyse in Deleuzo-Guattarian terms.

Virginia Woolf is determined to analyse the world around her within its greatest intensity, moving from micro singularities to collective assemblages. Her narrative provides the perfect means to develop multiple and fluid processes of subjectivation. She describes this process in "Modern Fiction,"¹⁴ an idea that can be clearly applied to *Mrs Dalloway*.

Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impression — trivial, fantastic, evanescent or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday and Tuesday...(Woolf, [1925-1928] 1994: 160)

As I have argued in the previous chapter, Woolf's style can be aligned with Deleuze and Guattari's concept of assemblage, flow of desire. Woolf describes flow as 'an incessant shower of innumerable atoms.' She creates an open-ended and versatile method that traces the pattern of these fluid individuations.

Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident stores upon the consciousness. Let us not take it for granted that life exists more fully in what is commonly thought big than in what is commonly thought small. (Woolf, [1925-1928] 1994: 161)

¹⁴"Modern Fiction" originally appeared as "Modern Novels" in the *Times Literary Supplement* on 10 April 1919; Woolf revised that essay for publication in *The Common Reader*, changing the title as part of the revision process. *The Common Reader* was published in two series; the first one in 1925 (the same year *Mrs. Dalloway* was published) and the second one in 1932.

Furthermore, Virginia Woolf's method is rhizomatic. She claims what we might call a molecular organising line, insofar as she declares an interest in focusing on singularities, where she believes that potentialities of life reside; where life exists more fully. Woolf does not believe that life exists more fully in "what is commonly thought big." That is why the novel spins around these "commonly thought small" things that interact within the characters, such as Clarissa's preparations for the party and the party itself; her own microcosmos; her celebration of life; a celebration that is hinted from the opening scene — "[w]hat a plunge!" — where the early morning air, the flowers, trees, and rooks (Woolf, [1925] 2000a: 1)¹⁵ assemble and saturate every atom by showing life and its potentialities. Another example of these micro-singularities might be found in Woolf's cosmic vision of Septimus and Clarissa, who happen to be connected to a multiplicity of objects, kingdoms, microorganisms, plants, animals, events, multiple others, by forming heterogeneities.

As Deleuze and Guattari argue: "Each multiplicity is symbiotic; its becoming ties together animals, plants, microorganisms, mad particles, a whole galaxy. Nor is there a performed logical order to these heterogeneities..." (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 250) However disconnected and incoherent they may seem, the atoms, each multiplicity, will be related with no hierarchical order, and out of this collective bonding, new processes of individuation will emerge. In *Mrs Dalloway*, leaves, branches, ephemeral perceptions, and many other tiny fragments of life form these specificities, but at the same time, certain characters introduce these micro-particularities into the story.

That is how, the Deleuzo-Guattarian concept of "minority" can be associated with "what is commonly thought small" by Woolf. It is from minoritarian subsystems that lines of flight¹⁶ and deterritorialisation may take place.

¹⁵All further references to the novel will be to this edition and will be included in the text by referring to page number only.

¹⁶A line of flight is a deterritorialisation that causes an assemblage to open up towards n (an unknown future), to undergo metamorphoses. These lines are often completely unexpected, but can also be provoked or sought out. Lines of flight tend to result from molecularisation but the form and structure of molar formations is susceptible of ruptures. Whereas a third party is often responsible for introducing this kind of rupturing of the molar on purpose, molecular flows are more likely to create the circumstances for ruptures to occur. Deleuze and Guattari affirm that the rhizome: "[u]nlike a structure, which is defined by a set of points and positions, the rhizome is made only of lines; lines of segmentarity and stratification as its dimensions, and the line of flight or deterritorialization as the maximum dimension after which the multiplicity undergoes metamorphosis, changes in nature. These lines, or ligaments, should not be confused with lineages of the aborescent type, which are merely localizable linkages between points and positions...Unlike the graphic arts, drawing or photography, unlike tracings, the rhizome pertains to a map that must be produced, constructed, a map that is always

Deleuze and Guattari define the majoritarian standard as ‘the average adult-white-heterosexual-European-male-speaking a standard language.’ By being a minority, women’s power — and alternative figurations for masculinity, I would add — might not be measured by their access into the majority system. The power of these minorities may reside in the potential to create new states through the process of becoming minor, which will dismantle or deterritorialise the standard majority.

If we follow Deleuze and Guattari, we can argue that Virginia Woolf’s focus on minoritarian characters (Clarissa — a woman — and Septimus — a non-hegemonic representative of patriarchal masculinity —) and her criticism and marginalisation of majoritarian characters (representatives of patriarchy such as Hugh Whitbread, Richard Dalloway, the Prime Minister, Dr Holmes, Sir William Bradshaw) can be attributed to her concern about the potential of minorities to project lines of intensity. I will discuss this point further in my analysis of the male characters in *Mrs Dalloway* and *Orlando* in the following sections.

Woolf’s characters are dynamically attached to each other in a process of desiring connections. Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Warren Smith are constructed out of these lines of flight that make their characters flow in an on-going process of becomings. They both experience life from a cosmic dimension, from an intense collectivity-position.

...but that somehow in the streets of London, on the ebb and flow of things, here, there, she survived, Peter survived, lived in each other, she being part, she was positive, of the trees at home; of the house there, ugly, rambling all to bits and pieces as it was; part of people she had never met; being laid out like a mist between the people she

detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entranceways and exits and its own lines of flight.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 21) Therefore, they distinguish three lines of organisation: the molar, the molecular and the line of flight. While molarity is defined by structure, molar states, territorialisations, molecularity is primarily concerned with deterritorialising flows and movements that cross thresholds other than the edges traced by the molar segments. The molecular fluxes slip between the more rigid structures of our lives. The three lines are immanent; “caught up in one another.” (Deleuze & Parnet, [1977] 1987: 125) Deleuze and Parnet define the line of flight “as if something carried us away, across our segments, but also across our thresholds, towards a destination which is unknown, not foreseeable, not pre-existent. This line is simple, abstract, and yet is the most complex of all, the most tortuous.: it is the line of gravity or velocity...This line appears to arise [*surgir*] afterwards, to become detached from the two others, if indeed it succeeds in detaching itself. For perhaps there are people who do not have this line, who have only the two others, or who have only one, who live on only one.” (Deleuze & Parnet, [1977] 1987: 125)

knew best, who lifted her on their branches as she had seen the trees lift the mist, bit it spread ever so far, her life, herself. (6)

Clarissa prefers to see herself as a ‘mist’ diffused among the familiar people and places of her life — no longer, “this or that.”¹⁷ Mrs Dalloway considers herself an event, a haecceity. In *Mrs Dalloway* the simple “I,” gives way to more complex modes of individuation. Identity is a flux of sensations and attributes that can be drawn together, what Clarissa calls “apparitions, the part of us which appears.” (135) Clarissa cannot feel herself as a single identity because she feels herself “everywhere; not ‘here, here, here’...but everywhere.” (135) As a result of the synthesis of connection, desire flows freely in her, producing connections and intensities that generate new connections and intensities in a dynamic continuum that is constantly transforming and creating. Nothing is fixed, nothing is rigid, and nothing becomes a unity. Clarissa never ceases to exist as long as her microcosmic connections flow in endless becomings: “So that to know her, or any one, one must seek out the people who completed them; even the places. Odd affinities she had with people she had never spoken to, some woman in the street, some man behind a counter — even trees, or barns.” (135)

Peter Walsh, in an interior monologue, declares that Clarissa’s fear of death has motivated her to develop this transcendental understanding of life. By relying on these multiple connections she assures for herself continuity after death. In any case, despite calling at a transcendental theory,¹⁸ I would like to underline that Woolf does not believe in finite subjects but rather in complex and extended flows of assemblages.

When Clarissa perceives her subjectivity as fixed, she feels subordinated: “...this body, with all its capacities, seemed nothing — nothing at all. She had the oddest sense of being herself invisible...this being Mrs. Dalloway; not even Clarissa any more; this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway.” (8) Clarissa’s extended individuation feels threatened by confining representations such as the one of ‘the perfect wife and hostess:’ “that was her self — pointed; dartlike; definite. That was her self when some effort, some call on her to be her self, drew the

¹⁷“...she would not say of herself, I am this, I am that.” (6)

¹⁸In ‘Beyond Gender: The Example of “Mrs Dalloway”’ (1975), Michael Payne analyses the phenomenological basis of the novel: “Coming to terms with the novel’s strategy of transcendence is important for three reasons: first, it generates the novel’s main structural features, the shape of the plot and the function of point of view; second, it provides the basis for understanding the character of Clarissa and the other characters in the novel who radiate out from the center which she provides; and, third, it suggests an approach to understanding Virginia Woolf’s attitude toward suicide.” (Payne, 1975: 3)

parts together, she alone knew how different, how incompatible and composed so for the world only into one centre..." (31) Clarissa perceives this unity as a contraction — "[h]ow many times she had seen her face, and always with the same imperceptible contraction!" (31) Likewise, Septimus Warren Smith also feels his self cannot be confined by the constraints of a finite subject; he feels rather a piece of a bigger cosmic apparatus. He feels a molecular connection with his surrounding reality:

...leaves were alive; trees were alive. And the leaves being connected by millions of fibres with his own body, there on the seat, fanned it up and down; when the branch stretched he, too, made that statement. The sparrows fluttering, rising, and falling in jagged fountains were part of the pattern...(18)¹⁹

As the leaves are being connected by millions of fibres with Septimus's body, characters in *Mrs Dalloway* are connected forming collectivities. Each character with his or her individuality designates a multiplicity. Each character is simultaneously in "this multiplicity and at its edge, and crosses over into the others."²⁰ Clarissa is linked with Septimus and Sally Seton, as well as she is contrasted with Sir William Bradshaw and Miss Kilman. However, while Septimus and Sally are 'embodiments of vital experience,'²¹ fluid individuations, which the novel affirms, Sir William and Miss Kilman are dictated by proportion and conversion — two paradigms that fix their subjectivities —, which the novel condemns.

The paradigmatic example of a fluid connection within this collectivity is to be found in Clarissa and Septimus, whose linking tunnels connect them to each other, although they never happen to meet. At first, Woolf had planned that "Septimus and Mrs Dalloway should be entirely dependent on each other." (Woolf, [1923-1928] 1978c: 189)²² In fact, Mrs Dalloway was intended to die:

¹⁹This reference to the leaves connecting with Septimus's body is echoed in Woolf's own memories, *Moments of Being*, when she recalls a scene in the garden at Saint Ives: "I was looking at the flower bed by the front door; "That is the whole", I said. I was looking at a plant with a spread of leaves; and it seemed suddenly plain that the flower itself was a part of the earth; that a ring enclosed what was the flower; and that was the real flower; part earth; part flower. It was a thought I put away as being likely to be very useful to me later." (Woolf, [1976] 1985: 71) Woolf's epiphany reveals her cosmic vision of the world and her focus on "what is commonly thought small."

²⁰Deleuze and Guattari are referring here to the characters in *The Waves* (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 252) and I believe it can be applied to the characters in *Mrs Dalloway*.

²¹This is an expression coined by Michael Payne in "Beyond Gender: The Example of "Mrs Dalloway"" (1975) to refer to Sally Seton and Septimus Warren Smith.

²²Letter to Gerald Brenan, 14 June 1925.

“Mrs Dalloway was originally to kill herself, or perhaps merely to die at the end of the party.”²³ However, in the last version of the novel, Septimus operates as her alter-ego. He is linked to Clarissa through his anxieties about sexuality and marriage; his anguish about life and death, sanity and insanity; and his sensitivity or openness towards his surrounding experience. They both share a cosmic vision of life.

There are two clear examples of such an overt connection. Firstly, Woolf opens the novel with an image that will be recurrent until the end. Clarissa opens the windows and plunges into her past: “What a lark! What a plunge! For so it had always seemed to her when, with a little squeak of the hinges, which she could hear now, she had burst open the French windows and plunged at Bourton into the open air.” (1)

This is an image that will resonate with Septimus’s eventual suicide. Her plunge is contrasted with Septimus’s. Whereas Clarissa’s plunge implies an energetic celebration of the intensity of life, Septimus “flung himself vigorously, violently down on to Mrs. Filmer’s area railings” (132), dramatically choosing death instead of life. However, the boundaries of binary oppositions such as sanity/insanity and death/life are not clearly defined in the novel. Septimus chooses to die but he praises life: “He did not want to die. Life was good. The sun hot.” (132) His position is ambivalent, as well as Clarissa’s. Clarissa Dalloway celebrates life but is constantly referring to and fearing death.

Secondly, Guiderius’s song from Shakespeare’s *Cymbeline* emphasises this ambivalent duality, which apart from having a structural function providing links between the scenes, it also has a thematic function, being one of the “tunnels” linking Clarissa and Septimus.

Fear no more the heat o’ th’ sun
Nor the furious winter’s rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone and ta’en thy wages.
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust. (IV.ii)

The first two lines of the song will be recurrent in Septimus’s and Clarissa’s mind throughout the novel. The “heat o’ th’ sun” will be, therefore, opposed to the “winter’s rages,” which echoes the multiple double themes (sanity/insanity; life/death) designed for *Mrs Dalloway*. Like *Cymbeline*, *Mrs Dalloway* affirms

²³Virginia Woolf’s introduction to Modern Library edition of *Mrs Dalloway* in “An introduction to *Mrs Dalloway*.” (Woolf, 1994: 549)

the potential and intensity of human existence, “the heat o’ th’ sun,” while at the same time faces death, the terrors of existence, “the furious winter’s rages.”

When Clarissa hears of Septimus’s death she needs to retreat into herself. She empathises with Septimus, and does not pity him; on the contrary, she fully understands his ambivalence towards life. Through the window she sees her neighbour going to bed, and again these little fragments of human experience remind her of the intensity of life; ‘She must assemble’ so as to keep flowing through the multiple connections of her existence.

The clock began striking. The young man had killed himself; but she did not pity him; with the clock striking the hour, one, two, three, she did not pity him, with all this going on. There! the old lady had put out her light! the whole house was dark now with this going on, she repeated, and the words came to her, Fear no more the heat of the sun. She must go back to them. But what an extraordinary night! She felt somehow very like him — the young man who had killed himself, She felt glad that he had done it; thrown it away while they went on living. The clock was striking. The leaden circles dissolved in the air. But she must go back. She must assemble. She must find Sally and Petter. And she came in from the little room. (Woolf, [1925] 2000a: 165)

Woolf describes the ambivalence of human experience; human beings may come to fear life as much as they fear death, precisely for its intensity; for Clarissa “...always had the feeling that it was very, very dangerous to live even one day.” (6) Clarissa, as Septimus, will always be “sliced like a knife through everything,” (5) occupying a position in the middle, in-between, in an on-going ambivalence that will allow her to carry out multiple ‘becomings.’

Woolf presents a different schema, one favouring rhizomatic, rather than arborified functioning, no longer operating by dualisms. Her aim is “to saturate every atom...to give the moment the whole; whatever it includes.” (Woolf, [1925-1930] 1980: 209) We could say that her writing becomes an ‘abstract machine’²⁴ in itself. Her writing is the intersection of each multiplicity, ‘becoming,’ segment, vibration. Woolf refers to her own process of writing as: “...it seems to leave me plunged deep in the richest strata of my mind. I can write & write & write now: the happiest feeling in the world.” (Woolf, [1920-1924] 1978b: 323) Her writing becomes her device to ‘world’ life experience.

²⁴“...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.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 252)

As has been shown, Woolf's mode of individuation is complex, ambivalent, collective, interconnected, creative, fluid and incommensurable. Woolf's approach to reality stems from this concept of subjectivation; reality is complex and ambivalent and can no longer be defined by dualisms. Mark Hussey²⁵ in *The Singing of the Real World: The Philosophy of Virginia Woolf's Fiction* (1986) affirms:

Virginia Woolf's art tells us not about an external, objective Reality, but about our *experience* of the world. One of the most salient points she has to make is that the experience of being in the world is different for everyone and is endless, a process of constant creativity. "Every moment", she wrote in "The Narrow Bridge of Art", "is the center and meeting-place of an extraordinary number of perceptions which have not yet been expressed. Life is always and inevitably much richer than we who try to express it" (GR, 23). In her fiction Woolf seems always to be resisting definition and closure." (Hussey, 1986: xiii)

Mark Hussey points to the fluidity of Woolf's figurations of our experience of the world. Her characterisation, and, I would say, her concept of individuation is "a process of constant creativity," of multiple 'becomings.' As Virginia Woolf acknowledges herself, life exceeds any form of representation. That is why, as Hussey states, Woolf seems to resist definition and closure; in Woolf's imagination things are no longer "this or that."

When thinking about gender, this concept of individuation beyond dualisms seems particularly fruitful. In "Erasure of Definition: Androgyny in *Mrs. Dalloway*" (1991), Nancy Taylor²⁶ considers Woolf's dismantling of a unified subject from a gender perspective:

²⁵In his influential study, Mark Hussey analyses Woolf's philosophy of identity, life, and reality. Hussey shows that Woolf conceived reality as a 'pattern in life' that exceeds language. He argues that Woolf does not believe in unified subjects: "The individual is enmeshed in the influences, relationships and possibilities of the world, caught up in the movement through time and space, and so cannot be realized as one absolute entity. If there is a unique self to be identified — a "summing-up" of the person — it must be separated from its intervolvement with the world. However, such an operation may well lead to nothing." (Hussey, 1986: 23-24) The transcendence of the self is impossible to describe. Mark Hussey is Professor at Pace University. His scholarship has focused on the study of Virginia Woolf, Masculinities, Textual Editing, Feminist Theory and his publications include the edition and introduction of Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (2005), "Bibliographical Approaches" in *Palgrave Advances in Virginia Woolf Studies* (2007), and "Literary Theory" in *Encyclopedia of Men and Masculinities* (2007).

²⁶Nancy Taylor explores the concept of androgyny in character, dramatic situation and

In her fiction, and perhaps most notably in *Mrs. Dalloway*, she further deconstructs the ideal of a unified ego by allowing typically masculine and feminine traits to be distributed among both males and females, as if traits traditionally seen as gender-related may be interchanged. Another goal of her book is to criticize the unnatural and often cruel dictates of society; but rather than identify all males with this force and all females as benign victims, she shows women who are hungry for power and men who resist it. (Taylor, 1991: 368)

Taylor argues that, in *Mrs Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf blurs the boundaries between femininity and masculinity by interchanging masculine and feminine traits among both male and female characters. Furthermore, she asserts that the novel criticises patriarchy and its complicities among both men and women. That is why she underlines the fact that some female characters adopt the patriarchal code (such as Lady Bruton or Lady Bexborough) whereas, some male characters resist it (Peter Walsh) — and challenge it (Septimus), as I will demonstrate further on.

While Taylor highlights Woolf's criticism about molar gender constructions and suggests a concept of androgyny in Woolf that proves any attempt to define characters on the basis of gender according to a prescribed code to be futile, from my point of view, Woolf pushes gender wider still. Woolf embraces life, its multiplicity and complexity, and as has been argued before, her concept of individuation surpasses any binary opposition.

The most common binary oppositions imposed upon gender and sexuality are male/female, heterosexual/homosexual, and object-choice/identification.

in her language in *Mrs Dalloway*. She believes that Peter Walsh is the most androgynous character in the novel: "Society judges him a failure because his "susceptibility" to beauty makes him laugh and cry inappropriately (disproportionately)." (Taylor, 1991: 373) According to Taylor "...the most important element in the plot reverses a patriarchal ordering of events. The heroine's closest double is male, but the man is destroyed while the woman survives; and Septimus is no knight in shining armor sacrificing his life for his damsel in distress. Holmes and Bradshaw consider themselves heroes, but Woolf shows them to be, however unintentionally, villains perpetrating the one death in the narrative." (Taylor, 1991: 375) She concludes that: "When one travels through the consciousness of many characters, any attempt to define characters on the basis of gender according to a prescribed code is futile. This reading of Woolf undercuts the value placed on society over individual, male over female, fixation over fluidity. The latter part of the pair is generally portrayed by Woolf as the more humanizing influence." (Taylor, 1991: 375) However, Taylor considers that Woolf "is aware of the need for the dual consciousness necessary for an androgyny of balance." (Taylor, 1991: 377) In my opinion, Taylor's analysis of androgyny is still trapped in a gender binary opposition, which precisely some of Woolf's characters, such as Septimus Warren Smith and Orlando, tend to deconstruct.

Following Deleuze and Guattari, when these dualisms are dealt by means of exclusive disjunctions, molar representations of gender are formed. Consequently, these molar gender formations fix the flows of desire that generate nomadic formations. In *Mrs Dalloway*, molar gender formations are contrasted with nomadic gender formations. Virginia Woolf explores gender beyond masculinity and femininity leading Septimus to a gender location ‘which has not yet been expressed.’²⁷

Gender formations produced by inclusive syntheses break the polarisation of the category ‘feminine/masculine’ and open gender to n possibilities, affirming difference and its multiplicities. Molecular gender figurations are transsexual in a molecular sense, dynamic in their tendency towards an n gender position. My analysis of Septimus Warren Smith will explore the potential of this character to project itself towards a new conception of gender. Deleuze and Guattari replace the dichotomy ‘being woman or being men’ by the action of a continuous flux of ‘becoming-woman.’ In this line of thought I will analyse how Septimus proves to be an example of ‘becoming-woman.’

If the category ‘Man’ and ‘Woman’ are taken as a result of habit-formations (social constructions that respond to patriarchal demands), then these two categories represent a rigid set of clichés among which bodies need to be defined or identified with. In so far as bodies are gendered within society, gender stands as a socially functional limitation of a body’s connective and transformational potential.

Virginia Woolf’s characters seem to represent her critical views about such limitations. In *Mrs Dalloway*, Woolf is harshly critical of the main representatives of the ‘Majoritarian Subject’ (Richard Dalloway, Sir William Bradshaw, Dr Holmes, The Prime minister, professor Brewer) and shows sympathy with ‘minoritarian’ characters.

The following section analyses male characters in *Mrs Dalloway*. On the one hand, I will analyse molar definitions of masculinity, by means of these representatives of the ‘Man Standard.’ On the other hand, my analysis of the

²⁷In this line of thought, Mezei argues in ‘Free Indirect Discourse, Gender, and Authority in *Emma*, *Howards End*, and *Mrs. Dalloway*’ (1996): “While our dilemma as readers is to untangle our response to the polyphony of voices calling to us, surely some of our delight and pleasure stems from this confusion of voices, this confusion of gender.” (Mezei, 1996: 66) According to Mezei, the narrator switches gender, and the gender of Woolf’s narrator is more indeterminate and layered. In contrast to this merging voice, Mezei analyses the particular ‘Proportion Speech’ associated with Sir William Bradshaw, where Woolf mimics the language of patriarchy. According to Mezei, Woolf criticises the patriarchal voice by using features of exaggeration such as capitalization, proliferation of phrases, and the highlighted language of Empire in an exaggerated manner.

dissident voices to the hegemonic discourse of masculinity will track Peter Walsh and Septimus Warren Smith, to show the potential of becoming-woman that this last character, in particular, radiates.

3.2.2 Masculine formations: Towards the becoming-woman of men in Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*

In *Mrs Dalloway*, the hegemonic or molar discourse of masculinity is articulated through juridico-political, medical and educational discourses, which both transmit and reproduce patriarchal values. That is precisely what Schlack²⁸ (1983: 58) suggests in her article "Fathers in General: The Patriarchy in Virginia Woolf's Fiction": "Be they professors, clerics, doctors, men of commerce, lawyers, politicians, or policemen, they are instruments of the patriarchy — hence tyrants in different forms," to what I would add victims and victimizers of the patriarchal discourse. Thus, patriarchy in the novel extrapolates the inherent Oedipal family structure presided by Mr Parry to the extended rule of an oppressive state power embodied by Richard Dalloway, Hugh Whitbread, and the Prime Minister as the parliament spokesmen; Dr Holmes and Sir William Bradshaw as the epitome of the medical or scientific discourse; Professor Brierly, and Mr Brewer as repositories of the academic discourse of masculinity; and Mr Browley as representative of collective thought.

From the very beginning, symbolically, the novel establishes a paradigm within which molar formations of masculinity are subverted by molecular dynamics. The whole novel is framed by "The sound of Big Ben striking the half-hour struck out between them with extraordinary vigour, as if a young man, strong, indifferent, inconsiderate, were swinging dumb-bells this way and that." (41) As most critics²⁹ have suggested, Big Ben epitomises the ineluctable

²⁸Beverly Ann Schlack describes the different layers of patriarchy in Woolf's fiction. Schlack states that for Woolf the authoritarian state is the patriarchal family expanded. In her analysis of *Mrs Dalloway*, fathers, businessmen (the male political establishment) and professionals (doctors and professors) are oppressive or ineffectual; they "manage to burden, demean, or disappoint their women." (Schlack, 1983: 53) Schlack provides a deep analysis of Woolf's criticism of patriarchy as related to female oppression. She highlights Woolf's mockery of hegemonic pomp, but she obviates the effects that this pomp has on men who are not constructed following the hegemonic parameters of masculinity.

²⁹Critics such as, Jeremy Tambling in "Repression in Mrs Dalloway's London" (1989), view Big Ben as the very embodiment of patriarchy. According to Tambling, 'mastery' in the novel is male-based and the Empire, war, and the State are proved to be structured on patriarchy. Although Tambling praises Woolf for her analysis and criticism of the patriarchal social system, he concludes that "yet though the novel would like to replace the definition and hardness of patriarchalism it might also be said that it can imagine no alternative to the rule

patriarchal law, imposing an arborescent structure and subjugating any alternative to mainstream social order. In *Mrs Dalloway*, the striking of Big Ben acts as a temporal grid to organise or fix the so often rhizomatic — dispersed and apparently disconnected — narrative.

However, such an emblem of power, directly linked to the hegemonic imposing and institutionalised discourse of masculinity, is undermined not only by the relativity and multiplicity of times in the novel, but also by the chiming of other clocks such as Saint Margaret's:

Ah, she said, St. Margaret's, like a hostess who comes into her drawing-room on the very stroke of the hour and finds her guests there already. I am not late. No, it is precisely half-past eleven, she says. Yet, though she is perfectly right, her voice, being the voice of the hostess, is reluctant to inflict its individuality. Some grief for the past eleven, she says, and the sound of St. Margaret's glides into the recesses of the heart and buries itself in ring after ring of sound, like something alive which wants to confide itself, to disperse itself, to be, with a tremor of delight, at rest — like Clarissa herself, thought Peter Walsh, coming downstairs on the stroke of the hour in white. (42-43)

While the chiming of St. Margaret is defined as something alive, which wants to confide itself, to disperse itself, Big Ben's strokes are vigorous and solid. The confrontation of these two symbols is inscribed in the dichotomy around which the main characters spin; that is to say, fixed and defined molar subject formations which accomplish hegemonic gender constructions and fluid and disperse modes of individuation which react against hegemony, by exploring and renegotiating new gender formations.

3.2.2.1 Molar masculinities: The Prime Minister, Richard Dalloway, Hugh Whitbread, Sir William Bradshaw, Dr Holmes and Professor Brierly

The male political establishment, Richard Dalloway, Hugh Whitbread, and the Prime Minister, representatives of "Big Ben's strokes," are often caricaturised through the perversity of their incompetence and superfluity. Very frequently in the novel we find an overt mockery of the hegemonic masculine pomp. That is clearly the case of Hugh Whitbread when he comes across Clarissa:

of patriarchy" (Tambling, 1989: 155) I will try to demonstrate that there are certain lines of flight that deterritorialise the molar structures of the patriarchal schema.

Hugh, intimating by a kind of pout or swell of his very well-covered, manly, extremely handsome, perfectly upholstered body ...raising his hat rather extravagantly and assuring her that she might be a girl of eighteen,...he had no heart, no brain, nothing but the manners and breeding of an English gentleman. (3-4)

Hugh displays his so internalised gentlemanly manners, which are depicted as rather extravagant and exaggerated. He is presented as a hollow character, one which embodies the ideals of molar masculinity. Virginia Woolf, from the very first pages of her novel, is critical of masculine solemnity and supremacy.

These three patriarchal tyrants are government officials, holders of the English “civilised” atrocities, such as, for instance, the war. We could argue that, from a social point of view, the Great War could have be read as an invention of Richard Dalloway and Hugh’s political detachment and their attachment to capitalism.³⁰ It was a product of the political establishment. The war is related to the ideal of ‘manliness’ fostered by traditional male culture (The majoritarian Subject) produced by the Establishment.

According to Jeremy Hawthorn³¹“...Virginia Woolf had a very clear idea of the connection between the brutality of war and the ‘screen-making habits’ of English males of the governing classes.” (Hawthorn, 1975: 31) In fact, the war is specifically associated, through Holmes and Bradshaw, with the state. An example of this is Richard’s fascination with the sumptuous myths of the great military families that Lady Bruton represents; he does not hesitate to invoke the gallant and hyper masculine military imagery when referring to this character.

Moreover, Dowling³² states that:

Richard Dalloway belongs, dinosaur like, to a passing race of fa-

³⁰David Dowling, in *Mrs Dalloway. Mapping Streams of Consciousness*, analyses characters and themes. He analyses Richard Dalloway’s political connections with the war and the effect that World War I had on both male and female lives.

³¹Jeremy Hawthorn is Professor of Modern British Literature at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. His teaching interests have centred on the novel, the short story, literary theory, and modernism. His publications include *Virginia Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway: A Study in Alienation*, (1975), *Joseph Conrad: Language and Fictional Self Consciousness* (1979), *Studying the Novel: An Introduction* (1997).

³²David Dowling is Lecturer in the English Department at the University of Iowa and has published numerous articles on American authorship and the literary marketplace. He is the author of *Capital Letters: Authorship in the Antebellum Literary Market* (2009); *Chasing the White Whale: The Moby-Dick Marathon; or, What Melville Means Today* (2010). His publishing work also includes research on British modernism; *Bloomsbury Aesthetics and the Novels of Foster and Woolf* (1985) and *Mrs Dalloway. Mapping Streams of Consciousness* (1991).

voured men who thrived in this veneer. The Political world of Richard and Hugh Whitbread was narrowly chauvinistic, being self-selected by class as well as by sex, because at this time The House of Commons represented a predominantly middle and upper-class complexion. (Dowling, 1991: 99)

Richard Dalloway and Hugh Whitbread embrace the values of the ‘Subject of enunciation,’ the ‘Majoritarian Man-Standard’ in Deleuzo-Guattarian terms, who is defined as male/white/heterosexual/speaking standard languages/property owing/urbanised.’ They foster a certain ideal of masculinity, which is legitimised by the patriarchal apparatus of the state.

Furthermore, this whole masculine paraphernalia is satirised through its most obvious emblem, the Prime Minister:

He looked so ordinary. You might have stood him behind a counter and bought biscuits —poor chap, all rigged up in gold lace. And to be fair, as he went his rounds, first with Clarissa, then with Richard escorting him, he did it very well. He tried to look somebody...this symbol of what they all stood for, English society. (152)

The Prime Minister stands, with Clarissa in her party, at the top of the stairs, as a visible symbol of the power of the ascendant classes. This symbolic position, at the top of the social hierarchy, is juxtaposed to Septimus’s, who presides the sub world of the lower classes. The Prime Minister stands for the head of this arborescent subject.

When we read this symbol in gender terms, The Prime Minister personifies the hegemonic fixed formation of masculinity. On the one hand, the Prime Minister presides over Mrs Dalloway’s microcosmic party standing as the main source of male authority; however, on the other hand, patriarchal grandiloquence is diminished by bringing his ordinariness to the fore, and by making the artificiality of gender constructs explicit. The Prime Minister is judged from the margins of English society by Ellie Henderson, an outsider spectator of the English elite, who depicts him as a puppet. She caricatures the performativity of his hyperbolic authority, and satirises the mechanisms of power displayed by English society. The molar discourse of masculinity, which the Prime Minister embraces, is undermined by one of its Others. Woolf highlights the Prime Minister’s artificiality to criticise the social conspiracy of the patriarchal state, a dangerous fraternity which can patronise social behaviour, and she chooses a minoritarian character to voice this suspicion.

In order to clarify Woolf's construction of a hegemonic paradigm of masculinity, I will analyse in detail the fixed masculine constructions displayed by both Richard Dalloway and Hugh Whitbread.

Richard embodies the archetypal land-owning gentleman; "Seriously and solemnly Richard Dalloway got on his hind legs and said that no decent man ought to read Shakespeare's sonnets because it was like listening at keyholes (besides, the relationship was not one that he approve). No decent man ought to let his wife visit a deceased wife's sister." (65-66) Here Richard is displaying two principles that inscribe him in the majoritarian discourse of masculinity; hypermasculinity³³ and the authority of the Oedipal husband.

Richard Dalloway has fully internalised the hierarchical binary opposition that defines his gender construct. As a representative of the subject of enunciation, Richard is aware of the fact that his subject position is defined as male, white and heterosexual and thus defined from what he is not, (female, non-white, homosexual). In this arborescent schema of identity, the act of reading Shakespeare's poetry is codified as an effeminate activity, which is tacitly related to Septimus's marginalised and subordinated representation of masculinity.

Apart from Richard Dalloway, there are other molar masculine figures reacting against this feminisation of reading, significantly enough, the holders of hegemony. Sally says of Hugh Whitbread that "he's read nothing, thought nothing, felt nothing;" (64) Dr Bradshaw "never had time for reading;" (85) and Lady Bruton, a phallic woman, "never read a word of poetry herself." (92)

The arborescent and majoritarian masculine insignia expels the act of reading from its imaginary. Furthermore, as Lynne Segal points out in *Slow Motion. Changing Masculinities. Changing Men*, "Shelley, Keats, and even Shakespeare, were to be attached as weak, morbid and effeminate — along with most other manifestations of artistic or intellectual activity — by late-Victorian storm-troopers of a new aggressive masculinity." (Segal, 1997: 107)

Woolf uses Shakespeare as a constant reference in the novel to connect Clarissa and Septimus. Taking into account the connotations implied in the collective thought, this reference adds a new dimension of counter narrative to both characters. Both Clarissa and Septimus are minoritarian characters in a Deleuzo-Guattarian sense, insofar as they do not belong to the majoritarian subject of enunciation.

Richard assumes that a 'decent man' should behave according to the hegemonic paradigm and he exercises his authority from his advantaged hegemonic

³³Hypermasculinity is a term borrowed from psychology and used by male studies to define the exaggeration of hegemonic and stereotypical male attitudes and constructions.

subject position within the discourse of masculinity. As a husband he invokes patriarchal authority and he seems inclined to activate the tyrannical and repressive mechanisms of the Oedipal family. In Richard's ideal of masculinity there are two clear exclusionary Others (women and homosexuals), and, thus, he makes sense of his masculinity in contrast, as anti-feminine and heterosexual.

Richard's need to reaffirm his masculinity against femininity might be associated with his relationship with his wife, who, despite the social boundaries which relegate her to the subordinated role of the compliant wife, reveals a sense of command over him: "...She could just hear the click of the handle released as gently as possible by Richard, who slipped upstairs in his socks and then, as often as not, dropped his hot-water bottle and swore! How she laughed!" (27)

Clarissa's agency and her insistence that the privacy of the soul be respected is stressed in this paragraph in her awareness of Richard's surrender to the boundaries she builds between them. Richard's submission and vulnerability in front of his wife's laughter undermines his authority as the patriarchal husband.

Another remarkable trait of Richard's molar definition of masculinity is his inability to express his emotions:

The time comes when it can't be said; one's too shy to say it, he thought, pocketing his sixpence or two of change, setting off with his great bunch held against his body to Westminster to say straight out in so many words (whatever she might think of him), holding out his flowers, "I love you." (101)...(But he could not bring himself to say he loved her; not in so many words.). (104)

His shyness might be read not only as a personal inability but also as a result of the restrictions of gender boundaries. In fact, the late-nineteenth century ideal of manhood, endorsed by different discourses such as Darwinism, was defined by a rigid athleticism, physical fitness, courage, audacity, and the suppression of emotion, as Lynne Segal (1997: 104-114) indicates. With the feminine increasingly being associated with physical weakness and emotionality, the masculine was identified with physical strength and self-reliance. In fact, the novel seems to draw on these inherited associations insofar as the great majority of wives (Whitbread's and Bradshaw's, for instance) in the novel suffer illnesses that inscribe their bodies in a weaker and inferior position in relation to their husbands.

Richard Dalloway cannot allow himself to be driven by his emotions according to the male standards he embraces. Furthermore, this emotional restriction might be connected and opposed to Septimus's "crime." Septimus punishes himself for having committed a crime, of which he is a victim — the patriarchal crime

of excluding emotion from masculine imagination. In that sense, Septimus, the dramatic victim of patriarchal authority — and a molecular subject as I will show further on —, has been forced to adopt the molar definitions of masculinity fostered by World War I. He assumes society's burden of guilt. Moreover, his guilt corresponds to the patriarchal authority he embraces through patriarchal complicity:

So there was no excuse; nothing whatever the matter, except the sin for which human nature had condemned him to death; that he did not feel. He had not cared when Evans was killed; that was worst; but all the other crimes raised their heads and shook their fingers and jeered and sneered over the rail of the bed in the early hours of the morning at the prostrate body which lay releasing its degradation; hoe he had married his wife without loving her; seduced her; outraged Miss Isabel Pole, and was so pocked and marked with vice that women shuddered when they saw him in the street. The verdict of human nature on such a wretch was death. (80)

Septimus is condemned by a system he cannot apprehend, and he reproaches himself for having attempted to follow its rules. Paradoxically, The Prime Minister, the symbol of this patriarchal logic, remains exempt from any sort of guilt, for all disgrace has been displaced onto Septimus, tormented by a feeling of having committed a crime.

Hugh Whitbread is another emblem of this hegemonic discourse of masculinity: "He was a perfect specimen of the public school type, she said. No country but England could have produced him." (64) Sally Seton refers, here, to the ideal of manhood discussed above, instilled most directly in the public schools, where rigid conformity and discipline were effected through compulsory team games, military training, poor food and spartan conditions. (Heward, 1988)³⁴ This upper/middle-class world of schooling promoted the ideals of bourgeois manhood from late-Victorian times to the 1930s in England.

Sally's identification of the master narrative of gender goes further in a previous comment: "...When Sally suddenly lost her temper, flared up, and told Hugh that he represented all that was most detestable in British middle-class

³⁴Christine Heward is a historical anthropologist interested in gender, the history of childhoods and primary schooling in the developing world. She has published extensively on masculinities including *Making a Man of Him: Parents and their Sons' Education at an English Public School 1929-1950* (1988) and masculinities in families in *Understanding Masculinities: Social Relations and Cultural Arenas* (1996). She is Senior Lecturer in the Institute of Education at the University of Warwick. UK.

life. She told him that she considered him responsible for the state of “those poor girls in Piccadilly” — Hugh, the perfect gentleman, poor Hugh! — never did a man look more horrified!” (64)

In this passage, Sally addresses peripheral subjects of British middle-class world (prostitutes), by regarding them as the result of the establishment of a hegemony which excludes and marginalises certain sectors of population. She accuses Hugh, as the representative of British middle-class, of being responsible for prostitution. Prostitution is considered an outcome of the material conditions offered to women within the patriarchal paradigm. Besides, the whole patriarchal order underpins structural inequalities within the political-economic system. This condemnation comes also from Clarissa, who asserts at a certain point: “...the Hughs and the Dalloways and all the other “perfect gentlemen” [who] would ‘stifle her soul.’” (66) Clarissa feels limited, silenced, oppressed by the patriarchs.

Sally attacks patriarchy by accusing it of ghettoising the Other — in this case, women — through hierarchical power structures; that is to say, “a world of separate objects, with policeman, church and parliament associating this atomism with the masculinity that Virginia Woolf connected with authority and state.” (Hawthorn, 1975: 88) As Hawthorn suggests, Woolf denounces the repressive authority of the state and criticises its patriarchal agenda.

Both Hugh and Richard follow *The Times*, the repository of tradition and Englishness, and therefore, the emblem of patriarchal comradeship. Richard reads *The Times* and invokes tradition nostalgically: “...looking at the memorial to Queen Victoria (whom he could remember in her horn spectacles driving through Kensington), its white mound, its billowing motherliness; but he liked being ruled by the descendant of Horsa; he liked continuity; and the sense of handing on the traditions of the past. It was a great age in which to have lived.” (103) In addition, Hugh writes letters to *The Times*. Both of them are seduced by symbols of tradition and despite being reformists, Virginia Woolf exposes a philanthropic male attempt by emphasising their chauvinism.

The male political establishment is matched by the patriarchal structure of Clarissa’s family, hinted at in the narration. Clarissa’s father, Justin Parry, is established as a stable source of authority in her family microstructure. What is more, Dowling (1991: 110) refers to the significance of his name as connoting justice as well as warfare, both male preserves. His presence is very strong in Clarissa’s memories of Bourton; we do not learn much about her mother, otherwise. Her absence may be read as a metaphor of the marginal position women have occupied throughout mainstream discourses of History. In addition, Mr Parry’s authority is apprehended by Aunt Helen, the repository of tradition

(patriarchal socially accepted principles). When Mr Parry dies, she fills his absence by adopting the oppressive language of patriarchy.

The medical-scientific discourse of masculinity is embodied by Dr Holmes and Sir William Bradshaw. They are at the top of this medicalised society inscribed in this privileged nature of the medical discourse in nineteenth and twentieth century Western societies, in which medical knowledge implies power and a means of social control since it contains the potential to establish and define normality and abnormality; that is to say, the centre and margins of a certain society. Doctors may be seen as the official guardians of mental and moral stability, the apostles of persuasion and proportion, instilled by the hegemonic masculine rationale. Maria DiBattista³⁵ suggests:

The generate, despotic utopias of Holmes and Bradshaw can only exist by enforcing the law of compulsive physical and spiritual conformity. Such utopias represent totalitarian social forms in which no exit, no protest is possible; their moral closure never admits of an opening. Men must not weigh less than eleven stone six and must accept, without appeal, the partial judgement that “this is sense, this madness” as the final, irrevocable decree of the goddess Proportion. (DiBattista, 1980a: 63)

If proportion is Bradshaw’s term for conventional, rigid or molar formulae for subjectivity, conversion is the means by which these formulae are imposed upon individuals. For Sir William, the distinction between normal and marginal behaviour is to be violently maintained by the imposition of his own will-power, and by the “conversion” of the periphery to the centre. In order to answer Septimus’s question “ ‘Must’, ‘must’, why ‘must’? What power had Bradshaw over him? ‘What right has Bradshaw to say ‘must’ to me?’ ” (130) we should take into account that Sir William Bradshaw is the authoritarian figure of social tyranny, the administrator and executor of the law of social stability: “...there was no alternative. It was a question of law.” (85)

However, the text suggests all of his colleagues’ admiration, the fear of his subordinates, and the medical institution are grounded on a gloomy and vain personal longing for power: “Naked, defenceless, the exhausted, the friendless received the impress of Sir William’s will. He swooped; he devoured. He shut

³⁵Maria DiBattista is Professor at Princeton University. She specialises in twentieth century literature and film, the European novel and narrative theory. Her books include *Virginia Woolf: The Fables of Anon* (1980), *First Love: The Affections of Modern Fiction* (1991), as co-editor and contributor, *High and Low Moderns: British Literature and Culture 1889-1939* (1997), *Fast Talking Dames* (2003) and, *Imagining Virginia Woolf* (2008).

people up.” (90) As a result, his ambition for social control unmasks an underlain manipulation.

Dr Holmes, “the repulsive brute, with the blood-red nostrils” (81), is the perfect repository of socially accepted behaviour. His advice for Septimus is: “Throw yourself into outside interests; take up some hobby. He opened Shakespeare — Antony and Cleopatra; pushed Shakespeare aside.” (80) Once more, the hegemonic censor excludes the effeminate act of reading Shakespeare from his ideal of masculinity by revealing an obvious homophobic attitude. Since Dr Holmes does not know how to handle Septimus’s breakdown, he averts its existence by minimising it.

From a gender perspective, Dr Holmes’s discourse of masculinity obviates any alternative definition, which is not socially legitimised. He is unable to deal with the patriarchal atrocities Septimus denounces through his repressed alternative discourse of masculinity because he is too immersed and comfortable in the hegemony to admit the flaws of patriarchy. Likewise, we should read his insistence on a husband’s duty towards his wife — “Didn’t one owe perhaps a duty to one’s wife?” (81) — as an attempt to impose the compulsory canons of masculinity. Holmes’s arborescent subjectivity cannot come to terms with the molecular dispersion presented by Septimus; Holmes’s rigid and defined pattern of individuation, cannot cope with the lines of flight underpinned by Septimus.

In 1922 the British parliament presented *The Report of the War Office Committee*.³⁶ According to Sue Thomas (1987), *the Report* was tainted by Proportion and Conversion and it validated and entrenched British public school ideals of character — a set of specific ideals of manhood, as has been discussed above. In that sense, she suggests an intertextual relationship between the novel and *The Report*. She suggests that therapies for shell shock recommended in *The Report* are the same as those that Woolf outlines as Dr Holmes and Bradshaw’s practice in treating Septimus. While *The Report* depicts ‘persuasion’ as a suitable treatment by appealing to the patient’s social self-esteem, similarly, Dr Holmes tries to appeal to Septimus’s social self-esteem as an English husband.

Septimus commits suicide to escape from Dr Holmes’s and Sir William Bradshaw’s impositions: proportion and conversion. Whilst *The Report* insists on the strategic importance of the dominating personality of the doctor in the therapeutic encounter, Sir William Bradshaw’s commanding behaviour towards Septimus and Rezia asserts his ability to dominate them. He establishes or imposes such patterns and rhythms at the psychiatrist’s office; firstly, Sir William Bradshaw orders to talk to Rezia; secondly, he lets Septimus come into the

³⁶*Report of the War Office Committee in English Parliamentary Papers*, XII, 1922.

room; and finally, he decides when to finish the visit.

Holmes and Bradshaw are the emblems of medical patriarchal authority, and they are responsible for Septimus's disgrace, an extended disgrace to the periphery of the hegemonic patriarchal core. Clarissa disapproves of their despotism and satirises Bradshaw's skills as a doctor:

...Sir William Bradshaw, a great doctor, yet to her obscurely evil, without sex or lust, extremely polite to women, but capable of some indescribable outrage — forcing your soul, that was it — if this young man had gone to him, and Sir William had impressed him, like that, with his power, might he not then have said (indeed she felt it now), Life is made intolerable; they make life intolerable, men like that? (163)

Bradshaw's life is governed by a sense of proportion since he cannot cope with a society that permits deviation from what he regards as normal. However, patriarchal power is again subverted by Woolf's satire: "But Sir William Bradshaw stopped at the door to look at a picture. He looked in the corner for the engraver's name. His wife looked too. Sir William Bradshaw was so interested in art." (171) Ironically, he is as interested in arts as he is in his patients. Just as he values the picture according to its signature by ignoring the rest, he is completely unsympathetic to his patients. Ultimately, institutional male power is undermined by his vanity.

