

FOUCAULDIAN CONCEPT OF “DEATH OF MAN” IN *THE WAVES*

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Abstract: Virginia Woolf significantly impacted modernism as an experimental writer and challenged the conventional principles regarding realism. In this paper, Foucault's views on bio-power and the death of Man are used to analyze the main female characters in the novel *The Waves*, in order to see how their identities are shaped in a patriarchal society. It is argued that the stereotypes of femininity are internalized within the individuals by the normalizing power, and every particular anomaly is excluded. Thus, women might have predetermined fates. Sexuality as a social construct is an anchor for shaping women's identities and destinies. Bio-power, which is a socio-political kind of power in the modern world, deploys sexuality in four great different strategic unities, namely, a hysterization of women's bodies, a pedagogization of children's sex, a socialization of procreative behavior, and a psychiatrization of perverse pleasure, to manage and control individual's life and population. Due to the role of bio-power and its deployment of sexuality, the repressive hypothesis regarding sexuality is rejected. Thus, we turn into docile bodies, whereby the individual's agency is effaced, and ultimately the death of Man occurs. The death of Man indicates that we are on the brink of a new episteme, which may bring about new possibilities only if we reconsider the way we see Man in the universe.

Keywords: Bio-power, Deployment of Sexuality, Death of Man, Episteme, Michel Foucault, *The Waves*.

Introduction

Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) established her name as one of the most significant writers of the twentieth century. Not only was she an innovative writer, but also an essayist, a reviewer, and a critic. She is recognized as a theorist of modernism and feminism, apart from the fact that she stands alongside other great canonical modernist writers such as T. S. Eliot and James Joyce. “Her criticism has shaped many of the

fundamental ideas and debates of literary criticism and theory concerned with modernism, feminism, and even postmodernism” (Goldman 308).

Woolf challenged the inherited tradition in literature, attempting to experiment with new techniques to abandon previous clichés and searching for a more profound sense of realism than those already laid inside the mind of people. Archer compares Woolf to modern painters and musicians and concludes, “she sought new ways to render the realities of thought and feeling in her novels. By holding up her mirror of fiction at a different angle, she attempted to help readers see themselves in a more revealing light” (2803).

Woolf attacked the writers who did not consider the inner life of characters, calling them materialist writers who only paid attention to “external details” of life. She was an innovative writer. As a modernist novelist, Woolf challenged conventional beliefs about the plot and character to achieve an authentic inner life. Thus, she rejected the “tyranny plot” along with “James Joyce” and “Frenchman Marcel Proust.” She developed the modernist technique of “stream of consciousness and internal monologue ... [with a] greater emphasis on ... ‘moments’-- that is, points in time when reality seems to stand revealed and to speak itself” (Hawthorn 79-82). It is true that the stream of consciousness originally belonged to France; however, the two English novelists, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf, “developed it to a very high level of artistic perfection” by “their unique writing style(s)” (Jin 115).

Woolf’s novel, *The Waves*, is usually considered experimental. Apart from the structure and the form of this novel, we can analyze it from a philosophical or a historical point of view to call it an early postmodern novel. We can claim it is a postmodern novel by applying the Foucauldian approach. However, what we mean by postmodern is related to the death of Man and the fact that we are already on the brink of a new episteme. After two earlier discontinuities in history, one with the beginning of the Renaissance episteme, and the other with the advent of the modern episteme, we are now starting to live in a new kind of episteme that we may call postmodern. However, Foucault did not precisely name that epoch.

Woolf tried to write *The Waves* as an autobiographical novel. Apart from that, she tried to write realist novels in modern ways, which means she tried to approach real life. In her essay, “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown,” published in 1924, Woolf discusses modernity noticing a significant shift in human nature and human relations. She claims,

in or about December, 1910, human character changed ... 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 (4-5).

Accordingly, along with the change in human nature, a change in human interactions and power relations seems to be inevitable. In this respect, we can claim that in her novels we can survey real power relations, in a more modern world, because these power relations form day-to-day interactions in a real life.

