

Virginia Woolf and Gilles Deleuze:

Cinematic e-motion and the Mobile Subject

Carolyn Abbs

Abstract

Virginia Woolf's legacy to women has always been of great significance in that writers have persistently returned to her work for inspiration. My purpose here is to suggest that her work might also be useful towards progress in feminist film theory.

This paper is about cinematic movement and the presence of the subject created by movement, as well as the subject *as* movement. I argue that the subject in Woolf's writing is produced by *e-motion*. The reason for my construal of the term *e-motion* is to understand vertigo as an emotion of the subject and to recognize the subject as the sensation of vertiginous movement in the text. While Woolf's essay "The Cinema" gives valuable insights it does not explore her full theoretical potential that appears in her novelistic practice. In accordance with Deleuze's theory on cinema, I posit that Woolf's cinematic writing has four layers: camera positions, the sensation of the text, the compositional viewpoint as in the sense of the text being composed by a subject from multiple viewpoints, and the production of the subject as metaphysical transference from camera into text space. In other words, it is argued as the paper progresses that the production of the subject, created out of *e-motion*, produces/is the sensation of the body as movement.

[S]o much of our thinking and feeling is connected with seeing, some residue of visual emotion which is of no use either to painter or to poet may still await cinema.

–Virginia Woolf, "The Cinema"

Virginia Woolf was a highly experimental writer. She had a fascination with cinema and recognized that the traits of cinema had the potential to further her innovative writing practice in terms of mobility. As in the above quotation, she did not merely valorize the visual but was interested in the excess of the visual, the multiple senses, involved with emotion. The purpose of this paper, then, is to define how Woolf creates mobility for the subject in her novelistic practice via certain traits of cinema. I suggest that such understanding may be useful towards further progression in feminist film theory. I want to argue that the production of the subject in Woolf's writing is created out of what I shall describe as *e-motion*, that is, *e-motion* produces/is the sensation of the body as movement. The reason for the term *e-motion* is so as to be able to make a connection with *vertigo* via an emphasis upon the Latin origin of the word 'emotion', *emovere*, which means 'to disturb'. I regard it in the sense of a

Deleuzian type of chaotic disturbance of the subject; and *movere* to move (movement) within writing.

As will be seen, there are interesting links between Woolf's essay "The Cinema", her fictional as well as non-fictional work and Gilles Deleuze's theory of cinema, that is, in particular *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*.¹ I shall first discuss Woolf's essay on "The Cinema", before working with parts of Deleuze's theory of film and Woolf's novelistic practice. The Deleuzian approach will enable me to define how there are four layers in her writing practice that enable movement to be an intrinsic part of the text and subject. The first layer is arguably the most cinematic, the camera positions. The second layer is about what will be described as 'sensation' of the text. The third layer is to do with the compositional viewpoint as in the sense of the text being composed by a subject (as if with a camera) from multiple viewpoints. The fourth layer is about the production of the subject as metaphysical transference from camera into text space as a being for the world as opposed to a Heideggerian being in the world. The first layer will need to be dealt with first, as it is the basic instigation of movement before the consecutive layers can be explained and analysed within Woolf's writing. The analysis will then enable me to argue for the 'emotional' involvement of the textual subject as that which enables the illusion of movement and the body in the text. But first let us briefly contextualise Woolf's essay.

Historically, early silent cinema created what is often described as a truly 'modern experience' in that it involved the viewer with a directness of presence and (re)production of life in a manner that had not been achieved in other art forms. Cinema allowed presence to flourish as perpetual motion, that is, not only as 'now' but as recollection and future possibility.² It was due to this constant temporal flux that the traits of cinema were useful for Woolf's purpose. In addition, the early period of cinema was not merely a euphoric visuality drowned in a metaphoric blanket of silence.³ Silent cinema was not completely without sound but rather, it was accompanied by music, at first on a piano and later often by a whole orchestra. In the verbal manner of sound there were performers who commented upon the film as well as making interpretations for the spectators.⁴ However, these film 'props' were not as integral to meaning as linguistic dialogue within the film itself and therefore nonverbal signs were of paramount importance. If a person "cannot hear" they "must feel", in which case they must hearken and perhaps hearken very well, Horst Ruthrof explains following Heidegger,⁵ an argument that is particularly valid with regard to the cinematic genre.

Virginia Woolf's essay, "The Cinema" was first published in 1926; almost at the end of the 'silent period' of film. In this essay she regards cinema to be a modernist project devoid of the 'slice of life' of realism: "cinema does not belong to the simple photograph of real life".⁶ She offers some fundamental as well as radical insights into the dynamics of cinema although does not explore the full theoretical potential of cinema here that she seems to apply within her own later writing practice. In the essay, she makes an historical link between the mesmerised spectator of cinema, agog before the cinema screen, and our distant ancestors who, she claims, in a predictive manner heard the

music of Mozart while knocking two bars of iron together. Cinema engages with our primitive past, she argues, and yet according to modern philosophy “the savage [sic] no longer exists”⁷ in modern human beings. Woolf is acknowledging, here, that there is something more than that which we see; a depth of understanding that is perhaps connected to our perhaps pre-linguistic and pre-technological past. It could be described as something like Julia Kristeva’s *semiotic* or *genotext*⁸ in that there is the depth of modernism as opposed to the surface of the film, which we might regard as its visuality.