The educational discourse of masculinity is voiced by "the Professor on Milton, the Professor on moderation," Professor Brierly:

Professor Brierly was a very queer fish. With all those degrees, honours, lectureships between him and the scribblers, he suspected instantly an atmosphere not favourable to his queer compound; his prodigious learning and timidity; his wintry charm without cordiality; his innocence blent with snobbery; he quivered if made conscious, by a lady's unkempt hair, a youth's boots, of an underworld, very creditable doubtless, of rebels, of ardent young people; of would-be geniuses...(156)

Schlack points out how Woolf's fictional professors fare as badly as the clergy, and she refers to them by quoting Woolf herself, as belonging to the same clamouring class of "fathers in general," the "bishops and the deans, the doctors and the professors, the patriarchs and the pedagogues all." (Schlack, 1983: 64)

Another tyrant of social control, Professor Brierly, could not lecture on a more emblematic and representative author of the literary phallogocentric canon.

Brierly epitomises this deeply rooted masculine equation established by the universe inscribed in *Paradise Lost*. His sense of moderation is strictly related to the Miltonian tradition, and as an advocate of this tradition, he does not tolerate any subversion, for what he hates are rebels and anything threatening.

Brierly embraces Western logocentrism, which has claimed the supremacy of meta-narratives such as male chauvinism. By taking this patriarchal logic as a point of reference, values like proportion and moderation are coupled with the oppressive use of authority they arouse. Woolf relates the medical and the educational discourse through their “goddesses” — moderation and proportion³⁷ —, which accentuate the common ground these two discourses support. Both medicine and education embrace and promote the molar hegemonic discourse of masculinity.

Proportion, conversion, moderation define the paradigm of the rigid molar formations of masculinity, grounded on gender binary oppositions (male/female, heterosexual/homosexual, and object-choice/identification). Whereas molar male characters are structured around proportion and moderation, molecular male characters — like Septimus Warren Smith — have a sense of excess, limitlessness and fluidity.

3.2.2.2 The anti-femininity of molar masculinities and female mimicry of patriarchal power

The masculine hegemony in the novel, described in the previous section, establishes the patriarchal equation between the central One and the peripheral Other. Despite the masculine Others I will analyse further on, the absolute marginalised object within a patriarchal paradigm is one at the bottom of the social hierarchy of power — women. Women remain at the bottom of the patriarchal scale being unable to activate mechanisms such as complicity or male corporativism.

Furthermore, the power relations that emerge from this tension nurture the hegemonic discourse of masculinity, which ultimately defines its core as intrinsically anti-feminine. My intention here is to analyse the power relations that emerge around masculinity within femininity itself and to conclude with my analysis of the hegemonic definition of masculinity in the novel by pointing to its strong anti-femininity.

³⁷“Proportion, divine proportion, Sir William’s goddess...” (87)

The most obvious representatives of otherness in this system are those women who submit to the patriarchal law of proportion and conversion; Mrs Foxcroft and Lady Bexborough, Lady Bruton or Lady Bradshaw. The pattern of male control and female weakness is established amongst the upper classes in the novel. Bradshaw, Whitbread, and Dalloway have wives defined by weakness, symbolised by their physical illnesses. The diagram is only reversed by Septimus Smith, who must be looked after by Rezia. The hegemonic construction of masculinity is defined within this binary opposition: strength/weakness, autonomous/dependent, male/female.

Lady Bradshaw, of whom we do not even know her first name, is depicted as a puppet trained and limited by her husband: "Fifteen years ago she had gone under. It was nothing you could put your finger on; there had been no scene, no snap; only the slow sinking, waterlogged, of her will into his. Sweet was her smile, swift her submission." (88) Her subordination to her husband's authority is related to her internalised hierarchical gender binary, by which Mrs Whitbread is likewise trapped: "She was one of those obscure mouse-like little women who admire big men." (65) Lady Bradshaw draws "Mrs Dalloway into the shelter of a common femininity, a common pride in the illustrious qualities of husbands" (162) in the party, by performing her role as the perfect compliant wife. She is the victim of Sir William's will-to-power which is a determination to eradicate difference. Her subordination nurtures and reinforces the hegemony of Bradshaw's masculinity.

Similarly, Clarissa is described sarcastically by Peter Walsh as:

In all this there was a great deal of Dalloway, of course; a great deal of the public-spirited, British Empire, tariff-reform, governing-class spirit, which had grown on her, as it tends to do. With twice his wits, she had to see things through his eyes — one of the tragedies of married life. With a mind of her own, she must always be quoting Richard — as if one couldn't know to a title what Richard thought by reading the *Morning Post* of a morning! (67)

Clarissa's decision to marry Richard is far more complicated, since, despite her submission to patriarchy in macro social terms, she achieves a personal space of freedom. In any case, Clarissa would have been subordinated to Richard or Peter's male authority. By marrying Richard, Clarissa enters the mainstream heterosexual social universe which defines her as invisible:

That she held herself well was true; and had nice hands and feet; and dressed well, considering that she spent little. But often now

this body she wore (she stopped to look at a picture), this body, with all its capacities, seemed nothing — nothing at all. She had the oddest sense of being herself invisible; unseen; unknown; there being no more marrying, no more having of children now, but only this astonishing and rather solemn progress with the rest of them, up Bond Street, this being Mrs. Dalloway; not even Clarissa any more; this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway. (7-8)

Clarissa's identity is completely reframed in Mrs Dalloway's imaginary. She is dispossessed of her name by the patriarchal social rearrangement of marriage, by adopting a marginal subject position within the public male-centred values of London. Her position is, however, ambivalent.

Her personal detachment and preservation of her privacy stand as attempts to free herself from the subordinating rules of patriarchal society. Nevertheless, her subject position is ambivalent since she has internalised the grand narrative of gender and she is indicted by patriarchal splendour. Virginia Woolf ridicules Clarissa's objects of veneration — Royalty, the Empire, the Government — and satirical tones are applied to the description of the VIP's car.

'Mastery' and authority are male-based, and those women who exercise any power in the novel borrow male codes such as stoicism. Lady Bexborough, for instance, shows the same toughness and emotional repression required from Septimus, and she adopts a mask of heroic stoicism when she hears about about her son's death.

Lady Bruton is closely related to the martial images that her military ancestors adopt: "Lady Bruton raised the carnation, holding them rather stiffly with much the same attitude with which the General held the scroll in the picture behind her...She should have been a general of dragoons herself." (92) She is caricaturised by hyperbolic anti-feminine icons, such as for instance, her unlady-like-way of snoring after Hugh and Richard have left her. She repudiates the effeminate process of reading. Furthermore, by rejecting reading Shakespeare she, significantly, adopts a hegemonic formulae of masculine representation;

For she never spoke of England, but this isle of men, this dear, dear land, was in her blood (without reading Shakespeare), and if ever a woman could have worn the helmet and shot the arrow, could have led troops to attack, ruled with indomitable justice barbarian hordes and lain under a shield noseless in a church, or made a green grass mound on some primeval hillside, that woman was Millicent Bruton. (159-160)

Although Lady Bruton, the phallic woman, adopts the masculine masquerade and intrudes into the public political sphere, she still needs Hugh Whitbread's support in order to write to *The Times*: "Debarred by her sex, and some truancy, too, of the logical faculty (she found it impossible to write a letter to the *Times*..." (159) Instead of being an exemplar she is depicted as dangerous, she has been co-opted into the male system, and there is little to separate her from Lady Bradshaw, the 'typical successful man's wife'; "After a morning's battle beginning, tearing up, beginning again, she used to feel the futility of her own womanhood as she felt it on no other occasion, and would turn gratefully to the thought of Hugh Whitbread who possessed — no one could doubt it — the art of writing letters to the *Times*."³⁸ (96) Lady Bruton follows masculine codes in order to have access to the political male dominated establishment but she does not endorse its patriarchal basis. In fact, Lady Bruton subverts the oppressive role that the patriarchal social system attributes to women. However, her attempt to break with her own domesticity is undermined by her compliance with the patriarchal construction of female inferiority, at the same time.

Doris Kilman is also seduced by the patriarchal rhetoric of authority. She has been persuaded by another masculine organism, the church, infused with an institutional despotic use of power. Woolf equates the religious and the scientific professions by blaming both for their patriarchal origin and essence. Kilman fosters the masculine values of persuasion and domination, especially over Elizabeth. Traditionally masculine and logocentric systems such as History, Education and Religion appeal to her.

J.A. Wallace³⁹ (1985) contrasts Clarissa's and Doris Kilman's different versions of the problem of being a female body in a patriarchal culture. Wallace suggests that both Clarissa and Doris internalise the ambivalence they feel about their bodies, and both of them articulate this ambivalence only through either denial or mistreatment of their bodies. While both feel threatened by their inscription within patriarchal culture, they each respond differently. On the one

³⁸Special attention has been drawn to reproduce Woolf's spelling, following the edition that is being referred.

³⁹Jo-Ann Wallace is Associate Dean at the University of Alberta. Her teaching areas include feminist theory, biography, literary modernism, and studies in "the child" and children's literature. She co-authored *Women Artists and Writers: Modernist (Im)Positionings* (1994) with art historian Bridget Elliott. Other recent publications include articles or chapters on early 20th century missionary work in India, feminism and advocacy, feminist campaigns against contagious diseases acts in late 19th-century India, recent controversies within Canadian universities (equity issues, cultural studies), women's literary history, feminist theories of the body, and children's literature and postcolonial theory.

hand, Clarissa responds by withdrawing from her own body at the same time as she invests everyday life and the ordinary moment with significance. On the other hand, Doris puts her faith in those very phallogocentric systems which have excluded and marginalised her. However, she is unable to fully invade the male-dominated teaching profession. She has no professional credentials and she is relegated to tutoring the daughter of educated men. To counteract her inferiority, she directs her anger against women who have ingratiated themselves with males in power.

She is a ‘phallic woman’ — as Lady Bruton —, who identifies with ‘the Law of the Father’ by denying her femaleness, that is to say, the established discourse of femininity. She hates Clarissa’s female delicacy and feminine aesthetics, and she rejects feminine signs such as fashionable clothing; she does not ‘dress to please.’ Minow-Pinkney⁴⁰ ([1987] 2010: 73) supports this view: “because of her inferior class-position, Kilman has had to adopt the most aggressive masculine values to secure a niche for herself.” Miss Kilman has to renegotiate her gender and class codes in order to counteract her double marked social position. She is dominated by the male stigma of ‘conversion’ and even her love for Elizabeth becomes a greedy desire for possession. By conforming to male society, she has to repress the maternal and the body — as Clarissa has.

Minow-Pinkney states:

By making Kilman so distastefully aggressive, the novel encourages us to discount her attack on Clarissa’s complicity with the patriarchy, the contradiction that she depends on an imperialistic society to afford the material conditions for the possibility of values — ‘the privacy of the soul’ (140) — which that society at the same time negates. (Minow-Pinkney, [1987] 2010: 74)

Miss Kilman might embody, once more, the danger for women who adopt the male-centred paradigm in order to secure a place for themselves in the masculine despotic utopia, by internalising and activating the oppressive mechanisms of

⁴⁰Makiko Minow-Pinkney is a Woolf scholar and a Senior Lecturer in English in the School of Arts, Media and Education at the University of Bolton. She has published widely on Virginia Woolf. She was awarded a Research Investment Grant by the University of Bolton in January 2008 and is currently working on a volume of her Selected Essays on Virginia Woolf to follow up her first book *Virginia Woolf and the Problem of the Subject* (1987); some of its chapters are to be published separately as “Virginia Woolf and Entertaining” (2010), “Two Sketches of Carlyle’s House” (2010). Her research interests include Virginia Woolf, modernism, women’s writing, literary and cultural theory (particularly feminist and psychoanalytic theory).

patriarchy. According to Sypher⁴¹ (1996), Miss Kilman is the most complex and challenging allusion to the ‘New Woman’ in Woolf’s fiction. Despite being a single and professional woman, Miss Kilman’s autonomy is undermined by her envy of Clarissa. Kilman becomes associated with the most detestable examples of patriarchal oppression. Just as Bradshaw and Holmes want to manage Septimus, so Kilman wants to control Clarissa and Elizabeth and she is able to activate the oppressive machinery of patriarchy in order to achieve her goals.

As well as dealing with the main sources of institutional power, the novel explores, what could be characterised as the most influential legitimising social mechanism; the collective thought. The following passage appears simple but refers to this patriarchal collective thought:

The aeroplane turned and raced and swooped exactly where it liked, swiftly, freely, like a skater —
 “That’s an E” said Mrs. Bletchley —
 or a dancer —
 “It’s toffee” murmured Mr. Bowley — (17)

Although the passage appears simple, in this conversation between Mrs Bletchley and Mr Bowley a widespread male chauvinism is detectable in Mr Bowley’s assertive and arrogant statement. His overconfidence in decoding the message written by the plane authorises his reading and marginalises Mrs Bletchley’s. He patronises her; he makes her sound naive, by imposing his line of thought without allowing any dissenting voice. These two minor characters lack an individual subjectivity and they embody the “common sense” of this society.

Furthermore, other instances, such as the party, depict this social imaginary in which masculinity and femininity are mutually exclusive entities: “The ladies were going upstairs already, said Lucy; the ladies were going up, one by one, Mrs. Dalloway walking last and almost always sending back some message to the kitchen...There was a motor at the door already! There was a ring at the bell — and the gentlemen still in the dining-room, drinking tokay!” (146-147) Men

⁴¹Eileen Sypher is Professor *Emeritus* of English at George Mason University. Her work focuses on the nineteenth and twentieth century British novel. Her teaching interests include George Eliot and Virginia Woolf, domestic ideology and space, nineteenth and twentieth century literature. Among her publications we can highlight her book, *Wisps of Violence* (1993), focused on reading the relationship between the representation of gender roles and public politics in the turn-of-the-century British novel. She has also published essays on George Eliot and Virginia Woolf.

gather together, drink tokay, while women go upstairs together led by social gender-based codes of behaviour. Those separate bondings maintain and reveal the hegemonic constructions of femininity and masculinity Woolf criticises in the novel.

3.2.3 Molecular masculinities

Scientific, religious, and heroic faiths were devastated by World War I. The aeroplane, the monument of Queen Victoria, and the Prime Minister's car, are master emblems which are contested by some of the characters in the novel. Having analysed the Establishment, molar figurations of masculinity in detail, the following section is devoted to the subordinated discourses of masculinity which project lines of flight and deterritorialisation.⁴²

3.2.3.1 Peter Walsh: A debate between molar and molecular figurations

Is Peter Walsh a real outsider? Peter's definition of masculinity is ambivalent and paradoxical. He attacks and mocks the hegemonic definitions of masculinity, being sceptical of the official male pomp, and addresses his most aggressive criticism to those who embody this masculine rhetoric, such as, for example, Hugh Whitbread:

A privileged but secretive being, hoarding secrets which he would die to defend, though it was only some little piece of little-tattle dropped by a court footman which would be in all the papers tomorrow.

⁴²According to Alex Zwerdling: "The fundamental conflict in *Mrs. Dalloway* is between those who identify with Establishment "dominion" and "leadership" and those who resist or are repelled by it. The characters in the novel can be seen as ranged on a sort of continuum with Bradshaw at one end and Septimus at the other...the characters at the Establishment end of the scale: Sir William, Hugh Whitbread, Lady Bruton, Miss Parry, and Richard Dalloway. Among the rebels (present or former) we must count Septimus Smith, Doris Kilman, Sally Seton, and Peter Walsh, though there are important distinctions among them. And in the center of this conflict — its pivot, so to speak — stands Clarissa Dalloway." (Zwerdling, 1988: 154) These attempts to break with the Establishment, described by Zwerdling, are not always real. In my opinion, Zwerdling overlooks the real dissident voices in the novel by categorising as rebels characters that hold different relations to power. Sally Seton and Doris Kilman are trapped in the hegemonic network of femininity. Whereas Doris, the emblematic feminist is betrayed by her envy towards Clarissa, Sally, the young transgressor, ultimately inscribes her femininity in the epitome of female socially accepted attitudes — she is a happy married mother. As I will show in the following section, Septimus Warren Smith is the real outsider of the story.

Such were his rattles, his baubles, in playing with which he had grown white, come to the verge of old age, enjoying the respect and affection of all who had the privilege of knowing this type of the English public school man. (153)

Walsh does not conform to the established masculine institutions; he was expelled from the University of Oxford, an icon of Englishness and English canonical gender patterns, and he fails in the institution of marriage, since he was rejected by the woman he loved, divorced his first wife, and is about to marry a younger lady with whom he is, apparently, not in love.

Moreover, he is unconventional according to the molar standards of masculinity of his society: “It was this that made him attractive to women, who liked the sense that he was not altogether manly. There was something unusual about him, or something behind him. It might be that he was bookish- never came to see you without taking up the book on the table (he was now reading, with his bootlaces trailing on the floor);” (138)

Here we have, once more, another reference to a male construct; the effeminacy of reading. Peter Walsh rejects the exclusion of reading from his masculine paradigm, and he tries to renegotiate his own understanding of masculinity with the dominant gender discourse. He is not what a man was expected to be according to the hegemony of his time, since he does not adjust to what it was required from the Establishment:

He was the best judge of cooking in India. He was a man. But not the sort of man one had to respect — which was a mercy; not like Major Simmons, for instance; not in the least like that, Daisy thought, when in spite of her two small children, she used to compare them. (138)

Walsh is opposed to the military man; the epitome of the molar discourse of masculinity, and his masculinity is constructed as a contesting alternative voice to the hegemony. He is not an authoritarian man.

Peter Walsh breaks with the emotional constraints in which Richard is confined. He is openly emotional and when he meets Clarissa again: “...suddenly thrown by those uncontrollable forces thrown through the air, he burst into tears; wept without the least shame, sitting on the sofa, the tears running down his cheeks.” (40) Peter Walsh challenges the rigid boundaries between femininity and masculinity in patriarchal society, by adopting roles that are typically associated with women. He merges these social codes ‘without the least shame.’

Nonetheless, Peter Walsh is not a real outsider. His definition of masculinity is more fluid than the molar constructions of ‘the Dalloways and Whitbreads’ but still he relies on a solid identity that is grounded on the arborescent structure of patriarchy.

Peter Walsh does not hesitate to display his gentleman’s manners: “...he was a gentleman, which showed itself in the way he knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and in his manners of course to women.” (138) Whereas he patronises the repositories of social convention — the Dalloways and the Whitbreads’ microcosm —, Peter’s new understanding of masculinity is bound up in the patriarchal binary rationale. Despite defining himself as an outsider of the English Establishment, he is trapped in its core by internalising dominant gender inscriptions. He is a rebel but he is undoubtedly committed to a gender *status quo*.

Therefore, immediately after his emotional outburst he describes his reaction in the language of patriarchy: “...overcome with shame suddenly at having been a fool; wept; been emotional; told her everything, as usual, as usual.” (42) His sense of shame has been filtered through hegemonic masculine imagery. By codifying his response by means of the patriarchal icons of masculinity, Walsh reads and marks his emotional exhibitionism as feminised and his masculinity is, consequently, minimised by menacing fragility.

As a result, he feels threatened by being relegated to a peripheral position in patriarchal terms. That is why his masculine fantasies, which precede Clarissa’s meeting, counteract his fear of disempowerment.

He was an adventurer, reckless, he thought, swift, daring, indeed (landed as he was last night from India) a romantic buccaneer, careless of all these damned properties, yellow dressing-gowns, pipes, fishing-rods, in the shop windows; and respectability and evening parties and spruce old men wearing white slippers beneath their waistcoats. He was a buccaneer. (46)

He fantasises about being an adventurer, a romantic buccaneer and a solitary traveller, three emblematic figures of the masculine imaginary, which mirror the gendered-based ‘Byronic hero’. Peter’s romantic ideals are inspired by the gender boundaries of bourgeois liberalism. He is a socialist who revolts against convention but he is still coerced by oppressive gender structures.

His alternative attempt to break with the hegemonic definitions of masculinity, his ‘unmanliness’, is undermined by his inability to escape from a patriarchal complicity, through a sentimental admiration of patriarchal civilisation. He feels an admiration for doctors and men of business, whom he despises at the same time, as has been argued above.

...there were moments when civilisation, even of this sort, seemed dear to him as a personal possession; moments of pride in England; in butlers; chow dogs; girls in their security. Ridiculous enough, still there it is, he thought. And the doctors and men of business and capable women all going about their business, punctual, alert, robust, seemed to him wholly admirable, good fellows, to whom one would entrust one's life, companions in the art of living, who would see one through. (46-48)

Peter Walsh is completely charmed by the pomp of Empire. He worships the ideal of civilisation: "One of the triumphs of civilisation, Peter Walsh thought. It is one of the triumphs of civilisation, as the light high bell of the ambulance sounded." (133) Ironically, Peter's devotion for the symbols of civilisation is dramatically linked to Septimus's death.

It is precisely Peter's object of veneration what triggers Septimus's suicide. Paradoxically, the civilised world is condemned by the most uncivilised attitudes. Thereby, that very same civilisation which Peter Walsh admires is responsible for the oppression of dissident voices. Septimus Warren Smith could not live under the inflexible constraints of proportion and moderation.

If we read Septimus's rejection of proportion and moderation in gender terms, we can affirm that Septimus does not fit into the molar construction of masculinity. His gender identity exceeds the limits of proportion and moderation and the only way he is able to free himself from those impositions is suicide. The representatives of molar masculinities force Septimus to death. Bradshaw's confining treatment is nothing but a little piece of a whole patriarchal machinery that dictates arborescent patterns of existence. In fact, Peter's complicity with patriarchy makes him responsible for Septimus's marginalisation and ultimate death. As Showalter⁴³ says: "Behind his mask of masculine bravado is an immature man who cannot reconcile his alleged ideas with his real feelings and acts." (Showalter, 1992: xiv)

His affiliation with patriarchal standards is especially significant when he deals with femininity: "But women, he thought, shutting his pocket-knife, don't

⁴³Elaine Showalter is an American literary critic, feminist, and writer on cultural and social studies. She is one of the founders of feminist literary criticism in United States academia, developing the concept and practice of gynocritics. Best known in academic and popular cultural fields, she has written and edited numerous books and articles focused on a variety of subjects, from feminist literary criticism to fashion. Her publishing work includes *A Literature of their Own: British Women novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (1977), *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980* (1985), (edited *9 New feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory* (1985), *Teaching Literature* (2003).

know what passion is. They don't know the meaning of it to men." (70) Peter is naive about women's capacity to understand men's nature, and he is chauvinistic by presupposing and establishing the opposition between female passivity and male activity; women do not know what passion is. When he contrasts Sally with Clarissa, he categorises "the Angel in the House" as the essential epitome for femininity; women who operate according to the patriarchal social standards: "Beneath, she was very shrewd — a far better judge of character than Sally, for instance, and with it all, purely feminine; with that extraordinary gift, that woman's gift, of making a world of her own wherever she happened to be." (66)

In the passage on the "solitary traveller" Peter begins by imagining "the grey nurse" and metamorphosing her into different clichés of women: the nymph, the Virgin Mary, a mermaid, and so on. He constructs women into a three fold iconography: the temptress, the mother, or the maid. He refuses to treat women as equal individuals by embracing essentialist ideals of gender constructions: "And behind it all was that network of visiting, leaving cards, being kind to people; running about with bunches of flowers, little presents; So-and-so was going to France — must have an air-cushion; a real drain on her strength; all that interminable traffic that women of her sort keep up; but she did it genuinely, from a natural instinct." (67-68) His ideas of femininity are deterministic, since he assumes that "pure femininity" is biologically determined. Biological determinism, thus, is a key element in Peter's simplification of women to his threefold pattern.

According to Henke⁴⁴, "Peter is a notorious womaniser." (Henke, 1981a: 135) He tries to project onto Clarissa his image of her as the passionate romantic committed lover in order to establish himself authoritatively as the object of veneration. Nonetheless, he cannot handle Clarissa's need for privacy, because, in gender terms, he expels this claim for autonomy from his definition of femininity. Furthermore, he reads her privacy and autonomy as a castrating threat to his superior position in the hierarchical binary opposition of gender, which is constructed within the patriarchal imagination. Peter Walsh equates with other representatives of hegemony; he and Dr Holmes are both guilty of wanting to force another person's soul to fulfill their own expectations. Furthermore, the relationship between Peter and Clarissa is trapped in the constraints of gender

⁴⁴Suzette Henke is a Woolf/Joyce scholar and Thruston B. Morton Senior Professor of Literary Studies at the University of Louisville. Her research interests focus on Modern British and American Literatures, Irish Literature, Women's Studies, Auto/Biography Studies, Critical Theory, and Postcolonial Literature. Her publishing work includes *Shattered Subjects: Trauma And Testimony in Women's Life-Writing* (1998), *James Joyce and the Politics of desire* (1990), and *Virginia Woolf and Trauma: Embodied Texts* (2007).

oppositions and sexual politics and these boundaries are perceived by Clarissa as oppressive.

By marrying Daisy, Peter reveals his need to reaffirm his role as a patriarch since, following Henke (1981a: 133), “Daisy will desert her own children, ‘sacrifice all’ and offer him the flattering idolatry of girlish infatuation.” Henke reads Peter Walsh’s contradictions in terms of infantilism, as the perpetual child; Peter chooses a younger Daisy to assert his youth, vitality and potency. I would rather consider his anxiety in gender terms. From my point of view, Peter Walsh tries to find a woman who accomplishes his ideals of pure femininity, in order for him not to lose his position in the hierarchical power structures, which makes him come to terms with hegemonic masculine mechanisms.

Many critics have commented on the significance of his pocketknife (Laeska, 1977: 100; Waugh, 1989: 118; Batchelor, 1991: 80-84; Minow-Pinkney, [1987] 2010: 68), and most agree about its phallic quality. Peter Walsh plays with his pocketknife whenever his identity is in danger. This is the weapon that he uses to protect himself from marginalisation. As a transcendent signifier, the pocketknife connotes the sexual impulse that Peter Walsh experiences.

This is especially clear in Peter and Clarissa’s first meeting: “She made to hide her dress, like a virgin protecting chastity, respecting privacy... ‘And what’s all this?’ he said, tilting his pen-knife towards her green dress.” (34) Significantly, Peter intrudes into Clarissa’s privacy by holding his knife in his hand. Peter embodies a masculine, sexual threat to Clarissa’s psychic autonomy which she cannot endure.

Minow-Pinkney reads this scene in terms of sexual abuse (rape): “Her sewing up of the dress becomes the restricting into wholeness of a hymen which Walsh constantly threatens to tear.” (Minow-Pinkney, [1987] 2010: 68) I would rather focus on the discursive dimensions involved. That is to say, Peter’s discourse of masculinity needs the opposition and submission of Clarissa’s femininity: “What an extraordinary habit that was, Clarissa thought; always playing with a knife. Always making one feel, too, frivolous; empty-minded; a mere silly chatterbox, as he used. But I too, she thought, and taking up her needle, summoned, like a Queen whose guards have fallen asleep and left her unprotected...” (37)

Clarissa juxtaposes the power of the masculine phallus with feminine defenceless. She identifies the martial violence aroused by Peter’s pocketknife and she assumes female fragile domesticity. Whereas weapons and the military paraphernalia are strictly associated in the novel with a masculine rationale, images of threads, sewing, and knotting become the symbols of women’s imagination. Virginia Woolf is aware of the patriarchal division of male public sphere and the

female domestic sphere.⁴⁵ There is only one character that blurs the boundaries of this division; the real outsider of the story, Septimus Warren Smith.

3.2.3.2 The becoming-woman of Septimus Warren Smith

Apart from being an outsider to the privileged world of the well-educated, an almost exclusively masculine world, Septimus feels completely alienated from the social network which surrounds him. He embodies a molecular gender discourse of masculinity for which a society organised around a dominating ideal of proportion and moderation is still not ready. His rhizomatic individuation is a challenge to “public spirited, British Empire, tariff-reform, governing-class spirit” (67) of Conservative politicians and the medical profession. He is the most obvious victim of patriarchy; its scapegoat. He tries to attain the emblems of arborescent hegemonic masculinity but he collapses in the process. He fails within the accepted polarised gendered social institutions of family, status and honour, because his in-betweenness and his potential for ‘becomings’ makes him surpass the limits of what his society conceives as appropriate.

Septimus has attempted to be part of the patriarchal machinery. He embraced the structures of capitalism by working for a firm of auctioneers, valuers, and estate agents. Likewise, he becomes involved in the patriarchal mechanism of marriage although he refuses to take the final step into patriarchy by refusing fatherhood. He refuses the responsibility of fatherhood and abdicates his “manly” role as husband and father by sexually rejecting his wife, insofar as his own sexuality is filthy to him:⁴⁶ “Love between man and woman was repulsive to Shakespeare. The business of copulation was filth to him before the end. But, Rezia said, she must have children. They had been married five years.” (78)

He is unable to find stability in his familiar world. Nevertheless, even before

⁴⁵Traditionally, there have been two spheres recognised: public and private. The public sphere covers our public interactions, education, business, government, community interactions. The private sphere belongs to the individual and the family. Feminism has challenged the gendered division between the private sphere (traditionally associated with women) and the public sphere (traditionally associated with men). Anna Snaith’s *Virginia Woolf: Public and Private Negotiations* (2000) develops on this tension between the public and the private in Woolf.

⁴⁶Many critics, such as Henke (1981) have argued about Septimus’s homosexuality. Henke affirms: “There is a great deal of evidence in *Mrs Dalloway* that Septimus is “defending himself against a homosexual impulse that has become too powerful.” (Henke, 1981b: 15) In my view, Septimus’s molecular process of individuation is so complex that it cannot be inscribed in finite binary oppositions such as male/female, heterosexual/homosexual. A further discussion on Septimus’s fluid gender figuration is provided as follows.

the war, he is presented as a multilayered character who is not fully able to conform to socially accepted masculine stereotypes.

It has flowered; flowered from vanity, ambition, idealism, passion, loneliness, courage, laziness, the usual seeds, which all muddled up (in a room off the Euston Road), made him shy, and stammering, made him anxious to improve himself, made him fall in love with Miss Isabel Pole, lecturing in the Waterloo Road upon Shakespeare. (74)

He was shy, he was fragile, he read Shakespeare's plays, wrote romantic poetry, and fell hopelessly in love with Miss Isabel Pole:

Something was up Mr. Brewer knew;...something was up, he thought, and, being paternal with his young men, and thinking very highly of Smith's abilities, and prophesying that he would, in ten or fifteen years, succeed to the leather arm-chair in the inner room under the skylight with the deed boxes round him, "if he keeps his health", said Mr. Brewer, and that was the danger — he looked weakly; advised football, invited him to supper and was seeing his way to consider recommending a rise of salary...(75)

Mr Brewer, his pre-war employer, realises the unconventionality of Septimus and he sees its danger for power structures of gender. Driven by masculine paternalism, Mr Brewer tries to reshape Septimus's manners into more manly interests, by focusing on his physicality. By facing this threat, Mr Brewer activates the machinery of patriarchy; he refers to the ideals of manhood promoted by public schools in England at the beginning of the century.

Mr Brewer engages in the rigid athleticism and physical fitness that hegemonic definitions of masculinity promote. He rejects physical weakness for its threatening feminine connotations and, in response, venerates physical strength. That is why he insists on football in order to counteract Septimus's effeminacy. Significantly, Mr Brewer tries to involve Septimus in the capitalist network of economic interchanges, the public sphere, the masculine domain.

Septimus experiences the war as an overwhelming impact on his identity: "As a delayed casualty of WWI, Septimus reminds us of a crisis that goes beyond his own personal breakdown. This case reveals a far-reaching social disorder and presents the narrator's indictment against established authority." (Marder,

1987)⁴⁷ The war itself depended on the individual's submission to the group and to the nation, which, in gender terms, draws back to the hegemonic imposition of masculinity.

An aspect of soldierly discipline involves a conversion to a stereotyped manly role based on stoic British public school ideals of character. Therefore, we can account for Septimus's shell shock in terms of gender coercion. Nonetheless, this very same society which has driven Septimus to an inexorable collapse, activates the machinery of a double moral collective blindness by denying the magnitude of the brutal violation: "For it was the middle of June. The War was over, except for some one like Mrs Foxcroft at the Embassy last night eating her heart out because that nice boy was killed and now the old Manor House must go to a cousin; or Lady Bexborough who opened a bazaar, they said, with the telegram in her hand, John, her favourite, killed; but it was over; thank Heaven-over." (2)

Septimus "developed manliness" in the army: "There in the trenches the change which Mr. Brewer desired when he advised football was produced instantly; he developed manliness; he was promoted; he drew attention, indeed the affection of his officer, Evans by name." (75) According to the *Report of the War Office Committee* in *English Parliamentary Papers*, male bonding generated a collective consciousness that forged a deep sense of grouping:

The processes which are occurring here may be said to consist in the conflict between the self-preservation instinct on the one hand and on the other a group of forces compounded of self-respect, duty, discipline, patriotism, and so on so forth. For simplicity of description we will designate all this latter group as "duty." The object of training the soldier is to enhance and magnify the power of this group as to make the issue of the conflict a foregone conclusion. That is to say, in the trained soldier the two opponents should be so unequally matched that "duty" is overwhelmingly victorious.⁴⁸

The war is a further step in his learning process and his internalisation of the hegemonic codes of masculinity, such as for example, stoicism. Septimus Smith survives the war and the loss of his friend Evans to discover he has lost the ability to feel:

⁴⁷Herbert Marder is a Woolf scholar and *Emeritus* Professor of English at the University of Illinois and the author of *Feminism and Art: A Study of Virginia Woolf* (1968) and *The Measure of Life: Virginia Woolf's Last Years* (2000).

⁴⁸*Report of the War Office Committee in English Parliamentary Papers*, XII, 1922: 77.

But when Evans (Rezia, who had only seen him once, called him “a quiet man”, a sturdy red-haired man, undemonstrative in the company of women), when Evans was killed, just before the Armistice, in Italy, Septimus, far from showing any emotion or recognising that here was the end of a friendship, congratulated himself upon feeling very little and very reasonably. (76)

Psychologically, the crucial aspect of this episode is his reaction to Evan’s death: he cannot grieve for him and, in fact, he seems to have repressed all feelings for him. He regards his inability to feel grief for Evan’s death as an unforgivable crime and he becomes overwhelmed with guilt.

Septimus is feminised by his tears, since the war traditionally understood feminine mourning as unpatriotic. According to Showalter (1985), anxieties about masculinity and a general feminine aspect were commonly diagnosed features of shell shock victims. Moreover, Showalter (1985: 172) states: “When military doctors and psychiatrists dismissed shell-shock patients as cowards, they were often hinting at effeminacy or homosexuality.”

According to Henke, Septimus is “defending himself against an homosexual impulse that has become too powerful.” (Henke, 1981b: 15) Other critics, such as Tambling, among many others, read Septimus and Evans’s compulsive desire “to share with each other” as an early twentieth century euphemism for homoeroticism. Evans, whom we do not learn much about, is described by Rezia as someone shy and undemonstrative in the presence of women, which might suggest a hidden homosexuality, or at least, his unconventionality to the established ideals of masculinity.

Despite the stated homosexual overtones of Evans and Septimus’s relationship, my focus resides on the marginal position his definition of masculinity occupies within the hegemonic hierarchy. Septimus does not come to terms with the mainstream language of patriarchy, be it heterosexual, stoic, dominating, violent, or simply defined.

Whether his alternative definition is homosexual or heterosexual, what is clear is that Septimus’s gender formula exceeds the hegemonic patriarchal network. He avoids applying the discourse of male complicity which Peter Walsh accomplishes. Septimus is detached from the imaginary of patriarchal symbols.

Even when he is about to die, in his breakdown, Septimus refuses the “knife” as the instrument of his suicide. He refuses all the weaponry of imperialism and patriarchy, whether the “byonet” or indeed, the “blade” that Peter habitually fondles throughout the novel. Instead, he chooses to use the window, an element closely related to Clarissa, who opens the window of the prelapsarian memories

in Bourton. Woolf allows Septimus to use established feminine codes. By doing so, the character floats in an *intermezzo* position, which interchanges feminine and masculine codes, no longer dictated by oppositional patterns.

He decides to marry Rezia in order to secure himself a safe place in society. But still, he refuses to use the language of power. His role as a husband collapses from the very basis through which he needs to be cared for by his wife, by subverting the patriarchal order concerning family structures. Rezia traps Septimus in the ineluctable microcosm of Oedipal gender-based family relationships. She imposes over him her commitment to patriarchy: “And it was cowardly for a man to say he would kill himself, but Septimus had fought; he was brave; he was not Septimus now...He was selfish. So men are...She spread her hand before her. Look! Her wedding ring slipped — she had grown so thin. It was she who suffered — but she had nobody to tell.” (19)

Rezia is exaggeratedly loyal to her husband and regards his weakness as an unspeakable secret, maybe because she knows how hard her society condemns her husband’s unmanliness. She is an Italian woman whose main ambition is to have children: “She must have a son like Septimus, she said. But nobody could be like Septimus; so clever. Could she not read Shakespeare too? Was Shakespeare a difficult author? She asked.” (78)

Rezia applies different standards to men and women; she expects men to be stoic and brave, so she cannot cope with her husband’s different attitude. She elaborates a discourse through which Septimus’s identity has been reshaped by the overwhelming effects of the war. Additionally, she takes for granted male superiority, and she overshadows her own potentials to adore and devote to her husband. Whereas Peter Walsh desperately needs this flattering to reaffirm his identity, Septimus experiences it as a repressive imposition, which does not allow him to flow in an incommensurable process of individuation.

As an Italian outsider to English society, Rezia apprehends all its values in order to have a place in it. However, Septimus resolves this conflict by his madness. His ‘becoming-mad,’ stands as an evasion from the very society Rezia is trying to absorb, since he cannot submit to the patterns of masculinity imposed by his society through Rezia.

Their marriage was over, he thought, with agony, with relief. The rope was cut; he mounted; he was free, as it was decreed that he, Septimus, the lord of men, should be free; alone (since his wife had thrown away her wedding ring, since she had left him), he, Septimus, was alone, called forth in advance of the mass of men to hear the truth, to learn the meaning, which now at last, after all the toils of

himself — was to be given whole to...”To whom?” he asked aloud, “To the Prime Minister”, the voices which rustled above his head replied. The supreme secret must be told to the Cabinet; first, that trees are alive; next, there is no crime; next, love, universal love, he muttered, gasping, trembling, painfully drawing out these profound truths which needed, so deep were they, so difficult, an immense effort to speak out, but the world was entirely changed by them for ever. (58-59)

Septimus, the Christ-figure, “the lord of men,” who sacrifices his life to defend his alternative truth, refuses to submit to the demonic authority underpinned by the social network. Paradoxically, he is a victim of the *status quo*, for this obsession for the old order to be re-established.

Septimus’s madness is the madness of a social alternative to the arborescent discourse of masculinity brutally violated by a civilisation that cannot understand it. I will read his madness in terms of becoming.

Septimus rejects patriarchal codes and he becomes oblivious to social pressure. He refuses to adopt the decorated war hero identity, which society attempts to force upon him. He is ultimately portrayed as a victim of society’s hegemonic definition of masculinity. However, there is an intensity, a force of life, a cosmic vision in his madness that opens his individuation to a fluid process of ‘becoming.’ Septimus Warren Smith is constructed out of these lines of flight that make his character flow in an on-going process of becomings.

Septimus’s madness can be considered a line of flight, a deterritorialisation of the ‘Man Standard.’ According to Deleuze and Guattari, Man is the hegemonic Standard, the socially established measure unit in opposition to which individuals are defined as molar. As the main representation of the molar and majoritarian, the category ‘Man’ cannot be molecular or rhizomatic. He stands as the root for the ‘tree’ of subjectivity.

However, following Deleuze and Guattari, due to his alienation and marginalisation in terms of power, Septimus has a closer access to desire, thus, to becomings. Septimus, occupies a privileged position in relation to becomings. He is closer to a haecceity, closer to a move from the molar to the molecular, by breaking the rigid gender binary opposition, since his fluid articulation of masculinity occupies a peripheral position in patriarchal society, where the male subject is positioned as ‘the subject of enunciation.’

Septimus’s becoming-woman presents the destabilisation of molar feminine/masculine identities. By breaking away from the majoritarian Man-Standard, Septimus forges his new becoming. Since the subject of enunciation is phallo-

centric, Deleuze and Guattari suggest a move towards the periphery in order to de-centre the hegemony of the subject, in order to dismantle the principles that constitute the male subject as a privileged individual. Septimus's new masculinity needs to start from molecular standards in order not to be reduced to the hierarchical and oppressive tentacles of patriarchy.

Septimus refuses and excludes himself from the patriarchal imaginary. He traverses the boundaries of the gender and sexual politics of his time, — be it the boundary of heterosexuality, or the hegemonic discourse of masculinity and femininity.

As part of his isolation, Septimus rejects the English language; he refuses to speak the language of power; instead, he speaks the language of madness. He explores new forms, different languages; the literary, the language of nature (birds speak Greek to him), languages which follow a fragmented alternative logic.⁴⁹ Furthermore, he tries to use the language of threads which, as has been discussed, is codified in the novel as an exclusively feminine domain. Just before committing suicide, Septimus collaborates with his wife in the making of a hat for Mrs Peter. As he helps Rezia design the hat, he explores and apprehends feminine imagination.

He is feminised in many other ways as has been analysed above; he reads Shakespeare, he is physically weak, he cries, and he resides in the domestic sphere. Patriarchy has expelled him from his core by activating the scientific discourse of madness. He has been evicted from the public sphere after the war, and he has been relegated to domesticity, so he shares this space with his wife.

Nevertheless, his new molecular codes cannot come to terms with the rigidity of gender definitions in *Mrs Dalloway*. Septimus succeeds in reconciling public and private spheres but social structures in *Mrs Dalloway* do not allow the flexibility he requires so as to explore his new figuration of masculinity. His suicide articulates the impossibility of renegotiating gender stereotypes in such a hermetic society. His dissenting construction of masculinity is repressed by social mainstream legitimacy. Septimus Smith finds in suicide, ultimately, the only option to contest the hegemonic gender codes of patriarchy.

⁴⁹An example of these fragmented languages can be found in that episode when Septimus is laying on the sofa and perceives the multiple languages of the cosmos: "Outside the trees dragged their leaves like nets through the depths of the air; the sound of water was in the room, and through the waves came the voices of birds singing. Every power poured its treasures on his head..." (123) as if he could understand and be connected to these multiplicities.

3.2.4 Septimus Warren Smith: An empty BwO

According to Hussey, “Septimus Warren Smith, in *Mrs. Dalloway*, begins to tend toward unembodiment when he is urged by his employer, Mr. Brewer, to develop “manliness” (by playing football! [95]).” (Hussey, 1986: 13) He feels that his body has been soaked away: “macerated until only the nerve fibres were left.” (59) From this way of living his body comes his sense of being freed from the earth, able to look down from “the back of the world” on all mankind (59). Septimus Warren Smith feels his self cannot be confined by the constraints of a finite subject; he feels rather a piece of a bigger cosmic apparatus. He feels a molecular connection with his surrounding reality: Is Septimus Warren Smith becoming a BwO?⁵⁰

Deleuze and Guattari attack any understanding of the body as a unified consolidation, a whole/complete unit. They consider that the body has been inscribed in a system of representation that binds it into the hierarchical structure of its organs. Instead of establishing primacy or hierarchy upon its organs, as is done with psychoanalytic sexuality (with the penis as main signifier), the Body without Organs is decentred. Deleuze and Guattari argue for a body that is freed from these constraints; a body that is multidimensional and an on-going process rather than a defined unit.

Septimus’s unembodiment frees him from the constraints of normal physical body in his own perception; his perception of his body is in direct conflict with the world outside him. To him, his body is part of microstructures of the universe (leaves, trees, feathers, birds). Septimus’s conception of his multilayered and limitless body is confronted with patriarchal fixed, defined, molar and hierarchical bodies, which condemn Septimus’s body as a deviant body to be cured.

Every “actual” body has a “virtual” dimension, an infinite collection of potentialities (connections, affects, flows, intensities, and so on and so forth). By activating these virtual potentials the body becomes the BwO. Consequently, the Body without Organs becomes a connection of desires, a conjunction of flows and collectivities. These potentials are underpinned through conjunctions by means of “becomings.” Septimus must undergo this endless process of becoming a BwO in order to live for himself; to live the body in his way. Therefore, Septimus denies an organised body as a limit to his process of becoming-woman.

⁵⁰The Body without Organs is a limit to the desiring function of all other bodies, from humans to rocks and trees. Deleuze and Guattari do not believe in one single defined body but in a series of flows, traveling at differential rates of speed and intensities. The Body without Organs is the plane where these intensities take place; in other words, a substratum of flows.

However, the constraints of proportion and moderation pressure his body to be organised. Holmes and Bradshaw do not give him the opportunity to undergo the process of becoming-woman. The only possibility for him to reach the plane of immanence is suicide; for it is the only way he can preserve his autonomy as a BwO. If we read this process from a gender perspective, we can say that Septimus cannot accomplish the gender constraints that the organised body imposes upon him. He becomes an empty BwO, thus, ceasing to become. The next section explores the case of a full BwO.

3.3 *Orlando*: The plane of immanence

3.3.1 The novel in context. The genesis of *Orlando*: Characters, plots, style. A rhizomatic configuration.

Through the life of the extraordinary character Orlando, partly inspired in Vita Sackville-West,⁵¹ Woolf examines the meanings of masculinity and femininity as these definitions changed in Europe over the course of four hundred years. In tracing those changes, Woolf presents a harsh criticism of molar gender formations and opens new lines of flight that project new molecular gender figurations. Orlando will be the main repository of such a project; a new mode of individuation that transcends the boundaries of history, gender, age, genre.

Orlando: A Biography fictionalises⁵² the life of an aristocrat that spans 400

⁵¹Virginia Woolf wrote in her diary on September 20, 1927: “One of these days, though, I shall sketch here, like a grand historical picture, the outlines of all my friends...It might be a way of writing the memoirs of one’s own times during peoples lifetimes. It might be a most amusing book. The question is how to do it. Vita should be Orlando.” (Woolf, [1925-1930] 1980: 156-157) Vita Sackville-West was an English writer and aristocrat. Her work includes poetry — e.g. *The Land* (1926) —, novels — e.g. *The Edwardians* (1930), *All Passion Spent* (1931) —, and biographies — e.g. *Knole and the Sackvilles* (1922). For a detailed research on the relationship between Vita Sackville-West and Virginia Woolf see De Salvo’s “Lighting the Cave: The Relationship between Vita Sackville-West and Virginia Woolf” (1982). For a Deleuzo-Guattarian reading of Sackville-West and Woolf’s relationship see Rosi Braidotti’s *Transpositions* (2001: 190-209).

