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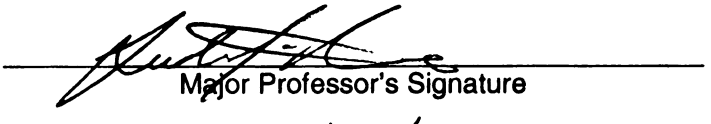

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"UNFINISHED BUSINESS": READING VIRGINIA WOOLF'S *THE WAVES*

By

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ABSTRACT

"UNFINISHED BUSINESS":
READING VIRGINIA WOOLF'S *THE WAVES*

By

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Through an analysis of select portions of the drafted versions of Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*, this paper explores the central issue of the text, the relationship between temporality and the translation of visual experience into linguistic expression. Examining the drafts as images, I argue that the reader's engagement with the disruptive visual and linguistic markings that are part of Woolf's artistic process recorded in the manuscripts reveals both the dynamics of the temporal dimensions and the excessive nature of visual experience that the final product seeks to represent through the character Bernard and the echoic structure of the novel. Further, reading the drafts as images allows the reader a level of active involvement in the work the text does which is not accessible through an inspection of the words in Woolf's final product.

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Rembrandt van Rijn
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Figure 1

"[T]he work that [art] performs has itself the logic of the linguistic event at the 'origin' of history."

--Krzysztof Ziarek
The Historicity of Experience: Modernity, the Avant-Garde and the Event

Typically, what one considers "the work of art" is that which has achieved a satisfactory degree of aesthetic resolution, a measure of completion that allows its artist to say, "I am finished." Thus, the creator permits his or her art to then be made public – for example, in the form of the exhibited print, like the Rembrandt depicted above, or the published novel, such as Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*. However, this conventional designation is problematic. Enshrining a particular version of a piece of art by canonizing it "the work of art" places the history of that piece under erasure. Because such a designation highlights the aesthetic virtues of the "finished product," it suppresses the

history of a piece inscribed in the art via the artistic process which is visually manifest in draft or proof versions of a work, and, in Martin Heidegger's words it thereby obscures "the work performed by art," its activity of "unconcealment."[1] The Heideggerian notion of the "work that art does," reflects the linguistic theory that underwrites it – linguistic erasure,[2] an idea fundamental to deconstructive thought and one that is integral to the conceptual framework of my examination of *The Waves* manuscripts. While this philosophical concept of erasure supplies a cognitive blueprint for understanding how all language functions under a kind of deletion and is therefore applicable to the apparent revisionary erasures in Woolf's manuscripts, to the extent that this reasoning neglects the practical implications of the reader's experience with the materiality of the texts, this philosophical paradigm necessitates the addition of a more concrete interpretive supplement, one that attends to the visual disturbances in the multiple states of texts like *The Waves.* Such a supplement would attempt to address the following issues: how the eye and the mind are to read the meaning of heavily edited

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[1] In Martin Heidegger's "The Origin of the Work of Art," he accentuates the active nature of art by coining the notion the "*work* that art performs. " In doing so, he describes the essential activity of an art work as that which "opens up in its own way the Being of beings. This opening up, i.e. this deconcealing, i.e. this truth of beings, happens in the work. In the art work, the truth of what is has set itself to work. Art is the truth setting itself to work. What is truth itself, that it sometimes comes to pass as art? What is this setting-itself-to-work?" (38). As I attempt to answer the question of how to read the drafts, my paper appropriates and adapts some of Heidegger's terminology. I borrow terms such as "the work that art performs" from him, because his emphasis on both arts active nature and its ability to reveal that which has largely been obscured by preconceived notions of reality aligns well with the way I see the incomplete aesthetic of the draft working as the viewer engages their visual, material existence.

[2] As Heidegger seeks to answer the question of being (what is being) in his work by that same name, he discovers that the propositional structure of language itself obstructs one's ability to answer that question in any fundamental way. Language is always already asserting Being and thus preventing one from asking the question of its essential nature, because such a question as well as its answer are actually prior to the articulation of the question within the language in which we operate. Thus, at the moment of breath, as soon as one begins to ask the question, one preempts even the asking by its very saying and thus cannot reach a complete answer. Thus, the word being and certain related words are under erasure, under the sign that designates them derivative, as articulating that which can't be fully articulated in language. (See Heidegger's the *Question of Being* for further elaboration.) As Derrida explains it in *Of Grammatology*, the notion of being is subtly discrepant at the time of breath. Thus, language operates as a differential structure that is fundamentally a trace-structure, constituted not by being as presence but marks or linguistic gestures that indicate continuous movement.

pages, how one is to make meaning of a visual layout which is outside the normal left to right structure of readerly texts, or, alternatively, how such pages of deletions themselves make meaning when read in the context of the drafted page rather than simply in light of the eventual final product.