Woolf is usually considered a feminist writer, and her works inspired feminism in general. In this paper, Foucauldian power relations in *The Waves* are analyzed in three female characters, namely Susan, Jinny, and Rhoda. Subsequently, a transition from sovereign power to disciplinary power and later bio-power is shown. Then the role of bio-power in the deployment of sexuality in a patriarchal society is elaborated, and finally, the death of Man in a postmodern world is discussed.

Bio-power & Deployment of Sexuality

Michel Foucault as an anti-humanist philosopher anticipated the death of Man although he believed that Man is a recent invention. Sara Mills defines the word “episteme” as “the body of knowledge and ways of knowing which are in circulation at a particular moment” (28). Foucault distinguishes at least three different underlying epistemes in Western philosophy, namely the epistemes of Renaissance, Classical, and Modern; he argues that we are on the brink of a new episteme.

In *The Order of Things* (1966), Foucault criticizes the philosophies related to the subject stating that, “we are trapped” in the episteme of the modern age, and that the death of Man has heralded a new era that can help us evade the dead end and seek for a new episteme. Foucault “diagnoses man as the problem of modern episteme” (Oksala 32).

He no longer believes in the individual self as the ultimate source of meaning. Instead, he favors a linguistic turn in philosophy, emphasizing that language has a constitutive role in shaping and understanding our experiences. He must have been more interested in impersonal structures that shape human beings than the knowing Man as the articulator of these impersonal structures of thought. In one of his interviews, Foucault concludes, “paradoxically, the development of the human sciences is now leading to a disappearance of Man rather

than an apotheosis of Man" ("The Disappearance of Man"). Therefore, we have to reconsider the way we see Man in the universe.

The human experience is basically formed by language, and sometimes power circulates through the exchange of ideas. In this respect, the role of discourse as a social language is indispensable. These discourses are formed by culture, and they provide a vista through which our experiences are understood. In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault notices the complex and reciprocal relationship of power and discourse, and mentions, "discourse can be both an instrument and effect of power." He argues that discourse may provide an "opposing strategy" against the power and offer "a point of resistance." It "reinforces [power], but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it." He continues to develop his idea into a well-known line, "where there is power, there is resistance." He believes that in every part of the power network, there is a possibility for resistance (95-102).

In *Discipline and Punish* (1975), Foucault elaborates on how power underwent a huge transformation by a shift from a sovereign power to a disciplinary power. The older sense of sovereign power was no longer applicable and it was replaced by disciplinary power relations. These changes occurred to create a network of exact surveillance and to subjugate people living in a society. Accordingly, our once condemned bodies at the hands of the sovereign power gradually became "docile bodies" trained and disciplined in disciplinary institutions. "Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies" (138). In this process, according to Diana Taylor, the techniques of normalization gains great value. Some particular social norms become "uncritically accepted" by the people or society in general, to the point that they start to believe these social norms are "natural and necessary." In other words, they can be described as "normalizing" (4).

Sexuality is a basis for forming our identity in the modern world. Consequently, sexual conduct is affected by normalizing power. Body and sexuality became places for exerting power, and they became pivotal aspects of what Foucault calls the "bio-power". In his analysis of the modern form of power, Foucault mentions that sexuality is a social construct, and along with the body, they have the capacity to be a basis for exerting bio-power over individual life and population. Thus, scientific studies around the whole idea of "sex" became widespread, and they produced the necessary knowledge that it "supports the socio-political control of people in modern society" (Oksala 71). Accordingly, sexual identity was formed around the knowledge about sex that normalized certain sexual behaviors and entitled others as abnormal.

In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault declares that in the eighteenth century, “specific mechanisms of knowledge and power centering on sex” formed by “four great strategic unities”, namely, a hystering of women’s bodies, a pedagogization of children’s sex, a socialization of procreative behavior, and a psychiatrization of perverse pleasure (103-105). It is through the hystering of women’s bodies that bio-power targets women’s bodies because it is where reproduction takes place. Bio-power tries to control this domain to manage the population for the benefit of society. Thus, “woman’s reproductive role has been equated with her sexuality” (Chloë Taylor, 89). In this process, according to Foucault, women’s bodies became saturated with sexuality. Women may respond to this medicalization of their bodies in different ways to resist the mechanisms of power, hysteria being one of them.