⁵²Woolf’s experimentation in biography is related to a wider preoccupation with the boundaries between fact and fiction that take place in the novel and poetry as well (Moore, 1979: 304) which reveals her distinctive view of the nature and limitations of biography. Woolf’s ‘New’ concept of biography consists in the blending of ‘the chronicler’s’ mode and ‘the artist’s’ mode. In this sense, *Orlando* has been claimed to be a trans-generic work (Squier, 1986) that challenges the biographic dichotomy fact-fiction. Shortly after she had started writing *Orlando*, Virginia Woolf published her essay “The New Biography” (1927), “The Narrow Bridge of Art” (1927) — first published as “Poetry, Fiction and the Future”, where Woolf points out the potential of modern fiction to blur the boundaries of genre —, and “Phases of Fiction”

years from the sixteenth to the twentieth century (1570-1928). Orlando is a young noble poet, of exotic ancestry, who was born in Elisabethan England and becomes a distinguished courtier, who, protected by the Queen, is given lands, honours, and “the gift of the great monastic house⁵³ that had been the Archbishop’s and then the king’s to Orlando’s father.” (Woolf, [1928] 1993: 17) After the death of the Queen, Orlando starts frequenting Wapping Old Stairs (East London slums) and mixing with the common people in beer gardens at night. He gets engaged three times to three different women — Clorinda, Favilla, Euphrosyne — but he always draws back from marriage. At the Coronation of James I during the Great Frost, he meets Sasha, the Russian Princess Marousha Stanilovska Dagmar Natasha Iliana Romanovitch, with whom he has a passionate, but brief, love affair.⁵⁴

After Sasha’s sudden departure to Russia, the afflicted Orlando withdraws into his house in the countryside. He suffers the first of his seven-day-sleep trances. He focuses on literature — reading and writing — and starts writing *The Oak Tree*,⁵⁵ a poem started and abandoned in his youth. By that time, he meets the poet Nicholas Greene, with whom he shares enthusiastic conversations about poetry until he feels betrayed by the poet when Orlando’s writing is criticised and mocked in his last work, *Visit to a Nobleman in the Country*. Subsequently, Orlando falls into “one of his moods of melancholy” (Woolf, [1928] 1993: 31)⁵⁶ where he reflects upon love and life. After a solitary and retreating

(1929). In “The New Biography”, Woolf declares: “the days of Victorian biography are over.” (Woolf, [1925-1928] 1994: 478) Woolf claims for a new biography that merges fact/fiction, biography/autobiography, insofar as in order to explore personality “facts must be manipulated; some must be brightened; others shaded: yet, in the process, they must never lose their integrity.” (Woolf, [1925-1928] 1994: 473)

⁵³Critics such as Baldanza (1955) and Hoffman (1968) have documented in detail and identified Orlando’s house in the countryside with Knole. Knole was the ancestral estate that had passed from Archbishop Bourchier and Cardinal Morton to Henry VIII, then to Queen Elizabeth, who gave it to Thomas Sackville, whose life parallels certain traits of Orlando.

⁵⁴This represents Vita Sackville-West’s affair with Violet Trefusis. Virginia Woolf openly admits in a diary entrance October 22, 1927: “I am writing Orlando half in mock style very clear and plain, so that people will understand every Word. But the balance between truth and fantasy must be careful. It is based on Vita, Violet Trefusis, Lord Lascelles, Knole, &c.” (Woolf, [1925-30] 1980: 162) Violet Trefusis (1894-1972) had a passionate and dramatic love affair with Vita Sackville-West between 1918-1921. See Nigel Nicolson, *Portrait of a Marriage* ([1973] 1980).

⁵⁵Vita Sackville-West published her long pastoral poem, *The Land*, in 1926. This poem is split between the four seasons, beginning with Winter and inspired in the landscape of Kent, which denotes Vita Sackville-West’s passion for gardening. It was an immediate success, going through fourteen impressions in its first year and being awarded the Hawthornden prize in 1927.

⁵⁶All further references to the novel will be to this edition and will be included in the text

period, Orlando feels the need to socialise; thus, he spends half of his fortune refurbishing his house and giving parties.

In order to run away from an insistent suitor — Archduchess Harriet —, Orlando asks King Charles II to send him as Ambassador Extraordinary to Constantinople. There, he is raised to the highest rank in nobility; Dukedom. However, the conferring of the Dukedom underpins riots on the streets, which precede Orlando's second seven-day-sleep trance. While sleeping, certain documents are discovered that state that Orlando is married to a gypsy woman, Rosina Pepita, and a rebellion against the sultan takes place, forcing the English to leave Turkey.

Orlando wakes up, finding out that she has been metamorphosed into a woman. Lady Orlando, then, runs away from the rebels with a gypsy clan with whom she lives for a while until she finally comes back to 18thc England, where she experiences, for the first time, the consequences of her sex-change. On her arrival in England, some emissaries from the Law Courts inform her about three major suits that have been preferred against her during her absence — the charges against her being that she was dead (and could not hold any property), that she was a woman, and that she was an English Duke who married the gypsy dancer Rosina Pepita,⁵⁷ with whom she had had three sons that claim their father to be deceased and claim for their inheritance. Consequently, she is left 'in a state of incognito or incognita' (120), legally unknown, until judgement is pronounced.

After that, Orlando receives the visit of the archduchess Harriet, who turns out to be a man after all, and reveals having pretended to be a woman in the past. The now Archduke Harry chases Orlando once again but he evades his marriage proposals, instead living a life switching between gender roles, dressing as both man and woman,⁵⁸ and having affairs and adventures of different sorts. Eager for life and love, Orlando goes to London and starts socialising, but finds the eighteenth century social life rather vain and superfluous until she starts gathering with Pope, Addison, and Swift.

by referring to page number only.

⁵⁷A name that might be related to Pepita, Vita Sackville-West's grandmother, a gypsy dancer and mistress of Lionel Sackville-West. Nigel Nicolson accounts for Vita Sackville-West's memories of her grandmother: "I [Vita] have got two photographs of my grandmother, which show clearly how beautiful she must have been...She was the illegitimate daughter of a gypsy and a Spanish duke; the gypsy, her mother, had been a circus acrobat, and was no doubt descended from a line of such, and the duke descended from Lucrezia Borgia." (Nicolson,[1973] 1980: 9-10)

⁵⁸This is a clear reference to Vita's transvestite adventures with Violet Trefusis in London and Paris.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, Orlando finally wins the lawsuit over her property, meets the adventurer captain Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine,⁵⁹ falls in love, marries him, and has a son. Selmerdine departs and Orlando finishes her writing. In London, Orlando bumps into the transgenerational old Nicholas Greene, who promises, this time, to help her publish *The Oak Tree*. In 1928, she publishes *The Oak Tree* and wins a prize.⁶⁰ *Orlando* finishes with the return of Shelmerdine and Orlando welcoming him the night of the 11th of October 1928, the actual day of the novel's publication.

On October 11, 1928, Woolf published her sixth major novel,⁶¹ which she had begun on October 8, 1927,⁶² and completed on March 17, 1928. Vita Sackville-West on first reading *Orlando* was absolutely dazzled:⁶³

I can't say anything except that I am completely dazzled, bewitched, enchanted, under a spell. It seems to me the loveliest, wisest, *richest* book that I have ever read, —excelling even your own *Lighthouse*...you have invented a new form of Narcissism, — I confess, —

⁵⁹Shelmerdine was inspired in Harold Nicolson. Harold Nicolson (1886 -1968), Vita Sackville-West's husband, was an English diplomat, critic, biographer, diarist and politician; a member of the Establishment. Shelmerdine's Byronic overtones can be associated with Nicolson, who wrote some studies of literary figures such as Lord Byron. Their marriage was polygamous, and both Vita and Harold had affairs with both men and women. According to their son, Nigel Nicolson, "[t]heir marriage succeeded because each found permanent and undiluted happiness only in the company of the other. If their marriage is seen as a harbour, their love affairs were mere ports of call. It was to the harbour that each returned; it was there that both were based." (Nicolson, [1973] 1980: ix)

⁶⁰Vita was awarded the Hawthornden Prize in 1927 for *The Land*.

⁶¹Virginia Woolf had already published five novels: *The Voyage Out* in 1915, *Night and Day* in 1919, *Jacob's Room* in 1923, *Mrs Dalloway* in 1925, and *To the Lighthouse* in 1927.

⁶²Woolf told Vita in a letter on 9 October 1927: "Yesterday morning I was in despair...I couldn't screw a word from me; and at last dropped my head in my hands: dipped my pen in the ink, and wrote these words, as if automatically, on a clean sheet: *Orlando: A Biography*. No sooner had I done this than my body was flooded with rapture and my brain with ideas. I wrote rapidly till 12...But listen; suppose Orlando turns out to be Vita..." (Woolf, [1923-1928] 1978c: 428-9)

⁶³Nigel Nicolson, Vita-Sackville-West's son, published a memoir written by his mother in the early 1920s, *Portrait of a Marriage. V Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson* (1973). He recalls Vita's letter to Harold when she received her copy of *Orlando*: "I am in the middle of reading *Orlando*, in such a turmoil of excitement and confusion that I scarcely know where (or who) I am." Nicolson goes on: "She loved it. Naturally she was flattered but more than that, the novel identified her with Knole for ever. Virginia by her genius had provided Vita with a unique consolation for having been born a girl, for her exclusion from her inheritance for her father's death earlier that year. The book for her was not simply a brilliant masque or pageant. It was a memorial mass." (Nicolson, [1973] 1980: 208) Vita's claim to Knole had involved a complex lawsuit.

I am in love with Orlando — this is a complication that I had not foreseen. (Woolf, [1923-1928] 1978c: 573- 574)

However furiously-paced Woolf claimed the process of writing *Orlando* to be,⁶⁴ this project had been in her mind since March 1927.⁶⁵ Before Woolf left for France and Italy, she started conceiving a new book, *The Jessamy Brides*,⁶⁶ which would ultimately become *Orlando*:

...I must record the conception last night between 12 & one of a new book...sketched the possibilities which an unattractive woman, penniless, alone, might yet bring into being. I began imagining the position — how she would stop a motor on the Dover road, & so get to Dover: cross the channel: &c. It struck me, vaguely, that I might write a Defoe narrative for fun. Suddenly between twelve & one I conceived a whole fantasy to be called “The Jessamy Brides”...No attempt is to be made to realise the character. Sapphism is to be suggested. Satire is to be the main note — satire & wildness...For the truth is that I feel the need of an escapade after these serious poetic experimental books whose form is always so closely considered. I want to kick up my heels & be off...I think this will be great fun to write; & it will rest my head before starting the serious, mystical poetical work which I want to come next. (Woolf, [1925-30] 1980: 131)

Virginia Woolf had just finished “these serious poetic experimental” novels — *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) and *To the Lighthouse* (1927) —, and felt the need to have “a writer’s holidays”⁶⁷ before embarking on her new “serious, mystical poetical work,” *The Waves*, to be published in 1931. Many critics have pointed

⁶⁴Woolf acknowledges her hurry to finish in a letter to her nephew Julian Bell on May 2, 1928: “I have been in the devil of a hurry, and am still, owing to my dog show prize [the *Femina*] and to having to finish an extremely foolish book [*Orlando*] all of a sudden.” (Woolf, [1923-1928] 1978c: 491).

⁶⁵We could also go further back to Virginia Woolf’s childhood, when she had enjoyed writing mock ‘histories’ of the lives of friends and relatives, such as for example “Friendship Gallery” written in 1907. (Gilbert, 1993: xv)

⁶⁶*The Jessamy Brides* was the initial project that Woolf had in mind and that later became *Orlando*. The story was meant to be about: “Two women, poor, solitary at the top of a house. One can see anything (for this is all fantasy) the Tower Bridge, clouds, aeroplanes. Also old men listening in the room over the way. Everything is going to be tumbled in pall mall.” (Woolf, [1925-30] 1980: 131)

⁶⁷On March 18, 1928, Virginia Woolf announced the end of *Orlando* in her diary: “Indeed I only write now, in between letters, to say that *Orlando* was finished yesterday as the clock

out the playfulness of *Orlando's* tribute to Vita Sackville-West,⁶⁸ but, as Squier (1986)⁶⁹ claims, *Orlando's* unconventional biography goes beyond this homage by standing as a subversive challenge against tradition: “claiming her literary majority, she confronted the influence of both literal and literary fathers to reshape the novel, and so to create a place for herself in the English novelistic tradition which was their legacy to her.” (Squier, 1986: 167)

Therefore, *Orlando* can be read as the “most elaborate love letter,”⁷⁰ as well as a serious piece of criticism concerning the complexities of literature, gender, selfhood, time and society. Woolf herself felt that her novel, which had begun as a “joke” had not evolved as one. Woolf confessed in her diary on March 22, 1928: “Yes it’s done—*Orlando*—begun on 8th October, as a joke; & now rather too long for my liking. It may fall between stools, be too long for a joke, & too frivolous for a serious book.” (Woolf, [1925-30] 1980: 177) As she had written on her diary on March 14, 1927, from the very beginning of its conception, Woolf considered three fundamental elements for *Orlando's* composition: A “Defoe

struck one...I have written this book quicker than any: & yet gay & quick reading I think; a writers holiday. I feel more & more sure that I will never write a novel again.” (Woolf, [1925-30] 1980: 176-177)

⁶⁸Frank Baldanza, “*Orlando* and the Sackvilles” (1955); David Green, “*Orlando* and the Sackvilles Addendum” (1956); Madeline Moore, “Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando*: An Edition of the Manuscript.” (1979); Louise A. DeSalvo, “Lighting the Cave: The Relationship between Vita Sackville-West and Virginia Woolf” (1982). For another source of documentation also see Victoria Sackville-West, *Knole and the Sackvilles* (1922).

⁶⁹Susan M. Squier is Brill Professor of Women’s Studies and English at The Pennsylvania State University, where she directs the Science, Medicine, Technology in Culture program. Her research interests include cultural studies of science and medicine, feminist theory, and modernism. Her major publications include *Virginia Woolf and London: The Sexual Politics of the City* (1985); *Babies in Bottles: Twentieth Century Visions of Reproductive Technology* (1994), *Women Writers and the City: Essays in Feminist Literary Criticism* (1984), *Arms and the Woman: War, Gender, and Literary Representation* (1989), *Playing Dolly: Techno-cultural Formations, Fantasies, and Fictions of Assisted Reproduction* (1999), and *Liminal Lives: Imagining the Human at the Frontiers of Biomedicine* (2004).

⁷⁰Nigel Nicolson, Vita Sackville-West’s son and editor of *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, in its introduction to volume III, catalogues *Orlando* as: “...her [Woolf’s] most elaborate love-letter, rendering Vita androgynous and immortal: it transformed her story into a myth, gave her back to Knole. Without shame in either side, she identified Vita as her model by the dedication and the photographs.” (Nicolson, 1977: xxii)

Narrative,”⁷¹ “Sapphism,”⁷² and “satire.” *Orlando* transgresses both social and literary accepted norms. Its narrative subverts the biographic conventions of Defoe’s realist tradition and Leslie Stephen’s Victorian biographical modes,⁷³ by confronting paradigmatic signs of classic biographical techniques with fantastic and caricaturesque⁷⁴ features. Squier provides the example of Orlando’s

⁷¹In her essay “Defoe” (1925), Virginia Woolf describes Defoe’s narrative as a narrative based on facts and morality: “...he came to his novel-writing with certain conceptions about the art which he derived partly from being himself one of the first to practise it. The novel had to justify its existence by telling a true story and preaching a sound moral...he takes pains to insist that he has not used his invention at all but has depended upon facts, and his purpose has been the highly moral desire to convert the vicious or to warn the innocent.” (Woolf, [1925-1928] 1994: 99-100) Woolf declares Defoe “the founder and master” of this tradition: “He belongs, indeed, to the school of the great plain writers, whose work is founded upon a knowledge of what is most persistent, through not most seductive, in human nature.” (Woolf, [1925-1928] 1994: 99-100)

⁷²Woolf associated a combination of erotic intensity and sexual ambiguity with Sapphism (lesbianism). *Orlando* was published near the time of Radclyffe Hall’s trial for obscenity for her portrayal of lesbian love in her autobiographical novel *The Well of Loneliness* (1928). *Orlando* was written at the peak of Woolf’s career and life (no illness). It became an extremely popular book when it was published: “The reception, as they say, surpassed expectations. Sales beyond our record for the first week. I [Woolf] was floating rather lazily on praise...” (Woolf, [1925-30] 1980: 200) In the first six months after publication it sold over eight thousand copies, whereas *To the Lighthouse* had sold less than half that amount. Woolf’s income from book sales nearly tripled with the publication of *Orlando*. Part of this success might be attributed to the whole debate about sexuality opened by the Radclyffe Hall’s trial. However, the potential homosexual overtones of *Orlando* have been camouflaged by the use of fantasy (sex-change), burlesque and arbitrariness. In the following discussion I will try to demonstrate how this arbitrariness might not be considered a mere disguise but a central principle for Woolf’s merging notion of gender.

⁷³Leslie Stephen (1832-1904), Woolf’s father, was a very well reputed man of letters, a critic and a biographer. He was the first editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography*. Woolf explicitly confronts the biographic tradition led by her father in *Orlando*: “The true length of a person’s life, whatever the *Dictionary of National Biography* may say, is always a matter of dispute. For it is a difficult business — this time-keeping...” (211)

⁷⁴In her diary on December 20, 1927, Virginia Woolf declared: “I want to write it all over hastily, & so keep unity of tone, which in this book is very important. It has to be half laughing, half serious: with great splashes of exaggeration.” (Woolf, [1925-30] 1980: 167-168) Maria DiBattista argues, in her chapter “Orlando. The Comedy of Androgyny,” about the power of caricature and comedy in relation to criticism: “Both urgency and seriousness of caricature in *Orlando* springs from an aggressive impulse directed against all she perceives as threatening to the integrity and freedom of the self — the pretentious, the powerful, the potentially tyrannical. Caricature attempts to reduce great things to small through an aesthetic transformation that diminishes a perceived danger by subjecting it to the formal play of imagination.” (DiBattista, 1980b: 115) DiBattista concludes that the best example of this is to be found in relation to exaggerated theme of sexuality. See also John Graham’s “The ‘Caricature Value’ of Parody and Fantasy in *Orlando*” (1971).

characterisation:

...The realistic novel's careful presentation of character in relation to environment becomes, in *Orlando*, a survey of the protagonist's contrasting experiences of Elizabethan, Jacobean, Carolinean, Restoration, Augustan, Victorian and Modern England, as well as of Constantinople before and after the Sultan's fall. This extensive topographical and temporal detail, far from increasing our belief in *Orlando* as an actual person, rather causes us to view him/her as the type of symbol of the British poet, nobleman/woman, and statesman. (Squier, 1986: 170)

Despite the realistic devices used to describe the different backgrounds of the character, Orlando's travelling across four centuries of British history brings about a mythical or symbolic dimension. Although the narrator constantly appeals to biographical rigour — "Our simple duty is to state the facts as far as they are known, and so let the reader make of them what he may" (47) —, Orlando lays in an *intermezzo* position between genres; biography and novel. Furthermore, the whole text breaks away from 'fixed' binary oppositions such as fact/fiction, reality/fantasy, author/subject, farce/criticism, man/woman, life/death, actual/internal time. Woolf creates a universe where the either/or dialectic feels too reductive, insofar as Orlando, like Clarissa, is "sliced like a knife through everything," (Woolf[1925] 2000: 5) occupying a position in the middle, in-between, in an on-going ambivalence that will allow him/her to carry out multiple becomings.

Moreover, according to Moore⁷⁵ "...Vita's portrait is fantastic not only because the hero-heroine changes sex and defies time to gain autonomy; it is fantastic because Woolf externalizes the arbitrary nature of creation itself...seeking constantly to unite the many selves of her elusive subject." (Moore, 1979: 304) The point is that this trans-genre, trans-historical, trans-gender position enables Orlando to live beyond the constraints of the subject of enunciation and projects him/her towards a rhizomatic and molecular mode of individuation, opened to multiplicity.

Time, in *Orlando*, is not disjointed, but fluid and on-going. It is not lineal or arborescent but fluid and molecular. Past and present merge in an eternal

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space/time continuum: "...‘I take up a handbag and think of an old bumboat frozen in the ice. Someone lights a pink candle and I see a girl in Russian trousers. When I step out of doors — as I do now’, here she stepped on to the pavement of Oxford Street, ‘what is it that I taste? Little herbs. I hear goat bells. I see mountains. Turkey? India? Persia? Here eyes filled with tears.’" (210) The binary opposition past/present does not work for Orlando, who "had gone a little too far from the present moment." (210) Orlando merges past and present in a continuum that follows rhizomatic routes, where the past is part of the present as much as the present itself. As Woolf dissolves temporal barriers, she also achieves an analogous merging of other dichotomies such as gender, selfhood, and fiction.

Woolf requires a technique to construct a polyvocal mode of individuation for her hero(ine), as she had done in *Mrs Dalloway* with her "tunnelling technique." In *Orlando*, Virginia Woolf expands the constraining boundaries of classic biography. She combines features of the biographic genre with elements of farse, comedy, and fantasy. This combination provides the text with lines of flight or deterritorialisations that underpin potential becomings.

Consequently, Orlando's self is not constructed as a unitary individual but as a multi-dimensional anachronical collectivity of selves that form part of an assemblage.⁷⁶ Orlando's individuation compounds a collective network of selves, epochs, objects, images, private moments, thoughts, memories, people, ethnic groups, genders, icons, nature — "trees, she said. (here another self came in)" (212) — that overlap with each other.

...Orlando said (being out in the country and needing another self presumably) Orlando? still the Orlando she needs may not come; these selves of which we are built up, one on top of another, as plates are piled on a waiter's hand, have attachments elsewhere, sympathies, little constitutions and rights of their own, call them what you will (and for many of these things there is no name) ...for everybody can multiply from his own experience the different terms which his different selves have made with him — and some are too wildly ridiculous to be mentioned in print at all...For she [Orlando] had a great variety of selves to call upon, far more than we have been able to find room for, since a biography is considered complete if it merely accounts for six or seven selves, whereas a person may

⁷⁶Virginia Woolf develops this theory of the multiplicity of selves by means of characters such as Clarissa and Septimus in *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), as has been previously discussed, and Bernard in *The Waves* (1931).

well have as many thousand...(212-213)

Orlando functions with blocks of ages, sexes, epochs, social positions that are always changing. S/he presents multiple virtual potentials, and s/he is engaged in a continuum of becomings, which cannot be accounted for in a biography that “is considered complete if it merely accounts for six or seven selves.” Orlando exists in the logics of the legitimate use of the synthesis of connection,⁷⁷ producing connections and intensities that generate other connections and potentialities in a dynamic flow that is constantly transforming and creating: “...changing her selves as quickly as she drove there was a new one at every corner...” (215) In the conclusion to the text, the narrator suggests that Orlando’s self is compounded of two thousand and fifty-two selves:

For if there are (at a venture) seventy-six different times all ticking in the mind at once, how many different people are there not — Heaven help us — all having lodgment at one time or another in the human spirit? Some say two thousand and fifty-two. So that it is the most usual thing in the world for a person to call, directly they are alone, Orlando? (if that is one’s name) meaning by that, Come, come! (212)

Woolf presents an elusive mode of individuation, which is impossible to fix, insofar as Orlando is a flowing assemblage of desire, a *haecceity*. Orlando is more an event than a single entity or thing. Orlando is a series of flows, energies, movements, and capacities, a series of fragments or segments capable of being linked.

Heccities are simply degrees of power which combine, to which correspond a power to affect and to be affected, active or passive affects, intensities. On her stroll Virginia Woolf’s heroine [Clarissa Dalloway] penetrates like a blade through all things, and yet looks from the outside with the impression that it is dangerous to live even a single day...But the stroll is itself a *heccity*. It is *heccities* that are being expressed in indefinite, but not indeterminate, articles and pronouns; in proper names which do not designate people but mark events, in verbs in the infinitive which are not undifferentiated but constitute becomings or processes. It is *heccity* which needs this

⁷⁷The connective synthesis of production is a site for production and motion where continuous flows of desire are coupled with partial objects. There is a connection, an affirmation, a series of “and...and the...and then...” in this assemblage.

kind of enunciation. HECCEITY= EVENT. It is a question of life; to live in this way, on the basis of such a plane, or rather on such a plane. (Deleuze & Parnet, [1977] 1987: 92)

Orlando inhabits this “plane of immanence,”⁷⁸ as an event that affects and is affected by the thresholds s/he crosses (epochs, kingdoms, sexes, and so on and so forth). His/her multiplicity of selves embraces ‘proper names’ that mark events and constitute becomings or processes in *Orlando*: Queen Elizabeth; Sasha; Archduke/archduchess Harriet; Nicholas Greene; the gipsy clan; Pope, Addison, and Swift; Nelly and Shelmerdine. All these ‘proper names’ stand in the novel as events, rather than characters themselves, which affect Orlando’s becomings.

By the end of chapter VI, in the conclusion, Orlando, while driving back home from London in her ‘motor-car,’ gets trapped in her own thoughts about the unattainable search of the true self. Convinced of the complexity of selfhood — “How strange it is! Nothing is any longer one thing!” (214) — Orlando exclaims: “What then? Who then?” (214) She is certainly seeking the essential ‘true self,’ a particular identity, which will not ‘come’ since the multiplicity of selves grows out of a series of experience in time, which is complex, fluid and fragmentary, and certainly not unitary. According to Mark Hussey, “It is only when Orlando ceases to call for her ‘true self’ that she becomes it.” (Hussey, 1986: 38) Using Deleuze and Guattari’s theories, I would add: it is by *becoming* that Orlando exists. Orlando’s elusive individuation is creative in its multiple becomings and, therefore, constantly mutable.

So she was now darkened, stilled, and become, with the addition of this Orlando, what is called, rightly or wrongly, a single self, a real self. And she fell silent. For it is probable that when people talk aloud, the selves (of which there may be more than two thousand) are conscious of dis severment, and are trying to communicate, but when communication is established they fall silent. (216)

⁷⁸The plane of immanence is made up of connections of constitutive forces that can be abstracted from bodies and states of affairs. It maps the range of connections a thing is capable of, its becomings or affects. In ‘*Pure Immanence: Essay on a Life*, Deleuze affirms that: “We will say of pure immanence that it is A LIFE, and nothing else. It is not immanence to life, but the immanent that is in nothing is itself a life.” (Deleuze, 2001: 27) Deleuze goes on by stating that: “It is a haecceity no longer of individuation but of singularization...” (Deleuze, 2001: 29). Therefore, according to Deleuze a life contains only virtuals, it is made up of virtualities, events, singularities.

In *Orlando* the “true self” comes in silence, which suggests that it cannot be named. If the “real self” that Orlando seeks comes only in silence, it is presumably outside language, outside naming, outside meaning. Orlando’s mode of individuation is complex, ambivalent and evades any system of representation. In *Orlando*, life exceeds any form of representation: “...‘what a world we live in! What a world to be sure!’ Its complexities amazed her.”⁷⁹ (166) Orlando’s incommensurable mode of individuation turns this biography into a *farsa*, insofar as the main target of an orthodox biography is to represent its subject, and Orlando’s multi-faceted selves exceed the paradigm of representation.

Significantly, Woolf uses the stream of consciousness⁸⁰ technique in this discussion about selfhood. This provides the narrative with the raw material to devise these fluid figurations of the self. Voids, rhetorical questions, and free associations open lines of escape that enable Orlando’s multiplicity of selves to flow.

All in all, we can consider Orlando an event; a constellation of particles connected by each other’s proximity, definable only by affects or powers:

No longer are elements on one side and syntagms on the other; there are only particles entering into each other’s proximity, on the basis of a plane of immanence. ‘I had the idea’ says Virginia Woolf, ‘that what I wanted to do now was to saturate each atom.’ And here again there are no longer any forms being organized as a result of a structure, or being developed as a result of a genesis; nor are there any subjects, persons or characters, which let themselves be

⁷⁹Orlando’s vital intensity parallels Clarissa’s “What a plunge! (1)

⁸⁰Especially in the following fragment: “What then? Who then?” she said. ‘Thirty-six; in a motor-car; a woman. Yes, but a million other things as well. A snob am I? The garter in the hall? The leopards? My ancestors? Proud of them? Yes! Greedy, luxurious, vicious? Am I? (here a new self came in). Don’t care a damn if I am. Truthful? I think so. Generous? Oh, but that don’t count (here a new self came in). Lying in bed of a morning listening to the pigeons on fine linen; silver dishes; wine; maids; footmen. Spoilt? Perhaps. Too many things for nothing. Hence my books (here she mentioned fifty classical titles; which represented, so we think, the early romantic works that she tore up). Facile, glib, romantic. But (here another self came in) a duffer, a fumbler. More clumsy I couldn’t be. And — and — (here she hesitated for a word and if we suggest ‘Love’ we may be wrong, but certainly she laughed and blushed and then cried out —) A toad set in emeralds! Harry the Archduke! Blue-bottles on the ceiling! (here another self came in). But Nell, Kit, Sasha? (she was sunk in gloom: tears actually shaped themselves and she had long given over crying). Trees, she said. (Here another self came in.) I love trees (she was passing a clump) growing there a thousand years. And barns (she passed a tumbledown barn at the edge of the road). And sheep dogs (here one came trotting across the road. She carefully avoided it). And the night. But people (here another self came in). People? (She repeated it as a question.) I don’t know...” (214-215)

attributed, formed or developed. There are only particles left, particles definable solely by relationships of movement and rest, speed and slowness...There are only hecceities left, individuations which are precise and without subject, which are definable solely by affects or powers. (Deleuze & Parnet, [1977] 1987: 122-123)

Orlando's collectivities are not organised following an arborescent structure. On the contrary, her/his multiple selves interact with each other generating rhizomatic lines that keep Orlando's individuation in an on-going continuum of becomings. Eventually, in order to 'world' the force of life at its greatest intensity, Woolf suggests fusing the polymorphous flows of time together with the multiplicity of selves: "...the most successful practitioners of the art of life,...contrive to synchronize the sixty or seventy different times which beat simultaneously in every normal human system so that when eleven strikes, all the rest chime in unison, and the present is neither a violent disruption nor completely forgotten in the past." (210-211)

Orlando, as Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Warren Smith, cannot be confined by the constraints of a finite subject; s/he shares their cosmic vision of life and feels a molecular connection with the different kingdoms of nature: "...she listened for a moment and heard only the leaves blowing and the sparrows twittering, and then she sighed, 'Life, a lover,' and then she turned on her heel with extraordinary rapidity..." (131) Orlando feels the leaves and sparrows as part of a bigger apparatus, forming collectivities and designating a multiplicity.

Orlando embraces nature as if it was an extended layer of his/her self: "All this, the trees, deer, and turf, she observed with the greatest satisfaction as if her mind had become a fluid that flowed round things and enclosed them completely." (216-217) S/he is constructed in a molecular organising line, which focuses on singularities. His/her hyper sensitivity to sounds, smells, sights and small details surrounding him/her reminds us of Clarissa and Septimus: "...sights exalted him — the birds and the trees; and made him in love with death — the evening sky, the homing rooks; and so, mounting up the spiral stairway into his brain — which was a roomy one — all these sights, and the garden sounds too, the hammer beating, the wood chopping, began that riot and confusion of the passions and emotions which every good biographer detests..." (13) All these particles of life assemble in an amalgam of particularities that form multiplicities, and, at the same time, mount up in the spiral stairway into Orlando's selves, connecting Orlando's selves with an extended heterogeneity. Woolf, once again, 'saturates each atom' for her narrative to be engaged in vital experience.

The following sections will focus on the potentialities that Orlando presents

in the field of gender and will explore the multiplicity of selves of both gender and sexuality posed by Woolf's narrative.

3.3.2 Performativity, arbitrariness and multiplicity of gender/sex figurations

"He — for there could be no doubt of his sex, though the fashion of the time did something to disguise it. —" (11) These are the opening lines of *Orlando: A Biography*. The ambivalence of Orlando's sexual identity is set as a framework for the whole text, by counterpoising the certitude of his sex to the ambivalence of his gender construction — associated with "the transvestism common to Shakespearean comic romances." (DiBattista, 1980b: 116) However, as will be argued further on, the narrator's certainties will be undermined by his/her own narrative. Virginia Woolf problematises the relationship between gender and sex from the very beginning in the text. For Woolf, as for Butler,⁸¹ both sex and gender are constructed. According to Judith Butler:

Gender ought not to be conceived merely as the cultural inscription of meaning on a pre-given sex (a juridical conception); gender must also designate the very apparatus of production whereby the sexes themselves are established. As a result, gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which "sexed nature" or "a natural sex" is produced and established as "prediscursive," prior to culture, a politically neutral surface *on which* culture acts. (Butler, [1990] 1999: 11)

As will be proved in this section, ambiguity becomes a fundamental tool to deconstruct pre-given notions of sex in *Orlando*. Orlando's incommensurability or polymorphism proves both gender and sex as it is understood in patriarchal societies (man/woman-male/female) to be the product of discursive/cultural means. This opening frames the subsequent playfulness to be associated with the performativity of gender,⁸² not only by means of characters who undergo sex

⁸¹Many critics have related Woolf's *Orlando* to Judith Butler's gender theory. Talia Schaffer proves a good example: "In many ways, *Orlando* seems like a case study designed for *Gender Trouble*. Butler uses the linguistic concept of the *performative*..." (Schaffer, 1994: 34)

⁸²Judith Butler's seminal notion of gender performativity describes the discursive and cultural means that fabricate gendered bodies: "...acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. That the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status

metamorphosis, such as Orlando, or transvestise, such as Archduchess Harriet, but also through other characters such as Sasha and Shelmerdine, who present unexpected gender constructions, as will be discussed in this section.

Certainties, especially certainties about gender, are parodied in the text. The intended objectivity of Woolf's biography is constantly subverted, the most representative scene being the biographer's account of Orlando's sex-change:

The change seemed to have been accomplished painlessly and completely and in such a way that Orlando herself showed no surprise at it. Many people, taking this into account, and holding that such a change of sex is against nature, have been at great pains to prove (1) that Orlando had always been a woman, (2) that Orlando is at this moment a man. Let biologists and psychologists determine. It is enough for us to state the simple fact; Orlando was a man till the age of thirty; when he became a woman and has remained so ever since. (98)

Despite the biographer's steady determination to approach this fact objectively and rationally, the chronicle of this phenomenon is undermined by his own assertion that a change of sex is against nature. The biographer leaves this matter, rather vaguely, in the hands of science (biological deterministic approaches to sexuality), and focuses on gender performativity: Orlando was a man till the age of thirty, and he became a woman from then onwards. What comes next in the narration concerns gender. Nevertheless, the chronicler's attempts to report "The truth, the truth, and nothing but the truth"⁸³ are defied when Orlando's sex becomes the target of social and legal scrutiny — when Orlando's sexual identity is appealed to the courts.

The categories 'Man' and 'Woman' are taken as a result of habit-formations (social constructions that respond to patriarchal demands), and represent a rigid set of stereotypes imposed upon bodies. Insofar as bodies are gendered within society, gender stands as a socially functional limitation of the body's

apart from the various acts which constitute its reality." (Butler, [1990] 1999: 173) According to Butler, gender performativity serves the purpose of the regulation of sexuality within the obligatory frame of reproductive heterosexuality.

⁸³The constant interjection of the biographer's voice, opinion, and interpretation could be associated with patriarchy. As the striking of Big Ben in *Mrs Dalloway*, the chronicler's voice epitomises the ever present patriarchal law. As has been discussed in *Mrs Dalloway's* analysis, Virginia Woolf was a great observer and critic of the patriarchal system. She aligns the patriarchal discourse with juridico-political, scientific and educational discourses, which both transmit and produce patriarchal values. More about patriarchy in *Orlando* is to be found in the following section 'The satire of molar gender constructions.'

connective and transformational potential, as can be read from Deleuze and Guattari's approach.

Orlando exceeds society's rigid gender constructions. The becoming woman of Orlando, ultimately reveals her becoming-woman as will be discussed in detail in a further section ('The becoming-woman of Orlando'). Orlando's multi-faceted selves cannot be inscribed in the reductive gender dichotomy that society imposes upon him/her. There are many instances in the text of Orlando's dismantling of gender binary oppositions. This is the case of Orlando's playful escapades and transvestism when Orlando overtly plays around with gender formations by undermining social expectations.⁸⁴ Orlando (as a biological woman, yet dressed as a man) encounters a prostitute, Nell, one night while out walking:

To feel her hanging lightly yet like a suppliant on her arm, roused in Orlando all the feelings which become a man. She looked, she felt, she talked like one. Yet, having been so lately a woman herself, she suspected that the girl's timidity and her hesitating answers and the very fumbling with the key in the latch and the fold of her cloak and the droop of her wrist were all put on to gratify her masculinity.
(136)

⁸⁴Many critics have related *Orlando* to sapphism. An example might be found in Faderman (1981: 292), who states that *Orlando* is an example of works that "hide their lesbian subject matter by whimsical devices;" Adam Parkes's "Lesbianism, History, and Censorship: *The Well of Loneliness* and the Suppressed Randiness of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*" (1994); and Kirstie Blair's "Gypsies and Lesbian Desire: Vita Sackville-West, Violet Trefusis, and Virginia Woolf" (2004). Sherron E. Knopp's "'If I Saw You Would You Kiss Me?': Sapphism and the Subversiveness of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*" (1988) explores the parallelism between *The Well of Loneliness* and *Orlando* and concludes: "What Virginia gave Vita in the book that started as a joke and continued seriously until it shoved everything else out of the way is the first positive, and still unsurpassed, sapphic portrait in literature." (Knopp, 1988: 33) In "The Unnatural Object of Modernist Aesthetics: Artifice in Woolf's *Orlando*" (1997), Suzanne Young concludes that treating "gender and sexual identity as overlapping but not identical categories in showing how philosophical questions about language, empirical fact, perception, and sexual difference took on not simply gendered but particularly "perverse" meanings in the modern period. To write in a rhetorically excessive style to dress up or masquerade in style as in sexuality, was not so much to write as a woman as to write as a homosexual, to invert the natural order of language, as of sexual difference...By the 1920s, one motivator of this intellectual anxiety...was...the lesbian artificer." (Young, 1997: 182-183) My research has distanced itself from these approaches which focus on lesbianism and homosexuality, insofar as my main thesis is to prove the great potential and multiplicity posed by Woolf's polymorphous gender fictional figurations beyond gender/sex binary oppositions.

By putting on a different gender disguise,⁸⁵ Orlando traverses the social binary opposition of gender, imposed by social codes. S/he has learned, and experienced from her sex-change, the different set of expectations required for each sex, and s/he, thus, knows how to activate the machinery of clichés and stereotypes ascribed to each of them. After Orlando's revealing herself as a woman, Nell responds:

‘Well, my dear,’ she said, when she had somewhat recovered, ‘I’m by no means sorry to hear it. For the plain Dunstable of the matter is’ (and it was remarkable how soon, on discovering that they were of the same sex, her manner changed and she dropped her plaintive, appealing ways), ‘the plain Dunstable of the matter is, that I’m not in the mood for the society of the other sex to-night. Indeed, I’m in the devil of a fix.’ (151)

Nell feels, actually, relieved when she realizes that Orlando is a woman. She feels released from the cultural/social constraints that dictate how men and women should behave. She drops ‘her plaintive, appealing ways,’ inscribed in hegemonic codes of femininity, and stops acting the part of an over-imposed female role.

The text is constantly hinting at the arbitrariness of gender constructions. Another example might be found in that scene when Orlando, back from Constantinople and after her sex-change, meets Archduke Harry: “Recalled thus suddenly to a consciousness of her sex, which she had completely forgotten, and of his, which was now remote enough to be equally upsetting, Orlando felt seized with faintness.” (126) Both characters have undergone sex-changes, of which Orlando has ironically forgotten, and they proceed to behave according to the social dictum:

‘La!’ she cried, putting her hand to her side, ‘how you frighten me!’

‘Gentle creature,’ cried the Archduchess, falling on one knee and

⁸⁵Many critics have analysed the relationship that exists between gender and costumes, transvestism, dressing, fashion in the text, revealing gender performativity; Sandra M. Gilbert's “Costumes of the Mind: Transvestism as Metaphor in Modern Literature” (1980) is an example. In *Vita and Virginia: The Work and Friendship of Vita Sackville-West and Virginia Woolf* (1993), Raitt analyses Woolf's use of costume as a metaphor for Orlando's multiple ‘selves;’ that is, an attempt to represent an identity which is fluid and fashioned according to society and culture. According to Jody R. Rosen (2009), “[c]lothing and cross-dressing underscore the constructed nature of gender categories; cross-dressing is a critique of binary thinking...” (Rosen, 2009: 161)

at the same time pressing a cordial to Orlando's lips, 'forgive me for the deceit I have practised on you!'

Orlando sipped the wine and the Archduke knelt and kissed her hand.

In short, they acted the parts of man and woman for ten minutes with great vigour and then fell into natural discourse. (126)

The scene could not be more ironic; Lady Orlando — before a man —, and Archduke Harry — having pretended to be a woman in the past — perform the gender roles that are now attributed to each sex. The mockery of the scene resides in the artificiality and mannerism of their over-performed behaviour. Woolf highlights the theatricality of the scene and denaturalises gender ascriptions, as the actors need to fall into 'natural discourses' after a while.

There is a wide range of gender figurations interweaved along the text.⁸⁶ Virginia Woolf explores the multiplicity of gender selves that are figured in her proposal of a new mode of individuation, of which Orlando stands as the paradigmatic example. S/he is constructed upon multiple selves, multiple sexes, and multiple genders. Moreover, gender in general is presented throughout the text as a multi-faceted and fluid state. The text promotes fluid gender identities by underlining their polymorphous or ambivalent nature. There is a constant innuendo to gender ambiguity in Orlando, as well as Archduke Harry, Sasha and Shelmerdine.

Immediately before Orlando's transformation is revealed, the metaphorical embodiments of three cardinal hegemonic values of femininity — Lady of Chastity, Lady of Purity, and Lady of Modesty — converge upon Orlando's sleeping body. Woolf's premonitory scene, which announces Orlando's sexual change and unconventionality, becomes an allegory of social restrictions concerning gender and sex.

For there, not here (all speak together joining hands and making gestures of farewell and despair towards the bed where Orlando lies sleeping) dwell still in nest and boudoir, office and lawcourt those who love us; those who honour us, virgins and city men; lawyers and doctors; those who prohibit; those who deny; those who reverence without knowing why; those who praise without understanding; the still very numerous (Heaven be praised) tribe of the respectable; who prefer to see not; desire to know not; love the darkness; those

⁸⁶Here I am trying to avoid the term 'androgynous,' which will be dealt in 'The case of Orlando: androgynous or molecular individuation.'

still worship us, and with reason; for we have given them Wealth, Prosperity, Comfort, Ease. To them we go, you we leave. Come, Sisters come! This is no place for us here. (97)

Patriarchal molar constructions of gender are allegorically associated with social conventions and embraced by the “respectable” hegemony, which produces rigid, fixed, stable gender figurations. Woolf presents a clear picture of the patriarchal allies, the patriarchal tyrants — lawyers, doctors, “those who reverence without knowing why,” virgins and city men — who “deny” and “prohibit” those figurations that escape the conventions promoted by the three patriarchal muses. The three muses leave Orlando, convinced that “this is not a place for them.” Woolf uses this image to preserve her hero(ine) from social constraints and by doing so, she states, once again, Orlando’s transgressive elusive and incommensurable gender condition. Woolf’s premonitory scene alerts the reader of the impossibility to restrict Orlando’s sex/gender identity to molar gender values; Orlando’s molecularity will be understood as an assemblage of multiple becomings that cannot be fixed in arborescent gender codes based on the traditional sex/gender binary opposition.

Furthermore, it is not until she goes back to England that Lady Orlando becomes aware of the changes that await for her.

It is a strange fact, but a true one, that up to this moment she had scarcely given her sex a thought. Perhaps the Turkish trousers which she had hitherto worn had done something to distract her thoughts; and the gipsy women, except in one or two important particulars, differ very little from the gipsy men. At any rate, it was not until she felt the coil of skirts about her legs and the Captain offered, with the greatest politeness, to have an awning spread for her on deck, that she realized with a start the penalties and the privileges of her position. (108)

Again, gender is depicted as an outfit to wear, denoting its constructedness. As Schaffer affirms, “[t]he novel is about costuming, precisely because costuming is what gender is all about. Orlando learns to be female because her flowered paduasoy skirt teaches her dependence, chastity and flirtation. The novel’s famous meditation on clothing demonstrates exactly how masquerade produces identity.” (Schaffer, 1994: 36-37) What is more, gender is claimed to be culturally determined: “the gipsy women...differ very little from the gipsy men.” (108) Every cultural group promotes different social codes that are imposed upon bodies and internalised among the members of the group. Virginia

Woolf alerts of the perils of signifying or universalising those social constructs, and corroborates the arbitrariness of social expectations concerning gender and sex. That is how, in Orlando's way back to England, the Captain introduces her to the Victorian English set of gender codes, to which she reacts: "'Lord! Lord!' she cried again at the conclusion of her thoughts, 'must I then begin to respect the opinion of the other sex, however monstrous I think it? If I wear skirts, if I can't swim, if I have to be rescued by a blue-jacket, by God!' she cried, 'I must!'" (110)

In fact, Orlando, from his/her trans-gender position, is not willing to accomplish the Victorian ideals of femininity:

...She remembered how, as a young man, she had insisted that women must be obedient, chaste, scented, and exquisitely apparelled. 'Now I shall have to pay in my own person for those desires,' she reflected; 'for women are not (judging by my own short experience of the sex) obedient, chaste, scented, and exquisitely apparelled by nature. They can only attain these graces, without which they may enjoy none of the delights of life, by the most tedious discipline.' (110)

These social imperatives on femininity — obedience, chastity, modesty of speech, and fetishisation —, which were shared by the patriarchal complicity of his male subject position, are revealed to Orlando as constraining and unnatural limitations imposed upon women. However, despite having enjoyed the privileges and hierarchical gender codes of male chauvinism, Orlando's gender formation has never been fixed and univocal — not even before his/her sex-change.

Moreover, Orlando's gender identity has never accomplished molar hegemonic regimes of individuation. He is unconventional according to the molar standards of his society. As a matter of fact, being a man, he is feminised on several occasions. The book starts off by juxtaposing Orlando's slicing at the severed head of a Moor, with his blade and imagining himself engaging in battle besides his father and grandfather, with a description of him of great effeminate overtones.⁸⁷

⁸⁷"The red of the cheeks was covered with peach down; the down on the lips was only a little thicker than the down on the cheeks. The lips themselves were short and slightly drawn back over teeth of an exquisite and almond whiteness. Nothing disturbed the arrowy nose in its short, tense flight; the hair was dark, the ears small, and fitted closely to the head. But, alas, that these catalogues of youthful beauty cannot end without mentioning forehead and eyes. Alas, that people are seldom born devoid of all three; for directly we glance at Orlando standing by the window, we must admit that he had eyes like drenched violets, so large that

The similes, images and references aligned to Orlando are not in the least virile. On the contrary, his rosy cheeks, his delicate and soft features are qualities ascribed to hegemonic ideals of femininity. Orlando fantasises about the emblems of masculinity but he never seems to quite fit in them. He is introduced to us “in the act of slicing at the head of a Moor which swing from the rafters” (11) when he is actually “steal[ing] away from his mother and the peacocks in the garden and go[ing] to his attic room and there lunge and plunge and slice the air with his blade.” (11) The epic, brave, and manly description of his imaginary adventure is undermined by the feminisation of his actual blade, which turns up being a peacock feather, and his battlefield, to be located in the private and feminine sphere of the attic room. Orlando, as Septimus Warren Smith, is partly an outsider to the hegemonic masculine imagination. Despite being an aristocrat, heir of the English great patriarchal tradition, he is a poet not a warrior. He becomes Queen Elizabeth’s pet, toy, and her most precious object. Turned into the Queen’s fetish, Orlando is kept away from the battlefield (the masculine public sphere): “He was about to sail for the Polish wars when she recalled him. For how could she bear to think of that tender flesh torn and that curly head rolled in the dust? She kept him with her.” (18) The Queen confines him to the private sphere, from where he will write his poetry.