Woolf certainly does not valorize the visual aspect of cinema:⁹ in fact she suspects that the visual could even be part of its deficiency. By giving the example of an early filmic version of *Anna Karenina*¹⁰ and arguing that because “[a]ll the emphasis is laid by the cinema upon her teeth, her pearls, and her velvet”¹¹ and so on, it has nothing to do with the novel that Tolstoy wrote. However, it is curious that she forges a separation between the eye and the brain while omitting the body’s involvement considering that she has certainly hinted at the body’s involvement:

[t]he eye is in difficulties. The eye wants help. The eye says to the brain, ‘Something is happening which I do not in the least understand. You are needed’.¹²

It is as if she acknowledges the retro-cognitive aspect of film that can bring past events to ‘life’ and yet denies the viewer’s perceived transportation¹³ or at least empathy via bodily sensations for cinematic events. Emotion and empathy are bodily sensations, transmitted via the body, and not mere disconnected thought, that is, separate from the visuality of the eye. In other words it is the eye of the spectator that produces the tactile sensation in the body.

Woolf insists that the eye and brain are in conflict which, on one hand, seems to lead her to suspect that the visual puts a closure on meaning. In the case of *Anna Karenina*, that which is construed by writing in novelist practice is lost but she maintains that it is the brain as opposed to the body to the extent she omits any mention of the body.

[T]he 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.¹⁴

On the other hand, while defining the complexities and deficiencies of cinema she begins to articulate the visual confusion and mystery as theoretical potential.

All is hubble-bubble, swarm, and chaos. We are peering over the edge of a cauldron in which fragments of all shapes and savours seem to simmer; now and again some vast form heaves itself up, and seems about to haul itself out of chaos.¹⁵

Woolf marvels at how a visual image such as a shadow can be more productive than human gestures or language in conveying emotions such as fear. While at a performance of *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*,

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... The monstrous quivering tadpole seemed to be fear itself.¹⁶



In a similar manner she argues that an abstract “black line wriggling on a white sheet” can be more effective for portraying anger than the rant and rhetoric of characters.¹⁷ Even though her very style is mobile as in the ‘wriggling’ of the black line she does not quite articulate movement itself as the very fundamental device of cinema. She focuses on thought as the nonverbal basis of inquiry as opposed to understanding movement as the foundation of cinema which we do indeed ‘feel’ via the body.

Is there, we ask, some secret language which we feel and see, but never speak, and, if so, could this be made visible to the eye? Is there any characteristic which thought possesses that can be rendered visible without the help of words? It has speed and lowness; dart-like directness and vaporous circumlocution. But it has also, especially in moments of emotion, the picture-making power, the need to lift its burden to another bearer; to let an image run side by side along with it. The likeness of the thought is, for some reason, more beautiful, more comprehensible, more available than the thought itself.¹⁸

It is as if she doesn't notice that her very words on thought are mobile and about movement – it has speed and lowness; dart-like directness – the ability to let an image run side by side along with it. Woolf argues for the power of language in writing to create visual images via ‘chains of suggestions’ which, of course, implies the flowing movement of poetic language in a connective manner, but she does not emphasise the fluid movement of the connection.

The theoretical link between Woolf and Deleuze that I wish to make is mainly to do with the fluidity of thought. As will be demonstrated, it is by reading Woolf's work from the perspective of Deleuze on cinema that we can understand how she works with the cinematic traits in her creative practice. It will enable an engagement with the emotional involvement of the subject, or

more precisely, what I argue for as the *e-motion* of the subject in Woolf's work that is the body in writing.

Camera Positions

The first layer of analysis and basis of the creation of movement in Woolf's writing, addresses the technique of the camera and camera position(s). The camera is mobile, and this is a mobility Woolf uses to new effect. As Deleuze has argued, the cinema is built upon the movement-image in that it can create a multitude of different types of images that relate and combine with each other and enable it to create a multitude of different images. At the beginning of *Cinema 1: the Movement Image*, he articulates a philosophy of the movement-image by defining a Bergsonian progressive tri-partite thesis on movement via a reading back and forth between *Matter and Memory* (1896) and *Creative Evolution* (1907). I shall utilize the first two parts of this tri-partite thesis in order to define the basic level of movement in Woolf's creative practice. Deleuze relates this thesis on movement to the cinematic movement-image while emphasising that Bergson does not make specific reference to the cinema until the later work; previously Bergson merely defines a more general theory of the movement-image. In the *First thesis: movement and instant*, Deleuze commences by arguing that, for Bergson,

movement is distinct from the space covered. Space covered is past, movement is present, the act of covering. The space covered is divisible, indeed infinitely divisible, whilst movement is indivisible, or cannot be divided without changing qualitatively each time it is divided. This already presupposes a more complex idea: the spaces covered all belong to a single, identical, homogeneous space, while the movements are heterogeneous, irreducible among themselves.¹⁹

This means that movement, for Bergson, does not exist within the instants themselves but rather, it can be achieved by two means. The first, is by adding to the instants, that is, by an abstract idea of succession. Deleuze observes that by making this manoeuvre, movement is missed because movement occurs in the interval between the instants. Yet, it can be argued that there is an illusion of movement created, albeit a limited illusion via the movement of the camera that 'adds instants'. The second means of achieving movement is related in that by adding instants there is simultaneously a qualitative duration. Both of these means of movement are created by the technology of the camera. In other words, the camera first merges objects and secondly, it concurrently accrues a qualitative duration as movement. For Deleuze this is an irreducible and incorrect formula: "real movement towards concrete duration – and – immobile sections + abstract time". Yet, this is the formula that Bergson understood to be the very illusion of cinema – in fact he was to name it in his later work: "the cinematographic illusion".²⁰ This does not seem to be problematic provided it is understood as the basis of movement or 'cinematographic illusion'. We can understand it, as Bergson did, to be more akin to natural perception than phenomenological in that sections are strung together towards a becoming of knowledge – a cinematographic inside us – although in actuality it is the very apparatus of cinema that enables these

sections (photogrammes) to move in time. If we refer back to Woolf's essay on the cinema, this first layer is related to the 'chains of suggestions' that she spoke of in relation to poetry.