In the second strategy, bio-power targets the children leading to the sexualization of children and the family. The children were seen “as ‘preliminary’ sexual beings,” and they should be protected from “the dangerous ... sexual potential.” Therefore, “parents, families, educators, doctors, and eventually psychologists” must take care of the situation regularly (*History of Sexuality* 104).

In the third strategy, bio-power targets married couples. These couples are responsible for serving the well-being of society. Those suitable couples were supposed not only to procreate but also to improve the next generation. Naturally, those who were not genetically fit were considered a threat to society and they were counted as irresponsible if they would procreate. Consequently, certain privileged members of society were encouraged to reproduce. Especially after the two World Wars, couples had the patriotic duty of procreating.

The last strategy for the deployment of sexuality is a “psychiatrization of perverse pleasure” which targets the so-called perverts. As Foucault noticed, all anomalies were studied in clinics, and then corrective practices were exerted (*History of Sexuality* 103). Then, these “abnormal” sexual behaviors were categorized pathologically. Therefore, “abnormal” acts were treated as illnesses to be cured and normalized under the supervision of medicine. Homosexuality, as one of the widespread manifestations of these abnormalities, was supposed to bring about the degeneration of humanity. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, eugenicists claimed that these “abnormal” acts might have had a destructive impact on the offspring.

Foucault rejects the repressive hypothesis concerning sexuality. In the repressive hypothesis, sex has been repressed and prohibited. However, as we noticed in bio-power, the whole issue is much more complex. The power might be productive rather than repressive

regarding sexuality; bio-power roughly has sexualized everyone. Sexuality is an important discourse that can shape an individual's identity. Moreover, sexuality helps power to manage, direct, and govern people's behavior.

Susan: A Stereotype of Traditional Woman

In the first chapters of this novel, when the girls are in the boarding school, Susan is depressed and homesick all the time. She is a country girl who misses nature and her father. From the beginning of the novel, we start to know her desires. She wants to leave the boarding school as soon as possible to get back to rural life. She wishes to get married, have children, and become just like her mother. In other words, she wants to become the angel of the house; a Victorian discourse that limited women to the household chores. Moreover, Susan says, "I shall be like my mother, silent in a blue apron, locking up the cupboards" (*The Waves* 57).

The reminiscing about her father in all speeches of Susan may suggest that she grew up in a patriarchal family or generally in a patriarchal society. Susan's father is symbolically a male figure in a patriarchal society that restricts women to household duties. Her character has been shaped by a discourse, and Susan aspires to become the angel of the house in a patriarchal society. She is known as a traditional woman in this society. Susan is closely modelled on a stereotype of femininity. That is the effect of normalizing power, which defines specific roles for women as norms, and stirs them to act in those predicted ways.

Susan is also associated with nature. She enjoys being in nature, and she is united with nature. However, it does not suggest a nostalgic view of feminism in which women were once free. Instead, it emphasizes Susan's nurturing character and her will to get married and to have children. This is the manifestation of what Foucault names as socialization of married couples.

One can see how sexuality is being deployed by bio-power. In this manner, married couples have the responsibility to procreate for the benefit of society. Since after the world wars, soldiers returned home, they needed their jobs. Consequently, women were to be sent back to their domestic territories to do household chores. Moreover, there was a need to increase the birth rate to create a workforce or a military force. Therefore, married couples had to procreate to save and improve the nation. It was a duty and no longer a preference for the individuals.

In *The Waves*, Susan is a character who wants to get married and to procreate. She is under the influence of bio-power. She supposes that

having a family must be her best achievement. On the other hand, we know that being an angel in the house is a discourse spread in a patriarchal society. Normalizing power makes women accept their traditional roles uncritically and internalize those norms as values. Therefore, their identities are shaped by such underlying structures, influenced by patriarchy and bio-power.

This is what we may refer to as the death of Man in a postmodern world. Susan imitates her mother, and her identity is based on the stereotypes of feminine models. Even if she chooses the life she wants, she is under the influence of power relations in the modern world. However, these structures are hidden, and we are unaware of their mechanisms. Thus, the individuals, and specially the women, are not seen as free agents anymore, because their identities are formed by predetermined structures. They are caught in a web, controlled, disciplined, and governed by it.