Unfinished prints like Rembrandt's *Old Man Shading His Eyes with His Hand* (figure 1) offer an aesthetic parallel to the incomplete versions of *The Waves* which can sharpen our understanding of the work performed by art because that print aesthetic allows the viewer to see and understand how art can articulate the relationship between language and history as well as demonstrate how the interaction of the two is elided by the scholarly emphasis on the "finished product" and the related privileging of it as "the work of art" – that "perfect[ed] vessel" which necessarily eclipses the work done in the process of its formation (*Holograph Drafts* 1). In the course of this paper, I explore the relationship between language and history in terms of visual experience, specifically through an analysis of how *The Waves* and the materiality of its manuscripts foreground and problematize the nature of visual experience and its translation into linguistic expression and thereby reconfigure our linear notions of historical progression. I read the unfinished print aesthetic in order to exercise the eye in preparation for an analysis of the images of the drafted pages. From the perspective of this study, the incomplete prints provide a visual manifestation of the Heideggarian notion of erasure, and they produce a viewing experience that is structurally similar to reader's encounter with the text of *The Waves*. Looking at drafts of *The Waves* through the lens of such visual representations resituates what we normally consider the "work of art" into the historical contingencies within the moments of creation that are not fully recoverable from the inspection of

words in the "final product." In doing so, this visual approach encourages us both to rethink the conventional notion that history is a linear process, as the draft's incomplete aesthetic disrupts the viewer's sense of that logic, and to consider what such a temporal disturbance reveals about the linguistic translation of experience, which is manifest in *The Waves* through the crisis faced by the artist-figure Bernard who struggles to understand the nature and extent of his agency in the world through a continual analysis of his story-making process.

As Bernard's attempts to read his visual experiences and translate them into stories, he is both Woolf's author-double and a figure for the reader who seeks to interpret the visual excessiveness of the drafted pages. While such a metafictional interpretation of Bernard's character is not a novel critical strategy, the reflexivity of this type of reading provides a significant textual component that links the final product, Woolf's drafting process, and the reader's involvement with both of the aforementioned. Bernard is a crucial connection here because Woolf often depicts his creative process *in medias res*, and her alterations of his character in the midst of those acts foreground the notion of incompletion and emphasize the complexities of visual perception embodied by the viewer's engagement with the unfinished aesthetic of the prints, which in turn illuminate the importance of the related experience found in reading Woolf's drafts. As I attempt to show in at the beginning of this paper, Bernard's struggle with understanding his agency is bound up with his conflict about projecting a linear temporal order onto experience through the act of storytelling. In the next portion of the essay, I establish how the echoic structure of the novel, with its ebb and flow of repeated images, figures the atemporal order of being and the excessiveness of experience which undergirders

Bernard's existential conflict. Ultimately, I argue that reading drafts as images makes the interaction of these two temporal orders available to the reader in a way that the final version cannot. The draft's disruptive visual aesthetic underscores the material production of the text, and it allows the reader a level of active engagement not only with the process of the story's formation but also with the work that the text does, both of which are preempted by the perfected state of the final product. The drafted pages' very lack of "finish" both represents the excessiveness of phenomenal experience more effectively than the echoic artifice of the final product and works against the reduction of visual experience that Bernard struggles to comprehend. In a sense, the finished work seeks to imitate what the drafts themselves already encapsulate, as they record the historicity of Woolf's composition and reveal the nature of the artifice that works on the reader in the process of textual interpretation.