Orlando’s physical effeminacy is a constant reference in his course as a man: “He blushed deeply” (26), and “he had a pair of the shapeliest legs that any Nobleman has ever stood upright upon has already been said.” (81) Gender expectations are constantly subverted when encountering hegemonic gender definitions, as gender binary oppositions do not operate in Orlando’s merging and fluid gender identity. Even when Orlando becomes a woman her gender identity surpasses the established boundaries of femininity and shares some traits that are typically associated with masculinity. An example of this can be found in the episode when lady Orlando escapes with the gypsies. Her courage and bravery are highlighted: “They rode for several days and nights and met with a variety of adventures, some at the hands of men, some at the hands of nature, in all of which Orlando acquitted herself with courage.” (99) Lady Orlando is presented as a courageous warrior — certainly not one of the molar attributes of femininity. Further references to Orlando’s merging gender identity will be provided in the following section.

As has been said before, there is a certain merging ambivalence in most of the characters of Orlando, where rigid gender constructions are left aside to give

the water seemed to have brimmed in them and widened them; and a brow like the swelling of a marble dome pressed between the two blank medallions which were his temples. Directly we glance at eyes and forehead, thus do we rhapsodize.” (12)

way to more fluid and multi-faceted ones. This is the case of Archduke Harry, a caricaturesque and grotesque character, whose cross-dressing resonates as a mockery of Orlando's sex change. Archduke Harry's transvestism is directly linked to his homoerotic feelings for Orlando, when he is still a man. Aware of the constructedness of gender, he does not hesitate to switch gender roles whenever it is more convenient for his personal longings to be fulfilled within the oppressive cultural system of eighteenth-century England. He is a hyper performative character, but his excess of performativity enables him to undergo multiple becomings.

Disguised as a woman, her/his gender identity is ambiguous: "...her manners regained the hauteur natural to a Roumanian Archduchess; and had she not shown a knowledge of wines rare in a lady, and made some observations upon firearms and the customs of sportsmen in her country, which were sensible enough, the talk would have lacked spontaneity." (78) She is ironically depicted in androgynous terms; her spontaneity resides in her unfeminine tastes, so the reader is aware of her unconventionality from the very beginning. The Archduke's same-sex desire for Orlando as a man and his cross-dressing in order to approach Orlando contains an underlaid homoeroticism which is not clear until the reader learns about his transvestism. The sexual courtship of the transvestite Archduke becomes then performative, constructed as all the other gender identifications in the story.

Yet, this character keeps crossing the thresholds of molar femininity and masculinity, even when his transvestism has been revealed. When he is finally unmasked as a man, Archduke Harry is feminised on several occasions by his tears: "As he spoke, enormous tears formed in his rather prominent eyes and ran down the sandy tracts of his long and lanky cheeks. That men cry as frequently and as unreasonably as women, Orlando knew from her own experience as a man; but she was beginning to be aware that women should be shocked when men display emotion in their presence, and so, shocked she was." (127) Archduke Harry's masculinity does not embrace patriarchal hegemonic values. He moves from molar figurations of femininity to molar figurations of masculinity in a continuous flouting of sex and gender conventions, opening lines of flight that make him become something else beyond any formulaic gender identity.

Sasha, who is more an apparition than a character herself, is introduced in the story with great gender ambiguity: "...coming from the pavilion of the Muscovite Embassy, a figure, which, whether boy's or woman's, for the loose tunic and trousers of the Russian fashion served to disguise the sex, filled him with the highest curiosity." (26) Sasha's seductiveness is somewhere beyond gender: "The person, whatever the name or sex, was about middle height, very

slenderly fashioned, and dressed entirely in oyster-coloured fur. But these details were obscured by the extraordinary seductiveness which issued from the whole person.” (26)

In the mist of this ambiguity, Sasha is aligned to masculine standards: “When the boy, for alas, a boy it must be — no woman could skate with such speed and vigour — swept almost on tiptoe past him, Orlando was ready to tear his hair with vexation that the person was of his own sex, and thus all embraces were out of the question.” (26) All the same, when we are finally certain that she is a woman Orlando imagines her coming towards his tent in a rather androgynous fashion: “When Orlando imagines Sasha coming to his tent: ‘She would come alone, in her cloak and trousers, booted like a man.’” (26) According to Schaffer,⁸⁸ Sasha shows how masquerade logic produces yet conceals a real identity insofar as this mysterious and androgynous character is marked by doubleness; her gender, nationality, motivations, and history all remain ambiguous (Schaffer, 1994: 31-32).

Finally, Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine, who stands for the ideal husband for Orlando, is constructed as a molecular man. Despite engaging with some molar patriarchal emblems, his gender identity is in-between, projecting potentialities towards a rhizomatic discourse of masculinity. Shelmerdine, a Byronic hero, is introduced as a rebel and independent adventurer. However, there is something in him that aligns a polymorphous nature to his sexual identity:

‘You’re a woman, Shel!’ she cried.

‘You’re a man, Orlando!’ he cried.

Never was there such a scene of protestation and demonstration as then took place since the world began. (174-175)

The main protestation coming from Orlando and Shelmerdine seems to be the social constraints imposed upon their bodies. By contradicting these two categories, these two characters might be opening a space where their gender/sex identities might negotiate and combine multiple singularities that move beyond the fixed binary opposition. On two different occasions they mutually enquire:

‘Are you positive you aren’t a man?’ he would ask anxiously, and she would echo, ‘Can it be possible you’re not a woman?’ and then

⁸⁸Talia Schaffer is Associate Professor of English at Queens College and the Graduate Center, CUNY. She has written widely on late-Victorian popular culture, material culture, domestic conditions, and non-canonical women writers. Her books include *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes: Literary Culture in Late-Victorian England* (2001); a collection called *Women and British Aestheticism* (1999), co-edited with Kathy A. Psomiades; and a new edition of Lucas Malet’s *The History of Sir Richard Calmady* (2004).

they must put it to the proof without more ado. For each was so surprised at the quickness of the other's sympathy, and it was to each such a revelation that a woman could be as tolerant and free-spoken as a man, and a man as strange and subtle as a woman, that they had to put the matter to the proof at once. (Woolf [1928] 1993: 178-79)

They share a sympathy that allows them to become beyond the molar representations of masculinity and femininity. There is something manly in Orlando, as well as there is something womanly in Shelmerdine, his subtlety, his reading poetry — as Septimus Warren Smith—, and his boyish tenderness.⁸⁹

With Shelmerdine, Orlando feels she is 'a real woman, at last,' which I will translate into Deleuze and Guattari as a molecular woman; the virtual woman that emanates from the actual woman; the potentials, the connections, the assemblages produced within the process of becoming-woman. And it is Shelmerdine's fluid gender figuration what underpins Orlando's molecularity as I will argue in the section entitled 'The becoming-woman of Orlando.'

However, this strawberry jam lover is also a courageous seaman, whose fluid gender construction cannot be ascribed to an arborescent gender identity. Shelmerdine adopts molar constructions to release them from patriarchal rigidity. His role as a husband does not meet social conventions. Orlando reflects upon her marriage: "She was married, true; but if one's husband was always sailing round Cape Horn, was it marriage? If one liked him, was it marriage? If one liked other people, was it marriage? And finally, if one still wished, more than anything in the whole world, to write poetry, was it marriage?" (182) It is precisely this flexibility what enables Orlando's multiplicity of selves to flow and never cease to become, becoming a writer, a wife; becoming a woman in her own terms.

Virginia Woolf blurs the boundaries between femininity and masculinity. Gender formations produced by inclusive syntheses redefine the polarisation of the category 'feminine/masculine' and open gender to n possibilities, affirming difference and its multiplicities. molecular gender figurations are transsexual in a molecular sense, dynamic in their tendency towards an n gender position. The greatest example of this digression from molar and majoritarian gender

⁸⁹"It's about all a fellow can do nowadays,' he said sheepishly, and helped himself to great spoonfuls of strawberry jam. The vision which she had thereupon of this boy (for he was little more) sucking peppermints, for which he had a passion, while the masts snapped and the stars reeled and he roared brief orders to cut this adrift, to heave that overboard, brought the tears to her eyes, tears, she noted, of a finer flavour than any she had cried before: 'I am a woman,' she thought, 'a real woman, at last.'" (175)

constructions is to be found in *Orlando*. The following sections analyse his/her fluid multiplicity of genders and sexes, from a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach.

3.3.3 The satire of molar gender constructions

Before analysing the molecularity of *Orlando*, I would like to highlight how Woolf parodies and ridicules the arborescent structure of the patriarchal machinery. Woolf's narrative, which promotes rhizomatic flows of individuation, criticises the rigidity and absurdity of patriarchal restrictions. That is how molar gender constructions are satirised throughout the text.

To start with, the whole narrative is sustained by an intrusive narrative voice, which, despite his/her supposed biographic rigour, is constantly judgemental in his/her narration of the course of events in *Orlando's* life. The realist voice of the chronicler clearly ascribes to the patriarchal discourses of Reason, Law, and Science, — similar deities to 'Proportion', 'Moderation' and 'Conversion' in *Mrs Dalloway*. However, the excessive nature of *Orlando's* life constantly subverts the arborescent structures imposed by the narrator. It is in those lines of escape posed by *Orlando's* fluidity, where Woolf inflicts the harshest criticism to patriarchal conventions. Woolf's own voice can be found in the voids, pauses and contradictions that the chronicler carries out.

An example of this criticism can be found in relation to misogyny:⁹⁰

Lord Chesterfield whispered it to his son with strict injunctions to secrecy, 'Women are but children of a larger growth...A man of sense only trifles with them, plays with them, humours and flatters them', which, since children always hear what they are not meant to, and sometimes, even, grow up, may have somehow leaked out, so that the whole ceremony of pouring out tea is a curious one. A woman knows very well that, though a wit sends her his poems, praises her judgment, solicits her criticism, and drinks her tea, this by no means signifies that he respects her opinions, admires her understanding, or will refuse, though the rapier is denied him, to run her through the body with his pen. (148)

⁹⁰Many critics have focused on Woolf's criticism of patriarchy and the feminist defense of *Orlando*: Kathie Birat, "Feminist Principles and Fictional Strategies: Otherness as a Narrative Strategy in *Sisters and Strangers* by Emma Tennant and *Orlando* by Virginia Woolf" (1993); T.E. Apter, "*Orlando*, and the Problem of being a Woman" (1979); Lisa M. Dresser, "Woolf and Feminism" (1995).

The chronicle persistently uses patriarchal stereotypes⁹¹ against women that are subverted by the course of events. On this occasion lady Orlando is trapped in the role that eighteenth-century England imposes upon her body. However, although Pope, Addison, and Swift dismiss her as an inferior subject, and do not give credit for her literary judgement, the story will make of Orlando an awarded writer in the twentieth century.

Molar definitions of femininity are proved to be arbitrary and futile. Nell, the prostitute, is confronted by a deeply rooted misogynist discourse of a client.⁹² Women are presented as naive, useless, dependent, lacking any desire, and unable to bond with each other. Women are held as *the Other*, the scapegoat of masculine prescriptions. However, this scene is juxtaposed to Orlando and Nell's encounter, in which this molar femininity is uncovered as a constructed façade.

Virginia Woolf accuses patriarchal behaviours of fostering unequal conditions between men and women. She regards women's inferior social position as an immediate result of the establishment of a hegemony that excludes and marginalises certain bodies. As in *Mrs Dalloway*, this is especially clear with regards to prostitution:

The light blazed in her eyes, and she saw, besides some degraded creatures of her own sex, two wretched pigmies on a stark desert land. Both were naked, solitary, and defenceless. The one was powerless to help the other. Each had enough to do to look after itself. Looking Mr Pope full in the face, 'It is equally vain', she thought; 'for you to think you can protect me, or for me to think I can worship you. The light of truth beats upon us without shadow, and the

⁹¹There are constant references in the text to stereotypical gender constructions imposed upon both men and women: "Not one of these Richards, Johns, Annes, Elizabeths has left a token of himself behind him, yet all, working together with their spades and their needles, their love-making and their child-bearing, have left this." (73)

⁹²"...for it cannot be denied that when women get together — but hist — they are always careful to see that the doors are shut and that not a word of it gets into print. All they desire is — but hist again — is that not a man's step on the stair? All they desire, we were about to say when the gentleman took the very words out of our mouths. Women have no desires, says this gentleman, coming into Nell's parlour; only affectations. Without desires (she has served him and he is gone) their conversation cannot be of the slightest interest to anyone. 'It is well known', says Mr S. W., 'that when they lack the stimulus of the other sex, women can find nothing to say to each other. When they are alone, they do not talk, they scratch.' And since they cannot talk together and scratching cannot continue without interruption and it is well known (Mr T. R. has proved it) 'that women are incapable of any feeling of affection for their own sex and hold each other in the greatest aversion', what can we suppose that women do when they seek out each other's society? (152)"

light of truth is damnably unbecoming to us both.' (144)

The prostitute looks at Pope and analyses straightforwardly the power relations that divide them; his paternalistic compassion is contrasted with her subordination. Prostitution is considered an outcome of the material conditions offered to women within the patriarchal schema. That is why the prostitute rejects Pope's pitiful gaze, insofar as he is held "responsible for the state of 'those poor girls in Piccadilly'" (64) — as Sally claims Hugh to be in *Mrs Dalloway*.

Apart from the ever-present chronicler's voice, there is a token that is also continually at the background of the text. *The Oak Tree*, which is traditionally associated with the English Kings (roots, lineage, Englishness, thus, patriarchy), stands in my eyes, as a symbol for arborescent gender constructions, which witnesses Orlando's multiplicity and fluidity.

He loved, beneath all this summer transiency, to feel the earth's spine beneath him; for such he took the hard root of the oak tree to be; or, for image followed image, it was the back of a great horse that he was riding, or the deck of a tumbling ship — it was anything indeed, so long as it was hard, for he felt the need of something which he could attach his floating heart to; the heart that tugged at his side; the heart that seemed filled with spiced and amorous gales every evening about this time when he walked out. To the oak tree he tied it and as he lay there, gradually the flutter in and about him stilled itself; the little leaves hung, the deer stopped; the pale summer clouds stayed; his limbs grew heavy on the ground; and he lay so still that by degrees the deer stepped nearer and the rooks wheeled round him and the swallows dipped and circled and the dragonflies shot past, as if all the fertility and amorous activity of a summer's evening were woven web-like about his body. (14-15)

Orlando, as a young man, feels a strong sense of attachment and belonging to his patriarchal ancestry: "For a moment Orlando stood counting, gazing, recognizing. That was his father's house; that his uncle's. His aunt owned those three great turrets among the trees there. The heath was theirs and the forest; the pheasant and the deer, the fox, the badger, and the butterfly." (14)

In fact, the oak tree provides the perfect image in my understanding of arborescent gender constructions. According to Deleuze and Guattari, arborescence refers to the tree-structured order of entities that are organised according to rigid dichotomies. Arborescence is characterised by homogeneity; that is to say, a molar individual is the dominated term in a relation of power, but, at the

same time, it is dominated by a commonality that doesn't allow its multiplicity to flow. At the beginning of the text, Orlando fantasises about this arborescence in the 'slicing of the Moor's head episode' and, 'woven web-like' to his body, Orlando feels annexed to the dictates of the tree-structured order of gender.

However, as Deleuze and Guattari indicate, the rhizome, an horizontal multiply connected root, emphasises the possibility of multiplicity and can be useful to transform rigid structures when brought to a social and political level. Orlando grows towards a rhizomatic plane, his trans-gender, trans-sex, trans-epoch condition, enables to flow in a multiplicity of becomings that the structure of the oak tree cannot attain.

3.3.4 The case of Orlando: Androgynous or molecular individuation?

Orlando's androgyny has raised a wide range of reactions among critics and has been the predominant case study of the novel. The following section is going to explore the major positions adopted by criticism and argues instead for a molecular perspective of gender by adopting a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach.

Woolf introduced her theory of the androgynous mind in *A Room of One's Own* (1929), which had been developed in *Orlando* (1928), published right before her famously acclaimed essay but written almost at the same time. We can find in much of her work this vision of gender by which "in each of us two powers preside, one male, one female," (Woolf, [1929] 2000b: 97) and *Orlando* seems the most evident testimony of this radical exploration of gender. This term has got two levels of meaning.

On the one hand, it refers to Woolf's ideal state for a creative mind which alternates between male/masculine and female/feminine; that is, an expression for writing.

...in each of us two powers preside, one male, one female; and in the man's brain the man predominates over the woman, and in the woman's brain the woman predominates over the man. The normal and comfortable state of being is that when the two live in harmony together, spiritually co-operating. If one is a man, still the woman part of his brain must have effect; and a woman also must have intercourse with the man in her. Coleridge perhaps meant this when he said that a great mind is androgynous. It is when this fusion takes place that the mind is fully fertilized and uses all its faculties. Perhaps a mind that is purely masculine cannot create, any more

than a mind that is purely feminine, I thought. (Woolf, [1929] 2000b: 97)

On the other hand, Woolf's notion of androgyny can be read from an ontological perspective, as a new conception of individuation: "It is fatal to be a man or woman pure and simple; one must be woman-manly or man-womanly." (Woolf, [1929] 2000b: 102) I am particularly interested in this second level of meaning since I believe the study of androgyny can contribute to our understanding of Woolf's vision of gender.

This concept has raised positive and negative reactions from scholarship. Supporters of the theory, including Carolyn Heilbrun, "[Woolf and Androgyny]" (1985) and Nancy Topping Bazin's *Virginia Woolf and the Androgynous Vision* (1973),⁹³ read androgyny as a balance and union between opposites which provides a stabilising structure.

...Virginia Woolf felt that neither an individual nor an age can find its point of equilibrium without frankly confronting and understanding the exact nature of the opposing forces. Thus, her interest in what it means to be a male or female was related to her quest for the self or the point of balance that would stabilize her personality and give her the sense of wholeness and unconsciousness which characterizes the androgynous writer. (Bazin, 1973: 3-4)

As Heilbrun states "*Orlando* ends with the marriage of the future, a marriage of the androgynous world." (Heilbrun, 1985: 81) It is precisely this marriage of opposites what both Heilbrun and Bazin praise. Likewise, in *Androgyny in Modern Literature* (2005), Tracy Hargreaves⁹⁴ emphasises the positivity of the term:

⁹³Heilbrun and Bazin's constitute two of the first reactions to Woolf in androgynous terms after Holtby in the thirties. Carolyn Heilbrun was a Woolf scholar and a feminist author. Heilbrun was Professor of English at Columbia from 1960 to 1992. Her research interest focused on British modern literature, with a particular interest in the Bloomsbury Group and her academic books include the feminist study *Writing a Woman's Life* (1988). Nancy Topping Bazin was Professor of twentieth-century literature and women's studies from 1971 until 2000 at Rutgers University, for one year at the University of Pittsburgh, and, finally, for thirty years at Old Dominion University. Bazin changed her career to creating fine art. Her published work includes *Virginia Woolf and the Androgynous Vision* (1973) and *Conversations with Nadine Gordimer* (1990), among various articles on modern literature, women's studies and androgyny.

⁹⁴Tracy Hargreaves is Senior Lecturer in English literature at the University of Leeds. Her earliest research focused on Virginia Woolf (the subject of her PhD) and on representations of androgyny, which resulted in her first book, *Androgyny in Modern Literature* (2005). After

Woolf's engagement with the ideals (and imperatives) of androgyny also constitute a decisive shift in early twentieth-century representations, moving androgyny away from the pathologised, degenerative and decadent incarnations to consolidate instead a relationship with feminism, polymorphous sexuality, writing and a creative literary criticism. (Hargreaves, 2005: 77)

Hargreaves states that Woolf's use of androgyny moves away from stigmatic representations to a productive approach of androgyny for feminism. She goes on posing that Orlando's sex change is not judged from the narrator's point of view as a deviant or pathological phenomenon. According to Hargreaves, Woolf suggests a reading of gender away from biological determinism that evidences the constructedness of its nature.

However, other critics have read Woolf's vision of androgyny as diversely as a double-edged weapon according to Stephen Heath⁹⁵ (the beginning of an alternative representation of the fixed axis men-women but a confirmation of that fixity at the same time), an escape from the body and a consequent neutralisation — Elaine Showalter, [1977] 1999 and Lisa Rado, 1997⁹⁶ —, an avoidance of feminist agenda — Elaine Showalter, [1977] 1999 —, or a perpetuation of phallogocentrism — Mona Fayad (1997)).

Detractors, such as Elaine Showalter, consider Woolf's notion of androgyny as an elusive strategy to avoid the feminist agenda. According to Elaine Showalter ([1977] 1999) androgyny represents an escape from the confrontation between femaleness and maleness.

Even in the moment of expressing feminist conflict, Woolf wanted to transcend it. Her wish for experience was really a wish to forget experience. In the 1920s, as her fiction moved away from realism, her criticism and her theoretical prose moved away from a troubled

completing her book, she began work on representations of the family in fiction in John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga* and *the Queen's Coronation*. Her current research interests are literature, film, television and adaptation between 1945-1968.

⁹⁵Stephen Heath is Professor at the University of Cambridge. His research interests are nineteenth and twentieth century, literary theory, and comparative literature. Among his published work we find *The Language, Discourse, Society Reader*, co-edited with Colin McCabe and Denise Riley.

⁹⁶Lisa Rado teaches at Harvard-Westlake School in Los Angeles. Her publications include *The Modern Androgyne Imagination: A Failed Sublime* (2000) and articles in leading journals of literary criticism on Conrad, Woolf, and Faulkner. She edited *Modernism, Gender, and Culture* (1997) and *Rereading Modernism: New Directions in Feminist Criticism* (1994).

feminism toward a concept of serene androgyny. (Showalter, [1977] 1999: 282)

Showalter considers Woolf's gender politics too weak, abstract and failing at the feminist demands of her time. In addition, she credits Woolf's androgynous vision of self-protection and escapism from social constraints, using ambiguity to escape from censorship towards sapphism:

The androgynous vision, in Woolf's term, is a response to the dilemma of a woman writer embarrassed and alarmed by feelings too hot to handle without risking real rejection by her family, her audience, and her class. (Showalter, [1977] 1999: 286)

Showalter blames Woolf for making women fall into exile and eunuchism or sapphism, "refined to its essences", "denied any action" and "disembodied." For Showalter, Woolf's worst crime against feminism is her distancing from feminist claims.

Toril Moi ([1985] 2002)⁹⁷ and Makiko Minow-Pinkney (2007) argue against Showalter. According to Moi, Woolfian androgyny is not a flight from feminism, as Showalter argues. On the contrary, Moi maintains that Woolf's understanding of the feminist struggle was focused on the deconstruction of the binary opposition of masculinity and femininity. As Minow-Pinkney states, "[a]ndrogyny in *Orlando* is not a resolution of oppositions, but the throwing of both sexes into a metonymic confusion of genders." (Minow-Pinkney, [1987] 2010: 122)

Furthermore, we could consider some studies on Woolf's exploration of androgyny to be an approach to androgyny which is trapped in the very same binary opposition that it seeks to deconstruct, insofar as there have been studies that have emphasised women as the embodiment of androgyny and other critics that see androgyny from a male-centred perspective.

To begin with, Heilbrun offers a female-centred reading of Woolf's approach to androgyny as a liberation for women: "Even those critics who are sympathetic to Woolf's vision often misunderstand it, for them the idea of androgyny is less a union representative of the range of human possibility than an agreed-upon division." (Heilbrun, 1985: 75)

⁹⁷Toril Moi is James B. Duke Professor of Literature and Romance Studies and Professor of English, Philosophy and Theatre Studies at Duke University. Her research interests are feminist theory and women's writing; on the intersections of literature, philosophy and aesthetics. Her published work includes *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (1985), *Simone de Beauvoir: The Making of an Intellectual Woman* (1994); and *What Is a Woman? And Other Essays* (1999). She is the editor of *The Kristeva Reader* (1986), and of *French Feminist Thought* (1987).

Other critics, such as Hélène Cixous (1986), regard androgyny as a type of bisexuality to which women are closer than men. Ellen Carol Jones in “The Flight of a Word: Narcissism and the Masquerade of Writing in Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando*” (1994) argues that *Orlando* is more a woman than a man, since women are never defined from a stable position. Similarly, Minow-Pinkney considers that by being outsiders women have undergone a kind of androgyny already as a result of doubly-split consciousness (referred to by Woolf in *A Room of One’s Own* (1929):

Again if one is a woman one is often surprised by a sudden splitting off of consciousness, say in walking down Whitehall, when from being the natural inheritor of that civilization, she becomes, on the contrary, outside of it, alien and critical. (Woolf [1929] 2000: 96)

Finally, there are critics who analyse androgyny as expanded on the lesbian subtext; Jane Marcus in her essay “Sapphisty: Narration as Lesbian Seduction in *A Room of One’s Own*” (1983) claims that in *Orlando*, Woolf privileges the female and the lesbian.

On the other hand, we can find works on androgyny which have adopted a male-centred approach. For Fayad (1997),⁹⁸ for instance, androgyny proves to be an example of patriarchal domination, the fusion of the female other within the male subject, a guarantee of male supremacy.

A third consideration of androgyny has been taken into account by critics; the merging conception of the term — with scholars such as Sánchez-Pardo, Minow-Pinkney, and Toril Moi. Esther Sánchez-Pardo (2004) when analysing the manipulation of gender in Virginia Woolf and focusing on *Orlando* suggests, following Hovey (1997), that *Orlando*’s originary androgyny is a fact, s/he has always been masquerading. She states that *Orlando* was already a woman in his previous life, or at least a ‘man-womanly.’ *Orlando*’s respective portraits as man and woman only illustrate that the androgyne is a ‘man-womanly’ or a ‘woman-manly.’ Gender is seen as a social construct, as a performative act; therefore, the change of sex does not involve a change of gender but a cultural process that has to be learned and is not inherent to sex. Richter seems particularly enlightening in relation to this:

The interaction between biological sex and socio-cultural gender, those well-known categories established in the 1970’s feminist the-

⁹⁸Mona Fayad is Associate Professor of Comparative literature, Women’s Studies and Cultural Studies at Salem State University. Fayad’s original area of research focused on Modern British literature.

ory, is presented as supremely complex in Woolf's 1928 fictional biography. *Orlando* is her most thorough exploration of the relationship between the cultural construction of gender and its various embodiments in sex — not the other way round. *Orlando* can thus be seen as both anticipating contemporary gender theory and moving beyond its limits. (Richter, 2010: 156)

Sánchez-Pardo, despite pointing at the unbalanced binary opposition between femininity/masculinity, its artificiality and volatility, concludes that this concept of androgyny merges the two binary poles of gender identity into the neutralisation of sex; sexual boundaries are effaced, and Woolf's reconciliatory fantasy of transcending sexual difference becomes manifest.

As death and life make a unity, love and hate become also one, and beings possess feminine and masculine characteristics. These conceptualizations seem to establish Woolf as a precursor, for she tries to escape the vision of difference that is based on the concept of opposition, and fights for breaking the ontological boundaries between opposites by uniting them. (Sánchez-Pardo, 2004: 82)

This concept of neutralisation is problematic because it can lead us to a certain relativism in considering gender identities in the configuration of subject identity. There is the risk to diminish the great potential that difference brings into play. However, at the same time, this merging of opposites opens up *n*-possibilities for gender identities and resignifies difference beyond its oppositional nature.

The feminist text must call into question the very identities which support this pattern of binary opposition. The concept of androgyny then becomes radical, opening up the fixed unity into a multiplicity, joy, play of heterogeneity, a fertile difference. (Minow-Pinkney, [1987] 2010: 12)

Although Makiko Minow-Pinkney signals the dangers of androgyny in its attempt to search for an alternative representation of the fixed axis men-women possibly turning into a confirmation of the very same fixity, however, she trusts the potential of androgyny to reinscribe difference in a new paradigm beyond binaries: "Just as language is a system of differences without 'positive' terms, so is gender a system of differences without any immanent essences. Thus

androgyny opens up new possibilities in the fixed division of gender.” (Minow-Pinkney, [1987] 2010: 130) According to Minow-Pinkney, intermixture does not mean fusion into homogeneous unity, but an affirmation of the difference between the sexes beyond the fixed division of gender.

As Burns (1998) and Hargreaves (2005) insinuate, one might read Woolf’s appeal to androgyny as the desire to correct “exaggerated, excessive masculinity” (Hargreaves, 2005: 95) — to what I would add —, to deconstruct the molar representations of masculinities, by bringing it into dialogue with its quintessential other, women’s subject positions.

...Neither the body of a man nor the body of a woman can represent adequately what a woman is, since women have been systematically written out of discourse. What Woolf does in order to represent the unrepresentable is play with performance. (Sánchez-Pardo, 2004: 84)

I would move on adding that neither the hegemonic discourse of masculinity nor the hegemonic discourse of femininity can represent the new becomings of gender identity that Woolf was hinting at through her fiction. The celebration of ambivalence and androgyny acclaimed in *Orlando*, for instance, is, thus, Woolf’s response to molar definitions of masculinity and femininity. By transcending rigid, fixed, and stable gender representations beyond her contemporary discursive regulation of gender roles, Woolf projects her literature towards a rhizomatic plane where fluid individuations underpin innumerable gender identities.

In Christy L. Burns’s (1994) analysis of the constructedness of gender in *Orlando*, Burns claims that Woolf fights against an essence in favor of the reversibility of sex, and reconsiders the nature of sexuality and the constructedness of gender.

If one might assume that sex is one of the single most essential attributes of identity, the self here is a collection of many possible sexualities...That is, there is a certain plurality and mark of difference always present in this identification. (Burns, 1994: 350)

It is precisely this multiplicity of selves, sexualities, and genders what makes of *Orlando*’s androgynous project an extremely innovative vision of gender, when reading it from a Deleuze and Guattari’s approach. Androgyny, as a term, presents some limitations, insofar as it merges two poles of the binary opposition male/female without taking into account the thousands of gender/sexual

identities in between. The term androgyny, as well as the term bisexuality, stem from the binary opposition it attempts to deconstruct.

Deleuze and Guattari consider the production of hierarchically gendered subjects a direct result of an illegitimate use of the syntheses of connection, disjunction, and conjunction. The most common binary oppositions imposed upon gender and sexuality are male/female, heterosexual/homosexual, and object-choice/identification. When these dualisms are dealt by means of exclusive disjunctions, the molar subject is brought to the fore. These molar subject formations fix the flows of desire that generate nomadic subjectivities.

Deleuze and Guattari stress the importance of thinking “difference” not as the reactive pole of a binary opposition organised so as to affirm the power and primacy of the same, but as the affirmation of difference in terms of a multiplicity of possible differences (difference-in-itself).

If we take into consideration the Deleuzo-Guattarian concept of difference, then the sexual distinction male/female is a contraction and normalisation of a wider and multiple range of subjectivities. According to Deleuze’s concept of difference, an individual is not constructed upon generality or commonality, but in a process of individuation set on specific differences, infinite connections and interactions. Deleuze and Guattari consider sexual division a result of molar structures that control the space of subjectivity. They present a nomadic mode of subjectivity and claim for ‘a thousand sexes.’ (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 278)

Molar representations of gender identities are a product of an exclusive disjunction. A molar subject is sexualised and engendered by choosing from a reductive set of subjectivities; male/female for its identification, male/female for its object-choice, homosexuality/heterosexuality for its orientation. The molar subject is patriarchal since it is both produced and reproduces patriarchal dynamics that privilege the phallus, the Law of the Father, that is, the male subject position.

On the other hand, nomadic subjectivities are dynamic, inclusive, multiple and non-hierarchical. This is the case of Orlando’s estate: “Different though the sexes are, they intermix. In every human being a vacillation from one sex to the other takes place, and often it is only the clothes that keep the male or female likeness, while underneath the sex is the very opposite of what it is above.” (132-33) This vacillation implies an *n* movement⁹⁹ within the interval of the sexes that amplifies the range of gender and sexual figurations.

Orlando’s realization of her ability to float between groups easily and expe-

⁹⁹By *n* movement I mean that the possibilities are multiplied towards the infinite.

rience the tangible benefits of both arborescent sexes, by simply changing her clothes, opens up endless possibilities regarding Orlando's range of experiences:

She had, it seems, no difficulty in sustaining the different parts, for her sex changed far more frequently than those who have worn only one set of clothing can conceive; nor can there be any doubt that she reaped a twofold harvest by this device; the pleasures of life were increased and its experiences multiplied. From the probity of breeches she turned to the seductiveness of petticoats and enjoyed the love of both sexes equally. (153)

It is particularly significant that Orlando's sex is described as "...chang[ing] far more frequently...", which implies more conversions than the singular dramatic transformation mid-way through the book. Orlando's fluid and dynamic individuation underpins 'thousand tiny sexes' and thousands of gender identities, as many as selves Orlando is claimed to *become*.

Deleuze and Guattari argue that at the molecular level, sexual identity comprises a multiplicity of states, traits and characteristics, which produces a wide range of sexualities that do not prioritize one differential trait over another, but take into account multiplicity-in-itself.

Thus it was in a highly ambiguous condition, uncertain whether she was alive or dead, man or woman, Duke or nonentity, that she posted down to her country seat, where, pending the legal judgment, she had the Law's permission to reside in a state of incognito or incognita, as the case might turn out to be. (119-120)

In fact, this state of *incognito* leaves Orlando pending in an *intermezzo* position that favours his/her *becoming-woman*, which will release body's potentials, connections, and assemblages; a *becoming-woman* that underpins a multiplicity of gender positions in which 'being a man or a woman' cannot be reduced to two sexual identities. On the contrary, these two categories open up to a multiplicity of states that generate n gender positions, affirming a multiplicity of infinite differences.

No actual body coincides entirely with either the category 'Man' or the category 'Woman.' These categories are more a form of approximation than an actual state. 'Man' and 'Woman,' as such, are the result of habit-formations. Orlando's gender ambivalence transcends time, space, biology and social impositions. Orlando is not sure to which sex s/he belongs, maybe because s/he belongs to both and none at the same time.

And here it would seem from some ambiguity in her terms that she was censuring both sexes equally, as if she belonged to neither; and indeed, for the time being, she seemed to vacillate; she was man; she was woman; she knew the secrets, shared the weaknesses of each. It was a most bewildering and whirligig state of mind to be in. The comforts of ignorance seemed utterly denied her. She was a feather blown on the gale. Thus it is no great wonder, as she pitted one sex against the other, and found each alternately full of the most deplorable infirmities, and was not sure to which she belonged. (113)

There is no pronoun to define Orlando, who is both ‘she’ and ‘he,’ but neither ‘him’ nor ‘her’ at the same time. ‘She seemed to vacillate;’ s/he is a woman, s/he is a man, s/he is none of them, she is something else, constantly changing, yet to become.¹⁰⁰

Orlando has learnt about the constructedness of gender and how gender is an overcoded, abstract faciality projected on actual bodies, which can only signify within molar constraints. Gender imposes rigid patterns upon the process of individuation and prevents becomings from flowing. Therefore, Orlando learns how to play the female gender role required from her society, and keeps her multiplicity by remaining an ambiguous and unconventional body. She epitomises the marriage between commonly attributed feminine and masculine traits.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰In “Vacillation and Mixture: The Multiple Genders of Orlando and Nature in Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando*” (2009), Jody R. Rosen analyses the relationship between Orlando’s multiple gender and sexuality and the multiplicity of nature itself, and states that “[b]ecause Woolf depicts gender in *Orlando* as something fluid, Orlando’s gender does not fit the binary model of male and female. This approach critiques the prevailing traditional view that conceives of gender as a natural reflection of one’s biology — Orlando’s biological change is hardly the only impetus for a gender shift in the novel. Multiply gendered, Orlando undermines the model of ‘naturally’ determined sex...Woolf’s narrative demonstrates that nature can be multiple in the same way that Orlando’s gender is neither singular nor fixed.” (Rosen, 2009: 153) Rosen points out Lisa Haines-Wright and Traci Lynn Kyle’s description of Orlando gender as “‘always both and more,’” arguing that one of the novel’s concerns is to “re-define identity as mobile, mutable, and nonetheless *self-constant*...” (Rosen, 2009: 155), as well as Suzanne Young’s description of Orlando’s gender as “the narrative’s “refusal to assign its protagonist a ‘natural’ and fixed identity.”” (Rosen, 2009: 155) According to Rosen, *Orlando* seems to be an attempt “[t]o move beyond the false dichotomies that insist that “sex” and nature are thought to be real, while gender and culture are seen as constructed.” (Rosen, 2009: 157)

¹⁰¹“For it was this mixture in her of man and woman, one being uppermost and then the other, that often gave her conduct an unexpected turn. The curious of her own sex would argue, for example, if Orlando was a woman, how did she never take more than ten minutes to dress? And were not her clothes chosen rather at random, and sometimes worn rather shabby? And then they would say, still, she has none of the formality of a man, or a man’s love of power. She is excessively tender-hearted. She could not endure to see a donkey beaten

And still “[w]hether, then, Orlando was most man or woman, it is difficult to say and cannot now be decided. (133) Orlando chooses this ambiguous, ambivalent, and unconventional man-womanly/woman-manly position, from where s/he can preserve his/her multiplicity.

Likewise, his/her sexual desire is polymorphous. A desire for women, as well as the occasional man, has been a constant throughout Orlando’s life, and therefore, is still a constant after her sex change. Critics as Marcus have discussed this work as a lesbian text, a contention that I would refute. Although there are homoerotic overtones, Orlando’s fluid and multiple sexuality cannot be ascribed to the constraining binary opposition imposed upon sexual choice (heterosexuality/homosexuality). The classification of Orlando’s sexual nature into strict binary terms (homosexual/heterosexual) defeats the purpose of the methodically deconstructed male/female sex and masculine/feminine gender binary that Woolf has elaborated throughout.

3.3.5 The becoming-woman of Orlando

The becoming woman of Orlando, ultimately reveals his/her becoming-woman — although his/her sex is described as “chang[ing] far more frequently.” (153) Orlando’s transformation into a woman is molecular. S/he is not transformed into a molar woman, insofar as s/he has never conformed to molar gender standards. As a man, Orlando is partly an outsider of the hegemonic masculine imagination; he is a poet not a warrior, he inhabits the private sphere not the public, and his physicality permeates through the story, by being objectified and fetishised by the narrator. As a woman, from the very beginning of his/her sex-transformation, Orlando is described by unfeminine behaviours; Orlando’s first encounter with the gipsies describes her as a brave warrior. She does not conform to molar traits of femininity: “...she was apt to think of poetry when she should have been thinking of taffeta; her walk was a little too much of a stride for a woman, perhaps, and her gestures, being abrupt, might endanger a cup of tea on occasion.” (136) Her daily routines will float between the female and masculine realm:

or a kitten drowned. Yet again, they noted, she detested household matters, was up at dawn and out among the fields in summer before the sun had risen. No farmer knew more about the crops than she did. She could drink with the best and liked games of hazard. She rode well and drove six horses at a gallop over London Bridge. Yet again, though bold and active as a man, it was remarked that the sight of another in danger brought on the most womanly palpitations. She would burst into tears on slight provocation. She was unversed in geography, found mathematics intolerable, and held some caprices which are more common among women than men, as for instance that to travel south is to travel downhill.” (133)

So then one may sketch her spending her morning in a China robe of ambiguous gender among her books; then receiving a client or two (for she had many scores of suppliants) in the same garment; then she would take a turn in the garden and clip the nut trees — for which knee-breeches were convenient; then she would change into a flowered taffeta which best suited a drive to Richmond and a proposal of marriage from some great nobleman; and so back again to town, where she would don a snuff-coloured gown like a lawyer's and visit the courts to hear how her cases were doing — for her fortune was wasting hourly and the suits seemed no nearer consummation than they had been a hundred years ago; and so, finally, when night came, she would more often than not become a nobleman complete from head to toe and walk the streets in search of adventure. (153)

Gender ambiguity will allow Orlando to behave beyond social gender expectations. In fact, her life experience will trespass the arborescent structures imposed upon bodies, by switching from one gender state to another and multiplying its potentialities towards n possibilities.

S/he crosses through a multiplicity of thresholds and becomings in order to become-minoritarian. Lady Orlando speaks from an *intermezzo* subject position: "...she was speaking more as a woman speaks than as a man, yet with a sort of content after all..." (114) Orlando's new gender formation stems from molecular standards so as to break away from the hierarchical and oppressive tentacles of patriarchy:

'Better is it', she thought, to be clothed with poverty and ignorance, which are the dark garments of the female sex; better to leave the rule and discipline of the world to others; better be quit of martial ambition, the love of power, and all the other manly desires if so one can more fully enjoy the most exalted raptures known to the humane spirit. (114)

Her transformation into the patriarchal 'Other,' provides Orlando the means to flow in the on-going process of becoming-woman. She refers explicitly to the marginal subject position that women occupy in patriarchal society. Orlando seems to be glad to occupy a peripheral position within molar structures dominated by the Man Standard, which she calls "manly desires." By distancing herself from the Majoritarian, Orlando is able to become-woman and "fully enjoy the most exalted raptures known to the humane spirit;" being able to explore the potentialities and particularities of life.

His/her becoming-woman will activate gender potential towards new states and becomings. Orlando epitomises the potential to create new states through the process of becoming minor, which will deterritorialise the gender standard majority. Orlando represents the transformational potential that minorities have in their becoming potential.

Orlando's sexuality has become a flow of desire and her marriage with Shelmerdine the perfect means for this flow to keep moving. This molecular marriage seems the perfect site for Orlando's gender and sexual fluidity. Shelmerdine's adventures, their wider concept of love, and Orlando's preservation of her autonomy or privacy as a writer inscribe their marriage in a new paradigm beyond patriarchy.

Unlike Septimus Warren Smith, for Orlando marriage is neither a site of repression nor an imposing molar structure to his/her fluid process of individuation. Orlando's marriage breaks away from the Oedipal family. That is why unlike Septimus, Orlando has a son within the new paradigm of this marriage: "...Orlando was safely delivered of a son on Thursday, March the 20th, at three o'clock in the morning." (204) The molar roles of husband and wife are undermined by Shelmerdine's and Orlando's fluidity and in-betweenness.¹⁰²

According to Deleuze and Guattari, the ultimate goal of human becomings is becoming imperceptible. In relation to gender, Deleuze and Guattari's claim for imperceptibility result in the need for the undoing of sexual/gender differentiation. Furthermore, they aim to free difference from reductive constraints of sexual/gender binary oppositions which bring about a simplification of multiplicity of states. Orlando and Shelmerdine's marriage seems to epitomise this imperceptibility, insofar as both characters interact with each other beyond the constraints of gender binary oppositions.

In fact, from the very moment Orlando is transformed into a molecular woman, s/he seems to witness the undoing of gender/sex binaries: "For now a thousand hints and mysteries became plain to her that were then dark. Now, the obscurity, which divides the sexes and lets linger innumerable impurities in its gloom, was removed..." (115) The obscurity that divides the sexes is removed. Instead, a multiplicity of differences is released.

¹⁰²Many critics have considered Orlando's marriage as an example of gender conformity; as if Orlando, as a woman, is subsumed under the demands of the patriarchal order by accepting her role as a mother and wife. Burns writes: "Although she conforms by virtue of marrying Shelmerdine, Orlando resists the particular demands of Victorian marriage and womanly roles...That is, Orlando takes the category that is forced upon her (marriage), but she subverts it by negating many of its more traditional constraints." (Burns, 1994: 355)

3.3.6 Orlando: A full BwO

Unlike Septimus Warren Smith, Orlando could be considered a full BwO. His/her body is productive, multiple, constantly changing. The full BwO is the healthy BwO; it is productive, but not petrified in its organisation.¹⁰³ The full BwO is this body in and through which intensities flow and circulate, where productions are engendered. As Grosz states “the ability to sustain itself is the condition that seems to be missing in the empty BwO.” (Grosz, 1994a: 171)

This is how it should be done. Lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continua of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times. It is through a meticulous relation with the strata that one succeeds in freeing lines of flight, causing conjugated flows to pass and escape and bringing forth continuous intensities for a BwO. (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 161)

Orlando engages with his/her experience projecting multiple lines of flight, by producing constant flow conjunctions that underpin his/her multiple selves. His/her body is a limit, a plane of intensities where assemblages and connections are productive in creating new states. Orlando is “no longer this or that,” s/he is an on-going flow of life and desire: “It is only there that the BwO reveals itself for what it is: connection of desires, conjunction of flows, continuum of intensities.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 161) Orlando has constructed his/her “own little machine, ready when needed to be plugged into other collective machines.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1980] 2003b: 161)

¹⁰³It was not until *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), Deleuze and Guattari valued positively the full BwO. At first, they defined the full BwO as catatonia, unproduction in *Anti-Oedipus* (1972): “The full body without organs is the unproductive, the sterile, the unengendered, the unconsumable. Antonin Artaud discovered this one day, finding himself with no shape or form whatsoever, right there where he was at that moment. The death instinct: that is its name, and death is not without a model. For desire desires death also, because the full body of death is its motor, just as it desires life, because the organs of life are the working machine...The catatonic body is produced in the water of the hydrotherapy tub. The full Body without Organs belongs to the realm of antiproduction; but yet another characteristic of the connective or productive synthesis is the fact that it couples production with antiproduction, with an element of antiproduction.” (Deleuze & Guattari, [1972] 2003a: 8)

3.4 Conclusion. The becoming-woman of male characters: Orlando and Septimus Warren Smith

Woolf's narratives contrast molar and molecular gender figurations. She draws a harsh criticism towards hegemonic gender constructions and proposes more fluid gender formations instead, which break away from rigid binary oppositions: male/female, heterosexual/homosexual, object-choice/identification. By undoing these dualisms Septimus and Orlando embrace multiplicity.

Whereas Septimus collapses in the process of becomings by becoming an unproductive empty BwO, unable to project any further line of flight, Orlando stands for the culmination of Woolf's polymorphous gender project, by becoming a productive full BwO.

On the one hand, Septimus Warren Smith's pressure from medical and scientific institutions force his body to be organised according to molar standards by pushing his approach to the plane of immanence towards the empty space of suicide, which becomes, otherwise, his only escape to preserve his autonomy as a BwO. His suicide makes of Septimus's body an empty BwO, breaking the flow.

On the other hand, Orlando never ceases to become. His/her body remains the site for connections, assemblages, flows and multiple becomings. Orlando manages to produce multiple lines of flight and to explore his/her multiple genders and sexes by vacillating or floating between different states from her *intermezzo* ambiguous subject position. Orlando becomes an event that never ceases to transform and be transformed, affect and be affected. As discussed above, her molecular marriage with Shelmerdine epitomises Orlando's potential to produce intensities.

This is how I believe that Orlando becomes the best representative of Woolf's polymorphous conceptualisation of gender; a productive machine that deterritorialises gender fixations. Orlando embraces vastness and variety moving beyond gender/sex taxonomies. S/he becomes the paradigmatic example of Woolf's fluid, flexible, multifaceted mode of individuation, which advocates for a polymorphous condition.