The role of bio-power in managing population and individual lives is more prominent considering the baby boomers after the two world wars. The birthrates "in England and Wales leapt by 45 percent between 1918 and 1920" (Bingham). This fact can clarify the role of bio-power in managing the population, because it can systematically influence the birthrates and normalize its values in society. In this way, Susan or her identity is reduced to a womb. She is evaluated by her ability to procreate or to satisfy a man, and in favor of a patriarchal society. In this process, the body has been turned into a place for exerting power. Foucault identifies it as the sexualization of women in his analyzing the bio-power under the concept of hysterization of women's bodies. Susan's identity is equal to her sex, to be a woman, and her identity is reduced to her reproductive role. Hence, a heterosexual relationship must be her predetermined fate so that she can accomplish her role in society. She has internalized the heterosexuality norms, and now she tries to fulfill her duty in this society with respect to the sexual norms. This is what we mean by the death of Man in a modern society, where the individual's agency has been effaced.

This pessimistic reading of *The Waves* is reinforced throughout the novel. Gradually we understand that Susan is not quite contented with her household duties after giving birth to her children and establishing her identity as a grown-up woman. Susan once enjoyed living in harmony with nature. She gradually discovers that her life is limited to household chores and taking care of her children. She starts to recognize that she is too exhausted with her responsibilities inside the house.

Now that she claims she has reached the summit of her desires, Susan has an epiphany that she finds out she has missed some opportunities in her life. She admits that,

I am fenced in, planted here like one of my own trees ... Yet sometimes I am sick of natural happiness, and fruit growing and children ... I am sick of the body, I am sick of my own craft, industry and cunning, of the unscrupulous ways of the mother who protects, who collects under her jealous eyes at one long table her own children, always her own ... I think sometimes of Percival who loved me (*The Waves* 112 -114).

Susan feels that she is imprisoned in some way or another, and she is sick of all things she once enjoyed much. She feels the burden of being a traditional woman and being an angel in the house on her shoulders, and she regrets the lives she did not live elsewhere. She even detests her body which is a result of hysterization of women's bodies whether she is reduced to reproductive organs or she shows the symptoms of a hysteric woman. Lisa Marie Lucenti states that Susan's hatred of the "regulatory functions of patriarchal" systems is ironic, and she concludes, "that she comes to fund those same institutions through her reproduction of children for the State. She herself valorizes her position as a reproductive body which manufactures sons" (82). However, she has to continue because she has no other alternatives.

Apart from the philosophical death of Man that applies here to Susan, as a female character in this novel, she faces another kind of death, a literal death. Her life is like living in death. She experiences a gradual death imposed on her by bio-power, normalizing power, and a patriarchal society or culture.

Jinny: A Stereotype of Modern Woman

Jinny is the second role model for women and another stereotype of femininity in *The Waves*. While Susan represents a traditional woman in a patriarchal society, Jinny exemplifies another stereotype of women. She is the portrayal of an exploited woman since she depicts a modern woman in contemporary society. Her identity is shaped by a seemingly different discourse from that of Susan. However, Jinny is also influenced by power networks in a patriarchal society.

In the initial chapters of this novel, Jinny is portrayed as a beautiful young lady. She lives in her own body; thus, she is described as a sensual character. When Jinny matures, she becomes sexually attractive and dedicates herself to bodily pleasures. She is aware of her beauty and uses her body to attract men. In this way, Jinny notices her ability to

attract men and then values her body as a source of her power. She sees the power of her body and states, "I feel a thousand capacities spring up in me ... The body is stronger than I thought" (*The Waves* 59). Jinny appreciates this form of power when she is at the center of the male gaze. Jinny exposes her beauty to have a kind of superiority over men, to control them, and to make them hers, as she says, "I pass them, exposed to their gaze, as they are to mine" (58).

Jinny is absorbed in bodily pleasures and enjoys exerting her power over men to the extent that she becomes sexually promiscuous. She is the only character not associated with the theme of permanence in this novel. For instance, Jinny is not similar to Susan because Jinny does not seek a kind of permanence through procreation. She is not identical to male characters since she does not create any artwork in any form. Jinny's identity has been shaped by hedonistic ideas and discourses. She believes in what Horace called *carpe diem*. In contrast to other characters in this novel, Jinny pursues the body's sensation at the moment. She defines and hence reduces her identity to a body and nothing more.