Bernard's Crisis

Although three of the six characters that speak in *The Waves* are figures of writers – Louis, Neville, and Bernard – the prevailing critical assumption is that the latter is "the artist-figure" (Graham 315). Throughout the final version of *The Waves*, Bernard, in the perpetual process of creation, mulls over concerns of unity and coherence in both his artistic effort and in his life experience. Particularly, in the second half of the published version, Bernard's soliloquies emphasize his struggles with the process of composition, the difficulty of shaping meaningful stories as well as his ambivalence about the possibility of crafting one perfect story. During Bernard's visit to Rome, in what is commonly known as the "Middle Life" episode of *The Waves*, he questions the fundamental value of his creative endeavors:

> I have made up thousands of stories; I have filled innumerable notebooks with phrases to be used when I have found the true story, the one story to which all these phrases refer. But I have never yet found that story. And I begin to ask, Are there stories? (Waves 187)

In the throes of what appears to be a kind of mid-life existential crisis, Bernard begins to interrogate the assumption on which he has been operating his whole life – that their is an inherent value in creating stories. After having spent half of his existence gathering "phrases" and maintaining the belief that all those separate pieces would eventually unite in the appropriate order to achieve a state of perfection, Bernard's final product, he finds his faith in the possibility of an ultimate referent jarred. His shaken conviction in the "one story" implies that his belief in something like a transcendental end in which all his life's significant actions would coalesce and attain their true meaning is also broken. His loss of faith in this ultimate end places the meaning of his life, that which is constituted by the gathering of phrases, in the realm of uncertainty. In this moment, Bernard's thoughts begin to shift from a fear of the unlikely consolation given by the anticipation of some final product or true story into a meditation on the process of creation that has structured his existence.

Bernard begins to negotiate his crisis through an enactment of the composition process, specifically in terms of his immediate visual experience from a balcony overlooking the busy streets of Rome. In positioning him so, Woolf figures Bernard's conflict not simply as the problem of creating a fictional story but more generally as the difficulty inherent in the process of shaping experience out of direct visual encounters. From the vantage point of the terrace, Bernard contemplates his orientation to the urban scene below:

> "I could break off any detail in all that prospect ...and describe it with greatest sense. But why...?....Again I could invent stories about that girl coming up the steps. 'She met him under the dark archway...."It is over," he said, turning from the cage where the china parrot hangs.' Or simply, 'That was all." But why impose my arbitrary design? Why stress this and shape that and twist up little figures like the toys men sell in trays in the street? Why select this, out of all that, -- one detail? (Waves 188)

Woolf herein approximates something like a brief instructional session on the complexities of story-making, with Bernard dramatizing the practical components of composition and the process's rather troubling philosophical underpinnings, in particular how one can or should make meaning from the excessive experience that constitutes a moment's perception. Bernard exhibits his conflict with the nature of the creative process, as he highlights the contingencies of the moments of design. He interrogates the value of his ability to "break off any detail" in his view and simply "describe" the "girl coming up the steps" (188). As he articulates his doubts about his creative capacity, Bernard's choice of words obliterates the objective overtones that attach themselves to the idea of "describ[ing]" something (188). Ultimately, he casts the process of composition in terms of an entirely subjective imposition of his will rather than as an activity that seeks to convey an empirical reality. In doing so, he broaches the question of how human agency and phenomenal reality are related. Thus, Bernard begins to consider the philosophical and ethical implications of "design" through his concern for the seemingly unjustifiable and arbitrary nature of choosing which details are important enough to be "stress[ed]" (188). Both the didactic edge of this passage and the fragmented form of Bernard's stories not only draw the reader's attention to their own constructedness but also remind us of the designing mind behind the novel itself and the contingencies of its own history.

In Barnard's balcony scene, Woolf intentionally situates his crisis in the context of a direct visual encounter so that his selection of his details proceeds from his immediate field of vision. Bernard's struggle reflects what Emily Delgaro's *Virginia Woolf and the Visible World* attributes to Woolf's sense that "the visible is prior to and contrasted with the writable" (2). Woolf's characterizations of writer-figures like Bernard often evince, in Delgaro's opinion, the "gulf exists between the visible and the writer" (2). Thus, with Bernard's placement Woolf illustrates both the problem with storytelling in the fictional sense, as Delgaro argues, as well as the complications that surround how one makes meaning of experience more generally, how "one tells the story of one's existence." What Delgaro asserts of *Mrs. Dalloway's* poet-figure Septimus Smith in relation to vision, I interpret as Bernard's understanding of the visual in *The Waves*. Bernard's particular perception of "the visible suggests a kind of power to see beyond the horizon of ordinary perception into a larger world that is only partly available to verbal representation" (1). However, Bernard cannot reconcile himself to the disparity he senses between the excessiveness of vision and the inadequacy of language to translate it, though he persists in his attempt to do so. By placing Bernard on the balcony above a bustlingly city where people can spontaneously penetrate his gaze, as opposed to depicting him in a relatively controlled environment like the confines of a room where he sits gathering elements for a story from a newspaper, Woolf uses Bernard's particular crisis to represent the common process of how one shapes the excessiveness found in any moment's visual perception. In Bernard's case, this excess is manifest by the multiple actions taking place before his eyes in the city streets. In effect, Bernard's conscious problem with the process of articulating a story from his immediate encounter provides