Chapter 4

Film adaptations: Gorris's and Potter's narrative of gender

4.1 Introduction

The following chapter studies two film adaptations based on Woolf's novels, *Orlando* (Sally Potter,¹ 1992) and *Mrs Dalloway* (Marleen Gorris,² 1997), not from a film studies approach, but from a conceptual and cultural studies approach, focusing on Woolf's narrative of gender. There have been two other film adaptations from two other novels by Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (Colin Cregg, 1986), and *Golven* [*The Waves*] (Annette Apon, 1982). Colin

¹Sally Potter is an English film director and screenwriter. She started her career as a dancer, choreographer, singer and songwriter. Her work as a filmmaker starts with experimental short films, including *Jerk* (1969) and *Play* (1970). It was not until 1979 that Potter succeeded in the international festival circuit with *Thriller*. Her films include *The Goldd Diggers* (1983), *The London Story* (1986) *I am an Ox, I am a Horse, I am a Woman* (1988), *Orlando* (1992), *The Tango Lesson* (1996), *The Man Who Cried* (2000), *Yes* (2004) and *Rage* (2009) — the first feature film to premiere in mobile phones.

²Marleen Gorris is a scriptwriter and filmmaker from the Netherlands. Her films include *A Question of Silence* (1982), *Broken Mirrors* (1984), *The Last Island* (1991), *Antonia's Line* (1995), *Mrs. Dalloway* (1997), *The Luzhin Defence* (2000), *Carolina* (2003), and *Within the Whirlwind* (2009). *Antonia's Line* (1995) earned her the greatest international success by being awarded with the Best Foreign Film Oscar.

Gregg's film adaptation is a BBC production and Annette Apon's film is a Dutch production, which had no international impact. Since the main objective of this chapter is to evaluate how more contemporary narratives have dealt with Virginia Woolf's polymorphous concept of gender, these two previous film adaptations are rather too far back in time. On the other hand, the most recent film adaptation related to Woolf, Michael Cunningham's novel *The Hours*, turned into film (Stephen Daldry, 2002), opens a compelling field of study with a great intertextual potential, which could be the object of study for a future research. However, this last film adaptation is not going to be the object of study of my thesis, insofar as it is a film adaptation of Michael Cunningham's *The Hours* and, therefore, at a remove from direct adaptations of Woolf.

Although the theoretical framework used here to analyse masculinities is still Deleuze and Guattari's key concepts of individuation, the Deleuzian approach to cinema, will not be used, insofar as it provides a revision and a new understanding of the cinematic medium in relation to fundamental concepts, such as image, movement, time, and space, and my approach is not as cinematic as narratological. In *Cinema 1: The Movement Image* (1983) and *Cinema 2: The Time Image* (1989), Deleuze aims to develop philosophical concepts for cinema, as a mode of thought. He focuses on the complex philosophical treatment of time, space, and movement. Nevertheless, neither does he analyse the narrative of films nor gender. This is why his work on cinema is not useful for my analysis of the male characters in both film adaptations. Deleuze's insights on cinema do not add any further dimension in this sense. Therefore, I have restricted my use of Deleuze and Guattari's framework to their body work concerning the process of individuation, which is going to be crucial for my understanding of gender narratives in these two adaptations of Woolf.

As has been proved in the previous chapters, Virginia Woolf's polymorphous gender approach challenges the rigid sex/gender binary opposition. She advocates for a multiplicity of sexes, which brings about a multiplicity of genders, sexual identities, sexual object choices, and sexual practices. Within this framework, I have tried to show how vital her novelistic representations of masculinities are for such a gender project. Woolf both denounces constraining patriarchal hegemonic constructions of masculinity and projects or produces more fluid alternative masculinities through her male characters in her novels.

This is how the last object of study of this thesis is to evaluate two late twentieth century approaches to Woolf's gender narrative, paying special attention to male characters and the representation of masculinities. In this chapter I will analyse two more contemporary narratives of gender carried out by film adaptations of Woolf's novels to demonstrate that Woolf's visionary conception

of gender is still not fully embraced by these two films.

I have chosen these two film adaptations of Woolf, by taking into account that they are both the most contemporary direct adaptations of Woolf's texts and two examples of non-mainstream cinema.³ Both Gorris and Potter, feminist and independent filmmakers⁴ created low budget films⁵ in which I expected to

³By non-mainstream cinema I mean to refer to low budget films that are not made by major entertainment studios or companies that are owned by international media groups. In this sense, this limited film funding and production is a twofold issue; on the one hand, productions like these have limited resources, but on the other hand, these type of films receive less pressures from producers to conform to commercial demands.

⁴In an interview in *Cineaste* in 1996, Marlene Gorris affirms that: "When I made my first film, *A Question of Silence*, feminism was very much a living issue. I think one of the reasons I could make *A Question of Silence* was that everybody was so inclined. They believed that those issues should be brought to notice. The same goes for my second film, *Broken Mirrors*. But then, round about 1985, the tide began to turn. As I heard somebody observe this morning on television, feminism became the last "F-word" in American culture. There has been a backlash for the last ten years. The media have been having a field day with anything feminist, denigrating it left, right, and center. However, I have the feeling that over the past few years, maybe even the last year, things have been changing again. Calling yourself a feminist or making a feminist movie is not something to be hidden." (in Sklar, [1996] 2002: 212) On the contrary, although *Orlando* is often considered a feminist film, Potter denies this label. She stated in an interview in 2003: "Under some circumstances, and within certain groups of people, I happily call myself a feminist because it's a useful shorthand. But, in other circumstances, the word feminist is used dismissively as a way of categorising and putting me into a little box; usually by people who don't know what the word means anyway. It's more useful, I find, not to use a label at all." (in Widdicombe, 2003: 4)

⁵As Christine Geraghty claims in "Art Cinema, Authorship, and the Impossible Novel: Adaptations of Proust, Woolf, and Joyce" in *Now a Major Motion Picture. Film Adaptations of Literature and Drama* (2008), "...the film [*Mrs. Dalloway*] had considerable production difficulties since inadequate financing meant that the production had to be halted during filming." (Geraghty, 2008: 58) Gorris's *Mrs. Dalloway*'s "[p]roduction began in July of 1996, but financing collapsed 2 1/2 weeks later and shooting ground to a halt. Gorris, Gibson and other department heads hung on until First Look Pictures took over financing. Production then recommenced for a total of eight weeks. Gibson credits the "100-percent support" of Panavision, Lee Electric, Rank Labs, Kodak and Fuji for helping her make it through the "living nightmare" of this part of production." (Kaufman, 1998: 22) Gorris acknowledged that the film had had a bigger budget than her earlier films but still departed from Hollywood's budgets: "By present-day American standards *Mrs. Dalloway* wasn't a very expensive film. It was only four and a half million dollars. And you know, if an American studio had made the film it probably would have been something like sixty million dollars. So, I think in Europe we manage to make quality films for much less money and I hope we continue to do so." (Marlene Gorris quoted in Geraghty, 2008: 58) Likewise, Sally Potter's *Orlando* (1992) had to face production difficulties. As Anne Ciecko reported for *Velvet Light Trap* (1998: 19), Potter's project was initially rejected by nearly every producer in Britain. Consequently, Potter's feature film was co-produced by her own company, Adventure Pictures, which she formed with Christopher Sheppard, with Lenfilm, Rio, Mikado Film, Sigma Film, and British Screen. As Tilda Swinton claims when referring to its funding, "the Americans didn't understand it

find more fluid gender representations. Both Gorris and Potter were free from the pressures of massive productions to submit to commercial standards. In addition, both filmmakers were interested and had worked on gender before.⁶ This is why I expected their gender narrative to take over Woolf's challenging gender proposal.

This chapter starts with a brief account of Woolf's thoughts on cinema and adaptation, as a mode of introduction. Then, it provides an account of the key discussions around film adaptation theory, in order to finally position my own approach in cultural studies. An analysis of gender and masculinities will be provided in the sections devoted to the study of film adaptations of Woolf, leading to a final discussion on the transformation, adaptation, amplification or re-evaluation that these two more contemporary cinematic narratives have carried out from Woolf's polymorphous and complex narrative of gender. Having proved the great potential of Septimus Warren Smith and Orlando to project

at all." (quoted in Glaessner, 1992: 13) Thus, the financial package for the film had to be found within Europe; from Italian, Dutch, French, Russian, and British sources. Therefore, the film is a co-production of the UK, the USSR, France, Italy and the Netherlands, and was filmed in the UK, Russia and Uzbekistan. According to Patricia Mellencamp, the film was produced on a grand scale, but it is not the typical Hollywood product: "Instead of cost overruns and astronomical economics, Sony quotes a price of \$5 million! Along with the gender of the director and a British-Russian co-production, this is a major revision of film history. Of equal import, Potter moved from avant-garde cinema to feature films without sacrificing formal, aesthetic, political concerns, something only a few have accomplished before her." (Mellencamp, 1995: 283) However, Sharon Lin Tay frames this production within British parameters: "Although there are many elements that distinguish *Orlando* from mainstream cinema, the film's budget, production values, and status as a European co-production situate it very much within mainstream cinema in British industrial terms." (Lin Tay, 2009: 88) In an interview with Scott MacDonald in 1995, Sally Potter revealed the cost of the film: "The film cost £2.25 million, approximately \$4,000,000. It was originally budgeted at \$17,000,000, and it's the same film. I didn't cut anything but the cost. In a sense, it's the same principle that was at work in my early films, just more money was involved. It was exactly the same feeling squeezing thirty-nine minutes of projected film time out of -" -£130, and squeezing four-hundred years of costumes and three continents out of \$4,000,000. Both projects push at the financial limits." (Potter in MacDonald, 1995: 217)

⁶In 1982, Gorris directed *A Question of Silence* and in 1984 *Broken Mirrors*; both films with clear feminist claims and criticism of male-dominated societies. In 1991 Gorris made *The Last Island*, which built her reputation as a feminist filmmaker. However, her greatest international success was *Antonia's Line* in 1995, a feminist fairy tale of a matriarchal community. As Emanuel Levy points out, "[a]ll three films deal with the emergence of the modern woman." (Levy, 1997: 75) According to Sharon Lin Tay (2009: 84), Sally Potter's career as a director is most clearly aligned with the trajectory of the feminist film movement in both political and theoretical terms. Before *Orlando* (1992), she had already made *Thriller* (1979); her first feature film *The Gold Diggers* (1983); a short film, *The London Story* (1986); and *I am an Ox, I am a Horse, I am a Man, I am a Woman* (1988), a film about women in Soviet cinema.

fluid gender figurations, the study of these two film adaptations adds an ultimate dimension to my overall argument about Woolf’s polymorphous concept of gender by evaluating new readings of Woolf’s gender narrative; to what extent is Woolf’s concept of gender contemporary? and, to what extent is it beyond more contemporary gender narratives?

4.2 Virginia Woolf and “The Cinema”

Virginia Woolf was one of the first critical voices to approach film adaptation⁷ in her 1926 essay “The Cinema.”⁸ Filmmakers had turned to literary texts as their sources, something that Woolf deplored. While she acknowledged cinema’s potential to explore time and space, and celebrated “cinema’s innovative and compelling emotional and spatial languages” (Hankins, 1993a: 99),⁹ Virginia Woolf openly expressed her disapproval about film’s simplifying or patronising tendency to diminish the potential of literary texts regarding literary adaptations.

All the famous novels of the world, with their well-known characters and their famous scenes, only asked, it seemed, to be put on the films.

⁷Much has been discussed about the relationship between modernism and cinema; two examples are worth noticing insofar as they deal with Woolf and cinema. Firstly, in *Cinema and Modernism* (2007), David Trotter provides a great account of the influence that cinema had on modernist authors, such as Woolf, Eliot, and Joyce. Secondly, in *The Tenth Muse: Writing about Cinema in the Modernist Period* (2007), Laura Marcus explores early critical reactions about cinema in relation to literature and arts in general.

⁸Virginia Woolf wrote the draft for this essay in mid-April, shortly before beginning the Initial Holograph Draft of ‘Time Passes’, which was written between 30th April and 25th May 1926. “The Cinema” appeared in the New York Journal *Arts* in June and in the *Nation and Athenaeum* on 3 July, as Marcus (2007: 107) asserts, without Woolf’s concern as ‘The Movies and Reality’ in the *New Republic* of 4 August 1926.

⁹In “A Splice of Reel Life in Virginia Woolf’s “Time Passes”: Censorship, Cinema and “The Usual Battlefield of Emotions”” (1993), Leslie K. Hankins highlights the influence that cinema had on Woolf: “Woolf’s interest in developing a strategy for containing emotion and finessing the sentimental in her art, uppermost in the planning of *To the Lighthouse*, found fertile ground in film theory of the twenties. The conceptual leaps sketched out in “The Cinema” opened up vast reserves for Woolf, freeing her from anxiety about the sentimental and enabling her to express obliquely through movement and space that which in words might be deemed sentimental.” (Hankins, 1993a: 103-105) Likewise, Trotter (2005) discusses the influence that cinema had on Woolf, opposing Showalter and Winifred Holtby’s analogical approach of the relation between cinema and Woolf’s writing. Trotter underlines the fact that film, a then new technological medium in describing life, had an influence on Woolf more in a conceptual basis rather than technical or analogical standards.

What could be easier and simpler? The cinema fell upon its prey with immense rapacity, and to the moment largely subsists upon the body of its unfortunate victim. But the results are disastrous to both. The alliance is unnatural. Eye and brain are torn asunder ruthlessly as they try vainly to work in couples. (Woolf, [1926] 1994: 349-350)

Woolf defends the novel against filmic adaptation,¹⁰ establishing the literary text in a privileged position in the literary-cinematic exchange. She presents a hostility to adaptations, insofar as she considers any attempt from film to intrude into any other field of other arts as ‘unnatural’ and ‘disastrous’ — what David Trotter calls, following Woolf’s view, an act of cannibalism.¹¹

In relation to *Anna Karenina*’s film adaptation, she complains: “A kiss is love. A broken cup is jealousy. A grin is happiness. Death is a hearse. None of these things has the least connexion with the novel that Tolstoy wrote...” (Woolf, [1926] 1994: 350) Woolf criticises film adaptations’ determinism and their reductionist tendencies to restrict the multiplicity underpinned by words to the reductive limitations of meaning or representation. Woolf was convinced that a representational system such as cinema could not cope with the expressive and suggestive nuances of language; “[a]ll this, which is accessible to words and to words alone, the cinema must avoid.” (Woolf, [1926] 1994: 351)

The eye says ‘Here is Anna Karenina.’ A voluptuous lady in black velvet wearing pearls comes before us. But the brain says, That is no more Anna Karenina than it is Queen Victoria.’ For the brain knows Anna almost entirely by the inside of her mind — her charm, her passion, her despair. All the emphasis is laid by the cinema upon her teeth, her pearls, and her velvet. (Woolf, [1926] 1994: 350)

Virginia Woolf considered literary and cinematic narratives to be two different domains and found any attempt to translate one medium into the other — the filmed novel — a reductive, and rather simplistic, venture. Furthermore, Woolf argued for a new cinematic code, one not dependent on literature but engaged in the new visual representational framework. She stresses the potential of cinematic devices once film is freed from the influence of literature: “...it is only when we give up trying to connect the pictures with the book that we guess

¹⁰Laura Marcus (2007: 107) affirms: “In ‘The Cinema’ Woolf at times appeared to be suggesting that cinema is a lesser art than literature, and certainly more ‘primitive.’”

¹¹In “Virginia Woolf and Cinema,” Trotter paraphrases Woolf: “The picture-makers have gone over to narrative. They have cannibalised literature.” (Totter, 2005: 18)

from some accidental scene — like the gardener mowing the lawn — what the cinema might do if left to its own devices.” (Woolf, [1926] 1994: 350) Virginia Woolf believed in the suggestive potential of cinema, but she insisted on the need to look for this in cinema’s own cinematic language.

At a screening of *Dr Caligari*, Woolf hints at the expressivity that can be inferred from the power or impact that images have in our imagination.

...a shadow shaped like a tadpole suddenly appeared at one corner of the screen. It swelled to an immense size, quivered, bulged, and sank back again into nonentity. For a moment it seemed to embody some monstrous diseased imagination of the lunatic’s brain. For a moment it seemed as if thought could be conveyed by shape more effectively than by words. The monstrous quivering tadpole seemed to be fear itself, and not the statement ‘I am afraid’. In fact, the shadow was accidental and the effect unintentional. But if a shadow at a certain moment can suggest so much more than the actual gestures and words of men and women in a state of fear, it seems plain that the cinema has within its grasp innumerable symbols for emotions that have so far failed to find expression. (Woolf, [1926] 1994: 350)

However, “The Cinema” reveals Woolf’s dissatisfaction with her contemporary film. Woolf opened and closed the essay with an open attack on the way filmmakers were exploring cinema at her time: “It is as if the savage tribe, instead of finding two bars of iron to play with, had found scattering the seashore fiddles, flutes, saxophones, trumpets, grand pianos by Erard and Bechstein, and had begun with incredible energy, but without knowing a note of music, to hammer and thump upon them all at the same time.” (Woolf, [1926]: 352-353) She believed in the capacity of cinema to produce meaning as a new artistic field, but she considered that the filmmakers of her time were still not ready to explore the wide range of possibilities that cinematic devices could offer.

Woolf’s twofold appreciations about cinema reflect the two main lines of research in the field of film adaptation. On the one hand, Woolf privileges the literary work over the film, underlying a hierarchy between the literary text, seen as the original or source text, and the resulting film adaptation, regarded as secondary, a copy or reproduction, a literal translation into a new aesthetic environment. This has been the subject of numerous adaptation studies of so-called ‘fidelity criticism,’¹² which evaluate and judge a cinematic adaptation by

¹²In *Novels into Film. The Metamorphosis of Fiction into Cinema* (1957), George Bluestone claims that fidelity criticism constrains the transformational process of film adaptations: “Such

its perceived ‘faithfulness’ to the literary text on which it is based and is vigilant against any kind of liberties which the film may have taken.

On the other hand, Woolf insisted that it is only when we “give up connecting the pictures with the book,” that the film will become a medium in itself with its own devices. Woolf was referring here to the autonomy of two distinct fields, which, in her view, should not be associated. In addition, Woolf was hinting at the autonomy of the cinematic text to be considered valid on its own, as an independent work of art. We could align these concerns about the cinematic narrative with the extended work on adaptation that has questioned fidelity¹³ and has claimed that the cinematic text should be studied as cultural practice beyond the literary text.

The following section outlines the evolution of film adaptation studies and positions my analysis of film adaptations of Woolf in the cultural studies approach.

statements as: “The film is true to the spirit of the book”; “It’s incredible how they butchered the novel”; “It cuts out key passages, but it’s still a good film”; “Thank God they changed the ending” — these and similar statements are predicated on certain assumptions which blur the mutational process.” (Bluestone, [1957] 1968: 5) Bluestone goes on by criticising these judgements for assuming that “...incidents and characters in fiction are interchangeable with incidents and characters in the film; that the novel is a norm and the film deviates at its peril; that deviations are permissible for vaguely defined reasons—exigencies of length or of visualization, perhaps—but that the extent of the deviation will vary directly with the “respect” one has for the original; that taking liberties does not necessarily impair the quality of the film, whatever one may think of the novel, but that such liberties are somehow a trick which must be concealed from the public.” (Bluestone, [1957] 1968: 5) Bluestone concludes that “[t]he film becomes a different *thing* in the same sense that a historical painting becomes a different thing from the historical event which it illustrates.” (Bluestone, [1957] 1968: 5) An example of fidelity criticism can be found in Robin H. Smiley’s *Books into Film: The Stuff That Dreams Are Made Of* (2003), which presents a collection of sixty-two brief studies of books that have been made into films, which evaluates how the film captured the book.

¹³These are some critical texts that attack fidelity criticism as reductionist, at least partly and more or less based on post-structuralist or related arguments: James Naremore, ed., *Film Adaptation* (2000); Robert Giddings and Erica Sheen, eds., *The Classic Novel: From page to screen* (2000); Sarah Cardwell, *Adaptation revisited: Television and the classic novel* (2002); Robert Stam, *Literature through Film: Realism, Magic, and the Art of Adaptation* (2005); Robert Stam and Alessandra Raengo, *Literature and Film: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Film Adaptation* (2005); Mireia Aragay, ed., *Books in Motion: Adaptation, Intertextuality, Authorship* (2005); John M. Desmond and Peter Hawkes, *Adaptation: Studying Film and Literature* (2006); Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation* (2006); Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006); and Thomas Leitch, *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents: From Gone with the Wind to The Passion of the Christ* (2007).

4.3 Film adaptation: Fidelity discourses vs. intertextuality discourses

Few adaptation theory writings about the relationships of literature and film appeared early in the twentieth century, and it was not until the eighties that studies in the field started to blossom. However, pioneering theorists like George Bluestone, *Novels into Film: The Metamorphosis of Fiction into Cinema* (1957)¹⁴ and André Bazin's "Adaptation, or the Cinema as Digest" (1948)¹⁵ are commonly held as the point of departure of film adaptation studies despite not being followed by other writings until the 1980s.

These early works about the relationship between literature/theatre and film focused on the similarities and differences between these two media, arts, or cultural products. George Bluestone¹⁶ defined in 1957 what in his view were the fundamental differences between the two media, and the complexity of a perfect correlation, by exalting the expressive and conceptual qualities of literature and diminishing cinematic narrative plasticity. He wrote extensively on the fundamental differences in audience, narrative, treatment of time and space, among other issues.

In his essay "In Defense of Mixed Cinema" (1952), Bazin¹⁷ expresses his concerns about those theories that consider that film adaptation spoils or distorts the essence of literature — "...the truth is, that culture in general and literature in particular have nothing to lose from such an enterprise." (Bazin, [1952] 1967: 65) He argues for the popularising effect that film adaptation had on literature, making it accessible to a wider audience: "...there is here no competition or substitution [between literature and cinema], rather the adding of a new dimension that the arts had gradually lost...namely a public." (Bazin, [1952] 1967: 75)

Bazin acknowledged the need for certain minor changes when adapting literature for the screen, but he strongly believed that an essence of the literary work should be extrapolated into the new aesthetic environment; "...the film-maker

¹⁴It stands as the first academic analysis on film adaptation in American cinema.

¹⁵André Bazin, "L'adaptation ou le cinéma comme digeste" in *Esprit* 16.146 (1948). The text was translated into English in 1997 by Alain Piette and Bert Cardullo and appears in *Film Adaptation* edited by James Naremore in 2000.

¹⁶George Bluestone is a pioneering film critic, one of the first critics to study film adaptations of literature. Teacher, producer, and author, taught at Boston University for twenty-four years, where he became professor *emeritus* of film. His published work includes *Novels into Film: The Metamorphosis of Fiction into Cinema* (1957) and *The Send-off* (1968).

¹⁷André Bazin was a groundbreaker French film critic and film theorist. He was a co-founder of the film magazine *Cahiers du cinéma* in 1951 and his publications include the four-volume collection of his writings, published posthumously from 1958 to 1962 as *What is Cinema?*

has everything to gain from fidelity.” (Bazin, [1952] 1967: 65) He argued: “[f]or the same reasons that render a word-by-word translation worthless and a too free translation a matter for condemnation, a good adaptation should result in a restoration of the essence of the letter and the spirit.” (Bazin, [1952] 1967: 67)

Despite his so acclaimed conservative concerns about fidelity, Bazin hinted at the transformational potential of film adaptation. Paradoxically, in his essay “Adaptation, or the Cinema as Digest” (1948), he anticipated the critical debate around “fidelity” discourses and “intertextuality”¹⁸ discourses and argued for a more open concept of film adaptation, setting the terms for cultural studies approaches to film. He anticipated post-structuralist critiques of literary originality — pioneering texts as Roland Barthes’s “The Death of the Author” (1968) and Michel Foucault’s “What Is an Author?” (1969) — which would undermine the fidelity discourse as related to film adaptation.¹⁹

In 1948, Bazin stated that “[the author] sold it [the work], and thus is guilty of an act of prostitution that deprives him of many of his privileges as creator of the work.” (Bazin, [1948] 1997: 48) He added that adaptation implied the destruction of the unity of the work of art, by suggesting that the original work and adaptation are independent pieces of art.

Bazin had opened the debate that critical theory would return to almost two

¹⁸The term intertextuality was coined by Julia Kristeva in “Word, Dialogue, and Novel” (1969) and *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (1980). It refers to the way texts are connected with each other, insofar as each text exists in relation to others. This term is inspired in Bakhtin’s dialogism, by which the ‘literary word’ is considered to be “an *intersection of textual surfaces* rather than a *point* (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writings: that of the writer, the addressee (or the character) and the contemporary or earlier cultural context.” (Kristeva, [1969] 1986: 36)

¹⁹Roland Barthes was a French literary critic and theorist, whose seminal groundbreaking post-structuralist work “The Death of the Author,” published in 1968, moves away from traditional literary criticism (liberal humanism) which bounds the literary work to the intentions and biographical context of the author, and instead frees the text from the author by stating that author and text are unrelated unities. Likewise, the French poststructuralist philosopher and social theorist Michel Foucault examines the notion of the author in literature in “What Is an Author?” (1969). Nonetheless, Foucault believes that we cannot fully kill the author due to the “author-function”. Despite trying to move away from the constraints of the author, authorial functions permeate: “It is obviously insufficient to repeat empty slogans: the author has disappeared...Rather, we should reexamine the empty space left by the author’s disappearance; we should attentively observe, along its gaps and fault lines, its new demarcations, and the reapportionment of this void; we should await the fluid functions released by this disappearance.” (Foucault, [1969] 2001: 1626) According to Foucault an author’s name is functional in that it serves as a means of classification: “A name can group together a number of texts and thus differentiate them from others. A name also establishes different forms of relationships among texts.” (Foucault, [1969] 2001: 1627)

decades later. As literary criticism had witnessed the challenge posed by post-structuralist, deconstruction, feminist, cultural, and postmodernist studies, film theory started to explore the critical challenge promoted by such theories.

Roland Barthes's proclamation of "the death of the author" called for intertextuality discourses.

Once the Author is removed, the claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile. To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing. In the multiplicity of writing, everything is to be disentangled, nothing deciphered; the structure can be followed, 'run' (like the thread of a stocking) at every point and every level, but there is nothing beneath: the space of writing is to be ranged over, not pierced; writing ceaselessly posits meaning ceaselessly to evaporate it, carrying out a systematic exemption of meaning. (Barthes, [1968] 2001a: 1469)

Roland Barthes proclaimed the death of the 'Author-God' by maintaining that a text is a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings blend and collide. (Barthes, [1968] 2001a: 1468) He claimed that by 'un-authorising' the text we can explore the multiplicity of meanings that are underpinned by the multiplicity of readers. Furthermore, he asserted that the text is plural, which is not simply to say that it has several meanings, but that it accomplishes the very plurality of meaning: an *irreducible* (and not merely an acceptable) plural. The text is not a co-existence of meanings but a passage, an overcrossing; thus, it answers not to an interpretation, even a liberal one, but to an explosion, a dissemination of meanings. (Barthes, [1968] 2001b: 1472)

This concept redefined the relationship between the spectator and the work of art as a bi-directional and dialogical relationship. The interaction between spectator and work of art takes place through interpretation, which suggests a human activity over the work of art, not only in the formative process, but also in an interpretative one. Furthermore, form and interpretation become interdependent processes. The malleable condition of form opens the work of art to endless possibilities and perspectives, since form becomes meaningful by opening to new processes of formativity.

Cinema adaptations take characters and situations from literature and adapt these by integrating them into their new aesthetic context. Adaptation follows the path of interpretation by extrapolating a narrative-verbal system into a representational one. This is why adaptation becomes a response to a signified that is decoded into another sign system. Thus, cinema takes as a point of

departure the symbolic meaning that language connotes, in order to fill this gap by interpretation. Robert Stam²⁰ (2000: 57) attacks fidelity criticism by arguing that “the greater the lapse in time, the less reverence towards the source text and more likely the reinterpretation through the values of the present.”

After the turn of the twenty-first century, film adaptation critics tried to revolutionise the field influenced by critical theory.²¹ This was the case in Dudley Andrew’s “Adaptation,” published in *Film Adaptation* (2000), edited by James Naremore, who adopted an interdisciplinary approach of cultural studies. He claimed to “...use it [adaptation] as we use all cultural practices, to understand the world from which it comes and the one toward which it points.” (Andrew, 2000: 37) Andrew claims that we need to study films themselves as acts of discourse.

It is in these terms that I aim, in this chapter, to analyse Marleen Gorris’s *Mrs. Dalloway* (1997) and Sally Potter’s *Orlando* (1992) as two re-readings of Woolf’s novels. I will study the films’ narratives as acts of discourse, which are historically contextualised. My point here is to examine the ideological filters that interact in the narrative formation stemming from the intertextuality between the literary text and cultural discourses. Without applying fidelity judgements I want to examine to what extent Woolf’s narrative of gender is reworked by these two film adaptations by taking into account gender narratives of their time.

According to Robert Stam (2000), adaptation is a matter of a source novel hypotext’s²² being transformed by a complex series of operations: selection, amplification, concretisation, actualisation, critique, extrapolation, analogiza-

²⁰Robert Stam is Professor in the cinema Studies Department at New York University, where he teaches about the French New Wave filmmakers. Stam has published widely on French literature, comparative literature, and on film topics such as film history and film theory. His many books include *Film and Theory: An introduction* (2000); *Tropical Multiculturalism: A Comparative History of Race in Brazilian Cinema and Culture* (1997); *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* with Ella Shohat (1994); and *Subversive Pleasures: Bakhtin, Cultural Criticism, and Film* (1992). He is also co-editor (with Toby Miller) of *A Companion to Film Theory* (1999) and (with Alessandra Raengo) of *Literature and Film. A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Film Adaptation* (2005).

²¹Here I will mention those critics who seem more convenient for my approach to the analysis of film adaptations of Woolf, and who are most representative of these new theoretical approaches. Among these critics I have not included in my discussion, I might highlight Sarah Cardwell’s *Adaptation Revisited: Television and the Classic Novel* (2002) and Robert B. Ray’s “The Field of “Literature and Film” (2000).

²²Robert Stam labels adaptation “intertextual dialogism” after Bakhtin and Kristeva, placing it alongside Gérard Genette’s five types of “transtextuality”: intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, architextuality, and hypertextuality. (Kranz, 2007: 80)

tion, popularisation, and reculturalisation. Since the source text and the film adaptation are related by an “intertextual dialogism,”²³ transferability might be understood as a creative process which will contribute to the genesis of a new object of art. The operations occurring throughout this process of intertextuality are my object of study.²⁴ By having analysed the source novels, — the network from where the film amplifies, subverts, or transforms —, I attempt to apply the same theoretical body to explore the possibilities opened in these second texts by focusing on masculinities. What interests me in the representation of male characters, are the processes of gender negotiation made possible in the interaction between the literary text and cultural discourses. I want to approach the male figures and gender constructions in these films not simply as sources of ideological norms and stereotypes but to consider how masculinities are signified within social discourses. According to Anneke Smelik,²⁵ cinema is a repository and a productive machinery of cultural meanings:

Cinema is a cultural practice where myths about women and femininity, and men and masculinity, in short, myths about sexual difference are produced, reproduced and represented. (Smelik, 1995: 9)

²³In “Twelve Fallacies in Contemporary Adaptation Theory” (2003), Thomas Leitch claimed for a change in the field of literature and film in order to fulfil its analytical potential. He takes intertextuality even further than Stam and argues that film adaptation might establish an intertextual dialogic relation with further texts than the literary source text. In these terms, the discourse of fidelity becomes obsolete.

²⁴A good example of this on-going dialogic process appears to be found in *The Hours* (Stephen Daldry, 2002), where the relationship between the source text and the adaptation is not univocal but multilayered. Virginia Woolf’s novel *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), Michael Cunningham’s novel *The Hours* (1998), and Stephen Daldry’s film adaptation represent a three level intertextual process: from written text to written text to film. In this case, vindications of fidelity or faithfulness towards the original literary source are out of the question. However, for the purpose of this thesis I will focus on a one-to-one transposition in order to analyse direct work on Virginia Woolf. My focus here is to compare Woolf’s narrative of gender through the analysis of male characters with more contemporary narratives of gender offered by Gorris and Potter’s film adaptations. In Daldry’s adaptation there are too many levels of refraction (such as the representation of female characters among others), which would become a remove from Woolf.

²⁵Anneke Smelik is Professor of Visual Culture, and the Katrien van Munster chair in the Department of Cultural Studies at the Radboud University of Nijmegen (Netherlands). Her current research focuses on memory and affect in visual culture; a Deleuzian perspective on fashion; performances of identity and authenticity in fashion; and multimedia literacy. Her published work includes *The Scientific Imaginary in Visual Culture* (2010), *Technologies of Memory in the Arts* (2009) with Liedeke Plate, and *Bits of Life: Feminism at the Intersections of Media, Science, and Technology* with Nina Lykke, as editor.

Mainstream cinema deals with the production of gender representations for popular consumption, therefore, it is an active participant in that culture's reconfiguration of masculinity. Filmic masculine icons both produce and reproduce gender and power structures which legitimise molar constructions of masculinity. Cohan²⁶ distinguishes between hegemony and subordination:

Hegemony underwrites positions of power and wealth, a culture's hegemonic masculinity has to appear to accommodate competing masculinities, too, with the purpose of maintaining a particular variety of masculinity to which others — among them young and effeminate as well as homosexual men — are subordinated. (Cohan, 1997: 35)

As I have argued in the previous chapters, *Mrs Dalloway* and *Orlando* are texts that deal with the quintessential mechanisms of patriarchy to establish arborescent gender constructions that marginalise molecular gender modes of individuations. Both texts evidence the direct relationship that molar patriarchal discourses establish between hegemonic or arborescent constructions of masculinity and power, what Deleuze and Guattari have defined as 'the subject of enunciation.' Mainstream filmic representations of masculinity have operated in a similar way:

Male power is central to any consideration of masculinity; patriarchal order continually attempts to define power and masculinity as practically synonymous. It is therefore no surprise to find that in filmic representations of masculinity, associated issues such as status, hierarchy, knowledge, skill, language, and success inform our understanding of the operations of male empowerment and control, whether this be exercised over events, people or emotions. (Kirkham & Thumim, 1993: 18-19)

I aim to explore Gorris's and Potter's criticism of the alliance between arborescent representations of masculinity and power and their proposal of an alternative paradigm for male characters as it is potentially projected in Woolf's

²⁶Professor Steven Cohan teaches courses and supervises graduate research in film studies, popular culture, gender and sexualities, and cultural studies. His books include *Telling Stories: A Theoretical Analysis of Narrative* (1988), co-authored with Linda M. Shires, *Screening the Male* (1993), co-edited with Ina Rae Hark, *The Road Movie Book* (1997, co-edited with Ina Rae Hark), *Masked Men: Masculinity and the Movies in the Fifties* (1997), *Hollywood Musicals*, *The Film Reader* (2001), *Incongruous Entertainment: Camp, Cultural Value, and the MGM Musical* (2005), *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* (2008) and *The Sound of Musicals* (2010).

texts. In this sense, Gledhill's analysis of cinematic representations of the body in popular fictions seems particularly interesting. Christine Gledhill²⁷ (1995: 75) describes the dual function of the human body in popular fictions as commanding recognition, on the one hand, by its reference to social, cultural and psychic attributes — gender, age, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and so on —; whereas on the other hand, the human body functions metaphorically, symbolically, mythically.

The stereotypes circulating in culture that produce male images as narrative functions and symbolic figures are trans-historical since they create relations between past and present. Gledhill states that one of the levels of text-viewer engagement is in an ideological negotiation. According to Gledhill, certain male roles are clearly the product of such negotiations between changing gender roles in society and the symbolising work of gendered figures in popular fictions. In that sense, I want to analyse to what extent Marleen Gorris and Sally Potter subvert this ideological negotiation.

All in all, this chapter aims to avoid moral judgements that privilege the source text over the cinematic text, trying not to fall into fidelity discourses, but at the same time, escaping post-structuralist dogmatism that binds the cinematic text into critical theory assumptions.²⁸ My main objective is to analyse to what extent Woolf's gender narratives have been trans-created or reworked, in terms of the social expectations of the last decade of the twentieth century.

²⁷Christine Gledhill is Professor in Film Studies at the University of Sunderland. Her research interests range from British cinema, especially but not only 1920s, women's film history, melodrama, genre and debates about transnational cinemas, screen actresses, stars and film performance, to feminist film theory. Her publications include *Reframing British Cinema 1918-1928: Between Restraint and Passion* (2003), and *Reinventing Film Studies* (2000) with Linda Williams.

²⁸Many contemporary authors like Krantz (2007), and Cartmell & Whelehan (2010) show their scepticism about the dangers of making post-structuralist and postmodernist theory the basis for adaptation theory and criticism, which can be summarised in Krantz's words as: "...we need to find a satisfactory mean or range between the essentialist extreme of fidelity criticism as depicted by its detractors and the relativistic extremes of post-structuralist theory." (Krantz, 2007: 98) Krantz claims for a hybrid method between tradition and new criticism, that advocates inclusiveness while not losing adaptation itself.

4.4 *Mrs Dalloway*: The molar and the molecular

4.4.1 *Mrs Dalloway*: Film adaptation in context

As Higgins and Leps²⁹ (2000a: 117) suggest, not surprisingly, *Mrs Dalloway*, the novel, became a film in the 1990's — 1997 —, when particular representations of identities saturated contemporary culture and warfare. England, still under the effects of Thatcherism, the Gulf War, and a severe economic recession, found its hegemonic masculine centre jeopardised by a multi-levelled Other (e.g. the apparent ascendancy of women in the post-industrial workplace, the war, the acceptance of an increasingly wide spectrum of sexual identities and practices). The structural changes of the post-industrial era generated a crisis of masculinity, which was materialised in a recorded increase in mental illnesses and suicides among young men.³⁰

As far as cinematic representations of masculinities are concerned, “to an almost unprecedented extent, 1990s British cinema seemed preoccupied with men and masculinity in crisis. The decade also produced a range of more fluid and provocative images of masculinity in films which engaged with the changeability

²⁹Leslie J. Higgins is Professor in the department of English at York University. Lesley Higgins's research and teaching interests include modernist and Victorian literary culture, gender studies and feminist critique, textual studies, and poetry. She is the author of *The Modernist Cult of Ugliness: Aesthetic and Gender Politics* (2002) and co-editor of *Victorian Aesthetic Conditions: Pater Across the Arts* (2010) and *Walter Pater: Transparencies of Desire* (2004). For Oxford University Press, she is co-general editor of the eight-volume *Collected Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Her edition of Hopkins's *Oxford Essays, 1863-1868* appeared in 2006; the *Diaries and Journals*, and the *Dublin Notebook* are forthcoming. Her essays can be found in *Southern Review*, *College Literature*, *Gender in Joyce*, *Rethinking Marxism*, *English Literature in Transition*, *Victorian Studies*, and *The Hopkins Quarterly*. Together with colleague Marie-Christine Leps, she is developing a project concerning the *Critical Fictions of Virginia Woolf, Michel Foucault, and Michael Ondaatje*. Marie-Christine Leps is Associate Professor in the department of English at York University. Marie-Christine Leps specialises in literary theory and discourse analysis. Her publications include *Apprehending the Criminal: The Production of Deviance in Nineteenth-Century Discourse* (1992), and articles on social discourse, narrative realism, intertextuality and various aspects of the “Information Age,” concerning issues of governmentality, race, and gender. Together with Lesley Higgins she co-authored articles on governmentality, fiction, film and history, and is currently writing a study of subjectivity and governmentality in modernist and postmodernist fictions.

³⁰In *Men, Masculinities and Poverty in the UK*, Sandy Ruxton reports this phenomenon: “Public debate about a supposed ‘crisis in masculinity’ expanded significantly in the 1990s, and looks set to continue. In the UK, it is common to see media articles highlighting issues such as the educational underachievement of boys and the rise in suicides among young men.” (Ruxton, 2002: 5)

(and in some cases loudly celebrated polymorphousness) of gender and sexual relations rather than mourning the passing of patriarchal certainties.” (Monk,³¹ 2000: 156)

However, according to Monk, despite such “post-patriarchal masculinities,” it was a decade in which homophobia, masculinism and misogyny resurged. There was a new attentiveness to men and masculinities as subjects-in-themselves. Nonetheless, as Claire Monk asserts, “the emergence of this impulse within the mainstream cinema at a moment when the fallout of post-industrialism and Thatcherism collided with the gains of feminism, produced a strand of male-focused films whose gender politics were more masculinist than feminist.” (Monk, 2000: 157)

The representations of men and masculinities projected in British films of the 1990s need to be understood within the contradictory tensions of an attempt to break with subordinated male invisibility — a wider spectrum of sexual identities and practices started to gain mainstream acceptance — and the ideological constraints which still encapsulated those new gender definitions in patriarchal logics. Consequently, the emergence of the ‘new man’ was undermined by the so extended presence of masculinist stereotypes.

In my opinion, Gorris’s *Mrs Dalloway* is trapped in the main ambivalence of the 1990s; on the one hand, it engages in deconstructing and interrogating molar masculinities, but, on the other hand, there is a contained approach to men in themselves. While Gorris’s adaptation fiercely criticises hegemonic representations of masculinities, the potential ‘new man,’ epitomised by Septimus Warren Smith, is denied a centrality in the film narrative of gender, insofar as it serves as an extension of Clarissa Dalloway’s characterisation.

This tension might be related to the “heritage/post-heritage” debate. Aesthetically, *Mrs Dalloway* is based upon the reference framework of “heritage films,” although some traits of, what Monk has defined as, “post-heritage”³² period drama can be underlined.

By “Heritage films” I refer to a genre coined by Andrew Higson³³ to catalogue

³¹Claire Monk is Reader in film and film culture at De Montfort University. She is best known for her contributions since the mid-1990s to debates around cultural politics of the heritage film. She specialised in contemporary British cinema, in particular, the cultural politics of the Thatcher and Blair eras. Her latest publications include *Heritage Film Audiences: Period Films and Contemporary Audiences in the UK* (2011) and “Heritage Film Audiences 2.0: Period Film Audiences and Online Fan Cultures” (2011).

³²Claire Monk coined the term “post-heritage” in her article “Sexuality and the heritage” (1995). “Post-heritage films” are considered postmodern renegotiations of the past, by revisiting the past from a more contemporary perspective.

³³Higson was one of the first critics in using the term “heritage” in his essay “Re-presenting

British, European, and some North American productions of historical cinema or *costume drama*, generally based on canonical literary works. Higson defines *heritage films* as those films that reproduce the grand national narratives of Englishness:³⁴

One of the central pleasures of the heritage film is the artful and spectacular projection of an elite, conservative vision of the national past. These films are intimate epics of national identity played out in a historical context. They are melodramas of everyday bourgeois life in a period setting projecting, like the National Trust, a country house version of Englishness. Several of them are set in the early decades of this century, when the culture of the country house was already in disarray — hence the almost pervasive sense of loss, of nostalgia, which infuses these films. (Higson, 1996: 133)

“Heritage films” do not establish a dialogic relationship between past and present. They not only stand as non-critical reconstructions of the past, but they produce careful decorative aesthetic products to be consumed: “a potent marketing of the past as part of the new enterprise culture, a commodification of museum culture.” (Higson, 2003: 1)

Nevertheless, as Higson points out, several of the bourgeois heritage films of the 1980s and 1990s can be read not only as mere escapism and national apologetics but as liberal-humanist critiques of the Thatcherite and post-Thatcherite era; a critical analysis of the past in order to comment on the faultlines of the present, to contrast the individualist and materialistic values of Thatcherism with the values of the liberal unanimity, making connections across social boundaries of class, gender, sexuality, nationality, and so on. (Higson, 1996: 238)

Concerning this ambivalence, Monk coins the term “post-heritage,” which embraces an emerging strand of period/literary films with a deep self-consciousness about how the past is represented. This new strand tries to destigmatise period media. And they share, according to Monk, an overt concern with sexuality and gender, particularly non-dominant gender and sexual identities: feminine, non-masculine, mutable, androgynous, ambiguous. (Monk, 1995: 33)

the National Past: Nostalgia and Pastiche in the Heritage Film” (1993) to refer to founding cinematic texts of the genre such as *Chariots of Fire* (Hugh Hudson, 1981).

³⁴The term “heritage cinema” is used by film theorists to refer the eighties costume dramas that claim for authenticity and faithful adaptations of classic Anglo-Saxon literature, such as *A Passage to India* (Lean 1984), *A Room With A View* (Ivory, 1986), *Maurice* (Ivory, 1987), and *Howards End* (Ivory, 1992) — the so-called Merchant Ivory replicas.

A paradigmatic example of this genre can be found in Sally Potter's *Orlando* (1992) (1992).³⁵

Claire Monk highlights the potential of "post-heritage" drama to open cinematic spaces to represent or produce more fluid constructions of masculinities.

A far wider range of representation with affinities to the new man ideal can be found in the shy, weak, flustered and often overtly proto-feminist male heroes and lovers of 1990s post-heritage period dramas. This affirms the importance of these films as an arena in which debates around gender and sexuality were often worked through more radically than a fantasy object, and suggests that his qualities were less likely to be received cynically by audiences when presented outside the context of the present. (Monk, Claire, 2000: 159)

In placing *Mrs Dalloway* in the theoretical discussion of "heritage/post-heritage films," we are faced with the difficulty of cataloguing this cinematic text as a post-heritage film, especially in terms of gender. In *Now a Major Motion Picture. Film Adaptations of Literature and Drama* (2008), Christine Geraghty distinguishes between the elements of the heritage tradition and those that seem to connect the film with Gorris's earlier work. On the one hand, Geraghty observes the subject matter and aesthetic associated with the genre: "As in many heritage films, the audience is offered both a nostalgic evocation of a gracious way of upper-middle-class life and confirmation of its own superior understanding of the social problems of the day." (Geraghty, 2008: 59) In addition, Geraghty highlights the fascination with costume and sets in heritage fashion (especially the images referred to Clarissa's girlhood), as well as a typical heritage casting.

On the other hand, Geraghty points to features of Gorris's cinematic perspective, such as a sense of female bondage and complicity. Geraghty (2008: 61) asserts that "the feminist discourse is intertwined with a more feminine discourse that reflects on both creativity [her party and social relations] and romance [a claim for women's privacy and autonomy beyond the constraining patriarchal fantasy of romance and marriage]." According to Geraghty, Vanessa Redgrave's performance and persona provided a bridge between the heritage

³⁵Post-heritage films include "more sexually explicit, violent and self-conscious" (Wortel, 2011: 1) films, such as *The Piano* (Campion, 1993), *Ridicule* (Leconte, 1996), *Shakespeare in Love* (Madden, 1998), *The House of Mirth* (Davies, 2000) and *Quills* (Kaufmann, 2000).

aspects of the film and its feminist undertones, which have served as catalysers of the two critical reactions (detractors and supporters).³⁶

While we can read this adaptation as a proto-feminist female-centred story, which combines a conventional period aesthetic³⁷ with a sentimental sobriety and a political thrust, we can claim that it is not consistent in projecting “the new man” ideal. Despite its open attack on molar gender constructions, molecular male formations remain at the margins of the film. The following section analyses the gender narrative of *Mrs Dalloway*'s cinematic text in relation to male characters.

4.4.2 Molar representations of male characters

While *Mrs Daloway* (1997) moves the feminine ego to the centre of the stage, it does not allow new non-hegemonic molecular discourses of masculinity to emerge by removing and marginalizing male figures. It does not only turn the hegemonic power hierarchy upside down, but it creates a new invisible periphery, which could be defined according to non-patriarchal parameters. Woolf's visionary work continues to affect contemporary modes of knowing and being. However, to what extent is gender narrative expanded in Gorris's film adaptation?