It is in this type of cinematic writing that Woolf often applies the double aspect of modernism, that is, not only the fluid connections but also the technology of the time, the train, the motor-car as a new perspective on life. In many ways this is like the film camera. However, it is not only in Woolf's fiction that we can see her experiment with this type of cinematic movement but also in letters and diaries. An example of this first layer of created movement²¹ is most readily articulated in a letter she wrote to Lytton Strachey on 3rd September, 1927. Note how the car becomes an innovative substitute for that of the technological device of the camera.

All the rest of the news is motor car gossip. We flash through Sussex almost daily; drop in after dinner; visit ruins; muse by retired moats, of which Sussex is full; surprise Colonels – it is a perfect invention. What we did without it passes comprehension. Most of the Victorian horror seems explicable by the fact that they walked, or sat behind stout sweating horses.²²

There is a similar instance in *The Waves* where the camera-eye is that of/from the train. By utilizing the speed of the train that 'flashes past the signal boxes' Woolf creates an increased sense of movement.

We flash past signal boxes; we make the earth rock slightly from side to side. The distance closes for ever in a point; and we for ever open the distance wide again. The telegraph poles bob up incessantly.²³

The whole resonance of the syntax creates the impression, the feeling, the emotion of movement. The scenery flashes past us. The telegraph poles 'bob up'. The spectator is agog and, as Woolf has argued in "The Cinema", perhaps in touch with something like a primitive past. At this stage the 'primitive past' can be thought of not only in nonverbal terms but also non visual terms so that it is a spatio-temporal *trace*²⁴ rather like the Kristeva *semiotic*.

In his critique of what he believes to be the Bergson's limited perspective, Deleuze argues that in cinema there is something instantaneous: a movement-image.

[C]inema does not give us an image to which movement is added, it immediately gives us a movement-image. It does give us a section, but a section which is mobile, not an immobile section + abstract movement.²⁵

He is arguing for the emancipation of the viewpoint which does not occur in Bergson's first or second thesis. Yet, as stated earlier, it is a necessary stepping stone with regard to understanding the basis of movement. Deleuze is intrigued that Bergson was aware of movement-images (*Matter and Memory*) in that he knew they went beyond the conditions of natural perception, but suspects that he became involved in another illusion, namely that of the fixed

viewpoint in early cinema. Woolf is, I feel, one step ahead here in that she uses the mobility (movement) of the car and train. Her writing never dwells on an immobile section as she observed in the early film adaptation of *Anna Karenina*, her teeth, her pearls and so on. In other words, when the camera is a train or a car it is movement; movement is intrinsic to its being.

Deleuze names Bergson's "Second thesis: privileged instants and any-instant-whatevers". In this second thesis (*Creative Evolution*) he states that Bergson defines at least two very different illusions of movement in cinema while still working with the same error, that of "reconstituting movement from instants or positions".²⁶ There are two means of understanding this, that of the ancient and the modern. In the former, movement refers to elements which are immobile but whose actualisation is one of matter-flux. Yet, in the latter there is also the idea of synthesis of movement, as from one instant or pose (as in a dance) to another. This means that, again, the instant is immobile with the camera acting as the translation to/for movement in that there is a continuity of the instant. Woolf's writing, like the cinema, gives movement to the image. That is, it gives movement back to the image that was taken away perhaps by the photograph: 'cinema is not a mere photograph of life'. It will be useful to refer to Woolf's short story "The Mark on the Wall" now to discuss synthesis.

"The Mark on the Wall" is a story of a woman sitting by a fire contemplating in a (perhaps filmic) day-dream like mode, a mark on the wall. While it could be argued that the evolution of the 'mark on the wall', is one of matter-flux – first perceived as a small round mark through a series of evolving images until eventually it becomes metamorphosed as a snail. Yet, there is also a synthesis of movement so that one image flows into the next as in a dream. The surrealist project of automatic writing can be taken into account here as it allows for the renewal of the image. In "Solid Objects" there is again this dream-like synthesis and metamorphosis that in addition applies the Russian Formalist concept of defamiliarization, of 'making strange' [*ostranenie*]. The basis of *ostranenie*, as first developed by Victor Shlovsky, was to break free from what he defined as the *habitualization* of life whereby understanding was mere habit.

After we see an object several times, we begin to recognize it. The object is in front of us and we know about it, but we do not see it – hence we cannot say anything significant about it.²⁷

Shlovsky believed, and we can suspect that Woolf did too, that art exists so that we can see things anew.

Art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone stony.²⁸

This concept can be observed if we recall Woolf's essay on cinema where the shadow becomes something else. But what is important here is that it is the camera that enables the new perspective to become portrayed. The camera enables not only the synthesis but the movement itself. We can then see that here Woolf is understanding the basis of the cinematic as movement which she did not seem to do in the essay.

The only thing that moved upon the vast semicircle of the beach was one small black spot. As it came nearer to the ribs and spine of the stranded pilchard boat, it became apparent from a certain tenuity in its blackness that this spot possessed four legs; and moment by moment it became more unmistakable that it was composed of the persons of two young men.²⁹

An even greater synthesis can be observed in the opening of *The Waves* where the sea is compared to a slightly creased cloth that is the product of human manufacture (technology) as opposed to sea and nature. The waves become ‘thick strokes’ rather like clock time but also reminiscent of camera shots ‘following each other’ consecutively as opposed to the continuous, singular flow of water. In this example the fluidity of the waves is simultaneously fragmented in order to create the first layer of movement. Note that whereas at first the sea is indistinguishable from the sky there becomes a ‘dark line’ that divides them and the ‘thick strokes’ follow each other as a succession of instances.