In direct contrast to Susan, we can analyze Jinny's character as a modern woman. She follows bodily pleasures and becomes promiscuous in this process. On the one hand, she resists the traditional notion of women that requires them to stay at home and procreate. On the other hand, she is the character that raises our consciousness about the sexuality of women. Woolf as a feminist writer, tries to raise her audience's awareness about the pleasure of women. In other words, women, just like men, might be promiscuous. This is an attempt and a will to know about women's sexuality.

In this case, Jinny as a modern woman, tries to subvert the sexual normalization, which was prevalent in those days and the Victorian era. That may be considered a revolutionary act that resists notions that reduce women to reproductive acts maintaining that women's bodily pleasures are not inferior to that of men. It transforms the ignorance about the sexuality of women indeed. Chloe Taylor argues,

Susan represents the woman who fully identifies with the mother and rejects language, or the paternal, while Jinny represents the phallic woman who fully assimilates herself into the symbolic, rejecting the maternal and embracing the role defined for her within patriarchy ("Kristevan Themes" 61).

Of course, Jinny challenges the traditional institution of marriage; however, she is still under the influence of bio-power and patriarchal discourses. Foucault argues that bio-power targeted women's bodies in

new ways. Thus, sex is no longer repressed, and then bio-power saturated women's bodies with sexuality. Jinny is also saturated with sexuality. It is under the influence of bio-power that Jinny's identity is shaped.

Jinny's body has been highly sexualized and this is another aspect of the hysterization of women's bodies. Jinny's body is exploited by men differently from Susan's body. However, her fate has already been predetermined again because her future life is highly connected with her body, her sexuality, and the normalizing power. Even if she resists the traditional institution of marriage or pursues the pleasure of her body, she is ultimately an object of sexual pleasure for men in a patriarchal society.

In this society, and with normalization techniques, the idea is promulgated that women must be beautiful and young. This belief is internalized, and then accepted uncritically to the point that it turns into the norm. The existence of women and their identities are evaluated by their beauty, which is directly related to their bodies. Again, the body becomes a place for exerting power and resistance in multiple ways.

Under the influence of this discourse, normalizing power and patriarchy, Jinny, whose identity has been reduced to a body, must always stay young and beautiful. However, this is beyond human control. Naturally, when she gets older, she feels worried. She starts to think that she does not have sufficient merits as a woman any longer, especially as a beautiful woman who has spent her time with different lovers. She starts to feel pressure in this process as soon as she gets older. Jinny acknowledges that,

How solitary, how shrunk, how aged! I am no longer young. I am no longer part of the procession ... Millions have died. Percival died. I still move. I still live. But who will come if I signal? ... I shall look into faces, and I shall see them seek some other face (*The Waves* 114).

She feels lonely, and her position in this society is threatened since she might not find lovers easily any longer.

Now she starts to feel excluded. It is the beginning of her fall because she does not have eternal youth and beauty. Therefore, her power is on the wane and she can be substituted by other beautiful young women. Once again, her substitution will be done quickly because there is no real individuality. All the women are the same, and one can replace the other easily. That is another sign of the death of Man in a postmodern world. In this patriarchal society, woman's beauty is an anchor for the power of women, which is undoubtedly a shallow and superficial merit. Eventually, this type of woman is bereft of her power.

Jinny tries to pull herself together. She assures herself that she is not afraid of aging. However, even if Jinny reaches a kind of self-assurance that she is still beautiful and desirable, it is just a sugarcoated pill. She is worried that she has no value in this society. One day, she has to face the inevitable bitter truth. She is afraid of confronting the bitter truth while she denies her fears. Even denying her terrors emphasizes the fact that her fears do exist.

At first, Jinny seems to be rebellious by resisting the institution of marriage and by emphasizing bodily pleasures. Somehow, she achieves a kind of liberation in this way. She can be a role model for modern women. In this case, we can claim she is shaping the culture and spreading a new kind of discourse regarding the women. On the other hand, we understand that she is trapped in these patriarchal networks of power. She herself is shaped by this patriarchal discourse. She loses her individuality and identity. She becomes a sexual object for male desires. She is shaped by underlying patriarchal structures, and hence we see the metaphorical death of this character. In addition, her aging suggests her gradual literal death while she seeks no permanence in any forms.