³⁶Film reviewers like Helen Van Kruyssen (1998: 93) point out that “[g]iven a quality script and cast, it is possible to be not only pleasing to the eye, but to be inhabited by complex, full-blooded characters. Mrs Dalloway is further evidence of this. Although brimming with some costume-drama clichés, it succeeds beautifully in detailing a world that is believable, poignant and profoundly moving.” Similarly, Claire Monk positions the film away from heritage tradition: “In a pointed departure from Woolf's novel, its opening shot shows Septimus in the trenches. The presence of the echo of the war in the film, together with its chilling snapshots of the attitudes of the rich and powerful make nostalgic viewing impossible.” (Monk, 2001: 189-190)

³⁷In an interview by Anwar Brett, “Rising to the Challenge. An Interview with Sue Gibson” (1998), Sue Gibson, director of photography of *Mrs Dalloway* (1997), explains the challenge of such a meticulous aesthetic, especially in recreating two distinctly different time periods: “The 1920s was designed with pastel colours, and had quite an airy feeling while the 1890s was obviously Victorian, with dark, more intense colours. In order to achieve this contrast, and purely as an experiment, I shot all the 1890s stuff on Kodak and the main bulk of the film on Fuji. That gave both sections a completely different look without having to be too manipulative. It actually got the best qualities out of each film stock. Fuji loves greens and is actually quite softer stock than Kodak, which I like.” (Gibson in Brett, 1998: 13) Apart from visual aesthetics, *Mrs Dalloway*'s (1997) narrative structure fits in the conventions of heritage film. Eileen Atkins, the screenwriter, refused to include the multiplicity of voices that Woolf used by means of her stream of consciousness and tunnelling technique. Atkins found the scarce use of voiceover a more feasible option for the cinematic narrative, despite Gorris's opposition. (Atkins, 1999: 160)

In my opinion, Marleen Gorris does not create a cinematic microcosm for *Mrs Dalloway* that expands itself in time to satisfy her contemporary expectations, such as Monk's new man ideal. In the following chapter I attempt to demonstrate why Gorris, in my view, does not explore all the possibilities concerning gender Woolf posed in her novel:

Mrs Dalloway marks a further mellowing of the black-and-white gender politics of Gorris's earlier films. In *Antonia's Line*, men were mere bad, benign, or sperm donors. Here, their peripherality to the lives women could lead in an ideal non-patriarchal Utopia remains a theme. (Monk, 2001: 189)

Men's peripherality to the lives of women in Gorris's film adaptation results in a certain absence of an exploration of the male figures in the story. Gorris creates a female-centred Utopia, instead, in order to counteract the male-centred cinematic tradition. Gorris does not exactly inscribe the film in the social discourse of sexuality of the nineties, when new conceptions of sexual identifications responded to the new possibilities offered to men and women outside hegemonic constraints.

Furthermore, by erasing masculinities from the main scope of analysis, Gorris refuses to fully activate, what, in my view, is the potential in Woolf's narrative of gender; her polymorphous conception of gender and sexuality. Both Gorris and Atkins seem to focus on a theoretical body of gender studies centred on patriarchal oppressions of women and obviates Woolf's concern about the power relations affecting men within the patriarchal equation. Hence, Gorris and Atkins address their harshest criticism to those molar discourses of masculinity which are at the top of the patriarchal hierarchy, insofar as they are the main form of power relations in patriarchy concerning women.

Marleen Gorris adopts a cinematic language where there are not many narrative transformations and transgressions, which challenge the hegemony of stereotypical constructions of culture and cinematic conventions. Yet, a subtle hint of irony and parody provides the raw material in problematising the hegemonic power relations underlying in the gender diagram.

Gorris stems from an anthropological definition of gender, a historically and culturally specific social construct forged by the superimposition of discourses. As Judith Butler states:

Originally intended to discipline the biology-is-destiny formulation, the distinction between sex and gender serves the argument that

whatever biological intractability sex appears to have, gender is culturally constructed...Taken to its logical limit, sex/gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders. (Butler, Judith, [1990] 1999: 9-10)

Butler claims that gender is produced by and as discourse through different performative signifying practices. Likewise, Marleen Gorris accentuates and activates, from the very beginning, the constructedness and performativity of gender ascriptions. This is the case of the gentleman's manners of these male characters that embody arborescent constructions of masculinity.

The opening scene, immediately after the images of Evan's death during the First World War, starts with Clarissa's voiceover establishing the parameters for the gender politics in which the film is inscribed, while descending the staircase of her elegant town house in Westminster:

MRS DALLOWAY: Those ruffians, the Gods shan't have it all their own way. Those Gods who never lose the chance of hurting, faulting, and spoiling human lives as seriously put out if all the same you behave like a lady...Of course, now that I think there are no Gods, there is no one to blame...It is so very dangerous to live for only one day! [Transcript from the film]³⁸

As far as gender is concerned, these Gods to which Clarissa is referring could be related to those patriarchal tyrants who overuse their power for their own benefit, so as to secure powerful positions in the social pyramid. From the opening scene, Gorris creates a female universe presided over by an autonomous heroine who denies the sovereignty of patriarchal law and who will plunge the spectator into the world of a female epic.

Having declared the death of this masculine supremacy, Gorris's adaptation identifies the hegemonic representations of male power and parodies their pomp by hyperbolising the theatricality of their representatives. The oppressive politicians, pompous psychiatrists and obtuse society matrons, heralds of the patriarchal scheme, are ridiculed in the film. Gorris takes over Woolf's satire of hegemonic masculinity. She is not different in her depiction of molar masculinities. Gorris focuses on the patriarchal hegemony and emphasises Woolf's humor and mockery of these male characters. Nonetheless, she differs

³⁸These lines are not included in Aileen Atkin's "The Complete Screenplay for *Mrs Dalloway*" published in *Scenario* in 1999, but they do appear as a voiceover in the film. The version of *Mrs Dalloway* published in *Scenario* is Atkins' first draft, completed in 1995.

from Woolf in her treatment of alternative discourses of masculinities embraced by Petter and Septimus. Whereas Gorris explores the hegemonic discourse of masculinity through the juridico-political, medical, and educational discursive apparatus, still she refuses to elaborate counter-narratives that Woolf constructs against the master-narrative of gender triggered by the novel; that is, molecular alternatives to the subject of enunciation.

The male political establishment, the representatives of parliament, Hugh Whitbread, Richard Dalloway and the Prime Minister are presented with a tint of mockery. Moreover, the institutional power is over-performed in many instances in the film. molar gender attitudes are constantly parodied by the excess of their artificiality and some of the proponents of patriarchal propaganda are provided with a grotesque aura.

This is the case of Hugh Whitbread. He is introduced to the audience through Clarissa's scepticism. From Clarissa's judgements and snapshots of the past we learn he is the perfect public school boy. His gentle manners are over-emphasised by means of the excessive exaggeration of his customs, which turns into a caricature that overtly expresses the performativity of masculinity. He doffs his black top hat rather extravagantly and he walks away from Clarissa with an overemphasised air of grandeur, an even burlesque magnificence, carrying a fairly hyperbolic briefcase of exaggerated dimensions, which stands for one of the main icons of the parliamentary establishment.

As Higgins and Leps suggest (2000a: 122), the film accentuates through the camera work costumes that focuses on embroidery, jewels, hat design, a frayed cuff, the sound and smoke of a locomotive, thus foregrounding the metonymic devices which enable objects and surface to signify entire social modes of production.

In fact, Hugh, perfectly dressed in his black frock coat, with his top hat, grey gloves covering his hands, the golden chain of a watch coming out from the grey waistcoat, a white carnation on the left lapel of his coat, and his prominent suitcase, is presented as one of the emblems of institutional power, one of the canonical pieces of the hegemonic mesh of masculinity in the film, whose pretentious pose is revealed by his iconographic signifiers. Doane uses the term *masquerade* to refer to the constructedness of femininity in films:

The effectivity of masquerade lies precisely in its potential to manufacture a distance from the image, to generate a problematic within which the image is manipulable, producible, and readable by the woman. (Doane, [1982] 1997: 191)

According to Mary Ann Doane in wearing femininity as a mask, the female

subject establishes a difference between herself and the represented femininity, by keeping femininity at a distance. Following Doane's definition of masquerade,³⁹ we could extend this notion to the analytical frame of masculinities. Gorris's parodies of the hegemonic forms and the performative excess she infuses in those representatives of the hegemonic discourse of masculinity are related to this manipulability, performativity, and readability of the gender images.

The cacophony of the Big Ben's strokes, an emblem of patriarchal power, is associated with a hegemonic definition of masculinity. The film accentuates this connection through the symbiotic relationship that exists between the political representatives and the sound of the patriarchal law. In this way, Hugh, frequently identified with the sound of Big Ben, follows the patterns imposed by its strokes. He is, for instance, escorted by Big Ben's strokes to Lady Bruton's lunch. In addition, Big Ben subjugates even the most unprotected subjects to the social order. This is evidenced by the cinematic opposition of a close-up of the tower and a female beggar singing; her song is framed by Big Ben's imposing sound.

In this particular sequence, Hugh Whitbread is grotesquely animalised by his instinctive gluttony. His greedy thrusts are revealed and overemphasised from the very beginning when he meets Richard at Lady Bruton's doorstep:

RICHARD (*To Hugh as he approaches*) Hello, Hugh. So you've been summoned as well. I wonder what she wants from us?

HUGH (*Pompously*) Nothing we can't accomplish over a good lunch, I'm sure! (Atkins, 1999: 140)

He eats compulsively at Lady Bruton's lunch and the camera corroborates his gormandising by stressing Richard and Miss Brush's disgusted gazes. He lacks any kind of delicacy, he keeps gulping, and intruding into the conversation at the same time. His bizarre attitude about food caricaturises his avarice and selfishness, which is brought to the fore in a scene after Lady Bruton's lunch when both Richard and Hugh are discussing Lady Bruton's proposal. Hugh's priorities are again problematised. His last comment — "There's a new chef at the Cafe Royal..." [transcript from the film] — reveals his inability to transcend his individual longings and desires and his lack of depth or interest in politics. He remains on the surface, as Virginia Woolf writes:

³⁹Mary Ann Doane builds upon the 1929 psychoanalytic work of Joan Riviere in "Film and Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator" (1982), and argues that women can wear superficial attributes of femininity as a mask, as a disguise to be taken-on or rejected. This disguise states the performativity of gender. By masquerading gender, that is, by exaggerating gender performances, the constructedness of gender is revealed.

He did not go deeply. He brushed surfaces; the dead languages, the living, life in Constantinople, Paris, Rome; riding, shooting, tennis, it had been once. The malicious asserted that he now kept guard at Buckingham Palace, dressed in silk stockings and knee-breeches, over what nobody knew. (90)

Gorris's thirst for scorning hegemonic patriarchal power makes her amplify this trait in Hugh by means of a repetition of the food matter, which constantly pops in and out of Whitbread's train of thought whenever he appears on the screen. Deliberately, Gorris insists on reducing Hugh to his greedy monstrosity so as to diminish — and make a comment on — his constructed supremacy.

Hugh is depicted as a humbug, a buffoon figure, whose clumsiness and arrogance can be extended grotesquely to the hegemony he represents. The film dramatises his sheer vanity when Lady Bruton flatters his power position in relation to the letter to *The Times*: "I Know dear Hugh you will know exactly how to phrase it for me." (Atkins, 1999: 141) The camera emphasises his caricatured movements of joy, which might be related to his narcissism. Similarly, at the beginning of this sequence his hypocrisy is underlined by his overwhelming gentle manners to Miss Brush, when he asks disinterestedly about her brother in South Africa, as if he was stuck in a required protocol in which he is not even interested. Atkins highlights the comic dimension of the character, paying tribute to Woolf's sense of humour: "she [Woolf] has such a sense of absurdity — she sees how absurd people are." (Atkins, 1999: 162)

Gorris accentuates his acquisitiveness further when he is looking in at a jeweller's shop window after Lady Bruton's lunch. He thinks of buying a present for Evelyn, but, again, he shows his superficiality: "Jewellery never loses its prize." (Atkins, 1999: 141) This is one of the many instances which portray Hugh as a potentially greedy, shallow, pompous, and frivolous figure.

In one of the flashbacks to the past, a tearoom scene — a perfect *heritage tableau vivant* — in Bourton where Edwardian gender stereotypes collide, Clarissa and Aunt Helen are sewing, Peter is playing chess, and Mr Parry is reading the newspaper (most probably *The Times*). Hugh's gluttony is again noted in Sally's criticism: "Hugh, would you ever stop eating?" [transcript from the film] Hugh, greedily eating cakes, is sitting next to Aunt Helen and Mr Parry, repositories of the snobbish patriarchal conventions.

The composition of this scene is very carefully worked out. On the right side of the camera frame we have the emblems of the conservative hegemony, as opposed to the left side of the camera frame, where Sally and Peter, the dissident voices, reside. Clarissa is sitting next to Sally but she remains submitted to her

father's law, towards whom she addresses her gaze every time she speaks, looking for his approval. Hugh's excessive mannerism is legitimised by the other two patriarchal characters and counterpoised by Sally's accusations.

The film inscribes Hugh's codes of behaviour in the hegemonic apparatus of standards. Additionally, once more, his mannerism is satirised and instilled with an over performed theatricality. Mr Parry, Aunt Helen, as well as Hugh are portrayed as marionettes, whose conservative strings are strongly accentuated. Marleen Gorris's adaptation creates a very well-founded scene which unites the political establishment embodied by Hugh and the patriarchal structure of Clarissa's family, by implying the conjunction of two institutions such as the state and the family as part of the instrumental resources of patriarchy. Gorris's criticism of this pattern is voiced in Sally Seton and Peter Walsh's dialogue on one side of the camera frame.

Hugh's Parliament's companion, Richard Dalloway is represented in the film with certain caution and moderation. He is one of these despotic politicians. However, despite being part of the hegemonic paraphernalia, he is not so obviously ridiculed by the narrative tone. Instead, there is a clear dichotomy posed by the film. On the one hand, there is the young, arrogant, snobbish, pretentious Richard from the past; and, on the other hand, we are introduced to the eternal caretaker husband, Clarissa's custodian, who is somehow redeemed from his patriarchal attitudes by his utter respect towards his wife.

By means of a flashback to the past, we are introduced to the young Richard in a dinner in Bourton. Iconographically, he stands for the hegemonic archetype of masculinity. He is tall, well built, perfectly laced in his white bow-tie, immaculately combed and his gentle mannerism is highlighted by Sally's mockery. The way he replies to Clarissa's mistake —“But it's Dalloway, my name is Dalloway” (Atkins, 1999: 136)—, and his gentleman's procedures, raising the glass of wine while whispering to Clarissa about his political future, are gestures which emphasise his gallantry. Marleen Gorris's adaptation plays with masculine hegemonic icons, by focusing on them as transcendental signifiers.

Kirkham and Thumim (1993: 18) argue that: “Related to strength and weakness, the hard and the soft, is the question of size — the big and the little, tall and short, fat and thin. There is no doubt that size is an issue, for men, in relation to their masculine identity.” Gorris activates this cultural discourse so as to contrast different gender constructions. The actors playing the characters of the past are totally dissimilar to those of the present⁴⁰, and this could be read

⁴⁰“Different actors play the younger and older main characters — Clarissa, Peter, Sally, and Richard Dalloway — so inviting comparison of their looks, demeanor, and gesture; Michael

from a gender perspective. Young Richard's glamorous image and old Richard's ordinary appearance are overtly contrasted. It is difficult to believe that such an opulent Richard would become a short ordinary man as Clarissa's husband is presented.

Moreover, there is a notable difference between Clarissa's and Richard's stature in the narrative present time; she is much taller than him. Symbolically, this apparently superficial icon can transcend Richard's moderated patriarchal oppression. In spite of being part of the extended mechanism of an institutional power, a real embodiment of the subject of enunciation — he is a politician, a husband and a father —, his role as a despotic patriarch is undermined by Gorris's iconographic resolution. His masculine pomp is not so obviously parodied by the camera and his visual depiction does not entirely correspond to the archetype of masculine hegemony.

Richard is characterised as a patient, supportive and protective father and husband. He is completely devoted to Clarissa and he nurses her to an endless extent. This is emphasised in the scene after Lady Bruton's lunch when Richard brings Clarissa some flowers and listens to her worries about the party. Richard tries emphatically to comfort her, and he closes the scene by kissing her forehead kindly: Gorris accentuates him as the perfect carer. Likewise, in her party, Clarissa is rescued from near-collapse by her unconditional husband, who steers her away from Bradshaw's discussion of shell shock and suicide, after realising Bradshaw's and other characters' over-reaction, which is signalled to the spectator by POV close-ups of their mouths.

However, the bunch of roses that I have mentioned above, epitomises the connection between the younger and the older Richard. Gorris juxtaposes a snapshot from the past, where Richard bought some flowers for Clarissa, with this scene in the narrative present time. This cinematic junction is ambiguous, since it seems to suggest that Richard's gentleman mannerism is grounded in the same hegemonic framework as young Richard's, which would imply a certain suspicion of an underlain patriarchal paternalism in his attitudes towards his wife.

Nonetheless, we cannot overlook the adaptation's masculine invisibility. Despite Richard's implied affiliation with the patriarchal machinery, he remains a peripheral character in the story, subjugated to Clarissa's decisions. Gorris does not explore these characters' insights and therefore, we do not learn, for instance, about his inability to show emotions, dictated by his gentleman's

Kitchen's rather seedy, middle-aged Peter is a contrast with the more winning forcefulness of his romantic younger self, while Natacha McElhone's Clarissa, though different physically, at points share Redgrave's preoccupied, dreamy air." (Geraghty, 2008: 60)

codes. Neither is Richard Dalloway presented with the contradictions and nuances of Woolf's character, nor with the oppressive and constraining effects that patriarchy has on him.

On the other hand, the film obviates the discourse of homophobia and misogyny embraced by Richard in the novel.⁴¹ Gorris seems to redeem him by not allowing him to invoke the authority of the patriarchal husband and to activate the tyrannical and repressive mechanisms of the nuclear family. There is only one hint of his masculine chauvinism addressed towards Lady Bruton. After Lady Bruton's lunch, Richard buys some flowers for Clarissa and goes home. He explains her about his lunch with an exalted air of magnificence, underestimating Lady Bruton's capacities. He comments that Lady Bruton "...wanted him [Hugh] to write a letter to *The Times*" and trivialises her project by affirming that this is just "[o]ne of her schemes for putting the world in order." (Atkins, 1999: 142)

Gorris's criticism of the tyrannical politicians is once more articulated in the satire implied in her depiction of the Prime Minister. The head of the political establishment is one of the emblematic representatives of the hegemonic discourse of masculinity. However, his presence in the film is anecdotic. He is the symbol of institutional power and yet is marginalized. His ostentatious arrogant pose is contrasted with his physical ordinariness. When he enters Clarissa's microcosm, the music becomes majestic, the crowd gazes with admiration, but again an anticlimactic over performance sabotages his power. The artificiality of his façade is displayed as part of a whole carnivalesque ensemble, which is judged straightforwardly by the camera.

Similarly, Gorris attacks the patriarchal dominion by lampooning the medical-scientific institution. The scenes at the psychiatrist's office are emphatically overacted with close-ups on the blubbery lips of the quack doctor, who does not have a bit of compassion for his patient. Sir William Bradshaw is typified as an uncompassionate and disinterested doctor, whose judgements dictate and establish social law. He hides himself behind his desk sitting on his ostentatious padded chair, which sets him on the pedestal of science. However, his obnoxious behaviour provides him with a grotesque dimension which parodies his power

⁴¹As has been argued in the previous chapter, in Woolf's text Richard displays two principles that inscribe his masculinity in the majoritarian discourse of masculinity; hypermasculinity and the authority of the patriarchal husband. His hypermasculinity is signalled by his overt rejection of feminised icons such as Shakespeare's poetry, which is so closely associated with Clarissa and Septimus, his inability to show emotions, and his attempts to build himself as a domineering head of the family. Instead, Gorris builds this character from a different angle by prioritising Richard's nurse-like and protective role towards his wife.

position. Doctor Bradshaw seems more interested in proving his skills than in helping his patients.

For instance, Rezia describes her husband's dramatic condition and after the doctor's "delayed shell-shock" diagnosis, she asks, in order to clarify the technicism, whether he is mad. Bradshaw replies: "I never use that word. I prefer to say lacking a sense of proportion." [transcript from the film] In this particular instance, Sir William Bradshaw's irrelevant rhetoric relegates him to the position of a charlatan. This is specially emphasised in the film through Bradshaw's exaggerated rhetorics, mannerism and tone. His pose, as I discuss further down is exaggeratedly grotesque. Marleen Gorris emphasises this grotesqueness in patriarchal characters even more than Woolf. Gorris's critical attack to hegemonic patriarchal forces becomes the focus of her representation of masculinities in the film. Being a low-budget production of a feminist director, and taking into account the changes and demands of the 1990s in gender terms, I expected Gorris to be more experimental with gender. I expected to find more subtle and fluid gender figurations. Instead, Gorris clearly emphasises Woolf's mockery of male patriarchal characters by diminishing the complexity and nuances of characters such as Richard, Peter and the potential of Septimus to produce new gender formations.

Bradshaw's self-satisfactory pomp and his false pretences define him as a humble social rule-maker, who is empowered to establish the parameters of normality and abnormality. In gender terms, he is one of the patriarchs who legitimise the molar discourse of masculinity by his institutional power. When Septimus confesses his crime, — be it his homosexual desire⁴² for Evans, or his affiliation with the patriarchal imagination epitomised by his inability to feel —, Bradshaw shows an absolute lack of understanding. His outright indifference and his incompetence in understanding is accentuated by his intent to minimise the magnitude of what Septimus is proclaiming: "We all have moments of depression," [transcript from the film] he concludes. The callous doctor does not show any interest in analysing Septimus's accusations of patriarchy through the confession of his crime, insofar as this may jeopardise his hegemonic standards. Instead, he seems very interested in Dr. Holmes's diagnosis. Here we find a hyperbolic over-acted Bradshaw who acts as a grotesque caricature.

⁴²Atkins's screenplay does not emphasize any homoerotic overtone. In fact in an interview in *Scenario* (1999) Atkins commented on her fear of Gorris's over estimation of the kissing scene between Sally and Clarissa: "I put in as much as I could put in from the novel about that relationship, and with Marleen — who is an open gay woman — I did say to her, "There's only one thing I would beg —that you don't take the kiss any further than is absolutely clear in the book." (Atkins, 1999:161)

Gorris's adaptation directs once again its sharpest argument against patriarchal tyrants. Bradshaw's exaggeration in his gestures is a further instance of his disrespect and ineptitude. He treats both Septimus and Rezia with a too chauvinistic attitude. He is paternalistic with both of them, which, as far as gender is concerned, draws us back to his hegemonic definition of masculinity; Bradshaw treats Rezia as a naive and simplistic woman, and Septimus as an imbecile. He establishes a hierarchy in his office at the top of which he places himself and he relegates the woman and the casualty — or a new definition of masculinity — at the bottom. In this sense, the film focuses on his arrogance towards the patient and his wife, which reaches a peak in his determination to send Septimus to one of Dr Holmes's rest homes. He is categorical and once he has reached his resolution he hurries to finish with the session without taking into consideration Rezia's and Septimus's complaints.

We learn about Dr Holmes from Septimus, whose harsh criticism describes him as a hypocrite who is more concerned about antique furniture than about his patients. The film overtly equates these two characters, Holmes and Bradshaw, as representatives of the medical dictum by Septimus's considerations. For him Dr Holmes "is a damn fool" (Atkins, 1999: 139) and Bradshaw "is a humbug." (Atkins, 1999: 140) Gorris's adaptation stresses Holmes and Bradshaw complicity in an extended patriarchal conspiracy by overemphasising Bradshaw's devotion to Holmes's remarks. Holmes intrudes into Rezia and Septimus's flat in the name of law and reacts with complete ignorance and lack of understanding about Septimus's torment.

The educational discourse of masculinity and the importance of British public schools in building hegemonic ideals of masculinity are almost obviated in the film. Professor Brierley is shown as part of an amalgam of blurred echoes of voices in the party, which at some point overlap with Clarissa's voice over. We only get to know that he is passionately talking about Milton successfully engaging his *petit comité* audience; there is no other comment on his sense of moderation. Nevertheless, significantly enough, Gorris chooses to place him at the centre of the camera's attention surrounded by emblems such as Hugh Whitbread, by implying a certain affinity and companionship. Gorris chooses to give him a space in Clarissa's party and to align him with Milton's patriarchal literary tradition. Mr Brierley becomes a piece of the patriarchal machinery that Gorris ridicules in the film. In this scene, his pedantry and exaggerated laughter are emphasised by his centrality in the frame.

In fact, the emblems of molarity, the Prime Minister, Hugh Whitbread, Richard, Dr. Bradshaw, and Professor Brierly seem to parade at the centre of Clarissa's party. This display of hegemonic emblems is countered by Peter and

Sally's dissident voices who symbolically remain at the periphery of the party. The party is the perfect stage for a whole range of marionettes with feather hats, glittering spangled dresses, flamboyant embroidery and jewels, black dinner jackets, and white silk bow ties, performing social conventions. Gorris uses these objects to highlight the arbitrariness of gender constructions and conduct.

Marleen Gorris's adaptation harshly criticises the hegemonic heralds of patriarchal oppression. It creates a female-centred universe which foregrounds male invisibility and patriarchal subjection, by evaluating male hegemonic formations. However, the existence of women who use their power to poisonous ends is also admitted most clearly via the figure of Lady Bruton and Miss Kilman who are particularly associated hegemonic male ambitions (a greedy ambition for power). In the film, Gorris makes this association explicit by focusing on both Miss Kilman's and Hugh's gluttony.

Lady Bruton exploits her status as a 'mere' woman so as to persuade male politicians to sponsor a scheme to "encourage" emigration in order to solve Britain's overpopulation. She does not hesitate to activate the patriarchal machinery in order to achieve her personal targets. After all, her affiliation with the patriarchal imagery is connected to her breathless eagerness for power.

In that sense, the film caricaturises Lady Bruton's masculine pose; the commanding tone of her voice and her dominating rhetoric are strategically emphasised and framed in a very well recreated room, where old pictures of her military ancestors, significantly, furnish the walls. This extremely phallic woman does know what mechanisms she has to set in motion in order to fulfil her personal longings. She admires the masculine paraphernalia and she does not seem to be reluctant to surrender to masculine chauvinism: "This is so much what I can do being a woman." [transcript from the film] In that sense, she persuades Hugh to write a letter to *The Times* by complimenting him on his abilities.

Moreover, Gorris creates a scene in which Lady Bruton's apprehension of patriarchal despotism turns against another woman. Miss Brush, Bruton's secretary, is tyrannised by her. Her attitude is imperious and Miss Brush is abusively subjugated to her power. Lady Bruton's exaggerated dictatorial manners towards Miss Brush are criticised by Gorris's treatment of this character, by emphasising her personal ambitions and her affiliation with the patriarchal imagination.

Miss Kilman is another female character whose personal desire for power makes her Gorris's object of satire. Miss Kilman is presented as a tasteless, ugly, embittered and frustrated woman whose greed and possessiveness makes her fraternise with another patriarchal oppressive institution; the church. Her urge to convert Elizabeth is problematised by her greed. The film suggests an

explicit parallelism and connection between Hugh and Miss Kilman, by means of their gluttony, which both evidences and criticises the use of the patriarchal law by both men and women. The film criticises any form of patriarchal oppression both coming from male and female characters. Gorris's adaptation hyperbolises the misery of Miss Kilman's desires by focusing on her envy towards Clarissa. Once again, Marleen Gorris takes over Woolf's mockery of patriarchal attitudes and places all the emphasis on it.

In the first scene we are introduced to Miss Kilman, who is competing with Clarissa for Elizabeth's admiration. The film stresses her satisfaction in getting Elizabeth's praise. However, the second scene in the tearoom accentuates Miss Kilman's desperate perverse longings for possessiveness. The film caricatures Kilman through her outstanding gluttony and the way she relishes her food in an exaggerated way, even constantly leaking her fingers. Finally, Kilman's desire to control Elizabeth's life is revealed when Elisabeth decides to go to her mother's party and Kilman, defeated by her pupil's rejection, pathetically attacks Clarissa's superficiality by denoting an uncontrollable envy. The film stresses Kilman's pathetism when she is left alone in front of the cakes in the tearoom after acknowledging her unhappiness. Her ordinariness, her silly outfit, and her caricaturesque way of moving and speaking, is emphasised by the camera work by means of constant close ups that accentuate her ridiculous movements and by the use of the music that adds a burlesque atmosphere to the scene.

Marleen Gorris's adaptation addresses the harshest criticism towards any form or recreation of patriarchal oppression; patriarchal chauvinism coming both from male and female characters. However, the exploration of molecular narratives of gender outside the patriarchal logics, as far as masculinities are concerned, is vague and almost inexistent.

4.4.3 Molecular male representations

Gorris's film does not analyse Peter's character in depth, since as I have been repeating throughout this chapter, masculinities, in general, and molecular masculinities, in particular, are peripheral to the narrative course suggested by the film.

Peter's complex definition of masculinity — that has been analysed as an unfulfilled becoming-woman character — is not fully represented in the film. On the one hand, Gorris shows us an extremely demanding Romantic young Peter, who despite his accentuated emotionality is trapped in the liberal humanist constraints of gender. On the other hand, the film presents us an older Peter who is nostalgic about the past and resentful about its resolutions.

Peter is not inscribed in the iconographic hegemonic mask of masculinity. He is dressed in more austere fashion avoiding the pomp of the hegemonic masculine solemnity, although he does conform to the rules of patriarchy when it is required; he is impeccably dressed in a dinner jacket for Clarissa's party. He does not stand out as an opulent figure. He is, on the contrary, short and quite weak physically. Kikham and Thumim (1993: 18) assert: "In the Western cinematic constructions of masculinity, the weak man is, simply, not a proper man, not a whole man. He is demonstrably less than a man and frequently feminised to emphasise that point." Gorris's adaptation stems from this framework in order to characterise Peter Walsh. Peter is not a proper man, according to the hegemonic standards of masculinity. And so, the film, although in an utterly inconsistent manner, feminises Peter at different levels. He is emphatically related to private spaces and he is intimately related to books. Marleen Gorris has recoded the act of reading by liberating it from the effeminate effect it carried at the beginning of the twentieth century.⁴³

Nonetheless, the film uses cinematic codes to feminise Peter. He tends to enclose himself in the library. Gorris chooses this location for one of his emotional outbursts in Bourton after Clarissa and Richard's meeting, as well as, in Clarissa's party, when he, melancholically, remembers about Bourton together with Sally Seton. Peter feels detached from the superficial public environments presided over by the hegemonic icons of masculinity and, thus, looks for new spaces which can be defined by alternative principles. Gorris creates these spaces by locating Peter in spaces that are not presided by molar male characters in the film; spaces like the park (where Septimus and Rezia spend some time before their visit to Bradshaw) and the library in Clarissa's party. Gorris depicts Peter as an outsider of male-dominated spaces, this is why he is confined in the library, outside the epicentre of the party presided by the Prime Minister. Peter Walsh is feminised by the camera in many instances in his emotional exhibitionism. The most obvious instance is the scene when Clarissa definitely rejects him. Peter is tracked by the camera standing in the rain, which symbiotically hyperbolises his emotional explosion. Gorris creates a whole environment to objectify Peter through camera work.

Marleen Gorris's attempt to deal with the multiple focalisers of *Mrs Dalloway* leads her to an exploration and a possible subversion of the filmic gender fixities by means of the cinematic gaze.⁴⁴ Peter's masculine control of the gaze is

⁴³This is an argument developed in my analysis of the novel in chapter 3, expressed by Showalter.

⁴⁴This term refers to the exchange of looks that takes place in cinema. This psychoanalytic term started to be used in relation to film in an attempt to discuss the spectator/screen

contrasted with his “to-be-looked-at-ness” through the camera’s objectification of his emotional outbursts. While Mulvey stated that male figures could not bear the burden of objectification, Gorris presents an alternative in which the male outsiders in the narration are provided with both an active and a passive role by means of the control of the gaze.

According to Mulvey,⁴⁵ (2000: 177-181) there is a double mechanism of visual pleasure, scopophilia (the pleasure of looking) and narcissism (in Lacanian terms, the mirror, the screen, becomes a place of recognition of a superior self). Gorris does not let these options prevail since the spectator is asked to adopt both male and female perspectives subsequently because we are introduced to each character by another character’s gaze. Gorris follows Kaplan’s⁴⁶ argument that female characters can possess the gaze and even make a male character the object of her gaze, which is overtly explored by Gorris in her focus on Septimus and Peter.

It is significant that in those films in which women take the control,...when the man steps out of his traditional role as the one who controls the whole action, and when he is set up as a sex object, the woman then takes on the masculine role as a bearer of the gaze and initiator of the action. (Kaplan, E.A., 2000: 129)

This is the case of Septimus, who is objectified many times by Rezia’s gaze. An outstanding example is to be found in the scene of the hat making. This is a

relationship as well as the textual relationships within the film. In Laura Mulvey’s 1975 essay, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” she introduced the concept “male gaze” to denounce heterosexual male control of the camera. According to Mulvey, women are objectified by the male gaze in mainstream cinema.

⁴⁵Laura Mulvey is a British feminist film theorist and Professor of film and media studies at Birkbeck, University of London. Her current research interests are rethinking feminist film theory, theories of technology and aspects of technological change in film and television, the aesthetics of stillness in the moving image: avant-garde and fiction, the “new woman” and the cinema in the late 1920s, and melodrama and world cinema. Her numerous publications include *Visual and Other Pleasure* (1989); *Fetishism and Curiosity* (1996); *Death Twenty-four Times a Second. Stillness and the Moving Image* (2006).

⁴⁶E. Ann Kaplan is Distinguished Professor of English and Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies at Stony Brook University, where she also founded and directs the Humanities Institute. She is also President of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies. Kaplan has written many books and articles on topics in cultural studies, media, and women’s studies, from diverse theoretical perspectives including psychoanalysis, feminism, postmodernism, and postcolonialism. Her many books include most recently *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature* (2005), and *Looking For the Other: Feminism, Film and the Imperial Gaze* (1997).

very interesting scene where there is an interchange of the gaze control between Septimus and Rezia. Septimus is fetishised by his wife's gaze when he affiliates with the feminine language of threads, through a close up. He is also objectified by the camera frame (and the gaze) when he is lying on the sofa.

Nonetheless, Marleen Gorris does not create a cinema where the reversal of roles and gazes transcend the underlying structure of dominion and submission. To own and activate the gaze is still to be in the masculine position, whereas to-be-looked-at is constructed as feminine. Gorris' cinematic language is grounded on binary oppositions, following the logics of the illegitimate use of the exclusive synthesis (either, or...). Gorris does not explore the merging and polymorphous condition of the multilayered characters in Woolf's narrative.

Peter Walsh's paradox resides in the fact that he fraternises with some of the patriarchal imaginary, while rejecting hegemonic masculinity. His gentleman's manners and his attempts to fetishise women, particularly Clarissa, curtail his eagerness to define himself as an outsider of the patriarchal paradigm. The film suggests this contradiction in one of the flashbacks to Bourton when Peter reacts against Clarissa's refusal to surrender to his desires with an uncontrollable fury by stabbing at the bark of a tree with his pocket knife; yet his following desperation suggests this contradiction.

Peter and Clarissa's meeting in the present narrative time is remarkable in gender terms. Peter intrudes into Clarissa's privacy with his dominating pocket knife and bursts into tears once more, but, rapidly, hides himself from Clarissa's gaze in front of the window. Peter's feminisation, present in his emotional drives, is counter balanced by his gallantry shown towards a young beautiful lady afterwards in the park.

His patriarchal complicity in his consideration of women is averted in the film, which reveals Gorris's lack of interest in exploring the complexity of masculinities, and a consequent dignifying dimension of the character. The film both hystericalises Clarissa and elevates Peter into a dashing romantic hero untouched by political complications.

The opening shot shows the main outsider (Septimus) of the film in the trenches. The presence of the echo of the war is counterpoised with the emphatically harmonious scenes of the wealthy Establishment of English society at the beginning of the twentieth century. Gorris uses the alliteration of the sounds of combat in the midst of a pastoral park scene or Bond Street to manifest the war's continuing, invasive presence in Warren Smith's afflicted life — a physical connection also imposed upon the listening audience. These truncated lyrical scenes epitomise the molecular alternative discourse of masculinity embraced by Septimus. The plangent notes of strings, piano and exploding motors connect

his daily hallucinations with the moment of pause preceding his suicide.

From the very beginning, Marleen Gorris's film establishes Septimus as Clarissa's alter ego by making their gazes coincide through the window of the florist's. However, his is a peripheral story framed in Clarissa's universe. Gorris's adaptation erases Septimus's past and relegates him to the position of a First World War casualty.

In an interview by Todd Pruzan, "Adapting *Mrs. Dalloway*. A Talk with Eileen Atkins" in *Scenario* (1999), Eileen Atkins, the screenwriter, argues for her choice of starting from Septimus in the trenches instead of having Clarissa telling Lucy that she would buy the flowers herself, so as to provide the audience with the connection between these characters:

I thought, we have to make this very, very clear at the beginning. And one of the things that broke my heart in the film..., because I think it needed clarification, was that they cut a little bit that I'd put in. Not only did I start with Septimus, but in those first scenes of her walking through the park, there's the scene — and they cut it — where she goes to Hatchards, and in the window is *Cymbeline*, and flags all around, and every viewer would know immediately that that was remembering the boys who'd been killed in the war. And that that was very much on her mind. (Atkins, 1999: 160)

Atkins complains about the erasure of Septimus, which she had linked to the trope of Shakespearean poetry. Atkins wanted to align Septimus with the war in this further instance that she recalled in this interview, and she complains about Gorris's decision to cut it. This might be taken as a further instance of the lack of deep analysis of this character in the film.

We could argue that the character has 'almost invisible presence,' used to expand and focus on Clarissa's presence. The film obliterates Septimus's psychological development. We do not learn about his problematic relationship with the molar definitions of masculinity and his androgynous rejection in fulfilling gender stereotypes. Neither do we learn about the psychological impact that the war represents for him in gender terms, where "he developed manliness." (75)

It is interesting to note the elements that Marleen Gorris chooses to explore in the short attention she pays to Septimus. Gorris's adaptation introduces Septimus stating "the world is clamouring kick yourself, kick yourself!!!" [transcript from the film] after the overlapping of three different situations: the weeping of a baby, the sound of a plane, and one of his hallucinations of Evans. If we read

this scene from a gender approach, we will find that Septimus feels pressured by the clash of three different discourses. Firstly, the baby crying stands for the hegemonic pattern of the patriarchal nuclear family, by which Septimus feels persecuted. Secondly, the sound of the plane reminds him of the horrors of the war. Finally, the image of Evans tortures him by reminding him of his crime, his inability to feel.

Septimus feels trapped in these hegemonic imposing patterns which threaten his identity, his alternative definition of masculinity. The following scene supports this previous hypothesis by highlighting the image of a traditional family in the foreground and the camera distances itself from Septimus, who remains immersed in his thoughts in the background.

The very same trope of the child is used repeatedly as the unleashing event, which provokes Evan's appearance in Septimus's hallucination. Rezia goes to ask for the time and she maternally embraces a child, who is about to fall. Again Septimus seems to be oppressed by the symbols of a hegemony which imposes its conventions via the social dictum.

The most significant sequence with Septimus is the one occurring at the psychiatrist's office. Septimus speaks out and drastically criticises the brutal tyrannical doctors, the social controllers. His witty analytical caricature of the war and his straightforward criticism of Dr Holmes is contrasted with Sir William Bradshaw's exaggerated clumsiness. This is one of the only scenes in the film, where the marginalised Septimus is overtly allowed to speak without the censorship of the patriarchal law.

Septimus is feminised in different instances throughout the film narrative. He is objectified on different occasions by the camera through certain close ups, especially through Rezia's gaze as I have discussed above in the hat making scene. He lies on the sofa and his body is objectified by the gradual approach of the camera.

His role as a husband is not inscribed in the patriarchal parameters of the nuclear family. He is fragile and vulnerable, and therefore, his authority as the patriarchal husband is only posed by Rezia's absolute devotion. He has been relegated to the private sphere, which he shares with his wife, and he is completely dependant on her. Every time he is left alone he follows the same pattern; he collapses, bursts out in fear, and is rescued by her.

A very clear example of this subversion of patriarchal roles is the scene after the psychiatrist's office when Septimus is literally guided home by her wife. Septimus is distressed and lost, and he is rescued by his caretaker. The relationship between Septimus and Rezia transgresses the logics of the masculine paternalistic power relationships suggested by Richard and Clarissa's marriage.

Rezia and Richard are emphatically connected by the film narrative and, therefore, Septimus's feminisation and disengagement of the patriarchal status quo is hyperbolised. He is not the decorated soldier Rezia tries to construct in doctor Bradshaw's office. On the contrary, the film depicts him as a defenceless and powerless casualty.

Septimus finally finds his place at the periphery by committing suicide. He is clearly the tacit scapegoat of his patriarchal society, embodied in the film by the charlatan doctors, and not so explicitly by his wife. Again Septimus's suicide is strongly connected to one of the first images of Clarissa in Bourton opening the window of the prelapsarian Utopia. He rejects using the weapons of patriarchy, such as scissors, which are implicitly associated with Peter's symbolic pocket knife. The film stresses this decision and suggests his absolute detachment from the patriarchal imaginary, by moving the camera frame through different close ups of the scissors, the fire place, towards the window. According to Claire Monk:

...*Mrs Dalloway* embraces the idea that death — or, here, suicide — may be a positive gesture of autonomy for those made powerless. More ambiguously, the film juxtaposes the young Clarissa's 1890 decision to marry Richard with Septimus' 1923 suicide, suggesting that her choice of a partner who will 'leave me room' in preference to his more politically radical rival Peter is a similar gesture of necessity in the face of constraint. (Monk, 2001: 189)

Claire Monk underlines Gorris's explicit connection between Clarissa and Septimus and establishes a parallelism between Septimus's decision to die and Clarissa's decision to marry Richard. By taking this juxtaposition we can understand how even Septimus's last attempt to speak out is minimised by Clarissa's over-emphasised presence in the film. Septimus does not work as an independent character in the film, he lacks the depth he has as a character in the novel, and works more openly as an extension of Clarissa's characterisation in the film.

This very same image is reworked by the end of the film. When Clarissa goes to the window, the effect is to reiterate a cliché of the classic Hollywood "Woman's film", which reproduces images of women looking through the windows. Clarissa's heightened awareness is correlated to his mental illness via the parallelism established between Septimus's suicide scenery and Clarissa's moment of epiphany. Moreover, her voiceover thoughts are interrupted repeatedly, by the interaction between Peter and Sally's recalls of the past and Clarissa's climatic moment, which belittles its effect. The climax is thus reduced to a con-

ventional resolution, which impedes any new thought and fosters a reiteration of established relations of power.

Marleen Gorris does not promote a new renegotiation in gender terms. Her narrative of gender does not explore the potential becomings the character of Septimus underpins. Instead, the film remains trapped in the binary thinking of gender/sex opposites, with no further line of flight than a criticism of the subject of enunciation.

The film concludes nostalgically with a freeze-frame of Clarissa, Sally and Peter enjoying the leisure of a privileged youth, before marriage. Such an ending confirms Gorris's film as the story of lost opportunities, missed love affairs, and wasted potential. A story which does not open new possibilities and redefinitions to these established power-relations.

Gorris creates a female-centred story which is not able to transcend arborescent social formations. There is an insistent criticism of molar discourses of masculinity, notwithstanding the invisibility and periphery of molecular discourses of masculinities. Gorris's adaptation attacks the institutional amalgam of discourses (political, medical, and educational) which constitute the hegemonic power in relation to women's oppression. However, the film overlooks the effect that this patriarchal oppression might have on subordinated masculinities, by omitting an analytical depth in characters such as Septimus, who could project the potentialities of 'the new man ideal'.

4.5 *Orlando*: The molar and the molecular

4.5.1 *Orlando*: Film adaptation in context

Sally Potter began working on the script of *Orlando* in 1984,⁴⁷ after having established herself as a major filmmaker in 1979 with her featurette *Thriller*, which soon became an icon for the feminist avant-garde, and immediately after finishing *The Gold Diggers* (1983), which had been held as a devastating failure by reviewers.⁴⁸ Before facing her next feature film *Orlando*, nine years later,

⁴⁷*Orlando* was a project that Sally Potter had in mind for a long time. In an interview with Walter Donohue she talks about her first encounter with the novel: "when I first read *Orlando* as a teenager, I remember watching it as a film. And from the first moment I considered doing an adaptation, I thought I could see it, even if parts were out of focus. The book has a live, visual quality to it — which was affirmed in Woolf's diaries, where she said that what she was attempting with *Orlando*, unlike her other books, was an 'exteriorisation of consciousness.'" (Donohue, 1993b: 218)

⁴⁸Sally Potter acknowledged the difficulties of such a project in an interview with Ehrenstein in 1993: "*The Gold Diggers* simply didn't work as a piece of entertainment for the vast majority

Potter turned to television comedy (*The London Story*, 1986) and documentary filmmaking (*Tears, Laughter, Fears and Rage*, 1986; and *I Am an Ox, I Am a Horse, I Am a Man, I Am a Woman*, 1989) to regain the confidence from her audience that had been taken away from her after her unsuccessful project in 1983. After great difficulties in finding funding, *Orlando* finally went into production in 1991 and was completed in August 1992. In an interview with Penny Florence in 1993, Potter vindicates recognition for female directors and argues about the difficulties that *Orlando* encountered in terms of financial support and production:

Christopher Sheppard was a total ally for me as a director and as a female director - but primarily as a director - and never had anything less than respect for my vision and so on. It's shocking how hard he found it to raise the money on my name. So it became a sort of crusade... Things have changed. I've experienced a definite shift in attitude in the last decade, certainly to me, but generally people have learned... well, that female directors are just directors, actually. (Potter in Florence, 1993: 280)

Potter's project was initially rejected by nearly every producer in Britain. Eventually, Potter's feature film was co-produced by her own company, Adventure Pictures, which she formed with Christopher Sheppard, with Lenfilm, Rio, Mikado Film, Sigma Film, and British Screen. Potter could finally count on European funding and the film became a co-production of the UK, the USSR, France, Italy, and the Netherlands.⁴⁹

Sally Potter creates a cinematic⁵⁰ microcosm for *Orlando* that seems to expand itself in time to satisfy Sally Potter's contemporary expectations. She

of its audience and its critics. So it's very satisfying to me to sit in a cinema with *Orlando* and see not one person leave for the whole time, and for it to be a full house, and for it to be number one in London, and number three for seven weeks, when things like *Scent of a Woman* came and went. We're talking a major commercial success." (Potter in Ehrenstein, 1993: 4)

⁴⁹Sally Potter completed *Orlando* in August 1992 and started a tour to promote her film as it opened in different territories. A brief account of her diary is provided in John Boorman's and Walter Donohue's *Projections 3* (1994). For further references to the production of the film see SP-ARK: The Sally Potter Archive (<<http://www.sp-ark.org/>>), an interactive multi-media online archive that provides all kind of information about the film's development, pre-production, production, post-production, the finished film, and distribution.

