

fundamentally to the child's anal-digital preoccupations. It is a bisexualized symbol of fertility that arises as a hypertrophy or overstatement of the life instinct in opposition to the death instinct." When the hurricane and its whirlwind and destruction sweep over man-made structures in a fury of water and mud and rain, what remains takes on an aspect of waste or residue or excrement: trees torn out by their roots, trails of vegetables, cadavers, utensils, broken pottery, driftwood, rubbish and broken exteriors. It is not unlike when the maternal contractions and the breaking of the water (we are born *inter faeces*) expel the life of one individual after another. Thus from these spiral fugues of water, from these astral whirlwinds, from these spinning galaxies, one must look for the greatest of things after the catastrophes of their agitations and discharges.

In the equilibrium of its line, the circle defines and encompasses the divine; but the spiral, which is an open or broken circle, is the indefiniteness of the human, the sign of its continuing and never-ending future. Most dances mix the two, the circle and the spiral, but only one dance has taken it to perfection: the *sema* or reunion of whirling dervishes and sufis, which is thought to be a reflection of the Pythagoric conception of the rotating music of the spheres and their mother-plasmas, the galaxies. The dancing order was founded in the 13th century by Mevlana Jalalu'ddin, a poet and mystic, who emphasized the movement of the subject and the music over written or spoken language. One can still witness the measured, careful steps of the dancers, with one hand toward the sky and the other toward the earth (like Buddha after his enlightenment!), surrendering to the intoxication of the music played on a reed flute and a small drum. The enthusiastic participants of the *sema* come from various villages in Asia Minor, where the tradition of dervishes seems to be rooted. They are approached with a peculiar anxiety, known for centuries:

*When you are everywhere, you are nowhere*

*When you are somewhere, you are everywhere*

The cryptic syllables of these lines (which are attributed to the sheik Necmeddin [10]) reflect the essence of the Sufi creed with respect to divine omniscience. The coherence of wonders, the certainty that what has no end has no beginning, are already present here, subtle within the implicit order. It is we who must "screw ourselves" (as the dance encourages) into the Unique, the Sun of Suns. Memory, the *zakhir*, is agitated by repeating His Name, releasing the serpentine secrets: it is untied in a sequence that goes from molecules to atoms, from atoms to elemental particles. An agitated whirlpool saves us from the abyss of forgetting. Thus the cosmic genealogy opens like a Nautilus snail between the veils of the heart. In the eye of the dance's geometric hurricane, in its hollow axis, the *fana'* or annihilation of the ego is complete. The whole universe, which was lying hidden beneath the drowsy folds of our eyelids, now awakes in the corkscrew of itself. The flute ceases, the drum falls silent. A galaxy is being born. Understanding has arrived, silent and unequivocal.

NOTES

- [1] Thompson, D'Arcy: *Sobre el crecimiento y la forma*. Blume, Barcelona, 1930.  
 [2] Cook, T. A.: *Spirals in Nature and Art*. London, 1903.  
 [3] Brandt, John and Maran, Stephan: *Lo nuevo en astronomía*. C.G.E., Mexico, 1977.

- [4] Ortíz, Fernando: *El huracán*. Fondo de Cultura, Mexico, 1984.  
 [5] Yólotl G. Torres: *El culto a los astros entre los mexicas*. Diana, Mexico, 1979.  
 [6] Tannerhill, Ivan T.: *Hurricanes, their Nature and History*. Princeton, 1944.  
 [7] *El Huracán*, op. cit.  
 [8] Soustelle, Jacques: *La vida cotidiana de los aztecas*. Fondo de Cultura, Mexico, 1984.  
 [9] Cárcamo, Ernesto: *La serpiente emplumada*. Revista de Psicoanálisis, No. 1, Buenos Aires, 1943.  
 [10] Friedlander, Ira: *The Whirling Dervishes*. Wildwood House, London, 1975.



VIRGINIA WOOLF,  
TIDES OF FADING IDENTITIES

JUANI GUERRA

She stood there watching the clouds floating by and the leaves trembling; in the midst of chaos, things were taking shape; sometimes its unceasing coming and going and waves flow into stability.