Rhoda: An Excluded “Pervert” Woman

Woolf portrays Rhoda as an outsider in her novel. Not only does Rhoda enjoy her solitude, but also she takes shelter from the outside world in her imagination and her dreamed world. If Jinny lives in her body, Rhoda lives in her mind instead. She dreams about falling repeatedly, which foreshadows her suicide. Rhoda claims that she is nobody and that she has no face. In many cases, we feel that she is lost. She has a romantic relationship with Louise, who is another outsider. However, they separate very soon.

Rhoda admits, “I have no face. Other people have faces; Susan and Jinny have faces; they are here. Their world is the real world” (*The Waves* 24). As we mentioned previously, Rhoda is an outsider, for she feels excluded. The theme of exclusion is of great significance in a Foucauldian analysis. Rhoda confesses that she has no identity. Her feeling of being lost, her having no identity, and her exclusion are all interconnected.

Rhoda believes that other people, including Susan and Jinny, have faces. She admires both of them; she feels completely lost to the extent that she tries to copy her friends, Susan and Jinny. She says, “Both despise me for copying what they do” (*The Waves* 24). Rhoda seems to depend upon her best friends to establish her own identity. Susan and Jinny form their identity based on their sexuality. In the first part of the

novel, Rhoda chooses them as role models of her femininity so that she can find her place in this world, but to no avail. Nevertheless, we have to compare these characters to find out more about the mechanisms of power.

We know Susan as a traditional woman who is a typical example of Victorian beliefs. She decides to get married and have children while doing the household chores. However, Rhoda, as an outsider, tries to have a romantic relationship with Louise, another outsider in the novel. Ultimately, they fail to have a successful relationship because of Rhoda's fear of intimacy or for other reasons. We know that Rhoda cannot communicate with other people as well; besides, what we know for sure is that she is incapable of establishing appropriate relationships.

On the other hand, she is in direct contrast with Jinny, who is the embodiment of a modern woman. Rhoda does not enjoy being in populated London or interacting with other people. She is a character who lives inside her mind and imagination, which ultimately distinguishes her from Jinny, who lives in her body and seeks bodily pleasures. Rhoda loves her body just when she is alone.

Susan and Jinny are the role models for Rhoda, the stereotypes of femininity. Rhoda has to choose one of these two predetermined choices to establish her identity as a woman in a patriarchal society. She tries to copy them but fails to do so. She does not fit into these stereotypes of femininity. Subsequently, she is not accepted in this society and then is excluded.

This exclusion is a result of the mechanisms of normalizing power. There are only two options for women in this society, which are considered the norms. The normalizing power forces Rhoda to copy the predetermined role models of femininity and establish her identity, or she has to endure excessive pressure. If one does not fit into this dichotomy as a woman, then she may suffer depression and then feel an emptiness as Rhoda did. She suffers so much that she commits suicide. Her emptiness and then her suicide, respectively, determine metaphorical and literal death of Man in a new world.

As mentioned previously, sexuality is greatly important in forming the characters' identities. However, does it really affect Rhoda's identity and her life as well? According to Oxidine, "Rhoda's eroticism is overtly lesbian in the first draft of the novel and implicitly so in the final text." Moreover, Virginia Woolf deals with the issues of "patriarchal resistance and lesbian desire" ("Lesbian Suicide in *The Waves*" 204). If we study Rhoda's character carefully, we recognize her as a lesbian. Then it does really make sense why she is an outsider and why she is excluded. In this patriarchal society, it is heterosexuality that is considered a norm.

Consequently, all other categories may be labeled as “abnormal” behavior, which may pose a danger, and thus must be treated medically.

In *The Waves*, Susan and Jinny are categorized and defined as heterosexual characters, although they may have different outlooks. They behave in a predicted way, and their identities are formed based on cultural norms. However, Rhoda belongs to a far different category. She cannot copy Susan and Jinny because she is a homosexual. Once again, she does not fit into the norms of this society. She must be defined as so called the “abnormal”, and hence, be excluded from this society.