an analogy for the often unconscious activity of how an individual construes meaning from what he or she sees in any moment or series of moments. From Bernard's perspective, language seems only to produce a frustratingly reductive and therefore false expression of his material experience. Because both Bernard's practical and philosophical musings readily apply to the condition and translation of visual experience broadly conceived, Woolf draws the reader's attention to the general applicability and complexity of the relationship between visual perception itself and the linguistic articulation of that experience.

But even as Bernard finds himself both swearing off the lifestyle epitomized by his "innumerable notebooks," the imposition of his "arbitrary design" (188) and expressing the injustice of his friends' reductive portrait of his experience ("Here I am shedding one of my life-skins, and all they will say is, "Bernard is spending ten days in Rome)," he seems unable to escape the vexed process that has shaped his existence (187).

> Here am I marching up and down the terrace alone, unoriented. But observe how dots and dashes are beginning, as I walk, to run themselves into continuous lines, how things are losing the bald, the separate identity that they had as I walked up those steps....I am moving too, am becoming involved in the general sequence when one thing follows another and it seems inevitable that the tree should come, then the break in the hedge. And as I move, surrounded, included and taking part, the usual phrases begin to bubble up, and I wish to free these bubbles from the trap-door of my head.... (188)

Try as he may, Bernard cannot free himself from the act of creation, because the movement inherent in existence itself generates both the "usual phrases" and the desire to "free" the ideas that have penetrated him through his vision and began to tap at the "trap-door" of his mind for release (188). Woolf's language here underscores Bernard's motions. Though he begins in an "unoriented" state, once he starts to "observe" his

surroundings and "walk" up the steps, Bernard perceives things in "dots and dashes," which due to the movement of his gaze and gait, "run themselves into continuous lines" (188). As Bernard hastily advances up the steps, a "red flower pot" becomes "a reddish streak" (188). What he once perceived as a particular entity his motion transforms; that once distinctive thing becomes merely a suggestive mark –a dot or a line that barely indicates a figure. In the course of this movement, he feels himself drawn into what seems to be the "inevitable" "sequence" of things, and thus Bernard finds himself compelled by the animate nature of existence to see and articulate something of this experience – ideas simply begin to "bubble up" (188).

Woolf's characterization of Bernard's crisis reveals a tension between activity and passivity within human perception. The two modalities of being appear bound up in an intricate relationship in this passage through Bernard's passively being "included" and his actively "taking part" (188). Yet the feeling of inevitability seems to dominate here. The language of lines, the "continuous line" and the "general sequence," which connotes inescapable linear succession of existence figures heavily (188). This rhetoric of linear progression or continuous movement forward appears (literally *appears* for Bernard by way of his visual process) to be inexorable. In this section, the nature of Bernard's interaction with his environment and the extent of his agency in it seem uncertain. What is certain, however, is that the process of representation does not cease as long as Bernard perceives, as long as he is. Further, the problems that attend the process persist: Bernard must choose from the seemingly infinite details of each experience, and with the motion of his gaze, certain phenomenon will always come into his focus and appear for a time to retain their shape and then seem to dissolve into suggestive markings, transformed either

through their translation into his "phrases" or through their fading from his memory (188). In this way, the structure of representation itself appears as a mode of erasure, because as Bernard's soliloquy implies motion defines living beings, and that very principle seems to resist linguistic identification. Thus, in the character of Bernard, Woolf is working with the relationship among linear temporal progression, visual experience, and human agency, as Bernard understands "the continuous line" as one that shapes the excessiveness of his experience into a linear sequence via his human ability to choose "details" (188). The rhetoric of the line here refers to the inevitable mapping-out of phenomenal experience through language, specifically in terms of successive events. For Bernard, this linguistic charting of an event necessarily diminishes the excessiveness of experience; in the course of its translation, the dynamic nature of experience becomes a mere series of causally related occurrences, the linear sequencing of which leaves certain facets of the event, ones that do not evidently conform to the central storyline, under erasure. Bernard's process of shaping experience, his demonstrative passage from perception to articulation, suggests that the process of creation is both generative as well as reductive. It is generative insofar as it allows him to make some meaning out of his experience and reductive to the extent that Bernard's storyline always involves the erasure of particular aspects of his experience.