⁵⁰In an interview with Ehrenstein in 1993, Potter claims *Orlando* to be the most cinematic of Virginia Woolf's books: "In her diaries she calls it "exteriorizing consciousness." She was trying to find images for the stream of consciousness—as opposed to words." (Potter in Ehrenstein, 1993: 5)

inscribes the film in a postmodern world by dealing with the social discourse of sexuality after the second wave of feminism, when new conceptions of sexual identifications respond to the new possibilities offered to women and men outside the hegemonic heterosexual family constraints. In this light, Sally Potter adopts a postmodern⁵¹ cinematic language where narrative transformations and transgressions become a weapon for a counter-narrative that challenges the hegemony of stereotypical constructions of culture and cinematic conventions of heritage films. Her production design is stylised rather than naturalistic (Francke, 1993: 48); objects, music, surface and costumes are not used for naturalistic purposes, but as crucial signifiers in Potter's carefully constructed cinematic language. However, to what extent does Potter's film fit "post-heritage" film paradigm in relation to sexuality and gender?

In "Sexuality and The Heritage" (1995), Claire Monk will argue that *Orlando* does not challenge consistently enough mainstream sexual/gender narratives despite its post-heritage aesthetics. Although Potter's *Orlando* (1992) is apparently sexually radical, Monk argues that perhaps it is less so than collaborations of Merchant-Ivory such as *Maurice* (1987). As has been argued in my analysis of Gorris's film adaptation, according to Monk, "post-heritage" British films express an overt concern with sexuality and gender, especially non-hegemonic gender and sexual identities, which becomes a distinctive mark that differentiates them from other European heritage cinemas and mainstream Hollywood cinema:

In an increasingly international production context, in which the label "British film" becomes ever more meaningless, the insistence on filming left-field sexual narratives can simply be seen as a strategy of product differentiation — from other European cinemas, even other European heritage cinemas, as much as from Hollywood. But nonetheless the transgressive sexual politics of the post-heritage film places it in genuine opposition to a 1990s Hollywood-defined mainstream. (Monk, 1995: 33)

Sally Potter's *Orlando* (1992) seems to be easily located in the strand of period/literary films with a deep self-consciousness about how the past is repre-

⁵¹Many critics have pointed at Potter's postmodernist aesthetics (Garrett, 1995; Humm, 1997; Pidduck; 1997; Degli-Esposti, 1996; Ferriss, 1999). As Degli-Esposti states: "Sally Potter's *Orlando* (1992) (1992) offers a postmodernism/neo-baroque rereading of a transhistorical story where freedom of imagination combines with the memory system of our history of ideas...It creates a space where postmodern manneristic representation becomes neo-baroque." (Degli-Esposti, 1996: 75)

sented — as Monk defines: “the implied reaction against heritage suggests they be termed ‘post-heritage.’” (Monk, 1995: 33) Monk regards Potter’s internationally successful *Orlando* (1992) as a pioneering work within the “post-heritage” film approach and a turning-point to “destigmatise the pleasures of costume and period spectacle.” (Monk, 1995: 33) In fact, Potter herself rejects the label “historical drama/costume drama” (“heritage film”) for *Orlando* (1992), and claims her adaptation to expand in time and to respond to her present demands: “There’s a tendency for a “historical drama” to become a spectacle. I’ve always said that *Orlando* is not a costume drama, not a period film, no matter how much it may appear so: it’s really about the present moment.”⁵² (Potter in MacDonald, 1995: 211)

In an interview for *Camera Obscura* with Scott MacDonald,⁵³ Potter points at the unavoidable artifice and constructedness involved in the representation of the past:

The usual approach to costume drama is in the genre of realism, where a room is made to look like a room as it is thought to have looked then. But the premise of *Orlando* is that all history is imagined history and leaves out all the most important bits anyway. There are traces of historical information that can be reinterpreted in various ways, so we are in a situation of artifice. So taking this on board and using it as a sort of strength, it was a designed, framed, constructed, imagined whoosh of history, not a recording... (Potter in Florence, 1993: 277)

Potter interprets Woolf and creates a new work from Woolf’s text, by establishing a dialogue between past and present narratives, cinematic and literary narratives, Woolf’s narratives and her own narratives. She claims the film to be a work on its own and she is aware of the process of transcreation⁵⁴ that the field of film adaptation requires:

⁵²Different critics have pointed at the transgressive character of Potter’s adaptation within the Heritage tradition. In “The Mirror Didn’t Crack: Costume Drama & Gothic Horror in Sally Potter’s *Orlando* (1992),” Mayer analyses Potter’s subversion of the genre. According to Julianne Pidduck: “This self-conscious artifice of set and costume emphasizes a divergence from the conventions of realist period film — and a refusal of its implicit claim to represent a historically ‘authentic’ narrative space.” (Pidduck, 1997:176)

⁵³Scott MacDonald is Professor of Film and American Literature at Utica College, New York. His published work includes *A Critical Cinema: Interviews with Independent Filmmakers* (1987). He has written for *Film Quarterly*, *October*, *Afterimage*, *Wide Angle*, *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, *Cinema Journal*, and other periodicals.

⁵⁴Critics such as Rose Lucas point at the capacity of Potter’s *Orlando* (1992) to interact with the source text: “*Orlando* enacts the notion of adaptation as a dynamic process of fluid

...hope my film has its own life. An adaptation which is slavish to a text, trying to make the novel “come alive,” is doomed to a sort of literary stultification. An adaptation has to be a transformation. I was much more interested in what I interpreted as the core of the book, in the spirit of what Woolf was trying to do. But I’m only too well aware that the film only exists because she wrote that book. I...changed things which didn’t work for me...I learnt that you have to be cruel to the novel in order to be kind to the film. (Potter in MacDonald, 1995: 212-213)

Potter’s adaptation focuses on the tone and form and carries out a visual interpretation of the text that has received much criticism from literary/Woolfian scholarship.⁵⁵ Potter’s re-arrangements will be my focus of study. In the following sections, I will contrast Woolf’s and Potter’s narrative of gender, trying to avoid any fidelity discourse. I will point at some critics’ (Monk, 1995; Watkins, 1998) scepticism about Potter’s radical sexual and gender narrative and argue that Woolf’s novel is much more ambivalent about gender identity and offers a more straightforward polymorphous vision of gender; that is to say, I will evaluate to what extent Potter’s adaptation captures Woolf’s molecular vision of sex and gender and explores the potential of Orlando’s character for the process of “becoming-woman.”

4.5.2 The gaze and direct address to the camera in Sally Potter’s *Orlando* (1992)

Sally Potter’s interpretation of Woolf’s text is revealed by Potter’s camera work. In her reading of *Orlando* there is no external narrator; it is Orlando’s voice that we hear, s/he assumes the role of the narrator to guide us through the story. In the opening scene, Orlando, off-screen, articulates the voiceover by

intertextuality.” (Lucas, 2005: 221) Similarly, Sophie Mayer establishes a parallelism between Shelmerdine’s and Orlando’s love affair and the film’s relationship with Woolf’s novel: “Shel and Orlando have found freedom in relation to one another that is like the film’s relationship with Woolf’s novel, in which the texts come together desiringly, but move on to their own destinies, and to fully-realised selves.” (Mayer, 2009: 97) In “Translating Generic Liberties: *Orlando* on Page and Screen” (2009), Floraine Reviron-Piégay analyses how Potter seems aware of the translating potential of adaptation.

⁵⁵Potter’s adaptation has been highly criticised by critics who compare it with Woolf’s text, of whom Jane Marcus seems the harshest example: “I can’t believe anyone who helped with the making of this mockery of genius has ever read the book. The director and the filmmakers use Woolf and a certain upper-class romanticized white feminism to reinforce a Yuppie Englishness entranced by Great Houses and Elizabethan extravagance.” (Marcus, 1994: 11)

which we are introduced into his/her story, which is interrupted by Orlando, who turns and looks at the camera, switching from third person to first person narration. This look to the camera is the first of many in the film. Potter's technical device of direct address to the camera has received great attention from critics (MacDonald, 1995; Degli-Esposti, 1996; Shaughnessy, 1996; Humm, 1997; among many others) who have praised it as a radical gesture in the film.

According to MacDonald, Potter has created a new kind of viewer, who is invoked in the film from the very beginning. When Orlando establishes eye-contact with the audience by replacing the "he" of the story with an "I," (Potter, 1994a: 3) Potter establishes a tight bond of intimacy and complicity with the spectator.

By creating the illusion of an unusually intimate relationship between Orlando and the audience, Potter has found a novel and effective way of responding to the debate about the exploitive, voyeuristic "male gaze" that has been so important in film studies since Laura Mulvey published her "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema": our personal intimacy with Orlando causes us to experience him/her, not as an object to be gazed at, but as a complex, sensual friend with whom we empathize, especially during moments of personal disappointment or happiness and during episodes where Orlando-as-woman is the victim of gender discrimination by male-oriented British society. (MacDonald, 1995: 190)

Potter makes the audience participant in the production of meaning in the film. She casts out the voyeuristic fantasy of the spectator⁵⁶ and deconstructs the dominant male gaze of mainstream cinema. Potter uses the 'subjective camera' from the point of view of both male and female, driving us into both gender positions. While Mulvey ([1975] 2000) states the inability of the male figure to bear the burden of objectification, Potter presents a convincing alternative. An example of this might be found in Orlando and Shelmerdine's love scene (scene 57), where Shelmerdine is the object of desire of Orlando's gaze, a scene that subverts the paradigm of mainstream cinema defined by Mulvey. The camera

⁵⁶In "Orlando and the Neo-Baroque Scopic Regime" (1996), Degli-Esposti sees Potter's use of direct address to the camera as an attack to traditional mainstream cinema: "Potter's cinematically codified interpretation of *Orlando* is not innocent but conscious of the intertextuality of a scopic regime that makes the subject an object of voyeurism. From the beginning of the film the character subverts this expectation...The camera becomes the tool for his/her own intention." (Degli-Esposti, 1996:80-1)

frames Shelmerdine in a way reserved for women in misogynist mainstream cinema. Furthermore, there is a point when Orlando sits up in bed and stares at him, “*who lies in his back, looking vulnerable and open, gazing at her.*”⁵⁷ (Potter, 1994a: 54) Immediately afterwards, the camera presents a close-up of Shelmerdine’s face implicitly framed by Orlando’s perspective. It is very significant that Shelmerdine is being looked at in the same way women are in mainstream cinema; he is nervous and smiles, emanating sensuality. This gender-bending game of of the gaze demotes, on the one hand, that Lady Orlando is not a passive character; she has a control of the gaze which is usually codified as masculine in mainstream cinema — she speaks for female desire. On the other hand, as Craft-Fairchild suggests, Potter also allows Orlando-male traditional authority by allowing him subjective control. Craft-Fairchild⁵⁸ refers to Orlando’s first encounter with Sasha as an example of male conventional filming forms.⁵⁹

Moreover, Potter subverts filmic gender fixities further through her use of the cinematic gaze and her casting. According to Maggie Humm,⁶⁰ “Potter dialectically contrasts Swinton’s masculine control of the gaze with the feminine quality of her ‘to-be-looked-at-ness’ fragile female beauty. Swinton is both the fetishistic object of our gaze and actively governs the camera frame. The doubling vision is a metonymy of the doubling of gender.” (Humm, 1997: 165)

⁵⁷ Parenthetical remarks will be quoted in italics, following Sally Potter’s screenplay *Orlando* (1994).

⁵⁸ Catherine Craft Fair-Child is Professor of English and Graduate English Program Director at the University of Saint Thomas. Her areas of expertise are eighteenth-nineteenth-century British Literature, Film studies and Jewish Studies. Her published work includes *Masquerade and Gender: Disguise and Female Identity in Eighteenth-Century Fictions by Women* (1993), and numerous academic articles such as “Sexual and Textual Indeterminacy: Eighteenth-Century English Representations of Sapphism” (2006).

⁵⁹ “...the first shot shows Orlando, skating with his fiancée, startled by something he sees offscreen. The next frame reveals that something to be Sasha. The sequence of shots that follow portray Orlando in conference with a male friend about Sasha while his eyes continue to costume her form. When the camera cuts to a closeup of Sasha, her gaze is roving and unfocused, as though she feels herself being stared at, but is uncertain from whence the gaze issues. Unlike Orlando, Sasha here is not allowed to look directly into the camera or have her eyes settle. Orlando’s intense, predatory gaze dominates the scene, and offers Orlando the enunciatory power typically granted to a male protagonist.” (Craft-Fairchild, 2001: 36)

⁶⁰ Maggie Humm is a Professor in the School of Arts and Digital Industries at the University of East London and a distinguished scholar within Woolf scholarship. Her books include *Border Traffic* (1991), *The Dictionary of Feminist Theory* (1995) (the first edition of which was named “outstanding academic book of 1990” by *Choice*), *Modern Feminisms* (1992), *Feminism and Film* (1997), *Modernist Women and Visual Cultures: Virginia Woolf, Vanessa Bell, Photography and Cinema* (2003), *Snapshots of Bloomsbury: the Private Lives of Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell* (2005), and editor of *The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and the Arts*, (2010). She was an editor of the *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Women*.

Humm adds a new layer to MacDonald's argument about Potter's creation of a new kind of viewer. Humm aligns Potter's use of the gaze with Orlando's androgyny, insofar as she is both the controller and the object of the gaze. Tilda Swinton's control of the gaze and her 'to-be-looked-at-ness' is one of Potter's attempt to suggest Orlando's ambiguity in gender terms (although her sexual identity is not going to be questioned as overtly, as will be argued further down in my discussion).

However, Craft-Fairchild (2001: 36-37) notes that Orlando-female and Orlando-male do not address the camera in similar terms. Orlando-male asserts and interprets, while Orlando-female mostly offers brief glances without words or fragments of speech on traditionally feminine topics. Catherine Craft-Fairchild refers to: Lady Orlando's cryptic look when Pope says she is lost (scene 51); her "I think I'm going to faint —I've never felt better in my life" as Shelmerdine embraces her (scene 56); and her entirely mute direct addresses that come by the end of the film (scene 61, 65). Craft-Fairchild goes on asserting that Orlando-female authority diminishes further through camera angles. According to Craft-Fairchild, Potter frequently shoots Orlando-male low-angle or from atop imposing edifices —as for instance, from the bridge watching the ice breaking (scene 20), from the tall library ladder (scene 25), and from the tower to receive the Order of the Bath (scene 41)—, whereas Orlando-female is depicted from high-angle —as for example, from the ground looking up at Shelmerdine on his horse (scene 54), and at Shelmerdine's feet while she bathes his ankle (scene 56). These different positions allow the audience to look up to Orlando-male and look down at Orlando-female. Craft-Fairchild suggests that while we can hint at Potter's irony in exaggerating the camera angle with Orlando-male, this does not feel so clearly ironic with Orlando-female. There is a contrast between Orlando's presence fully occupying the frame when male, and a diminishment of Orlando's less concentrated extreme close-ups when female. The greatest example that Craft-Fairchild poses in relation to this is the only scene (scene 46) shot from the distance of a high-angle camera work, where Orlando-female is shot from a high, almost aerial angle when moving through the desert on a camel. In my opinion, Potter's exaggeration of these details is deliberate and one of her gestures to denounce female subordination and exclusion in patriarchal societies.

Sally Potter claims to have used this technique as a narrative device "to convert Virginia Woolf's literary wit into cinematic humor...in this way the spectacle and the spectator would become one through the release of laughter." (Potter, 1994a: xiii) Not only was Potter intending to be funny and to add credibility to Orlando's journey through 400 years, but she also wanted to implement a sense

of connectedness between the audience and the story:

In Orlando I was searching for an essential innocence and connectedness that is outside of time. In the voice-over, right in the beginning, the narrator says that when Orlando was born, “it wasn’t privilege he sought, but company.” “Company” is a loose word, but it’s about connectedness. We’re born and we die alone, but we’re here to connect. Certainly that’s part of the essence of cinema: creating a state of connectedness. (Potter in MacDonald, 1995: 211)

All in all, this device seems to be a metacinematic device that participates in the constructedness of the story. According to Michael Whitworth,⁶¹ Orlando’s ‘look’ break the realist convention whereby characters are unaware that they are being filmed. (Whitworth, 2005: 207) Orlando’s direct address to the camera creates an atmosphere of artificiality or constructedness that might be related to one of the main themes of the film: the performativity of gender.

4.5.3 Gender in the film

(*voiceover*) There can be no doubt about his sex — despite the feminine appearance that every young man of the time aspires to...And because this is England Orlando would therefore seem destined to have his portrait on the wall and his name in historic books. (Potter, 1994a: 3)

Potter’s opening line, which is almost literal from Woolf’s text, states the ambivalence of Orlando’s sexual/gender identity, by counterpoising the certitude of his sex with the ambivalence of his gender construction. Woolf’s irony resides in the constant undermining of the narrator’s certainties, particularly those certainties about sex/gender. Orlando’s incommensurability or polymorphism proves both gender and sex as it is understood in patriarchal societies (man/woman-male/female) to be the product of discursive/cultural means; in

⁶¹Michael Whitworth is Professor in Merton College at the University of Oxford. His area of expertise is modernism and modernist writers, particularly in relation to their intellectual, social, and literary contexts. His first book, *Einstein’s Wake: Relativity, Metaphor and Modernist Literature* (2001) explored different ways of relating modernist literary form to the new physics, and considered metaphor in both its expository and cognitive roles. *Virginia Woolf* (2005) related Woolf’s fiction to its social and intellectual contexts. He edited a collection of essays, *Modernism* (2007), which presents a range of critical perspectives on the literary movement, and has recently completed a book, *Reading Modernist Poetry* (2010).

fact, this opening statement is subverted by Orlando's "thousand sexes" as many as selves s/he is claimed to become. In Woolf, this opening frames the subsequent playfulness to be associated with the performativity of gender and the ambiguous indeterminacy of sex.

Likewise, Potter's adaptation claims that gender is produced by and as discourse through different performative signifying practices. Sally Potter establishes the parameters of gender that will dictate Orlando's gender construction; his masculine identity is discursively shaped by the mind-set established by the voiceover. Potter denies a prediscursive "natural" sex-gender correspondence. She establishes from the very opening scene the codes of masculinity and femininity in a specific cultural framework. However, Tilda Swinton's male Orlando is playfully and transparently female. This decision works at two levels: On the one hand, it contributes to elaborate on the mockery and ambiguity fostered in the novel; however, on the other hand, Swinton's characterisation is straightforwardly female, and therefore not ambiguous or indeterminate.

As Potter declares herself: "all this masculinity/femininity stuff is really a dressing up of an essential self. They're identities that you can choose or not choose." (MacDonald, 1995: 219) Potter's obvious masquerading of gender hints at the constructedness of categories such as femininity and masculinity. Potter insists that "*Orlando* is a very gentle, very passionate look at the blurring of sexual identity and the nonsense of femininity and masculinity as constructions, and it's all done in the sweetest and kindest and most loving way." (Potter in Ehrenstein, 1993: 5) Potter relies on an essential self that transcends sexual and gender differences.⁶² Instead of advocating for an approach to difference-in-itself, and a more complex notion of polysexuality, Potter's radical approach to gender seems to be tamed by her analysis of sex "as "prediscursive," prior to culture, a politically neutral surface *on which* culture acts." (Butler, [1990] 1999: 11) Here Potter distances from Butler, who argues for the idea of gender as performance, but not, as in Potter's interpretation, as a performance that masks an essential self. For Butler, and arguably for Woolf as well, there is no essential self, only a multiplicity of selves and genders —the thousands among which we select. Thus, for Woolf the figure of the androgyne undoes the desire for sameness and transcends the gender/sex binary opposition and multiplies its options by making possible multiple genders and sexualities.

It is this dichotomy what dominates the whole film; on the one hand, Potter's Orlando elaborates on gender constructedness and performativity but her take

⁶²"I really think that the film's contribution...is not so much about gaining identity as it is blurring identity. It's about the claiming of an essential self, not just in sexual terms. It's about the immortal soul. (Potter in Ehrenstein, 1993: 6-7)

on Woolf does not account for Orlando's multiplicity and in not doing so it attempts to dissolve gender and sexual binary oppositions by eluding difference, not amplifying these binomials but neutralising it. Ambiguity, polysexuality and transgression are not to be found in the film as clearly traced as in the novel. As Claire Monk states in her critique of the film there is not a clear oscillation in the film: "...the infinitely...imaginative *Orlando* ultimately failed to cinematise the playfully oscillating sexual and gender indeterminacy of its heroine, though this was the precise quality that made Virginia Woolf's novels so captivating and so sexy a fantasy." (Monk, 1995: 33-34) In this very same line of thought, Anne Ciecko⁶³ argues that the film converts Woolf's suggestion of "an ambiguous, ambivalent, transgressive sexuality" into a "less threatening androgyny" that presents Orlando as a humanist rather than a bisexual hero (Ciecko, 1998: 23-24). My argument is not to defend Orlando as a bisexual hero, as Ciecko claims, insofar as I consider it a too restrictive label to deal with Orlando's incommensurability. However, I agree with her argument against Potter's humanist Orlando. Sally Potter diminishes Woolf's radical approach to Orlando's sexuality.

Nevertheless, something we must praise Potter for is her playfulness with gender identities insofar as gender ambiguity is stated from the very beginning in the film. Susan Watkins⁶⁴ argues that despite Potter's more conventional versions of identity, she still focuses on the performativity of gender:

Although in contrast to Woolf's novel, Sally Potter's film of *Orlando* develops more conventional versions of gender identity, in the scenes where Orlando dresses as a woman in the enormous skirts of the 18th

⁶³Anne Ciecko is Associate Professor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Her current and ongoing research interests are focused on international cinema, primarily non-western cinema (Cinemas of the Global South)—especially Arab, Asian, and African cinema; international co-productions; diasporic audiences; international transmedia stardom and celebrity; international film festivals; Afropop and Arabpop music and film; intercultural film/video and multimedia installations by women. Her writing has appeared in the following academic journals and arts publications: *Afterimage*, *Asian Cinema*, *Asian Journal of Communication*, *Cinema Journal*, *Cinemaya*, *Film Quarterly*, *History*, *Journal of Film and Video*, *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media*, *Literature/Film Quarterly*, *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, *Spectator: Journal of Film and Television Criticism*, *Tamkang Review*, *Velvet Light Trap*, and others.

⁶⁴Susan Watkins is Professor in the Faculty of Arts at Leeds Metropolitan University. Her main teaching and research interests are in twentieth-century and contemporary women's fiction and feminist theory. Watkins is also a founder member and currently Chair of the Contemporary Women's Writing Association and Associate Editor for the Oxford journal *Contemporary Women's Writing*. She is also Co-Editor, with Dr Claire Chambers, of the *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*. Her latest published work includes *Doris Lessing* (2010).

century Potter does initially seem to suggest the artifice, display and the *performativity* of femininity. (Watkins, 1998: 51)

The whole casting plays upon such performativity. Potter casts Tilda Swinton,⁶⁵ who is transparently female, as the male Orlando, and develops on the mockery of the novel's introductory claims about his indisputable maleness.⁶⁶ Potter decided to cast Billy Zane, for example, as Shelmerdine for his "slightly androgynous beauty." (Potter in Ehrenstein, 1993: 5), Quentin Crisp as Queen Elizabeth I,⁶⁷ and Jimmy Sommerville,⁶⁸ the openly gay pop singer, for his androgynous voice.⁶⁹ There is a double performance throughout the whole film; on the one hand, actors, men and women, play their gendered roles, on the other hand, they can be sexually bilingual since their sex appears to be nothing but a theatrical convention — Potter assigns actors of opposite sex to some characters.⁷⁰

⁶⁵Potter thought in Tilda Swinton from the very beginning of the production: "As it turned out, it was four years, so we had a long time to build a relationship and work together and discuss the script and the part, and to build up a common language so that, when we were on the shoot, a flicker of an eyelash was all we needed to communicate with each other. It was an extraordinary experience really." (Potter in MacDonald, 1995: 214). Potter felt attracted to Tilda Swinton's androgyny: "...for her role on the basis of seeing her in Peter Wollen's film *Friendship's Death*, where she had a cinematic presence that wasn't aligned to what our cinematographer Alexei Rodionov called 'crawling realism', and in Manfred Karge play *Man to Man*, in which there was an essential subtleness about the way she took on male body language and handled maleness and femaleness." (Potter in Donohue, 1993b: 219)

⁶⁶"I worked on the assumption that the audience was going to know from the beginning that here was a woman playing a man, and so the thing to do was to acknowledge it and try to create a state of suspended disbelief." (Potter in Donohue, 1993a: 10)

⁶⁷Quentin Crisp was an actor and author, whose *The Naked Civil Servant* (1968) — an autobiographical account of his life, effeminacy and homosexuality— earned him notoriety. Potter affirms: "...with Quentin, there are so many ways in which he's right for the part of Queen Elizabeth I, from physical resemblance onwards to the fact that he is the Queen of Queens, the true royal of England, and persecuted, the Englishman in exile *par excellence*. For me part of the secret pleasure of casting Quentin was restoring to him his true status as an iconic figure on the cultural scene." (Potter in Florence, 1993: 283)

⁶⁸Jimmy Somerville is a pop singer who was actively involved in sexual identity political issues.

⁶⁹Potter claims that "casting him also had to do with emphasizing the high part of the male voice, which is a running theme in the film. It's a wonderful part of the voice, and I know from music that the whole thing about women having high voices and men having low voices is all rubbish. So I rewrote the ending so that the film would be bracketed by Jimmy...Initially I just wanted him for the first scene, where he serenades the Queen as she comes in on her barge. The idea is Jimmy Sommerville parading Quentin Crisp—welcoming him back to England. Putting that on film was too good to be true." (Potter in Ehrenstein, 1993: 6)

⁷⁰Similar to the casting's transvestism, Potter uses soundtrack as a tool to accentuate such ambiguity. For instance, there are several *false* singers throughout the film and their fem-

The film establishes a connection between gender performativity and culturally symbolic signifiers such as clothing. After Orlando's sex transformation, he enters the world of female clothing. Despite being a symbol of female masquerade, clothing is also playfully exaggerated in male characters; Elizabethan male clothes are shown to be as constraining as eighteenth-century female dresses. In fact, transvestism or cross-dressing is suggested in both Quentin Crisp's part as the Queen and Tilda Swinton's Orlando, which seem to hint at the arbitrariness of gender identities. As Annette Kuhn describes: "In both form and content, *Orlando's* emphasis on spectacle and masquerade (Orlando's ever-changing costume is a designation of her/his gender as much as a visible mark of historical period) points to the fluid, the performative, nature of gender identity." (Kuhn, 1994: 235)

In this light, there is an overt exaggeration of the artificiality of costumes in the film, a parodic use of costumes of which there are several examples: the scene where Orlando is helped to get dressed by "three extremely anxious valets" (Potter, 1994a: 5) before meeting the Queen (scene 3); the exaggerated and caricatural size of Queen Elizabeth's and (later) Orlando's skirts; scene 48, in which Orlando is being corseted by two maids in a white dress with an excessive white crinoline; the subsequent scene (scene 49) where Orlando dodges between the furnitures down the long gallery, bumps into a maid and both comically try to find their way despite the difficulties posed by Orlando's attire; the excessive wigs and feathered hats that Orlando wears as a man in the 18thc before the sex-change scene; Lady Orlando's dress in the literary gathering with Archduke Harry, Addison, and Pope (scene 51, 52), which fills all the camera frame; and the subsequent scene (scene 53-54) where Orlando runs away from patriarchal constraints in the maze crossing a century and still running with the difficulties of wearing "her heavy skirts." (Potter, 1994a: 51)

In "Sex Change and Media Change: From Woolf's to Potter's *Orlando* (1992)" (1998), Susan Watkins analyses the scene in which Orlando is being tightly laced by two maids (scene 48) and scene 49, where Orlando walks down the Long Gallery of the Great House between the furnitures covered by dust sheets. Watkins establishes a parallelism between the dust sheets and Orlando's skirts in relation to "what lies *underneath*." (Watkins, 1998: 51) Despite Potter's emphasis on the artificiality of Orlando's dressing — "it is clothes that wear us not we them" (Woolf [1928] 1993: 132) —, the film does not show any ambivalence in relation to this matter. Having just shown Orlando's naked female body in the sex change scene, Potter reveals a certainty — a straight-

inised voices are juxtaposed to unusual deep voiced women the eighteenth-century Countess.

forward correspondence between the sexed body and the gender construction—that the novel avoids to hold — “it is only the clothes that keep the male or female likeness, while underneath the sex is the very opposite of what it is above.” (Woolf [1928] 1993: 132-33) Woolf’s text insists that the individual vacillates between the female and the male and projects sexuality and gender to tend to an *n* position, whereas Potter’s *Orlando* (1992) does not share this polymorphous vision. Furthermore, in an interview with Walter Donohue in 1993, Sally Potter talks explicitly about her choice not to masculinise Swinton: “Whenever I’ve seen women playing men on screen, it’s been a mistake to try to make the woman look too much like a man, because you spend your time as a viewer looking for the glue, the joins between the skin and the moustache.” (Potter in Donohue, 1993a: 10) Potter seems to prioritise or naturalise certain gender performances over others. She counterpoises the woman-to-perform-the-male against the man-to-perform-the-male, by denaturalising the former and naturalising the latter, as if obviating the performative character of both gender identities. Potter’s words seem to contradict the main tone of the film, which analyses the performative character of gender. She shows her uncomfortable-ness in front of the fake image of a character being excessively disguised, which is something that she does throughout in order to denounce the arbitrariness of gender constructions. Potter’s *Orlando* (1992) does not fully transcend gender/sexual binary oppositions; on the contrary, it is sustained by them.

Despite the playfulness of her actors’ and characters’ sex, the film does not present a merging Orlando who is both ‘she’ and ‘he’, but neither ‘him’ nor ‘her’ at the same time; a woman, a man, none of them, something else, constantly changing, yet to *become*. S/he does not seem to vacillate in the film. S/he is presented more straightforwardly as a woman, performing the male or the female. However, timid attempts to destabilise gender fixities must be acknowledged in both the male and the female Orlando. The transparently femaleness of Swinton predominates over the character of Orlando as a man, who is feminised by the camera on different occasions and displays an over-performed masculinity which is not convincing. An example of Orlando’s over-performed masculinity might be found in the Royal Tent (scene13) during the Great Frost where Orlando is introduced to Sasha. Orlando’s gallantry and his exaggerated pose (the way he sits leaning one arm on the table while holding his belt with the other hand) is contrasted with the intertwined close-ups of Sasha’s and Orlando’s fine-featured faces, which make plainly evident that her masculinity is a performance. An example of Orlando’s feminisation is one of his melancholy scenes with Sasha (scene 17); he is feminised by his tears and objectified by the camera with a close-up of him crying with Sasha at the background. More clearly, scene 5,

where Orlando is given a jewelled Order of the Garter by the Queen, shows his feminised long and fragile leg and, after this, the camera frames his face by means of a close-up. In the subsequent scene in the Queen's private chamber, Orlando is "*kissed his forehead sensually*" (Potter, 1994a: 9) and addresses the camera to conclude: "Very interesting person." Orlando's words are particularly significant, insofar as Potter could have had Orlando concluding: "very interesting woman." (Potter 1994: 9) Instead, she chooses "person" maybe to emphasise the irony of the scene, whose main female character is performed by a man and the main male character is performed by a female actress.

Maggie Humm suggests that "[t]he scene highlights the possibility of forging and reforging sexual preferences since Quentin Crisp's 'Queen' would undoubtedly admire a young beautiful boy but the historic Queen may have favoured both sexes." (Humm, 1997: 165) These homoerotic overtones are also implied in Sasha and Orlando's relationship. Due to Orlando's not convincing over-performance of masculinity, the audience is encouraged to discern the female actress Tilda Swinton from the character itself. Despite this intentionally devised sexual ambiguity — these sequences are certainly ironic—, the question is to what extent is Potter consistent with her destabilising of hegemonic gender and sexual identities. An example in the film that diminishes the force of sexual ambiguity and indeterminacy is Archduke Harry, who, despite obviously professing a profound love and desire for Orlando from the very first moment he sees him in the steam bath, does not appear cross-dressed as Archduchess Harriet; using the opening statement we could argue that "[t]here can be no doubt about his sex." (Potter, 1994a: 3) Potter pushes this character's homoeroticism but obviates his transvestism.

All in all, I would argue that the male Orlando is inconsistently molecular, insofar as he is dominated by molar gender codes of femininity. He is presented more as a woman than as a 'third term', a new gender figuration beyond the arborescent paradigm. Francke suggests that "Orlando ...is never authenticated as a man, rather he remains effeminately boyish." (Francke, 1993: 48) I don't think Orlando needs to be authenticated as a man, which would imply claiming for molar codes of masculinity. I believe Woolf's Orlando is very suggestive even before his sex-change takes place, precisely because he presents a molecular pattern of masculinity. As has been argued in the previous chapter, Woolf's Orlando's gender behaviour as a man, already destabilises gender fixities. This is something we do not find in the film, insofar as I do not think Potter achieves the "effeminately boyish" effect on Orlando. As spectators we see Tilda Swinton's feminine physicality as imposing over her not so convincing performance

of masculinity. In this sense, male and female codes are unbalanced,⁷¹ thus, not securing the “woman-manly or man-womanly” (Woolf, [1929] 2000b: 102) position that Woolf claims for Orlando, from which Orlando can project his/her multiplicity. Francke suggests that “[o]nly in Eastern robes does Orlando appear to be free — as much from the constraints of Englishness as of gender.” (Francke, 1993: 48) I would add that scene 38 set in the steam bath, stands out as the most androgynous look we get from Orlando.

In the film, Lady Orlando is almost unequivocally female; by choosing a sexed body — Swinton’s— and showing us her nudity, the film breaks away from any possible doubt about Orlando’s sex. Lady Orlando is a woman.⁷² However, we can identify rather feeble attempts to show Lady Orlando’s vacillation between male and female codes. The climatic sex-change (scene 45) proves a good example. This is again achieved through Potter’s interesting use of the gaze. When Orlando looks at herself in the mirror, the camera objectifies her body in a typically male voyeuristic way, but at the same time, the camera is facing the mirror so that Orlando indirectly addresses the camera “*looking into a long mirror; a cool, open, curious look.*” (Potter, 1994a: 40) Following this, with a close-up as Orlando directly looks into the camera, she achieves the control of the gaze by speaking to the camera: “Same person. No difference at all. Just a different sex.” (Potter, 1994a: 40) Similarly, Lady Orlando and Shelmerdine’s encounter (scene 54) also hints at Lady Orlando’s unconventional gender behaviour. Their meeting is presented as a completely anti-climatic scene, where gender conventions are to be subverted. Potter recreates a Romantic *Wuthering Heights*-like scenario, with Orlando lying “*stunned, prostrate*” (Potter, 1994a: 51) on the grass after tripping and falling, and the Byronic hero riding on the phallic horse to rescue her. However, what we find is Shelmerdine falling down and twisting his ankle, and Orlando rescuing him by “holding the reins” of his horse “*while SHELMERDINE perches behind her, his arms around her waist.*” (Potter, 1994a: 52):

SHELMERDINE: You’re hurt, Ma’am.

⁷¹I am referring here to a kind of unbalance related to the over-feminisation of the character (male and female Orlando) despite the attempt to balance the time devoted to Orlando-male and Orlando-female in Potter’s film. As Craft-fairchild states “[a]lthough Woolf’s book allows considerably more space to examining Orlando as a woman writer (roughly two-thirds of her text are devoted to the subject), Potter reverses that emphasis, appropriating 56 minutes of her 90-minute film to Orlando-male. To achieve this new balance, Potter adds to and subtracts from Woolf’s text.” (Craft-Fairchild, 2001: 34)

⁷²Several critics (Garrett, 1995, Degli-Esposti, 1996; Humm, 1997) have related the image of Tilda Swinton’s naked body and the shapely urn holding water to Botticelli’s *Birth of Venus*, a symbol of traditional femininity.

ORLANDO: I'm dead, sir!

(SHELMERDINE *pauses, carefully scrutinizing ORLANDO's expression*)

SHELMERDINE: (*Lightly*) Dead. That's serious. Can I help?

ORLANDO: Will you marry me?

SHELMERDINE: Ma'am, I would gladly — but —

(SHELMERDINE *winces in pain as he tries to move. ORLANDO looks startled.*)

I fear my ankle is twisted. (Potter, 1994a: 52)

Potter's ironic scene reverses patriarchal gender expectations; the female subject takes action by rescuing the injured male subject. The whole atmosphere of the scene is dominated by an overt anti-climatic tone of mockery and satire. In front of Orlando's apocalyptic answer "I am dead", Shelmerdine mumbles back with irrelevant appreciations, and in response to Orlando's proposal he refers to his twisted ankle. It is very interesting how the reversal of gender roles leads to a conversation that demonstrates the cultural construction of gender and claims to attack the fixity of gender conventions:

ORLANDO: (*Tentatively*) If I were a man...

SHELMERDINE: You?

ORLANDO: I might choose *not* to risk my life for an uncertain cause. I might think that freedom won by death was not worth having. In fact —

SHELMERDINE: (*Shrugging*) — you might choose not to be a *real man* at all...say if I was a woman.

ORLANDO: You?

SHELMERDINE: I might choose not to sacrifice my life caring for my children, nor my children children's. Nor to drown anonymously in the milk of female kindness. But instead — say — to go abroad. Would I then be —

(ORLANDO *and* SHELMERDINE *look at each other, and both smile in recognition.*)

ORLANDO: — a real woman? (Potter, 1994a: 53-54)

Potter remakes this scene by moderating Woolf's radical suggestion that both Orlando and Shelmerdine embody molecularly complex gender figurations that cannot be restricted to rigid molar sex/gender binary oppositions. As Woolf's text proves, in their "You're a woman, Shel' - 'You're a man, Orlando'" discussion and the consequent realisation of their mutual understanding, Orlando's

and Shelmerdine's gender/sex identities combine multiple singularities beyond the fixed categories 'man' or 'woman.' Instead of exploring this polymorphous vision of gender and sexuality, Potter chooses to use this episode to criticise molar gender constructions. In Potter's film, both Orlando and Shelmerdine use the conditional mode to denounce the constraints of patriarchal gender constructions (male militarism and female submission and invisibility) under the logics of "if I could choose to be a man/woman, I would not align myself with patriarchal codes." Potter's scene not only reveals the patriarchal constructions of femininity and masculinity, but also plays with the performative and discursive implications of such categories. "The real man"/"the real woman" is a social construct that men/women might choose to accomplish or not. Potter's Butlerian concept of gender (its constructedness) is one of the main themes of the film, which is a theme that Potter shares with Woolf. Yet, Orlando is not presented as a molecular individuation with multiple genders and sexes, despite Potter's attempts to deconstruct gender roles.⁷³

In the following love scene (scene 57), Lady Orlando, as has been discussed in the previous section, is the holder of the gaze and the active lover who caresses Shelmerdine, who "*remains resolutely passive.*" (Potter, 1994aa: 54). Here again, Orlando and Shelmerdine's relationship suggests a reversal of hegemonic gender roles, by which traditionally patriarchal societies have considered women sexually passive and men sexually active. Despite the destabilising character of Potter's attack on patriarchal fixities, the film does not move away from patriarchal imagination by using fetishistic images of the female body and erasing the eroticization of the male body. Potter moves the camera closer and closer to Tilda Swinton's body, objectifying her body in a way that she does not do with Billy Zane's off-screen body, which is actually peripheral (or invisible) to the camera frame. Furthermore, in extreme close-up, we find once again Lady Orlando's sexed body presented as straightforwardly female, eluding sexual indeterminacy.⁷⁴ An indeterminacy or ambivalence that is further displaced by the following scene (scene 58), which presents the two lover's embrace in bed, where we can easily distinguish between Shelmerdine's darker skin and Orlando's extremely pale body. Many critics (Humm, 1997; Craft-Fairchild, 2001) have

⁷³Potter's and Swinton's remarks on the publicity circuit advocate a gender merging that is inconsistently held in the film. Swinton declared in an interview for *Cineaste*: "our film is about a young man played by a woman who becomes, in essence, a woman played by a man." (Potter in West & West, 1993: 20)

⁷⁴Nicola Shaughnessy stresses the ambiguity of this close up: "...the camera surveys a body, the identity of which is uncertain, moving slowly over the flesh until it rests upon an eye which returns the gaze of the spectator." (Shaughnessy, 1996: 52)

commented this detail and have interpreted it as a visual code ascribed to gender; “The association of whiteness with female desirability has a long cinematic history,” as Maggie Humm affirms (1997: 165).

Orlando is never credited as a male character; however, s/he is more consistently identified as a woman. Potter’s *Orlando* (1992) (1992) creates more conventional narratives of gender, despite her attempt to destabilise gender fixities, by diminishing the ambivalence that Woolf’s Orlando embraces. Potter has a tendency to tight down or cut out Woolf’s lines of flight, the predominant arbitrariness that permeates in the novel. The best example of this is what MacDonald points out as one of the most significant changes that Sally Potter makes between the novel and the film; the clear connection between what happens before the sex change and the change itself. In Potter’s film, it is as if Orlando’s facing the war triggers his transformation into a woman. In scene 42, Orlando is shocked by the masculine cruelty of the war when the Archduke shoots a man and Orlando runs over to him and bends over the dying man:

ARCHDUKE: Leave him! Leave him.

ORLANDO: But this is a dying man!

ARCHDUKE: He’s not a man, he is the enemy. (Potter, 1993: 38)

For the sake of credibility, Sally Potter resigned a moment in the novel that was arbitrary.⁷⁵ In the interview with MacDonald, Potter states: “Men are almost always the defenders, the soldiers, whatever, which is something that in 99% of cultures, women haven’t got to face. So it seemed to me that that could be the logical zenith point at which Orlando would say no to being a man.” (Potter in MacDonald, 1995: 214) With the outbreak of the war when a party is to be held to celebrate Orlando’s services to his country, Orlando shows his inability to bring himself to fight and he escapes his duty by becoming a woman. Potter establishes a cause-effect relationship between the sex change and the previous scene. According to Potter “the narrative needed to be driven. Whereas the novel could withstand abstraction and arbitrariness (such as Orlando’s sex change) cinema is more pragmatic. There had to be reasons—however flimsy—to propel us along a journey based, itself on a kind of suspension of disbelief.” (Potter, 1993: x-xi) Susan Watkins interprets Potter’s gesture as denoting that: “femininity can be seen as an *evasion* of masculinity.”

⁷⁵“In the book, Woolf was able to be arbitrary, to play with arbitrariness in a rather arch way. I think the point she was making is that the difference of sex is arbitrary, and she as the author could be God and just decide arbitrarily that Orlando was now a woman. But the Godliness of the author is not in the film; my presence is not the same.” (Potter in MacDonald, 1995: 214)

(Watkins, 1998. 55) Anyhow, what is clear in my view is Potter's evasiveness about Woolf's ambiguous treatment of sexuality.

Maybe the core of my argument resides in my thoroughly different interpretation of Woolf's concept of androgyny. Potter claims androgyny to represent the essence of both novel and film:

I think that Virginia Woolf's notion of the androgynous mind and dissolving gender boundaries is still there. But whilst there is a Sapphic thread, if you like, to the whole book, it's not really within the queer wave, or the lesbian and gay cinema movement as it is now perceived. I think it is about a more polymorphous sexuality rather than specific sexual identities. I don't think the book so much explores sexual identities as dissolves them, and it's that kind of melting and shifting where nothing is ever what it seems for male or female that I think is the strength of the book and which I wanted to reproduce in the film. (Potter in Florence, 1993: 283)

Potter's androgynous schema instead of multiplying the possibilities of gender and sexual positions, seems to be determined to dissolve, melt, erase any trace of differentiation in her search for an essential self,⁷⁶ which, as I have argued throughout my discussion, seems to be closer to femininity. Potter's claim of the film to evoke "a more polymorphous sexuality than specific sexual identities" seems rather contradictory,⁷⁷ insofar as sexual multiplicity is not clearly embraced by characters such as Orlando, Shelmerdine or Archduke Harry, whose sexual codes are not explored with such a complexity as in the novel. Potter's major re-arrangements cut out part of the multi-faceted dimension of certain characters: Orlando's playful escapades and transvestism; Orlando's trans-gender/trans-sexual position (She refers back to his experience as a man once she is transformed into a woman); Archduke Harry's transvestism;⁷⁸

⁷⁶In an interview with Manohla Dargis for *Interview*, Sally Potter defines the film as a "love poem to the essential self." (Potter in Dargis, 1993: 32)

⁷⁷In her interview with MacDonald in 1995, Potter reacts reluctantly when asked about her personal sexual identity, and she basically refers to *Orlando's* ambiguity and complexity as a pattern for herself: "It seems to me that the natural condition is to be unconditionally connected to all other life. But we live in unnatural and constructed times in which we're divided into bits and groups." (Potter in MacDonald, 1995: 219) Potter's statement is highly Deleuzo-Guattarian in so far as she defends the very same notion of polymorphous desire. However, as shown in my argument, she does not succeed in developing this polymorphism in the film, which is still based on "the division into bits and groups."

⁷⁸Potter's decision to present Archduke Harry plainly and openly as a male homosexual who feels for Orlando simplifies the sexual and gender complexities embodied by this character.

Sasha's androgyny; and Shelmerdine's molecular masculinity, the perfect companion for Orlando. Most probably the greatest gesture of the film to contradict Potter's claim for her representation of a "more polymorphous sexuality" in the film might be found in her representation of Orlando's and Shelmerdine's love story. First of all, it is worth noting that Shelmerdine and Orlando do not get engaged in the film.⁷⁹ In fact, Potter's use of their short-term story responds to a specific political agenda. Shelmerdine asks Orlando to follow him and Orlando refuses to go:

SHELMERDINE:...Come with me!

ORLANDO: I cannot. I can't just follow you.

SHELMERDINE: You can stay and stagnate in the past or leave and live for the future! The choice is yours.

ORLANDO: As a *man* one has choices, Shelmerdine. (Potter, 1994a: 57)

In the film, Orlando does not want to submit to the patriarchal world, and chooses to search for freedom and autonomy on her own, which will be achieved in the contemporary modern era. Once she is dispossessed, – or better said — freed from all patriarchal bonds, including Knole, she is set to start anew on her own terms. Potter uses Shelmerdine's story to introduce her new ending, by which Orlando will have a girl-child, will, therefore, lose everything, but as Shelmerdine proclaims (Potter, 1994a: 56), she will be free — from the constraints of the long patriarchal tradition. Potter does not allow Shelmerdine and Orlando to get together, insofar as she does not work on Shelmerdine's molecularity. Billy Zane's Shelmerdine is far more imposingly masculine than his literary counterpart in Woolf's novel. In Woolf's text, Shelmerdine does not demand Orlando to follow him; on the contrary, their relationship is neither a site of repression nor an imposing molar structure to Orlando's fluid process of individuation. It is an unconventional union that projects new terms of individuation, gathering together, and — ultimately — gender and sexual figurations. Due to Orlando's polysexual condition and Shelmerdine's molecularity, their marriage challenges arborescent definitions of gender and sexuality.