(V. Woolf. *To the Lighthouse*)

Delving into the plastic dynamics of *Jacob's Room* and then moving on *To The Lighthouse* is opening up ones insight to the human transformation encompassed within the erratic movement of *The Waves*. And it's that Virginia Woolf's literature, her poetic narrative, progresses from the scattering or fading of human feelings among the crashing of the waves, among the surprising rhythms of the foam: The sea is the conscience at all its levels — logical, illogical, topological, its outgoing tides but also its incoming tides, its overflowing, its lights and its shadows. The sea is the myriad impressions which inhabit our re-forming perception of reality by enchanting it. The sea is the local thought which wanders hither and yon through the nooks and crannies of uncertainty; Liquid folds now ever-changing among which the essential visions randomly come to fore. Virginia was captivated by the infinite possibilities of the sea as a literary metaphor or as an analogy of the infinite possibilities of life itself, the origin of the most profound of visions of human identity. It was in that great metaphor that Virginia's novel writing drifted in a sort of prodigious structuring from her first works such as *Night and Day* (1919) or *The Voyage Out* (1915) up to her crossing the threshold of purely vagabond abstraction in *The Waves* (1931). Paradoxically and in a final act of loyalty to her realm professional pursuit, Virginia, the author, experienced the final heartrending symbiosis of losing her own life at the water's hands. These are some of the creative forces of a text which toys with ambiguity by shouting out at the reader: "Nothing!".

I love swimming. And it almost always awakens my senses.

What is Raquel doing with her gaze fixed on the green depths of the sea? She's sensing, diving her freedom or her final trip "under the glassy, cool, translucent wave". I have opened and shut *The Voyage Out*. It's too cold right now, I'll come back some other day.

Depending upon the sea conditions, the writing conditions. Or vice versa. It is through this sandy page that one enters *Jacob's Room*: [1]

*["So of course," wrote Betty Flanders, pressing her heels rather deeper in the sand, "there was nothing for it but to leave,"*

*Slowly welling from the point of her gold nib, pale blue ink dissolved the full stop; for there her pen stuck; her eyes fixed, and tears slowly filled them. The entire bay quivered; the lighthouse wobbled; and she had that illusion that the mast of Mr. Connor's little yacht was bending like a wax candle in the sun. She winked quickly. Accidents were awful things. She winked again. The mast was straight; the waves were regular; the lighthouse was upright; but the blot had spread.*

*"...nothing for it but to leave," she read.]*

I continue swimming through these folds (im-plications) between memory and desire encompassed within the water dynamic that is *Jacob's Room*: the sea is becoming progressively more tactile. Or simply, it is highlighting its reality in reaction to the initial conditions of the water of which tears are made distorting the right of passage. May the current sweep me away.

Veering off suddenly toward the paraphrasing of Heraclitus by Michel Serres "we always swim in the same river yet we never sit on the same shore". I climb out on the other shore of *Jacob's Room* and sit a moment to view the seascape of his mind:

*[By six o'clock, a breeze blew in off an icefield; and by seven the water was more purple than blue; and by half-past seven there was a patch of rough gold-beater's skin round the Scilly Isles, and Durrant's face, as he sat steering, was of the colour of a red lacquer box polished for generations. By nine all the fire and confusion had gone out of the sky, leaving wedges of apple-green and plates of pale yellow; and by ten the lanterns on the boat were making twisted colours upon the waves, elongated or squat, as the waves stretched or humped themselves. The beam from the lighthouse strode rapidly across the water. Infinite millions of miles away powdered stars twinkled; but the waves slapped the boat, and crashed, with regular and appalling solemnity, against the rocks.] (42-43)*

Characters inebriated with the sea. All is flowing and dissolving. Nothing ceases. Impossible to say where one wave ends, where it breaks, where a sentence ends, where it breaks. The best thing is to allow oneself to soak up the syntactic rhythms.

Yes, let's go on *To the Lighthouse*: [2]

*[The house was left; the house was deserted. It was left like a shell on a sandhill to fill with dry salt grains...] (149) [For now had come that moment, that hesitation when dawn trembles and night pauses, when if a feather alight in the scale it will be weighed down.] (151) [Then indeed peace had come. Messages of peace breathed from the sea to the shore.] (154)*

Lily Briscoe is getting ready to paint.