*The sun had not yet risen. The sea was indistinguishable from the sky, except that the sea was slightly creased as if a cloth had wrinkles in it. Gradually as the sky whitened a dark line lay on the horizon dividing the sea from the sky and the grey cloth became barred with thick strokes moving, one after another, beneath the surface, following each other, pursuing each other, perpetually.*³⁰

Taking this observation into account, if we now refer once again to the previous example where Jinny is on the train, there can be noted a similar ‘camera-shot’ type of fragmentation which creates a rapidity of movement: the ‘telegraph poles pop up incessantly’. This exemplifies the first layer of movement which is the very fundamentality of the cinematic camera; it is mobile; it does not immobilize events or images. Deleuze, it seems, confirms this to be the modern version and it is akin to Woolf’s version of the ‘modern in the age of the motor car’.

In this modern account Deleuze discerns that the cinema has insisted not upon relating movement to privileged instants but to any-instant-whatever: immanent material elements. Privileged instants are not like poses, they can be remarkable occasions or any-instant-whatever. They can be either quite ordinary or of particular significance, taking on a qualitative significance which is achieved by an accumulation of banalities as synthesis which is, I shall add, the camera’s work. Deleuze argues:

[T]o recompose movement with *eternal poses* or with *immobile sections* comes to the same thing: in both cases, one misses the movement because one constructs a Whole, one assumes that ‘all is given’, whilst movement only occurs if the whole is neither given nor giveable. As soon as a whole is given to one in the eternal order of forms or poses, or in the set of any-instant-whatevers, then either time is no more than the image of eternity, or it is the consequence of the set; there is no longer room for real movement.³¹

In actuality the ‘camera’ in Woolf’s novelistic practice, her cinematic presentational process, does not so much ‘miss movement’, but rather it

constructs a Whole via the connection of images and moments. On one hand, the Whole could be defined as being created out of visual connections, pure surface in the postmodern sense. But it is also about the connection of moments and retroactivity and thus leads to a depth, not so very different to the Heideggerian notion of the *openness* of the ‘clearing’ where a viewer is transported as mentioned earlier. However, it seems that cinema takes the matter of the ‘clearing’ a step further than painting or poetry. It is because cinema contains the basic trait of movement that, I argue, it has the potential to create a greater sense of the *openness* of being which is in many ways about a greater sense of the body in motion. This is at the heart of Virginia Woolf’s writing. As Deleuze points out if “one relates movement to any-moment-whatevers, one must be capable of thinking the production of the new, that is, of the remarkable and the singular, at any one of these moments”.³² Woolf’s work anticipates this insight.

Deleuze’s Bergson wanted to give the modern technology of the time (the camera) a metaphysic. Whether this is plausible or not is a moot point, but to shift the power to the camera away from the reader/viewer can procure an interesting consequence in writing. It allows us to work beyond the phenomenological with an aim of understanding how the body is already *in* writing as opposed to a reader bringing a body to the text. Nor is it merely the question of one body giving way to another. Both the body in assisting and the reading body are essential ingredients in the process of narrative meaning. In the case of Woolf’s writing it seems also plausible to claim that the camera as technology (an aspect of modernism) contains itself a certain metaphysical quality. This element of the metaphysical is, I suggest, facilitated by the cinematic process and it is the basic trait of movement. The next layer, the (Deleuzian) ‘sensation’ of the text, will clarify the possibility of the cinematic metaphysic.

Sensation

The second level is the *sensation* of the text and is related to the ‘motion’ aspect of *e-motion*. In Deleuze’s words, a text becomes “independent of its ‘model’ from the start” as well as its creator and similarly from its viewer who merely read/see it later, and that sensation is thus textual. For Deleuze there is ‘something’ that is preserved which is more than the artwork on one level but is the text, on another level. This something is *sensation*. The work of art is “*a bloc of sensations, that is to say, a compound of percepts and affects*”.³³ The intrinsic something, he argues, is in the text and beyond the text, a becoming of the text which is not the perception of author or reader. There is something that a text maintains; the possibility of *becoming* which is a *being* of sensation.

Percepts are no longer perceptions; they are independent of a state of those who experience them. Affects are no longer feelings or affections; they go beyond the strength of those who undergo them. Sensations, percepts, and affects are *beings* whose validity lies in themselves and exceeds any lived. They could be said to exist in the absence of man [*sic*], because man, as he is caught in stone, on the canvas, or by words, is himself a compound of percepts and affects.

The work of art is a being of sensation and nothing else: it exists in itself.³⁴

Sensation, then, is not the materiality of the writing but rather the affect of the writing so “sensation is not the same thing as the material[ity]”.³⁵ For Deleuze, writing can preserve the sensation, not by memory but, by a *bloc of sensation*, which is pure sensation.

[E]very work of art is a monument, but here the monument is not something commemorating a past, it is a bloc of present sensations that owe their preservation only to themselves that provide the event with the compound that celebrates it.³⁶

Woolf’s writing embraces ‘blocs of sensation’ which are formulated by the connection of quasi-cinematic images. The camera as mobility produces an image dynamics that I suggest is metaphysical. Because it does not fix time nor image, the fluidity of the connections are as important as any image, that is, if any image can at all be defined exactly on its own. After all, there is always a fluid connectedness, the back and forth which retroactively gives life to the image. It is this connectedness that capacitates percepts and affects which lead to (*are themselves*) blocs of sensation, forever changing and metamorphosing. The process of retroactivity is ongoing. It is as Husserl informed us. “Every sensation has its intentions; which leads us from the now to a new now” towards a future as well as a past.³⁷ Sensation is of course as integral to cinematic writing as it is to the cinema itself in that it is about the temporal mobility of connections and images. The point to be stressed before moving on is that *sensation* is still textual even if we have to re-decide what it means to be textual. To be textual is not necessarily visual, nor verbal, but something else; the sensation, and what I define as the *e-motion* that is so special in Woolf’s writing. Deleuze’s concept of *sensation* is part of the text and yet beyond the rationality of the linguistic and most certainly beyond syntax. *Sensation* as percept and affect is an intrinsic state of the text. Sensation can, therefore, be claimed to evolve from the first level, that of the camera shots, where we visually perceive the telegraph poles ‘bob up’, with the affect that we *feel* the movement of the train. Hence, there is created a block of sensation that is a type of resonance of the text. It is through the visual or the quasi-visual in the case of writing, that the text conveys, translates, a textual body/bodily feeling of being there. The same holds for such other nonverbal readings as olfactory, gestatory, or tactile constructions.