⁷⁹"I decided to give Orlando's love affair with Shelmerdine a rather different significance...In the book Orlando's marriage with Shelmerdine loosely envelops the last part of the story. In the film they meet and then definitively part. Orlando's story does not end in the arms of a romantic saviour but in accepting responsibility for her own life in the present." (Potter, 1994a: xii)

In this sense Sally Potter has been accused by some critics⁸⁰ of inscribing the film in the dominant discourse of heterosexuality, which, as will be discussed further down, reproduces molar and fixed definitions of sexuality and distances itself from a more polymorphous vision. This is most clearly seen in scene 57, which, as argued before, Potter explicitly fashions through the camera work as an unequivocally heterosexual love scene.

Potter admits: “The longer I lived with Orlando and tried to write a character who was both male and female, the more ludicrous maleness and femaleness became, and the more the notion of the essential human being — that a man and woman both are— predominated...” (Potter, 1994a: xiv-xv) Potter interprets Orlando as a character that is both male and female; that is, a character that is structured by molar identifications (‘man’/‘woman’). However, my thesis is that Orlando is both a ‘woman’ and a ‘man,’ s/he is none of them, s/he is something else, constantly changing, yet to *become*. Orlando embraces such multiplicity. In addition, Potter does not take difference and multiply its potential, by following the logics of Deleuzo-Guattarian ‘difference-in-itself.’ On the contrary, she looks for sameness, commonality, a transcendental common ground that she calls “the essential human being.” For Potter, both gender and sex veil an essential self which groups individuals in a single category; humanity. This humanist approach resonates in the sex-change scene (scene 45) with Orlando’s maxim — “Same person. No difference at all. Just a different sex.” (Potter, 1994a: 40) — as well as in the last scene, where a singing angel (Jimmy Sommerville) appears from the sky postulating the transcendence of gender/sex differences in the name of “humanness.”⁸¹

Orlando ends up being a film about female experience, but I think it starts out as a film about male experience, and in sum total it’s about human experience —though “human” is a difficult word to use because it’s so woolly. But we don’t have a more precise one for the state of being alive, whether you’re a man or a woman. I think the

⁸⁰In “Redirections: Challenging the Class Axe and Lesbian Erasure in Potter’s *Orlando*.” (1995), Leslie K. Hankins analyses the film’s censorship of the lesbian subtext in Woolf’s novel. According to Hankins, Potter erases the lesbian subtext and inscribes the film in the dominant discourse of heterosexuality: “Though the film’s reversal of gender expectations would be marvelous (and quite Woolfian) if part of a project to “gender trouble” the viewer and heterosexist culture, interviews with Potter and Swinton and the film’s overall momentum suggested that the film’s genderings have no such agenda.” (Hankins, 1995: 173)

⁸¹

“Neither a woman, nor a man,
We are joined, we are one
With a human face...” (Potter, 1997: 62)

viewer feels the *humanness* of that moment. (Potter in MacDonald, 1995: 211)

Potter's idea of an essential self hidden behind sexual identity and gender constructions acts not to subvert, but to support the sexual/gender *status quo* insofar as difference, which is multiple and infinite, cannot be represented by universalisations in an attempt to homogenise its particularities. As has been argued in chapter 2, Deleuze and Guattari — originally Deleuze — define difference as something that exists *a priori* of the subject, beyond identity, analogy, opposition, and resemblance. By difference Deleuze and Guattari understand the 'singularity', 'specificity' or uniqueness of every single state. Furthermore, by establishing a commonality such as Potter's concept of "humanness," we run the risk of neutralising difference and reproducing majoritarian tendencies hidden in these artificial commonalities.⁸² Therefore, Potter as Deleuze and Guattari, argue against molar categories such as 'woman'/'man', 'female'/'male.' The difference is that, whereas Potter deconstructs such categories by dissolving any singularity, Deleuze and Guattari argue for a notion of distributed sexuality, and *n* gender positions that embrace multiplicity. From my point of view, Woolf's Orlando is closer to Deleuze and Guattari's definition.

4.5.4 The satire of molar gender formations

Both the film and the book allow Orlando to transgress the boundaries of time in order to picture the different historical codes of gender. *Orlando* presents the different cultural and historical codes that determine gender at different periods of time in England. Consequently, misogynist attitudes are sceptically presented and counteracted by Orlando's incapability to submit to them (in the novel as well as in the film). The criticism of misogyny and the repressive attitudes towards women carried out in patriarchal societies are the main emphasis of Potter's adaptation. Orlando's rejection of, what is codified in the film as, male militarism⁸³ stands out as a clear example of Orlando's rejection of patriarchal

⁸²In this line of thought, Anne Ciecko argues that the end erases difference: "...the utopian finale also erases difference, and Somerville is "desexualized" as another "feminized" male due to the display of his high singing voice and androgynous appearance." (Ciecko, 1998: 23)

⁸³This theme is already formulated in other works written by Woolf, in particular, *Three Guineas* (1938): "For though many instincts are held more or less in common by both sexes, to fight has always been the man's habit, not the woman's. Law and practice have developed that difference, whether innate or accidental. Scarcely a human being in the course of history has fallen to a woman's rifle; the vast majority of birds and beasts have been killed by you, not by us; and it is difficult to judge what we do not share." (Woolf, [1938] 2001: 103-104)

injustices. Potter creates two scenes to depict Orlando's clear opposition to militarism: his avoiding to fight in the war in the East by transforming himself into a woman and her running across the Second World War battlefield, pregnant of a girl-child, away from patriarchal atrocities, towards her foreseeable future.

Another example of Orlando's rejection of repressive patriarchal codes is to be found in the eighteenth-century literary gathering scene (scene 51), where Orlando first encounters misogyny in the film after her sex transformation — a scene adapted from Woolf's text:

SWIFT: Women have no desires, only affections.

(*The COUNTESS titters appreciatively.*)

POPE: Indeed, women are but children of larger growth.

(*ORLANDO freezes, staring at POPE.*)

ADDISON: Ah — but *I* consider woman as a beautiful, romantic *animal* who should be adorned in furs and feathers, pearls and diamonds.

(*He turns and bows to ORLANDO.*)

(*Turning to POPE.*) Apart from my wife, of course, who will insist on attempting to learn *Greek* which is very unbecoming I can hardly tolerate her company at the breakfast table. Why *do* they do it? (Potter, 1994a: 45-46)

Potter makes Swift, Addison and Pope, three emblems of the phallogocentric patriarchal literary tradition, speak the traditional misogynist frame of mind, which is confronted by Lady Orlando, who points at their hypocrisy in venerating a female muse while dismissing their wives and women in general. Lady Orlando's words break symbolically with the female invisibility and silence to which women have been condemned in patriarchal societies. Pope embodies this tyrannical patriarchal discourse. He reacts with the typical arrogance of male chauvinism: "Oh! The lady is aflame. And silent. Perfect!" (Potter, 1994a: 46) However, the lady speaks up. Pope insists that women must be excluded from intellectual thought, and obey their husbands or fathers, instead. Orlando protests. The scene ends with Orlando turning and looking silently into the camera, denouncing male chauvinism with her irritated gaze. The whole scene is set in a room "*full of posturing, mannered individuals who speak and move in a fast, staccato, casually cruel way.*" (Potter, 1994a: 43) Potter satirises patriarchal pose by creating an artificial and caricaturesque atmosphere in an "*overdecorated eighteenth-century city salon.*" (Potter, 1994a: 43) Excessive wigs, costumes and furniture increase the tone of mockery. Pope's, Swift's and

Addison's theatrical and extravagant mannerism is exaggerated by the camera. Potter's cinematic narrative creates a striking *tableau*, an interesting visual scheme of the patriarchal male chauvinism and complicity that dominates the whole scene. Pope, Swift, and Addison are sitting in a semi-circle, forming a very evocative visual composition. Potter situates Pope, who controls the conversation, in the center of the semi-circle facing Orlando and sitting in "a great armchair" (Potter, 1994: 43) of disproportionate dimensions. Next to him, Swift and Addison will look up to everything he says. Close ups of the four components of the conversation precede the movement of the camera from right to left and from left to right behind Lady Orlando, who is fronting the poets as if she was fronting a panel of judges. The whole shot is filmed with great irony and the expressivity of its images is very suggestive.

Consequently, Potter's adaptation seems to clearly attack molar representations of masculinity, hegemonic patterns of male pomp and repression towards women, and despite hinting at gender constructedness and arbitrariness, it still does not present consistently fluid gender representations.⁸⁴

4.5.5 Postfeminist ending?

Towards the end of Potter's film, there is a sense of hope for the future. Potter chooses to free Orlando from the constraints of the long patriarchal historical tradition in order to reinforce the image of Orlando as a single independent woman with a daughter. Orlando is experienced in changes and, therefore, faces her new present situation with optimism: "(voiceover) She's no longer trapped by destiny. And ever since she let go of the past, she found her life was beginning." (Potter, 1994a: 61) Potter admits that writing the film's ending posed her greatest screenwriting difficulties. She claims to have rewritten it "hundreds of times." (Florence, 1993: 282)

By dispossessing Orlando of her ancestral property (Knole), Potter erases the last tight that Orlando had with the patriarchal past and starts writing a new future for her with new standards, with a new paradigm which implicitly moves away from patriarchal limitations. This is symbolised by her visit to Knole, now converted into a museum and "[t]he façade, lawn, and topiary pyramids...entirely covered in white plastic, which is flapping and shinning in the wind and sunlight."

⁸⁴However, both Potter and Swinton insist on claiming for the film's wider scope for gender identities. Tilda Swinton suggests in an interview with Dennis West and Joan M. West for *Cineaste*: "...I hope that the nature of this character has things to say not only to women but also to men, because the text of the film is crucially not only about the liberation of women but also about the liberation of men." (Swinton in West & West, 1993: 18)

(Potter, 1994a: 61) This medium shot of Orlando walking through the topiary pyramids draped in white is reminiscent of scene 49, where Orlando had to “trouble negotiating her way around the furniture.” (Potter, 1994a: 42) However, these two scenes are clearly juxtaposed in the film. In late twentieth-century, Lady Orlando, “...with the slightly androgynous appearance that many females of the time aspire to...” (Potter, 1994a: 61), has no difficulty in dodging between the covered topiary pyramids; on the contrary, she walks calmly, serene, while her daughter “dashes about joyfully.” (Potter, 1994a: 61) It is as if Orlando felt relieved, freed from the patriarchal past, now covered under the white plastic. In the Great Hall, Orlando, a tourist herself, among the flashes of other tourists, revisits her story as an outsider: “...she had changed...” (Potter, 1994a: 61)

Sally Potter rewrites Woolf’s novel and updates it to her present moment. Potter undresses Orlando of the attire patriarchy had corseted her in and presents an androgynous Orlando who walks towards what Hollinger and Winterhalter⁸⁵ call a “postfeminist promised land of complete gender equality.” (Hollinger & Winterhalter, 2001: 251)

Potter’s changes pose two controversial issues. Firstly, some critics (Hollinger & Winterhalter, 2001) have argued that by erasing Woolf’s restoration of Knole to Orlando, Potter presents motherhood as the only path for woman to encounter their “true self.” This emphasis runs the risk of essentialising women in their role as child-bearers. Secondly, some critics (Garrett, 195) consider the risks that Potter’s postfeminist⁸⁶ image of the present-future imply; that is the end of female struggles on the basis of an apparent gender equality.

In her interview with Florence, Sally Potter explains her decision to change the end and focus on motherhood. Potter wanted to remove the patriarchal order that has excluded women from history in order to build up a female tradition. This is the main intention behind motherhood in the film.

At the end there is another kind of inheritance that becomes possi-

⁸⁵Karen Hollinger is Associate Professor of film and literature at Armstrong Atlantic State University in Savannah, Georgia. She is the author of *In the Company of Women: Contemporary Female Friendship Films* (1998) and co-editor with Virginia Wright Wexman of *Letter from an Unknown Woman* (1986). She has published widely on representations of women in film and literature. Teresa Winterhalter is Associate Professor of Victorian and twentieth-century British literature at Armstrong Atlantic State University. She has published several articles on Charlotte Brontë and Woolf, emphasising the relationship between narrative technique and the representation of women.

⁸⁶Postfeminism is a reaction against second-wave feminism. The term postfeminism is a usually vague term which generally connotes the belief that feminism has succeeded in its goal of reaching equality between the sexes, making it opposed to the third-wave political agenda of broadening feminist scope.

ble. I'm certainly well aware of how I'm standing on my mother's shoulders and grandmother's shoulders - what I was able to do that they weren't able to do, what they gave to me, and what was taken from them. I think that sense is there in the last seconds of the film without having to be stated as such. The only fact that is stated is the fact of motherhood.(Potter in Florence, 1993: 282)

Potter's *Orlando* creates an alternative world for women, driven by another kind of inheritance. Potter is claiming here for a change of paradigm. Sitting under the same oak tree from the opening scene, Orlando sees what appears to be a vision of a singing angel in the sky while her daughter is "wielding the camera and seeing what she sees: so there is a kind of drive into the vision of the future without actually saying what it is." (Potter in Florence, 1993: 282) Despite Potter's claim of a defused ending, Woolf's open-ending is offered a closure in Potter's adaptation. Instead of the uncertainty suggested by Orlando's look at the sky, not sure of what she sees, in the film an angel singing of a future that has already arrived offers a closure. Motherhood and the postfeminist image of the world where the new generation of women who can hold their cameras and can speak out the world has already been born. Sally Potter inscribes *Orlando* in a postfeminist world.

Every image in the film is imbued with every female bone in my body. And why did I change it from being a boy child in the book to a girl child in the film, and why is that girl holding a camera? Of course, if I really reveal my true heart, it's all of our daughters, or it's me, or our futures, and so on. (Potter in Florence, 1993: 281)

Her daughter's filming⁸⁷ and Potter's metacinematic language call the attention to a new counter cinema. She creates an active-looking female subject that is ready to contest misogynist cinematic master narratives. Orlando, who has been the predominant controller of the gaze, passes it on her daughter and is being looked at by her. This scene might symbolise Potter's claim for the female line of inheritance, her claim for a change of paradigm; in this case, a new paradigm of cinema that questions male-centred mainstream cinema.

⁸⁷According to Roberta Garrett, Orlando's daughter's filming can be aligned with Potter's metafictional emphasis on gender: "The use of the shaky camera certainly draws our attention to the question of how the story has been framed. Yet this is also a question which is apparent throughout the text, given its "metafictional" emphasis on the "gendering" of historical representation." (Garret, 1995: 95-96)

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has been developed from a reflection on film adaptation to the analysis of my two cases of study: Gorris's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1997) and Sally Potter's *Orlando* (1992) to point at the transformation, adaptation, amplification or re-evaluation that these two late twentieth-century cinematic narratives have carried out from Woolf's polymorphous and complex narrative of gender—with a special focus on the representation of masculinities. My analysis of both film adaptations has tried to move away from fidelity discourses, but has worked tightly with the literary text in order to explore Gorris's and Potter's reading of Woolf, in particular, of her gender narrative.

As has been argued, the British 90's can be analysed as a contradictory scenario for gender; on the one hand, British cinema from the 90's produced a range of more fluid and provocative images, whereas, on the other hand, it still reproduced persistent masculinist stereotypes. Both films seem to be trapped in such a contradiction insofar as there is a clear attack on molar patriarchal gender fixities but a not so consistent fluid, polymorphous alternative. In the context of the heritage film tradition, both Potter's and Gorris's — to a lesser extent— film adaptations challenge the boundaries of the genre. However, their gender narratives do not present radical fluid gender representations. As independent filmmakers out of the mainstream cinema media-covered circuit, I expected both adaptations to expand on Woolf's polymorphism.

Therefore, coming back to the initial questions raised at the beginning of this chapter —“To what extent is Woolf's concept of gender contemporary? and, to what extent is it beyond more contemporary gender narratives? — we could conclude that Woolf's radical approach to sexual/gender ambiguity has not been pushed to its boundaries by these two film adaptations.

Marleen Gorris's film, a proto-feminist female-centred story, seems not to project consistently “the new men” ideal, not resolving the main tension from the 1990s. Gorris focuses on Woolf's attack on molar patriarchal discourses of masculinity and diminishes her counter-narrative of gender by marginalising Septimus's and Peter's molecularity.

Potter's *Orlando* (1992) seems to have a more dialogic relationship with Woolf's text than Gorris's *Mrs Dalloway* (1997). Sally Potter's free transcreation of Woolf's text contrasts with Gorris's adaptation. In fact, Atkins created minimal incidents or invented very few new scenes for the film, whereas Potter reframes the whole story to suit her argument. Potter's argument about gender claims for an “essential self” that transcends sexual and gender differences. For Woolf, there is no essential self, only a multiplicity of selves and genders the

thousands among which we select. Potter's undoing of sexual and gender differences, poses a controversial debate about difference itself. Potter's *Orlando* (1992) elaborates on gender constructedness and performativity but her take on Woolf does not account for Orlando's multiplicity and dissolves gender and sexual binary oppositions by eluding difference. There is no space for consistent ambiguity, polysexuality and transgression in the film. Orlando as a character is not ambivalent, but more clearly female than male.

Despite both film adaptations point at the arbitrariness and performativity of gender constructions, they do not present productive merging, fluid, ambivalent alternatives that open Septimus and Orlando to the process of becoming-woman. Neither Septimus nor Orlando are explored at a molecular level.

Conclusion

The gender narrative of Woolf's novels seems to surpass the parameters of her time and, arguably, our more contemporary times. Her elusive style, the plasticity and ambiguity of her language and her complex, nuanced and excessive characterisation create a visionary universe where social conventions are questioned, subverted and transcended. Woolf embraces life, its multiplicity and complexity, and her concept of individuation surpasses any gender/sex binary opposition.

Virginia Woolf develops a polymorphous, fluid, multilayered concept of gender by opening spaces in her novels where non-hegemonic gender expressions flow. Her male characterisations are vital for Woolf's larger gender argument. As has been proved, in Woolf's fictional universe, male characters are not mere counterparts of female characters; but on the contrary, they stand as crucial elements for an understanding of Woolf's conceptualisation of gender.

Her fiction examines generations of men ranging from pre-Victorians to their sons, the new generation of men, some of whom envision the advent of the new gender formations of modernity.

On the one hand, Woolf's fiction deconstructs the ideal of "proportioned" subjectivity dictated by the dominant cultural norm. Her attack is focused on the "master narratives," the "grand plots" of history which produce and legitimate social practices and relationships such as gender stereotypes. By creating characters like Willoughby Vinrace, Mr Ambrose, Trevor Hilbery, William Rodney, Mr Plumer, Richard Dalloway, Hugh Whitneard, Dr Holmes, Sir William Bradshaw, Mr Tansley, Percival, Dr Crane, Mr Barrett, Mr Pargiter, and Bartholomew Oliver, Woolf satirises the pomp of a patriarchal system that traps men into specific patterns of thought and behaviour. This rigid pattern of masculinity is shut in a fixed set of rules (patriarchy) that moulds male conduct. These male characters are represented as tyrannical and narrow-minded. They are associated with the desire of power and control, rationality. They are aligned

to the institutional discourses of power displayed by patriarchal institutions such as Medicine, Science, the Academy, Law, the Army, the Nation-Empire, and the Family. They embrace fixed categorisations, and are characterised by an intellectual and affective inflexibility, heterosexuality, and an inability to communicate with women. However, despite addressing her harshest criticism towards doctors, admirals, politicians, scholars, lawyers, and fathers, patriarchs such as Mr Ramsey and Richard Dalloway hint at the constraints and repression that patriarchy imposes upon both men and women. Woolf examines the patriarchal apparatus and points at the confining bounds that even those individuals in a power position are subjected to.

On the other hand, her more fluid male characterisations undermine the fixed sex/gender binary opposition, by projecting a multiplicity of genders, sexual identities, sexual object choices, and sexual practices. Terence Hewet's, Ralph Denham's, Jacob Flanders's, Augustus Carmichael's, Bernard's, Louis's, Neville's, Peter Walsh's, and Shelmerdine's complex gender constructions challenge social conventions about gender and sexuality to some extent. The most prominent cases are to be found in Septimus and Orlando, who move beyond man-woman, male-female, heterosexuality-homosexuality binary taxonomies. Woolf's alternative gender identities are performative, fluid, and non-essentialist. These fluid male characters have a capacity to feel and to change; they become mutable individuations. They are associated with empathy, imagination, emotion, a love for literature and arts in general, an affinity to androgyny, an openness to sexual and gender multiplicity, a flexibility of judgement. Their sex/gender constructions are so complex and nuanced that they transcend the rigid binary system of gender categorisation in Britain at that time.

Woolf's novelistic male characters and her fictional construction of masculinities has received very little scholarly attention to date. In comparison with the predominantly female-centered body of criticism that has dealt with gender in Woolf, male characters in Woolf's fictional world —on their own— have not been the focus of study of the great majority of criticism about Woolf. Whereas feminist literary criticism has been prioritising the analysis of female characters in texts written by women over the study of male characters, pro-feminist masculinity studies have been primarily concerned with male characters of texts written by men. As a consequence, few studies have been devoted to masculinities in Woolf's writing. Woolf is a writer who has often been too easily only associated with femininity.

Among this scholarship that has dealt with masculinities in Woolf's writing, we can distinguish five main strands: Scholars who have related Woolf's representations of masculinities to imperialism and fascism; psychoanalytic ap-

proaches to masculinities; the study of androgyny; the study of male homosexuality; and poststructuralist approaches to gender identities. The scholarship which aligns masculinities in Woolf to the empire and war mainly focus on characters who embrace hegemonic definitions of masculinity (Woolf's construction of rigid male characters under the logics of patriarchy) and does not provide an analysis of Woolf's countertypes. Similarly, psychoanalytic studies on Woolf have been proved to be very useful to analyse molar definitions of masculinity but too restrictive as a paradigm to deal with the polymorphous potential presented by fluid characters — which are considered as impossible projects, deviant scapegoats of a constraining society. It seems that much of the academic effort devoted to the study of fluid male characters has been related with homosexuality or homoeroticism. Nevertheless, these studies inscribe these fluid multifaceted male figurations in a fixed sexual identity (homosexuality) that restricts their potential for multiplicity. Such critics narrow down Woolf's wider concept of polysexuality. In this line of thought, and in an attempt to amplify gender/sex equation, many critics have approached Woolf's conception of gender from the point of view of androgyny, which, as I have argued, is still based on the same polarisation that it intends to deconstruct. New poststructuralist approaches to Woolf's characterisation have provided some new insights about gender in Woolf's fictional work. This poststructuralist approach is particularly relevant for the study of masculinities in Woolf's writing, insofar as it suggests a new mode of individuation that deconstructs fixed-rigid processes of subjectification, which provides a flexible paradigm to analyse Woolf's productive ambivalence away from the logics of gender/sexual binary oppositions.

This thesis has used Deleuze and Guattari's theoretical framework to approach Woolf's conceptualisation of gender. Deleuze and Guattari's deconstruction of phallogentric subjectivity serves as a useful toolbox to analyse Woolf's polymorphous concept of gender. Their proposal of nomadic, on-going processes of individuation and their redefinition of difference provides a useful framework to deal with the potential of gender as projected in Woolf's writing.

Their evaluation of sexual difference as a contraction or normalisation of a multiple range of states, and their dismantling of fixed binary categories such as man/woman, male/female, homosexual/heterosexual, proves to constitute a consistent theoretical framework to analyse Woolf's polymorphic vision of gender. Deleuze and Guattari break away from gender/sex binary oppositions, which they evaluate as intervals which contain n possible states, in order to focus on a concept of sexual difference that no longer consists of being 'either/or...' but of exploring alternatives under the logics of inclusive disjunctions ('either/or...or...or...'). Nomadic subjectivities are dynamic, inclusive, multiple and

non-hierarchical. Therefore, Deleuze and Guattari replace the binomial 'being woman or being man' by the potential of the becoming-woman, a process that dismantles rigid sexed and gender identities. Since bodies are gendered within society, gender stands as a socially functional limitation of a body's connective and transformational potential. In this sense, gender can be considered the actual limitation of a body's potentialities. In order to return to the body's potentials, connections, and assemblages, Deleuze and Guattari propose the becoming-woman for both men and women.

My argument has demonstrated that Woolf's male characters follow two organising lines; a rigid, patriarchal, majoritarian, molar line and a fluid, minoritarian, and molecular line. I have proved that my two cases of study, Septimus Warren Smith and Orlando, embody molecular processes of individuation that underpin multiple becomings and how Woolf's style and characterisation become the perfect location for molecularity. Through the analysis of the becoming-woman of Orlando and Septimus, I have shown how these two characters are examples of Deleuzo-Guattarian full and empty Bodies without Organs.

In *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), molar (fixed) gender formations are contrasted with molecular (fluid) gender formations. Gender formations produced by inclusive disjunctions break the polarisation of the category 'feminine'/'masculine' and open gender and sex to n possibilities, affirming difference and its multiplicities. molecular gender figurations are transsexual in a molecular sense, dynamic in their tendency towards an n gender position. My analysis of Septimus Warren Smith has explored the potential of this character to project itself towards a new conception of gender.

Septimus Warren Smith feels his self cannot be confined by the constraints of a finite subject. Septimus embodies a molecular gender discourse of masculinity for which a society organised around a dominating ideal of proportion and moderation is still not ready. He is the most obvious victim of patriarchy; its scapegoat. He tries to attain the emblems of arborescent hegemonic masculinity but he collapses in the process (unable to succeed neither as an auctioneer, a soldier, nor as a husband). He fails in the accepted polarised gendered social institutions of family, status and honour, by surpassing the limits of what his society conceives as appropriate. Septimus's gender performances break away from social gender expectations: he is shy, fragile, physically weak, he cries, and he resides in the domestic sphere. He has been evicted from the public sphere after the war, and he has been relegated to domesticity.

His madness is the madness of a social alternative to the arborescent discourse of masculinity violently repressed by a civilisation that cannot cope with it. He refuses to adopt the decorated war hero identity, which society attempts

to force upon him. However, there is an intensity, a force of life, a cosmic vision in his madness that opens his individuation to a fluid process of becoming. Septimus Warren Smith is constructed out of these lines of flight that make his character flow in an on-going process of becomings.

His madness can be considered a line of flight, a deterritorialisation of the 'Man Standard.' However, following Deleuze and Guattari, due to his alienation and marginalisation in terms of power, Septimus has a closer access to desire, thus, he occupies a privileged position on the ground of becomings. He is closer to a haecceity, closer to a move from the molar to the molecular, by breaking the rigid gender binary opposition, since his fluid definition of masculinity occupies a peripheral position in patriarchal society. He remains detached from the subject of enunciation by refusing and excluding himself from the patriarchal imaginary. Septimus's becoming-woman presents the destabilisation of molar feminine/masculine identities. By breaking away from the majoritarian Man-Standard, Septimus forges his new becoming. Nevertheless, Septimus succeeds in reconciling public and private spheres and in enhancing gender codes, but social structures in *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) do not allow the flexibility he requires so as to explore his new gender figuration. His dissenting construction of masculinity is repressed by social mainstream legitimacy. Septimus Smith finds in suicide, ultimately, the only way out from hegemonic gender codes of patriarchy.

Septimus's conception of his multilayered and limitless body is confronted with patriarchal fixed, defined, molar and hierarchical bodies, which condemn Septimus's body to be the deviant, the mad, the Other, the outsider. Septimus denies an organised body as a limit to his process of becoming-woman. However, the pressure of the patriarchal notions of proportion and moderation force his body to be organised. Septimus finds in suicide the only way out in order to preserve his autonomy as a BwO. Nevertheless, by killing himself, he becomes an 'empty BwO,' ceasing to become.

On the other hand, Orlando lives beyond the constraints of the subject of enunciation and projects him/her towards a rhizomatic and molecular mode of individuation by becoming a full BwO. Orlando's self is not constructed as a unitary individual but as a multi-dimensional anachronistic collectivity of selves that form part of an assemblage. S/he presents multiple virtual potentials, and s/he is engaged in a continuum of becomings. Orlando exists in the logics of the legitimate use of the synthesis of connection, producing connections and intensities that generate other connections and potentialities in a dynamic flow that is constantly transforming and creating.

Woolf presents an elusive mode of individuation, which is impossible to fix, insofar as Orlando is a flowing assemblage of desire, a haecceity. Orlando in-

habits this plane of immanence, as an event that affects and is affected by the thresholds s/he crosses. Orlando's mode of individuation is complex, ambivalent and escapes any system of representation. All in all, we can consider Orlando an event. Orlando, as Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Warren Smith, cannot be confined by the constraints of a finite subject; s/he shares their cosmic vision of life and feels a molecular connection with the different kingdoms of nature. S/he is constructed in a molecular organising line, which focuses on singularities. All these particles of life assemble in a diverse tapestry of particularities that form multiplicities.

Orlando's multi-faceted selves cannot be inscribed in the reductive gender dichotomy that society imposes upon him/her. The text is constantly hinting at the arbitrariness and constructedness of the gender/sex location, by focusing on the playfulness of transvestism and sex-change. Orlando is constructed upon multiple selves, multiple sexes, and multiple genders. Moreover, gender in general is presented throughout the text as a multi-faceted and fluid state. The text promotes fluid gender identities by underlining their polymorphous or ambivalent nature. This is why there is a constant subtext of gender ambiguity not only in Orlando but in other characters such as, Archduke Harry, Sasha and Shelmerdine.

Orlando keeps her multiplicity by remaining an ambiguous and unconventional in-between body. Unlike Septimus, Orlando chooses this ambiguous, ambivalent, and unconventional in-betweenness to preserve his/her multiplicity and become a full BwO never ceasing to become. Whereas Septimus collapses in the process of becomings by becoming an unproductive empty BwO, unable to project any further line of flight, Orlando stands for the culmination of Woolf's polymorphous gender project, by becoming a productive full BwO, a productive machine that deterritorialises gender fixations.

I have argued that *Orlando* stands in my view as a clear manifesto about Woolf's visionary narrative of gender, a vision that permeates throughout her work, but is most clearly developed in this text. My analysis on masculinities in Woolf's writing culminates in what stands as the paradigmatic example of Woolf's polymorphous conceptualisation of gender.

The last object of study of this thesis has been to evaluate two late twentieth-century approaches to Woolf's gender narrative by two cinematic adaptations of her texts. Without establishing any fidelity bond between the literary text and the cinematic work, I have examined Gorris's and Potter's transformative operations (selection, amplification, concretisation, actualisation, critique, extrapolation, analogisation, popularisation, and reculturalisation) in order to explore how two more contemporary authors, re-read Woolf's radical gender

narrative. Woolf's nomadic visionary gender narrative has not been exhausted within all its potentialities by these two more contemporary approaches. Gorris and Potter do not present a deep exploration of Woolf's radical approach to sexual/gender ambiguity. Despite minor attempts, Woolf's visionary conception of gender has not been consistently tackled by these two films. They do not offer radical narratives of gender; on the contrary, they remain trapped in the binary oppositional paradigm imposed upon gender and sexuality.

On the one hand Gorris's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1997) follows female-centred scholarship that has focused on Woolf as the writer of femininity and has overlooked Woolf's wider exploration of gender constructions (which includes her molecular male characterisation). The less challenging, experimental film adaptation *Mrs Dalloway* (1992), while capturing the harsh attack addressed in the novel towards arborescent gender constructions, diminishes the complexity of characters such as Peter Walsh and, particularly, Septimus's countertype of masculinity. Septimus remains a peripheral character in the shadow of Clarissa's overt presence in the film. Marleen Gorris's adaptation focuses on Woolf's attack on patriarchy, but does not explore the potential becomings that Septimus underpins. Gorris does not explore the effect that patriarchy has upon subordinated masculinities, such as Septimus's, and does not project gender to the new paradigm Woolf hinted at in her novels.

On the other hand, the more aesthetically challenging and post-heritage film *Orlando* (1992), which more clearly revisits Woolf's text by inscribing it in a postmodern context and expanding it to her own contemporaneity, still presents a less radical sexual and gender narrative than Woolf. Sally Potter satirises molar constructions of gender and points at their arbitrariness. However, her approach to Orlando's sex-change reveals an attempt to dissolve any sex/gender singularities in order to claim for a neutral "essential self." Despite her many cinematic gestures to attack gender fixities, Potter's adaptation does not escape the rigid gender/sex binary oppositions. Her version of Orlando does not vacillate between the multiplicity of his/her sexes and genders, but remains more clearly female. Her adaptation claims for a change of paradigm, a new paradigm of cinema that questions male-centred mainstream cinema but that is still too elusive to offer a clear-cut negotiation of gender/sex alternatives. Orlando as a character is not ambiguous, polysexual, or transgressive but a more clearly tenet of feminist agenda.

Both film adaptations deconstruct cinematic conventions to question gender conventions. Their use of the gaze, costume and other visual techniques attack male-centred mainstream cinematic conventions but do not present productive merging, fluid, ambivalent gender alternatives. As I have proved, Woolf's merg-

ing and fluid gender figurations are related to an affirmation of difference and multiplicity in a Deleuzo-Guattarian sense. Woolf breaks the boundaries of androgyny towards a multiplicity of genders. Her concept of gender is neither polar, dichotomous, nor fixed, but rather multiple, fluid and merging. Neither Gorris, nor Potter inscribe their gender narratives in Woolf's polymorphous paradigm.

This thesis has tried to approach Woolf's gender narrative from a new gender paradigm. In my research on gender and Woolf I realised that gender studies, especially psychoanalytic approaches, do not provide a productive theoretical framework to analyse Woolf's dismantling of gender/sex binary oppositions. Furthermore, I realised that Woolf has too often been associated with femininity and that her challenging approach to masculinities has not received too much attention from scholarship, in particular more fluid male characterisations. This is the reason why I intended to study Woolf's radical conceptualisation of gender by focusing on her representation and production of masculinities to demonstrate a wider scope in her gender narrative as compared to the one that female-centred studies have attributed to her. Both male and female characters are oppressed by patriarchal constraints in Woolf's fiction, and both male and female characters participate in the reconstruction of new gender formations. Here it is where my thesis claims for a change of paradigm in gender studies reviewing Woolf, which has been initiated by poststructuralist and queer approaches.

To a larger extent, a bigger claim of this thesis is related to the field of gender studies *per se*. I believe that, following Woolf's fictional visionary gender proposal, gender studies might build a new paradigm that would embrace a merging vision beyond gender dualisms, a counter narrative for gender that would include a necessary widening of the scope of gender studies. New gender identities-to-become need to be subjected to a molecularisation of molar categories. The categories 'man' and 'woman' have been established in majoritarian terms that control the ways a social body thinks of its background. A new train of thought that projects micro-sexualities, multiplicities consisting of micro-singularities is required. A new conception of the body has to come to the fore, one that no longer locates the body within the framework of sexual orientation, object-choices, and gender combinations — which are already molar—, but as a productive machine defined by its capacity for becoming. The potentialities and forces of bodies cannot be reduced to the norms of gender, but are better understood as energy and movement in variations that produce multiplicity and singularities. This new paradigm for gender studies might constitute a nomadic space which would broaden its scope to a generalised attention to the capacity

of bodies to affect and be affected. This focus on body's specificities could be attended by micro-politics of gender, which might present a chance to shake the structures of the *status quo*. It is in this nomadic space where I have positioned my study of masculinities in Woolf's writing and film adaptations of her novels. I have shown how Woolf's novels, in particular, *Orlando*, present the perfect location to create this nomadic space of productive multiplicities.

Finally, throughout the research and writing process of this thesis I have come up with different areas of analysis that I have seen myself narrowing down in order to focus on my thesis statement. These areas can be the object of study for further research.

Firstly, after having elaborated and justified a Deleuzo-Guattarian theoretical framework that offers the theoretical tools to analyse Woolf's gender narrative, I would like to approach male characterisation in other novels by Virginia Woolf in order to explore the lines of flight suggested by the author through the molecularity of certain fluid male characters. In particular, I think that Bernard (*The Waves*, 1931), who embodies Orlando's multiplicity, fluidity and complexity — "I am not one and simple, but complex and many" (48) —, will prove a very fruitful example.

Secondly, I think another object of study that can be expanded from this project is the analysis of the intertextual and dialogic relationship that *Mrs Dalloway* has generated with three different works; Robin Lippincott's novel *Mr Dalloway* (1999), Michael Cunningham's novel *The Hours* (2000), and Stephen Daldry's film adaptation *The Hours* (2002). These three authors revisit and resignify Woolf's characters responding to the dissemination of meanings underpinned by Woolf's text. An interesting research could focus on examining such rearrangements by taking into account the different social demands that surround these texts. Gender narratives could serve as an interesting object of study; to compare Lippincott's, Cunningham's, Daldry's, and Woolf's gender narrative and to evaluate the contemporaneity of Woolf's radical vision of gender.

Finally, a further object of study would evaluate to what extent Woolf's radical narrative of gender is still challenging and radical within the contemporary paradigm of gender and how it can open the field of gender studies to new understandings.

By revisiting authors like Virginia Woolf, whose vision of the world was so beyond her contemporary circumstances, literary criticism has the chance to create critical machines capable of deterritorialising solid, fixed, crystalised locations in order to explore new territories for our contemporary condition.

Appendix A

Glossary: Deleuzo-Guattarian terminology

arborescent A root-tree structure, or arborescence, is used by Deleuze and Guattari (1972, 1980) to refer to the structural model which has dominated Western thought. Arborescences are hierarchical, segregatory, unified and stratified totalities which impose limited connections and states upon their components.

assemblage An assemblage is any number of things or pieces of things gathered into a single context. All life is a process of connection and interaction. An assemblage can bring about any number of effects. Assemblages are multiplicities; they are composed of heterogeneous elements or objects (physical objects, events, states of things or signs, utterances, modes of expression) that are related with one another. Assemblages are thus heterogeneous entities that consist of bodies and objects, as well as nonmaterial entities. The human is the effect of a series of assemblages (genetic, social and historical).

becomings Becoming is a process of change, flight, or movement within an assemblage. The driving force for becomings is desire (desire for molecular proximity). The process of becoming serves Deleuze and Guattari to account for relationships between the elements of the assemblage. A becom-

ing needs to be in constant process towards something but it never reaches a being state. In becomings the pieces of the assemblage are drawn into the territory of other pieces, changing their value as different elements and bringing about new unities. The connection of these pieces is grounded on affinities rather than on organisational purposes. The process is one of deterritorialisation in which the properties of the constituent element disappear and are replaced by the new properties of the assemblage which will be replaced in an endless process *ad infinitum*.

Body without Organs The BwO is a practice. It is a connection of desires, conjunction of flows, a continuum of intensities, a collectivity (assembling and fragmenting elements, things, plants, animals, tools, people). It is a body of composition.

desire/desiring machines According to Deleuze and Guattari desire is connection. Desire is a process of increasing expansion, connection and creation. Desire is mechanic because it does not find its origin in closed organisms. It is the productive process of life that produces organisms.

deterritorialisation Deterritorialisation can describe any process that decontextualises a set of relations. The processes of deterritorialisation are the movements which define a given assemblage since they determine the presence and the quality of lines of flight. Deleuze and Guattari define deterritorialisation as the movement by which something escapes or departs from a given territory. *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980) distinguishes between relative and absolute deterritorialisation. Relative deterritorialisation is always accompanied by reterritorialisation, while positive absolute deterritorialisation is more alike to the construction of a plane of immanence.

difference-in-itself Difference is usually understood either as ‘difference from the same’ or difference of the same over time. In either case, it refers to a net variation between two states. Such a conception assumes that states are comparable, and that there is a sameness to be contrasted with variation. As such, difference becomes merely a relative measure of sameness and, being the product of a comparison, it concerns external relations between things. According to Deleuze and Guattari, difference cannot be understood in terms of resemblance, identity, opposition and analogy, the kinds of relations used to determine groupings of things. Difference is internal to a thing or event, implicit in its being that particular. Difference exists in the particularity or singularity of each individual thing, moment,

perception or conception. Deleuze's difference-in-itself preserves difference from domination by identity and sameness.

haecceity Deleuze and Guattari understand haecceities as degrees of intensity (a degree of heat, a certain time of the day) that, in combination with other degrees of intensity, bring about individuals. The individuals they bring about retain the anonymity of the pre-individual realm. First, haecceities consist entirely of movement and rest (longi-tude) between non-formed molecules and particles. Second, they have the capacity to affect and be affected.

line of flight Lines of flight define the form of creativity specific to assemblages. In addition, lines of flight define the particular ways in which they can effect transformation in other assemblages or in an assemblage itself. Throughout *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari develop a vocabulary that emphasises how things connect rather than how they 'are.' Deleuze and Guattari prefer to consider things not as substances, but as assemblages or multiplicities — bodies and their powers to affect and be affected — rather than static essences. A line of flight is a path of variation through the actualisation of connections among bodies that were previously 'virtual'. Deleuze and Guattari point at three kinds of lines that inform the relationships between assemblages and the world. There is the molar line that forms a binary (arborescent system of segments), the molecular line that is more fluid although still segmentary, and the line of flight that breaks with the other two lines. The line of flight can evolve into creative metamorphoses of the assemblage and the assemblages it affects. Although Deleuze and Guattari clearly value lines of flight that can connect with other lines in creatively productive ways that lead to infinite transformations of the social field, they also caution against their dangers. A line of flight can become ineffectual, lead to regressive transformations, and even reconstruct highly rigid segments.

machine For Deleuze and Guattari, the machine is a site of production. A machine may be defined as a system of interruptions or breaks. For Deleuze and Guattari, being a subject or an object no longer matters; the relationships are primary. These relationships are related to flows. Almost anything can be said to flow, but Deleuze and Guattari focus on very particular and everyday flows. A machine is composed of smaller machines, each of which sits on a flow and interrupts it. The human body proves a good example of Deleuzo-Guattarian machine. But every machine is a

part of a system of machines, and between them they integrate every sort of flow. Machines are constantly changing.

micropolitics Deleuze and Guattari oppose micropolitics to the politics of molarisation. The basis of micropolitics is the molecular, which allows for connections that are particular and singular by providing the grounds for those flexible and contingent things, moments, perceptions or conceptions.

majoritarian Deleuze and Guattari describe a majority as a standard, like a-dult-white-heterosexual-European-male-speaking-a-standard-language, in comparison to which other types can be said to be minoritarian. A majority is linked to a state of power and domination. Majority is an abstract standard that can be said to include no one and speak in the name of nobody.

minoritarian A minority is not defined by quantifiable numbers but by its capacity to become or, in its subjective geography, to draw for itself lines of flight that open up a gap and separate it from the majoritarian standard. A determination that differs from the constant is considered minoritarian.

molar It is a line of organisation. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari apply the ‘molar’ and ‘molecular’ to political bodies. Molar entities belong to the State. They are well defined, often massive, and are affiliated with a governing apparatus. They are rigid, fixed, arborescent and majoritarian. Their molecular counterparts are micro-entities, focused on singularities that are potentially transformative.

molecular The molecular line is a line of organisation defined by more fluid, flexible and contingent directions. The segmentarity of the molecular line operates by deterritorialisations that run the risk of permitting reterritorialisations that turn back into rigid lines.

nomadic Nomadism is a way of life that exists outside the “State.” The nomadic way of life is characterised by movement across space. The nomad, is thus, a way of being in the middle or between points. It is characterised by movement and change, and is beyond systems of organisation. The goal of the nomad is only to continue to move within the *intermezzo* position.

paralogism It is a fallacious or illogical argument or conclusion.

plane of immanence The plane of immanence (or of consistency) is immanent not to something but only to itself. It is in no way bound to a mental design but rather an abstract or virtual design, which for Deleuze, is the metaphysical or ontological itself: a formless, univocal, self-organizing process which always qualitatively differentiates from itself. Becomings and multiplicities intersect the plane of immanence or consistency.

rhizome Deleuze and Guattari use the notion of the rhizome as a model for culture. The rhizome resists the organisational structure of the root-tree system. It is a horizontal multiply connected root, which emphasises the possibility of multiplicity and can be useful to transform rigid structures when brought to a social and political level. The rhizome resists chronology and organisation, favouring instead a nomadic system of growth and propagation.

syntheses The syntheses are ways of processing or constituting experience. They represent the collision of different things, which preserves the multiplicity of the individual. There are three different syntheses: connective, disjunctive, and conjunctive. The connective synthesis realises a connection, an affirmation, a series of “and...and then...and then...” The synthesis of disjunction follows the logics of “either...or...or,” instead of the binary schema “either/or.” Finally, the subject of the conjunctive synthesis is nomadic and intermittent.

virtual According to Deleuze and Guattari, the virtual is the condition for real experience. It refers to an aspect of reality that is ideal, but which is nonetheless real. For Deleuze and Guattari virtual is not the condition of possibility of any rational experience, but the condition of genesis of real experience. Without being or resembling the actual, the virtual has the capacity to bring about actualisation and yet the virtual never coincides or can be identified with its actualisation.

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Filmography

ORLANDO

Director: Sally Potter

Release year: 1992

Production company: British Screen Finance

Lenfilm

Mikado Films

Sigma Films

Adventure Pictures

Synopsis: An interpretation of Virginia Woolf's novel in which the young aristocrat Orlando journeys from 1600 to the present and, by changing sex along the way, shakes off his biological and cultural history.

Cast:

Tilda SWINTON — Orlando

Billy ZANE — Shelmerdine

Quentin CRISP — Queen Elizabeth I

Heathcote WILLIAMS — Nick Greene

Dudley SUTTON — King James I

Lothaire BLUTEAU — The Kahn

Charlotte VALANDREY — Sahsa

Anna FARNWORTH — Clorinda

John WOOD — Archduke Harry

Thom HOFFMAN — William of Orange

Jimmy SOMMERVILLE — Falsetto/Angel

Credits:

Sally Potter — Director
 Christopher SHEPPARD — Producer
 Sally Potter — Scriptwriter
 Virginia Woolf — Author of *Orlando*
 Alexei RODIONOV — Photography
 Herve SCHNEID — Editor
 Bob LAST — Music Producer
 Sandy POWELL — Costume Designer
 Morag ROSS — Make-up

Running time: 93 mins.

MRS. DALLOWAY

Director: Marleen Gorris

Release year: 1997

Production company: First Look international
 Bayly/Paré Productions
 Bergen Film & TV
 Newmarket Capital Group
 BBC Films
 European Co-production Fund
 Nederlandse Programma Stichting (NPS)
 Dutch Co-Production Fund
 Nederlands Fonds voor de Film

Synopsis: Adaptation of the novel by Virginia Woolf. Set in London in 1923. As a middle-aged wife of a Westminster politician prepares for a society party she and her husband are giving that evening, events of the day take her back to scenes of her youth, and she muses on the different course her life might have taken.

Cast:

Vanessa REDGRAVES — Mrs Clarissa Dalloway
 Natascha MCELHONE — young Clarissa Dalloway
 Michael KITCHEN — Peter Walsh
 Alan COX — young Peter Walsh

Rupert GRAVES — Septimus Warren Smith
John STANDING — old Richard Dalloway
Robert PORTAL — young Richard Dalloway
Lena HEADLEY — young Sally
Robert HARDY — Sir William Bradshaw

Credits:

Marleen Gorris — Director
Richard WHELAN — Assistant Director (1st)
Susie LIGGAT — Assistant Director (1st)
Stephen BAYLY — Producer
Lisa KAKTSELAS PARÉ — Producer
Hans DE WEERS — Producer
Eileen ATKINS — Scriptwriter
Virginia Woolf — Author of *Mrs Dalloway*
Sue GIBSON — Photography
Michiel REICHWEIN — Editor
Llona SEKACZ — Music Producer
Judy PEPPERDINE — Costume Designer
David RICHENS — Production Designer

Running time: 97 mins.

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