That is how sexuality is deployed by bio-power. Foucault names that as a psychiatrization of perverse pleasures. Eugenicists once believed that sexual perversion could degenerate human beings. In other words, the sexual deviants could pass on their degenerate genes to the next generation. Therefore, these so-called “perverts” had to be treated in hospitals, for they were a potential danger to the goodness of society. In this kind of reading the novel, Rhoda is considered a sexual deviant, and to be more precise, she is a lesbian. Although she is not hospitalized, she must be excluded for the best benefit of society.

Rhoda is excluded to the point that she feels she does not belong to this society. She has no face and no identity, which is equal to her metaphorical death. She is filled with emptiness and depression. Rosenfeld believes that, “Rhoda emerges as a compelling portrait of the kind of woman who is maimed by patriarchal values, and most especially, by the restriction of women to a certain sphere of manners” (111). The only identity she is permitted to have is being a pervert. She has to endure all these pressures, leading ultimately to her suicide. However, her suicide might be considered a kind of freedom for Rhoda, releasing her from all the power networks functioning in the system. In this manner, her suicide takes the shape of a resistance to normalizing power.

Her suicide can be interpreted differently. Suicide is a modern phenomenon. In religious contexts, no one has the right to take the life of a human being except for the sake of God. Later, only the King had the authority to take the life of human beings on behalf of God. Not only Rhoda does show resistance to religion, but she also resists the sovereign power, which emphasizes again that we are living in a new postmodern world.

In this incident, even we may notice that Rhoda’s identity is shaped by the culture. However, by showing resistance, she can influence the culture and shape that too. It is noteworthy that Rhoda resists the power

structures just as Jinny did. Nevertheless, Rhoda's reaction is much more radical, tragic, moving, and influential.

Educational Discrimination and Producing Docile Bodies

Woolf's brothers attended prestigious universities to continue their education. However, she and her sisters had to spend their time in their father's library to practice self-study. Virginia Woolf, as a feminist writer, was highly aware of the educational discrimination that existed between the two genders.

In chapter four of the novel, *Bernard*, the main narrator of this novel notices how the school has changed them all. The role of the school in shaping their identity for good or bad is inevitable. School is seen as a kind of disciplinary institution which has a significant role in disciplining our bodies and turning them into docile bodies. Gradually, throughout this novel, we will understand that the boys are going to a prestigious college, which prepares them for a hopeful future. The boys are much more ambitious in this manner. For boys, school and college are the places that provide them with opportunities to achieve a fruitful life.

Surprisingly the girls attend a lesser school. All the female characters, namely Susan, Jinny, and Rhoda abhor the school days. Susan hopes that the schooldays are over so she can be home soon. She is entirely homesick during the schooldays. She resists the disciplinary power of the school when she promises she will never send her children to school. Jinny despises the passing days at school, thinking about a promiscuous lifestyle in her future. Finally, Rhoda rejects the brown serge uniforms of the school that they have to wear in a symbolic gesture. She resists the conformity and the disciplinary power promulgated in this institution at an early age. Lee also noted Rhoda's resistance,

[when Rhoda] evades the pedagogical forces only through her acts of imagination, rather than undertaking any direct involvement in communal acts: it is the aesthetic performance that she has adopted for escaping the school's aggression towards her ... By distracting herself from the girls' school ... Rhoda refuses to be a tamed body, albeit unconsciously (127-128).

The girls have to attend a lesser school, which does not prepare them for promising good days. In contrast to boys, they have no opportunities because they are not trained to be ambitious. The disciplinary power of the school has turned these female characters into docile bodies. Bio-power is at work at a very early age by not giving the

female characters opportunities to have an ambitious and fruitful life. What the female characters have are very limited and limiting predetermined choices, which shape their identities. They have to procreate for the benefit of society, or they have to be exploited sexually in this patriarchal society. No alternative is defined. Perhaps, the best option is a kind of resistance and awareness. Otherwise, there might be no escape from the power networks; thus, exclusion, death, or suicide is the only choice remaining.

Conclusion

By scrutinizing Susan, Jinny, and Rhoda as the three main female characters of *The Waves*, we can perceive how their identities formed by the predetermined structures of thought, discourses, normalizing power, and bio-power based on their sexuality in a patriarchal society. These limiting structures shape their identities and fates. This process nullifies women's agencies as free subjects to the point that they cannot form their own identities autonomously anymore. Thus, all of these characters lose their agencies and come close to metaphorical deaths, which can be entitled philosophically as the death of Man in a new world.