Let us now consider how Rhoda’s speech in *The Waves* facilitates (a) bloc(s) of sensation. We can see that the visual perception of the camera stimulates and activates bodily senses and this is perhaps why Bergson suspected that the cinematic camera contained a metaphysic. It is because the camera plays tricks with the viewing position(s), in effect pretending to be not a camera but the point of view of the subject. Here the camera does not objectify, look at the subject, but rather it looks from the point of view of the subject. It gathers the affect of mobility by its own actual mobility, transforming and metamorphosing its machinic technology into a living body. Consequently, Rhoda is not a mere camera eye but a subject with a mind and body. Blocs of sensation are perceived as a result of this ‘believability’, which is primarily a

technological trick of the camera. This trick of the camera establishes empathy for the *e-motion* and lived body of the subject to the extent that *I* becomes Rhoda in both a spatial and temporal sense. While this may not be exactly how Deleuze defines blocs of sensation it is how I believe we can define blocs of sensation in Woolf's writing. The textual affect is that bodily sensations and feelings, as a bloc of sensation, are neither verbal nor visual (except in the preliminary stage of camera shots) but rather the visual leads to the body via the mind. I want to argue that, by extension, the dominant sense can now be regarded as *e-motion* in that it synthesises all other senses so that this bodily *e-motion* is in the very language of the text. The body *is* (in) the writing. It is *e-motion* that is the bloc of sensation.

Now I spread my body on this frail mattress and hang suspended. I am above the earth now. I am no longer upright, to be knocked against and damaged. All is soft, and bending... Out of me now my mind can pour... Oh, but I sink, I fall! ... I sink down on the black plumes of sleep; its thick wings are pressed to my eyes. Travelling through darkness I see the stretched flower-beds... Let me pull myself out of these waters. But they heap themselves on me; they sweep me between their great shoulders; I am turned; I am tumbled; I am stretched, among these long lights, these long waves.³⁸

While this example from *The Waves* will also become appropriate to the third layer 'point of view' due to the emphasis and repetition of the first person subject: 'I sink', 'I fall' and so on, it is in the first instance a 'bloc of sensation'. We need to observe how the fluidity of the camera merges with the subject. The repetition of the deictic 'now' in the first three lines operates rather like stage directions for the camera to merge in a manner of empathy with the subject as opposed to the camera following the image. The subject with the agency of the camera directs the spatio-temporality of the shots and shifting angle: 'I... hang suspended' – 'no longer upright' – 'out of me my mind can pour' – 'I sink, I fall' – 'I sink down' – 'travelling through darkness' – 'pull myself out of these waters' – 'they sweep me' – 'I am turned' – 'I am tumbled' – 'I am stretched'. The camera's perception of Rhoda's movement, mobile mind and body, facilitates the affect of vertigo and the believability of a subject. However, what Deleuze omits from his second level of sensation is the accrued excess of intersemiosis that has a further affect of producing the body. For instance, there is the tactile sense perceived by the implied 'feel' of the 'frail mattress' and 'thick wings pressed to my eyes'. The proximal sense of hanging suspended: "I am no longer upright..." which gives the affect of vertigo. Now, considering that the third layer 'point of view' is very much about how sensation is caused by percept and affect, it is a perspective that deserves closer scrutiny.

Point of View

The third layer, 'point of view' is related to the concept of *sensation* due to the fact that the point of view is a subject with an involvement in the text. However, I shall not theorize the subject per se until the fourth section for reasons of theoretical progression. It is not merely a matter of technology now, the camera, but a sentient being who is a subject who sees, feels, within the text

in relation to textual matter and events. In *The Fold*, Deleuze, with reference to Leibniz, explores point of view in relation to movement. He observes movement as that which occurs with the subject's impression of what he calls an "exquisitely sensuous view of the world" as contemplative territories;³⁹ a *becoming* within the text. It is also a performance and performance increases the believability of the subject in creating a body.

Deleuze's example in *The Fold* is that of the Baroque and I shall use this example to explore a little more deeply the aspect of movement in writing. He speaks of the Baroque in terms of pleats and folds as opposed to having decisive points. This is also a trait of certain forms of modern art whereby the canvas is covered in overlapping folds (or merging colours) such as in Post-Impressionist painting or as in dance. Deleuze understands the foldings of the Baroque to be an operative function that endlessly produces more folds. This endless production is an infinity of movement rather like the cinema. The reason that The Baroque is useful here is that it has two infinities, or to be more precise, there are two interconnected levels of foldings that are infinite, a lower level and a higher level. On neither of these levels does the enfolding involve definable points (even the smallest unit will be a fold) because of the curvature of lines in this form of art. This perpetual folding (and unfolding, there is no difference) is the anticipation and movement of further folds within folds; a cave within a cave, an infinite becoming. If we refer back to the example of the waves as cloth there is to be observed a Baroque effect of endless (en)foldings that deny any actuality of defining points even though we have made an artificial construction of the first layer. It is the movement *towards* that is now paramount.