The Problem of Reading the Drafts

As Bernard's soliloquy suggests all representation may very well always already operate under erasure, if indeed writing or linguistic expression is a trace structure. Yet, the reality of representation must also always be imagined to retain its status as reality. Philosophical paradigms, such as those of Heidegger and Derrida, devoted to

representing the "reality" of language attest to this fact. Indeed their works are themselves supplements to language, reminding us how the medium "really" works. Yet, as Heidegger contends the propositional structure of language itself obstructs the possibility of language answering the fundamental question of being (what is being?). Due to this, language itself prevents one from accurately understanding how representation functions within it. When he acknowledges language's elusive operation in *The Question of Being*, Heidegger adds to his writing the visual supplement of the mark of deletion, e.g. B~~e~~ing (80). This visual acknowledgement is an effort at transforming our understanding of what language can express and how linguistic representation operates (Spivak xv). Focusing on the visual markings in the drafts, I too wish to draw attention to the function of language in relationship to the creation of art works and the nature of our readerly engagement with those texts. As evidenced by the focus on literary products, as opposed to the human labor bound up in their process of creation, readers tend to view texts not only as separate from their maker, but also as disconnected from the particularities of time and space embedded in the history of their making. To begin to reground the text of *The Waves* in material existence and simultaneously think language in its trace structure, I attempt to move away from the emphasis on language's abstract functioning in the text by using a visual supplement that will allow the reader to reimagine experience as expressed by the text as one rooted in its materiality, specificity, and excessiveness.

The challenge of this imagining is apparent in the complexity that one confronts in reading the drafts of *The Waves*, and it proceeds in part from the conventional conception that the graphic sign of words in a novel or a poem and the images in a print

or drawing belong to two separate spheres, each of which are often thought to represent different and mutually exclusive ways of understanding the world. In large part, the visual, material side of letters is forgotten in the process of reading. Regarding the typical experience of reading the printed page, philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty says,

> The wonderful thing about language is that it promotes its own oblivion...My eyes follow the line on the paper, and from the moment I am caught up in their meaning, I lose sight of them. The paper, the letters on it, my eye and the body are only there as the minimum setting of some invisible operation. Expression fades before what is expressed, and this is why its mediating role may pass unnoticed. (Morely 13)

In the episode of *The Waves* on which we have been focusing, Woolf shows how the sphere of the visible operates similarly to the way in which Merleau-Ponty here describes the sphere of the readable. As Bernard's soliloquy reveals, in the process of inscription (what I have been calling Bernard's act of composition) from direct visual experience, many if not all of the sights before him dissolve as they are translated into his recordable, "useful phrases," becoming that which is readable (*Waves* 188). Thus, his actions produce "streaks" and traces of that which surrounds him (188). However, it is not Bernard's representation of the perceptual process that reveals the "invisible operation" of language (Morely 13). In the final version of *The Waves*, Woolf's depiction of Bernard certainly problematizes the apparatus of language, but only analyzing her finished product tends to limit the reader's ability to perceive the "invisible" action of the text, because our reading habits as well as the final text's conventional form leads us away from the words' visuality and materiality (13). By recasting our encounter with the drafted page in terms of sight, my examination of her manuscripts seeks to recover something of that otherwise "invisible operation" of how the eye and the mind capture

experience, which is a representational problem foregrounded in the development of Bernard's character in the manuscripts (13).

Poststructuralist thought and art have attempted to revise the conventional and limited epistemological models that strictly separate the visual and the verbal. However, for the most part, we still operate by way of the typical notions that categorize things into the binaries that inform those traditional structures of thought. Even in our post-structuralist, post-modern world, we are not "post," "past," or beyond the binaries like that of the verbal and the visual or the rational and the emotional, but we must play within them (a thoroughly post-structuralist notion). The aesthetic of the drafts performs just that kind of play. It disrupts our typical modes of perception, because the visual code embodied in Woolf's deletions interacts with the linguistic code that orders sentences and opens up new avenues of interpretation based on the reader's particular experience of the confluence of those two forms of marks. Even though Woolf's gestures of deletion that are visible in the manuscripts were not deliberately intended to alter the viewer's ability to read the letters on the page, they do have this effect. From the position of the writer herself, they were evidently used as editorial signs to indicate how an image or an idea had been clarified, not as markings meant to disturb her gaze or disrupt her thoughts as she retyped the revised story. In this way, the drafts are both representations of an historical process that read not just as verbal text with marginalia and interlineations from which we might trace artistic changes but also as an image that works to reveal the vagaries of the perceptual process. When the drafts are read as an image, the legibility of the words that makes possible a linguistic communication to the mind merges with the

illegibility of the erasures and incomplete status of the work to intimate the reality of the historical contingencies bound up in the movement that is Woolf's creative process.