*[... she took her hand and raised her brush. For a moment it stayed trembling in a painful but exciting ecstasy in the air. Where to begin? — that was the question; at what point to make the first mark? One line placed on the canvas committed her to innumerable risks, to frequent and irrevocable decisions. All this in idea seemed simple became in practice immediately complex; as the waves shape themselves symmetrically from the cliff top, but to the swimmer among them are divided by steep gulfs, and foaming crests. Still the risk must be run; the mark made.*

*With a curious physical sensation, as if she were urged forward and at the same time must hold herself back, she made her first quick decisive stroke. The brush descended. It flickered brown over the white canvas; it left a running mark. A second time she did it — a third time. And so pausing and so flickering, she attained a dancing rhythmical movement, as if the pauses were one part of the rhythm and the strokes another, an all were related; and so, lightly and swiftly pausing, striking, she scored her canvas with brown running nervous lines which had no sooner settled there than they enclosed (she felt it looming out at her) a space. Down in the hollow of one wave she saw the next wave towering higher and higher above her. For what could be more formidable than that space?] (172)*

Before, it was writing. This time it is the dynamic of the complexity of the waves which is encompassed within the dynamic of the complexity of the act of creating the painting on the part of the artist, *but both linked to one another and to the whole [and all were related]*. And to complete the triad, the dynamic of the complexity of the human mind which, like the sea or the artistic act, knows no other barrier than the fleeting glance:

*[Always (it was in her nature, or in her sex, she did not know which) before she exchanged the fluidity of life for the concentration of painting she had a few moments of nakedness when she seemed like an unborn soul, a soul reft of body, hesitating on some windy pinnacle and exposed without protection to all the blasts of doubts. Why then did she do it? She looked at the canvas, lightly scored with running lines. It would be hung in the servants' bedrooms. It would be rolled up and stuffed under a sofa. What was the good of doing it then, and she heard some voice saying she couldn't paint, saying she couldn't create, as if she were caught up in one of those habitual currents which after a certain time experience forms in the mind, so that one repeats words without being aware any longer who originally spoke them...] (173)*

The sea currents of the conscience engulf the refuse of morals: it is the vagabond creation:

*[Certainly she was losing consciousness of outer things. And as she lost consciousness of outer things, and her name and her personality and her appearance, and whether Mr. Carmichael was there or not, her mind kept throwing up from its depths, scenes, and names, and sayings, and memories and ideas, like a fountain spurting over that flaring, hideously difficult white space, while she modelled it with greens and blues.] (174)*

The sea is an internal reality :

*[The sea without a stain on it, thought Lily Briscoe, still standing and looking out over the bay. The sea is stretched like silk across the bay. Distance had an extraordinary power; they had been swallowed up in it, she felt, they were gone for ever, they had become part of the nature of things. It was so calm; it was so quiet. The steamer itself had vanished, but the great scroll of smoke still hung in the air and drooped like a flag mournfully in valediction] (204)*

I swim all the way up to the last paragraph of *To the Lighthouse*, a vision of a fleeting moment. Bergsonian in appearance, gives rise to a primitive colliding, or a major veering:

*[Quickly, as if she were recalled by something over there, she turned to her canvas. There it was — her picture. Yes, with*

all its greens and blues, its lines running up and across, its attempt at something. It would be hung in the attics, she thought; it would be destroyed. But what did that matter? She asked herself, taking up her brush again. She looked at the steps; they were empty; she looked at her canvas; it was blurred. With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a lie there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished. Yes, she thought, laying down her brush in extreme fatigue, I have had my vision.] (226)

I jump headlong into *The Waves*; the author had thought of titling it *The flight of the Moth*, the erratic flight of a little female bird [3]. The grandeur of the waves seems more well-suited to her new artistic purpose, that of configuring an open system of words which is similar to the natural forms which spring forth from her mind in the process of creation. On November 16, 1931, she wrote in her diary: [I think I am about to embody at last the exact shapes my brain holds. What a long toil to reach this beginning — if *The Waves* is my first work in my own style.]