The lower level consists of pleats of matter, while the upper level consists of folds in the soul which now provides us with a means of understanding the metaphysical aspect of the camera. The first level is an enveloping of an object or event but because the enveloping does not delineate a point but a fold within the fluid curvature of lines there is a continuation. Leibniz observed that in the Baroque there is a horizontal widening of the lower level. For instance,

the rounding of angles and avoidance of perpendiculars; the circular acanthus replacing the jagged acanthus, use of limestone to produce spongy, cavernous shapes, or to constitute a vortical form always put in motion by renewed turbulence, which ends only in the manner of a horse's mane the foam of a wave; matter tends to spill over in space to be reconciled with fluidity at the same time fluids themselves are divided into masses.⁴⁰

The second level contains the folds of the soul which are an enfolding progression of the first level, but this second level is metaphysical and is very much to do with the impact of *sensation*; it is pure *sensation*. Deleuze describes these levels in metaphoric terms as the levels of a house; one above the other. He maintains that it is the perpetuation of the foldings of the first level that causes a second level to 'float' high on a metaphysical plane of spirituality as an "affair of the soul".⁴¹ This can be compared to the mobility of the camera that in a similar manner creates a metaphysical bloc of sensation. There is an anti-

Cartesian emphasis here that denies any distinction between body and soul in the way that the two levels of folding are interconnected. The first level is arguably more bodily (in the sense of materiality and the linguistic) in that it will envelope an event. But because this enveloping does not delineate a point but rather a fold and further foldings, its workings create an ethereal sense of matter rising upward to the second level. There is a certain interaction and transference between subject and matter. Deleuze posits:

Life is not only everywhere, but souls are everywhere in matter. Thus, when an organism is called to unfold its own parts, its animal or sensitive soul is opened onto an entire theater in which it perceives or feels according to its unity, independently of its organism, yet inseparable from it.⁴²

Everything is thus connected. Everything is (in) fluid connections; the subject(s) become connected to matter; matter is connected to spirit. It is not a simple relatedness or dialogue for matter does not speak (enter into dialogue) but an *e-motion(al)* believability created by the compositional viewpoint that is (in) matter. It is a rhizomatic⁴³ fluidity that “connects any point to any other point”⁴⁴ so that any real definable points are denied. Instead, there is an evolving again and again of multiplicities from the centre, that is, the centre of the compositional viewpoint as well as all aspects of text and events. There is a ‘deterritorialization’ of the subject that enables it to discover, via lines of flight, “a vertiginous animality... that allows it to rise up, and that will make it ascend over all other folds”.⁴⁵ The Virtual is now valorised over the mundane so that there is understood a pure Event which is “Virtual ideality par excellence”; an event awaiting to become an event as it moves through virtual transformations from fold to fold; a spirit with a turbulence. There are no definable contours here but turbulence that “ends only in watery froth or in a flowing mane” of incessant fluctuation.⁴⁶ This is the transference, or transportation, into a type of virtual reality. As a result the body *is* the text. The body is (in) the writing.

The subject as point of view is mobility itself. In this next section from *The Waves* the subject as point of view, as mobility, as harmony, connects all surroundings in ‘blocs of sensation’. We shall see how the various senses accumulate out of, as well as becoming, *e-motion*.

‘Now the wind lifts the blind,’ said Susan, ‘Jars, bowls, matting and the shabby arm-chair with the hole in it are now become distinct. The usual faded ribbons sprinkle the wall-paper. The bird chorus is over, only one bird now sings close to the bedroom window. I will pull on my stockings and go quietly past the bedroom doors, and down through the kitchen, out through the garden past the greenhouse into the field. It is still early morning. The mist is on the marshes. The day is stark and stiff as a linen shroud. But it will soften; it will warm. At this hour, this still early hour, I think I am the field, I am the barn, I am the trees; mine are the flock of birds, and this young hare who leaps, at the last moment when I step almost on him. Mine is the heron that stretches its vast wings lazily; and the cow that creaks as it pushes one foot before another munching; and the wild, swooping swallow; and the faint red in the sky, and the green when

the red fades; the silence and the bell; the call of the man fetching
carhorses from the fields – all are mine.⁴⁷

The blind lifts like the curtain being raised on a stage while the subject's point of view like a camera brings the scene slowly into focus as if waking from sleep: 'Jars, bowls, matting and the shabby arm-chair with the hole in it are now becoming distinct'. The point of view is the agency of the subject as she controls, like the camera, what is to be seen, think and feel as opposed to being gazed upon by a camera. The subject as point of view traverses laconically 'quietly past the bedroom doors, and down through the kitchen, out through the garden past the greenhouse into the field' connecting, mobilizing, all discernible objects: 'Jars, bowls, matting and the shabby arm-chair...'; the wall-paper, the bedroom window and so on. The subject causing movement is movement. It is because her point of view is mobile that she is mobile. While this mobility enables subjectivity there is something more which facilitates the actuality of a body. This is the accumulation of sensation with point of view that now enables *e-motion*. It is sensation added to the mobility of the point of view that lets the subject luxuriate as well as demonstrate (perform) the *e-motion* as a body. It is the body as subject that in effect spills over into the matter, the life world, the images of the text so that the body is the text, it is the writing. The production of the subject as body will now be discussed as the fourth layer.

Production of the Subject

The production of the subject as opposed to camera position or point of view is what Deleuze describes as the metaphysical transference of the subject into matter in relation to sensation. At first, this seems like a curious statement when arguing for the perception of the body but it will enable us to understand the sensation of the body via the socio-cultural as well as through its psychoanalytic connection with surroundings. It will allow for movement to be *felt* from the point of the view of the subject who is now in(volved) (in) matter and event because movement occurs via being for the world as an ethico-aesthetic transference rather like an experience of virtual reality. In *Chaosmosis*, Guattari advocates the plurality and polyvocality of the subject, or what he prefers to define as subjectivity from the point of view of its production. He deconstructs the binary between the individual and society and understands a

transversalist conception of subjectivity, one which would permit us to understand both its idiosyncratic territorialised couplings (Existential Territories) and its opening onto value systems (Incorporeal universes) with their social and cultural implications.⁴⁸

The subject here is heterogeneous to the extent that s/he is produced by all aspects of society to include what he describes as social machines, such as technological machines of information.