The death of Man is the herald of a new episteme. Although Foucault did not name that episteme, we can call it a postmodern episteme. He already noticed three different epistememes, namely Renaissance, Classical, and Modern. In this way, we can conclude that we are on the brink of a completely new episteme. According to Foucault, the death of Man may create new possibilities. It may raise our awareness about our status in the world and thus has the potential for change.

Foucault also negates the repressive hypothesis regarding sex. In this novel, the discourse on sexuality is not repressed. However, it is circulated in different forms to be an anchor for exerting power in different manners. Therefore, *The Waves*, as a novel and a piece of art, promulgates the discourse on sex in various ways.

Woolf tries to portray the real world. As a feminist, she was aware of how the sexuality of women could affect their entire life. She paid close attention to marginalized people. Even if the culture excludes the marginalized people, they should have been portrayed in her novels since her works were a reflection of the real world outside. However, it should be depicted as objectively as possible.

Understandably, Rhoda is excluded in this society as a homosexual character. Thus, she should be portrayed as an outsider, left out of this society. However, Woolf did not exclude Rhoda thoroughly from the

text. By representing Rhoda in *The Waves*, and giving a voice to her, even if it is not that strong, Virginia Woolf endeavored to raise our consciousness about the society we live in, and she cautioned us about the threats that might intimidate us as human beings.

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مفهوم فوکویی «مرگ انسان» در رمان *خیزاب* صائب شبانی، لاله آتشی، فریده پورگیو

ویرجینیا وولف نویسنده‌ای تجربه‌گراست که بر مدرنیسم تأثیر شگرفی داشته است تا سنت‌های مرسوم رئالیسم را به چالش بکشد. در این جستار، سعی داریم تا با استفاده از مفاهیم «مرگ انسان» و «زیست-قدرت» میشل فوکو، شخصیت‌های اصلی زن رمان *خیزاب* اثر ویرجینیا وولف را تحلیل کنیم تا چگونگی شکل‌گیری هویت آنها را در جامعه‌ای مرد سالار آشکار کنیم. بدین سان، متوجه می‌شویم چگونه قدرت همگن‌ساز، تفکر قالبی زنانگی در این شخصیت‌ها را در اجتماع نهادینه می‌کند تا هرگونه ناهمگنی طرد شود. بدین نحو، جنسیت که برساختی اجتماعی است، هویت و سرنوشت افراد به خصوص زنان را در این رمان شکل می‌دهد. سوزان تفکر قالبی از زن سنتی، جینی تجسم زن مدرن، و رودا نشان‌دهنده‌ی زن مطرود به علت لذت منحرف است. زیست-قدرت که قدرتی اجتماعی-سیاسی در دنیای مدرن است، در چهار مجموعه‌ی بزرگ استراتژیک، سامانه‌ی خاص دانش و قدرت حول محور سکس را بسط داده است. این چهار مجموعه‌ی استراتژیک شامل هیستریک شدن بدن زن، تربیتی کردن جنس کودک، اجتماعی کردن رفتارهای تولید مثلی، و روان‌پزشکانه کردن لذت غیرمتعارف است که در نهایت به مدیریت و کنترل فرد و جمعیت می‌انجامد. بنا بر نقش زیست-قدرت و سامانه‌ی سکسوالیته، فرضیه‌ی «سکسوالیته» نفی می‌شود. در نهایت انسان به بدن‌های مطیع فرو کاسته می‌شود و فاعلیت فرد سترده می‌شود که به تعبیر میشل فوکو منجر به «مرگ انسان» می‌شود. مرگ انسان بازگویی این حقیقت است که ما در اپیستمه‌ی نوینی هستیم که ممکن است به فرصت‌ها‌ی جدیدی منجر گردد، به این شرط که در باره‌ی جایگاه انسان در جهان مدرن باز اندیشی شود.

کلمات کلیدی: زیست-قدرت، سامانه‌ی سکسوالیته، مرگ انسان، اپیستمه، میشل فوکو، *خیزاب*.