She was no longer seeking supernatural revelation, a vision, the epiphany; now she was seeking the models, the disorderly design of the consciences, the forms of chaos: the order stemming from chaos. Of the six characters in *The Waves*, Bernard, the writer, is who most clearly confronts once and again the essence of the unpredictability of the creative act: [Words crowd and cluster and push forth one on top of another. It does not matter which. They jostle and mount on each other's shoulders. The single and the solitary mater, tumble and become many.] (77)

[To speak, ..., is to bring about an explosion. (...) The entirely unexpected nature of this explosion (...) There is no stability in this world. Who is to say what meaning there is in anything? Who is to foretell the flight of a word?"] (88)

[Then how lovely: the smoke of my phrase is, rising and falling, flaunting and falling, ...] (100)

I swim the last, final strokes before making my way out of *The Waves*. All of the voices refuse to tell stories; in their strange, captivating and unceasingly structuring of themselves, in their sea and in their sea movements, they suggest many unpredictable stories. Now having emerged from the sea or from the book, the fading identities of *The Waves* organize themselves at random into creative rhythms.

#### NOTES

- [1] V. Woolf, *El cuarto de Jacob*. Barcelona. De. Lumen, 1977, 1980. Trad. Andrés Bosch.
- [2] V. Woolf, *Al faro*. Madrid. De. Debate 1995. Trad. Carmen Martín Gaité.
- [3] See Juani Guerra, (1996) "Edward Lorenz's Butterflies and Virginia Woolf's Moths: Model as Metaphor and Metaphor as Model". in *Estudios de la mujer en el ámbito de los países de habla inglesa*. Vol. II. Universidad Complutense de Madrid.



## ALÉM DA ÁGUA A joint project between Alentejo (Portugal) and Extremadura (Spain)

MAR VILLAESPESA

I recently read an article in the newspaper about a fisherman who found no less than 21 messages-in-a-bottle on a beach in Cadiz. All the messages were written in a language that he could not decipher, yet which seemed somehow "familiar" to him. So he took them all to the nearest school for the teachers to translate; the mystery was soon solved, and there was no need to gather provisions and set off on some great adventure, nor keep a look-out for pirates, since the treasure had already been discovered: the very fact that the bottle had been found, and that the fisherman had taken it to the local school. These messages were not some shipwrecked sailor's cry for help, but the words of children from the International School at Vila Moura on the Algarve. They formed part of a project based on the theme of Lisbon's Expo '98: the oceans. From then on, like a modern-day fairy tale, the story unfolded on both sides of the South-Atlantic coast: the schools made contact the very same morning that the bottle was found. The children are now busy writing new messages and preparing to throw them into the sea, while the teachers grow increasingly concerned about throwing more and more 'rubbish' into the water. But as well as discussing these logistical aspects, the teachers have also designed a whole program of activities based on environmental education: from organizing a "children's lobby" to drawing up a list of "ten ways to protect the sea". And they are organizing a meeting for the Spanish and Portuguese schoolchildren. Suddenly, thanks to these messages-in-a-bottle, Portugal and the Algarve have ceased to be mere names on the map for the children of Cadiz: they have become a part of reality, and a whole new experience.

This true story, which remains unfinished as I write (the children are now getting ready to meet and exchange their cultural ideas April 3-4 in Vila Moura), inspires me to begin this article for *Atlantica* about Alem da Agua. This project, which came to an end in autumn 1996, was co-curated by myself and Jorge Castanho, and produced by Carta de Ajuste-BNV. It took place in various sites in the area of Alentejo and the river Guadiana; specifically, in one of the border regions between Alentejo in Portugal and Extremadura in Spain, where the river flows under the Ajuda Bridge. The reason for this was that, as well as being based on the theme of water (just as water brought together the children of Cadiz and the Algarve), Alem da Agua also aimed to encourage a sharing of experiences, and to highlight the lack of awareness and links between these two neighboring areas, from both a historical and a cultural point of view. The project also involved a spirit of adventure, and aimed to recover "stories" such as Treasure Island (and other similar tales), in an attempt to overthrow conventional, static reality and transform the very concept of creation.