[These] operate at the heart of human subjectivity, not only within its memory and intelligence, but within its sensibility, affects and unconscious fantasms.⁴⁹

The machinic device of the production of subjectivity is not necessarily technological but encompasses all aspects of the social or “collective assemblages of enunciation”.⁵⁰ Guattari makes reference to aspects of research in contemporary ethology and ecology such as Daniel Stern’s work *The Interpersonal World of the Infant* that explores the pre-verbal subjective formation of infants. As opposed to Freudian ‘stages’ he explores, here, levels of subjectivation which maintain themselves in parallel throughout life with an emphasis upon:

the inherently trans-subjectivity character of an infant’s early experiences, which do not dissociate the feeling of self from the feeling of the other. A dialectic between “sharable affects: and “non-sharable affects” thus structures the emergent phases of subjectivity. A nascent subjectivity, which we will continually find in dreams, *delire*, creative exaltation, or the feeling of love.⁵¹

It is what the subject comes into contact with that develops her/his subjectivity. Sterne speaks of his work with psychotic patients where there is an aim of assuming “responsibility”, of developing an “ambience of communication” and creating centres for “collective subjectivation”. It is not a case of “remodelling a patient’s subjectivity” but of a “production of *sui generis*”.⁵² For instance, psychotic patients that come from a poor agricultural background would be introduced to such tasks as art or music whereas intellectuals might be invited to do gardening or work in the kitchen.

The important thing here is not only the confrontation with a new material of expression, but the constitution of complexes of subjectivation: multiple exchanges between individual-group-machine.⁵³

Guattari argues that diversions lead people to “recompose their existential corporeality” by getting out of “repetitive impasses” and enabling the possibility of “resingularising themselves”⁵⁴. There is a certain dispersion of subjectivity, he suggests, in order to reform it as less anxious or univocal. It creates a new modality of subjectivity in that the most heterogeneous aspects become the most positive. Instead of a given subjectivity there is a sense of a “process of the realisation of autonomy”.⁵⁵ Following this train of thought it becomes possible to understand the production of subjectivity from a new angle. The production of the subject is developed out of textual performative traversal, that is, movement in virtual space whereas the *sensation* of vertigo is accrued out of these multiple locations or what Deleuze calls *deterritorializations via lines of flight* as a geography of hypothetical experience. This is an affect that is the becoming of the subject. It is in these multiplicities, these multiple locations that the subject does not become literally chaotic in a negative way but positively so in the sense of multiplicity. There is a contagion whereby the subject enters into certain *assemblages* which enables the additional meaning of e-motion to come into play: as a chaotic disturbance of the subject into multiple realms of ‘deterritorialization’. These ‘intensities’, as Deleuze calls them, are the ethico-aesthetic transference that are the enablement of becoming a subject, a subjectivity, who is a heterogeneous subject as all accrument of connections

and traversal with(in) multiple *deterritorializations*. Guattari's perspective on subjectivity,

involves shifting the human and social sciences from scientific paradigms towards ethico-aesthetic paradigms, the production of subjectivity which is inseparable from "the technical and institutional apparatuses."⁵⁶

Every individual or social group has its own means of modeling subjectivity: "a certain cartography – composed of cognitive references as well as mythical, ritual and symptomatological references".⁵⁷ With reference to his concept of schizoanalytic cartographies he emphasises that the concept needs to be accepted or rejected freely in order to re-inforce the multicomponential cartographic method of the process and production of subjectivity. Multiple partial subjectivation is not problematic if thought of in terms of polyphony and music, existential refrains. These modes of subjectivation can be regarded as "keeping time" or as a rhythm of the subject: a collectivity or harmony of territories. When Woolf writes of events such as the sea, the waves, fluid connections and so on they create matter for the subject to be involved in, that is to merge as the sensation of movement, so that the subject becomes movement, *is* movement as harmony.

To explain further, as a psychoanalyst Guattari theorises these harmonies by an extension/conversion of Lacan's object in that the 'other' (object) becomes/is an aspect of the self, an alterity. For Guattari there is a type of connection between the subject and a constellation of Universes.

Here is the real paradox of these Universes: they are given in the creative moment, like a hecceity freed from discursive time -nuclei of eternity lodged between instants.⁵⁸

There is a virtuality opening up here. Each new venture of the subject opens up further (extensions of) virtualities and what is important to understand is that time is not to be merely endured but is "activated, orientated, the object of qualitative change".⁵⁹ This leads to rich complex subjectivities that are reconciled in the harmonious polyphony of rhythm and existential orchestrations. There is as much a decentring of the subject towards subjectivity as opposed to the traditional view of the subject whereby there is to be understood an "ultimate essence of individuation, as a pure, empty, prereflexive apprehension of the world".⁶⁰ The interest of subjectivity is in the "zone of intersection that subject and object fuse and establish their foundations".⁶¹ It is an enveloping, as infinite movement via the rhizomatic insistence of intensities of lines of flight. This is the movement of the text, the *e-motion*(al) involvement as being for the text. Note how in the following example from *The Waves* the subject almost becomes the text as a bloc of sensation but is never immobilized in/as one space. She does not seek or identify with space but as movement and a perpetual *becoming* of the field, the barn, the tree and so on. It is not so much that she *is* the barn or field but more the fluidity of the connections and the deterritorializations.

I will pull on my stockings and go quietly past the bedroom doors
and down through the kitchen, out through the garden past the

greenhouse into the field. It is still early morning... I think I am the field, I am the barn, I am the tree.⁶²

Mobility here, for Woolf in *The Waves*, is about change and transformation. In film, Deleuze argues that sets are never absolutely closed but always attached to the open even if only by the “finest thread”.⁶³

In the next example from *The Waves* see how the subject, Jinny, perceives progression and transformation as her very being. The affect is the ‘bloc of sensation’ in that she is a sentient being with a consciousness of life. She recalls a past that is of other lives with whom she has been connected and to the future that she will live. However, she is in the ‘heart of life’ as if it is the spring from which she will become all multiplicities (millions) who descend the stairs.

I stand for a moment under the pavement in the heart of London.
Innumerable wheels rush and feet press just over my head. The great
avenues of civilisation meet here... I am in the heart of life... Millions
descend those stairs... Millions have died. Percival died. I still move.
I still live.⁶⁴

Life and body are here the *e-motion*: a bloc of sensation from where subjectivities evolve. It is a constant becoming as a vertiginous being as opposed to having become immobilized in a photograph of life.

I move, I dance; I never cease to move and to dance. I move like the
leaf... I dance over those streaked,... distempered walls... as firelight
dances over teapots.⁶⁵

In conclusion, I have discussed how Virginia Woolf advanced her ‘theory’ of writing and the subject by utilizing the traits of cinema, in particular its mobility. While this theory was not fully developed in her essay “The Cinema” we can now understand how she applied this very basic trait of movement to her politico-creative art. Although this has been in many ways little more than a structural analysis of Woolf’s work, via four layers, that of camera positions, sensation, point of view, and the production of the subject, it has enabled us to understand how she managed to incorporate the body. It has helped us to recognize how the body is understood as being in the writing via the dominant sense of what I have described as *e-motion*, which produces a mobile and multiple subjectivity: the body as movement. It can be seen that film does indeed have the potential to create mobile subjects, that is, beyond the visual out of the very understanding of *e-motion* discussed here. Yet what is more striking perhaps is that by reading Woolf via Deleuze there is to be noted a remarkable connectedness, if not similarity, in their work. My point is that by reading Woolf as a theorist of the subject within her politico-creative writing practice, in conjunction with a Deleuzian philosophy of film, there seems to be the potential for a further understanding of the subject in feminist film theory.

Notes

- ¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement Image* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).
- ² It was Edmund Husserl in *The Phenomenology in Internal Time Consciousness* (Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, 1966) who argued that, in consciousness, the present could only ever be idealized because the 'now' is in the constant state of flux connected with past and future.
- ³ Silent cinema had of course an aesthetic for both colour as well as sound.
- ⁴ Cherchi Usai Paola, *Burning Passions: An Introduction to the Study of Silent Cinema* (London: BFI Publishing, 1994), 12-16.
- ⁵ Horst Ruthrof, *The Body in Language* (London & New York: Cassell, 2000), 46.
- ⁶ Virginia Woolf, "The Cinema", in *The Crowded Dance of Modern Day Life* (London: Penguin, 1993), 55.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, 54
- ⁸ For more information on the *semiotic* and *genotext*, as defined by Kristeva, see *Revolution in Poetic Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).
- ⁹ See the quotation at the opening of this paper where Woolf refers to 'visual emotion' which is not merely about the visual but something more.
- ¹⁰ There have been a number of adaptations of Tolstoy's novel *Anna Karenina* but Woolf does not state which one she is referring to here.
- ¹¹ Woolf, "The Cinema", 56.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 55.
- ¹³ This is similar to what Martin Heidegger called the 'clearing' of the art work. See *Poetry, Language, Thought*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 39.
- ¹⁴ Woolf, "The Cinema", 56.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 54.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 56.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 56.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 57.
- ¹⁹ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 1.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.
- ²¹ It needs to be taken into account that the separation of layers is an 'artificial' separation but necessary in order to conduct the analysis.
- ²² Virginia Woolf, *A Change of Perspective: The Letters of Virginia Woolf 1923-1928*, ed. N. Nicolson, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1977), 418.
- ²³ Virginia Woolf, *The Waves* (London, Penguin Books, 1992), 46.
- ²⁴ Kristeva mentions/repeats the word 'trace' twice in her definition of the *semiotic*. See *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 25.

-
- ²⁵ Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*, 2.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.
- ²⁷ Victor Shlovsky, "Art as Technique" in *Modern Criticism & Theory: A Reader*, (London & New York, Longman, 1989), 21.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.
- ²⁹ Virginia Woolf, "Solid Objects" in *The Complete Shorter Fiction of Virginia Woolf*, (San Diego, New York, London, Harcourt Brace & Co., 1989), 102.
- ³⁰ Woolf, *The Waves*, 3.
- ³¹ Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*, 7.
- ³² *Ibid.*, 7.
- ³³ Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy* (London & New York: Verso, 1994), 164.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 164.
- ³⁵ Deleuze, *What is Philosophy*, 166.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 167.
- ³⁷ Husserl, *The Phenomenology in Internal Time Consciousness*, 140.
- ³⁸ Woolf, *The Waves*, 19.
- ³⁹ Tom Conley, "Translator's Foreword", Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), xiii.
- ⁴⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 4.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 12.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, 11).
- ⁴³ For more information on the *rhizome* see Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis & London: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1994).
- ⁴⁴ Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, "Percept, Affect, and Concept" in *What is Philosophy?* (London & New York, Verso, 1994), 21.
- ⁴⁵ Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, 11.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.
- ⁴⁷ Woolf, *The Waves*, 72.
- ⁴⁸ Felix Guattari, "On the Production of Subjectivity" in *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, (Sydney: Power Publications, 1995), 4).
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 6.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, 6.

⁵³ Ibid., 7.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 7.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 7.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 11.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 11.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 17.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 18.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 22.

⁶¹ Ibid., 25.

⁶² Woolf, *The Waves*, 72.

⁶³ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 10.

⁶⁴ Woolf, *The Waves*, 148.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 30.