As Woolf's own product leads the reader away from itself towards the process of composition, wherein the emphasis on the visual aspects of the written word, not just the visual image that a written depiction produces, the drafted page respatializes the word and disrupts the reader's sense of linear temporality. I say *re*spatialize in order to highlight how the manuscript pages highlight the fact that the words in a text take up space, and in this way, they begin to recover a materiality that is lost as a result of the process of reading, which, as Merleau-Ponty suggests, eclipses the visual and spatial dimensions of the page. From the perspective of the viewer, the text of the drafts inhabit a conceptual space that is accessed primarily though the reader's visual perception of the typographical lines and the conflicting appearance of editorial marks which incite a response like that provoked by an image. The drafted pages simultaneously appeal to us through the imagistic nature of the deletions as well as the more rational and linear character of the typographical line with its grammatical and syntactical components. The interaction between the symmetry manifest by the lines of words and sentences and the non-symmetrical editorial markings and marginal notations produce a kind of tension that itself is intrinsic to the state of composition those markings represent – the unfinished. Such visual disturbances within the text result in a temporal disjunction. Within the drafts, the reader experiences the collision of various temporal dimensions, as the authorial voice and editorial deletions interfere with the narrative chronology. Thus, the text's very materiality leads the reader outside of the linear temporal order of the story's representational scheme. The unique temporality of the drafts is similar to the disruptive

fictional temporality that Woolf's final product seeks to represent through the repeated use of visual images. Through an analysis of Woolf's technical means of representing time in *The Waves*, wherein she attempts to create a non-linear temporal order that mimics excessiveness of phenomenal existence, we can begin to understand the temporal overlapping with which the reader grapples in the drafts.

Woolf's principle stylistic device in *The Waves*, as it is in *Mrs. Dalloway*, is the echo – the repetition of images throughout the text that provides a sense of coherence to the story and affects a temporal discontinuity through the slight alteration of repeated images. Thus, the textual echoes in *The Waves* function not so much as auditory phenomenon, but primarily as a visual one, as the six characters frequently recollect similar visual images, which simultaneously represent their common experiences in life (a shared past) as well as figure the way that these characters distinctly interpret their separate identities and diverse futures. In Jack F. Stewart's "Spatial Form and Color in *The Waves*," he states that in Woolf's text "images fuse, dissolve, and reform in continuous wavelike rhythms that transcend their linear succession on the page" (96). The abundance and continual overlapping of images, such as the repeated recollection of folds in napkins, tablecloths, and the palms of hands, in both the characters' soliloquies and in the interludes between the character episodes, reconfigures the reader's typical sense of space and time. As the image of the folds and their continual repetitions collide in the reader's mind they work to disrupt our sense that individual experience is shaped in a linear fashion, because this imagistic layering of the text causes the recurrent image to perform at least a triple motion. In other words, as Woolf repeats and changes the images, their symbolic meaning is continually refigured because it causes the reader to

reinterpret the meaning of the text in its immediate context, in relation to previous moments of its appearance, and in anticipation of future occurrence of the image. Thus, the text constantly pushes the reader to work in both a forward and retroactive fashion, as each instance of a recurrent image figures, refigures, and prefigures meaning. In Jane Goldman's *The Feminist Aesthetic of Virginia Woolf*, which analyzes the function of visual imagery in *The Waves*, she describes the beauty of these "Woolfian moments" as "enabl[ing] and even encourag[ing] us to explore past and future moments in ways that obedience to linear chronology would make less accessible" (2). Woolf's layering of images does indeed subvert the typical mode of linear secession attributed to charting events in time.

Woolf's persistent use of the disruptive visual echo is a structural argument about the way vision, memory, and meaning operate in a non-linear fashion. As the source of the echo, the originary voice or initial sight that produces the repeated image, is lost in the midst of its textual repetition, as its origin becomes indeterminate in the course of its reconfigurations, the echo becomes an apt metaphor for the artistic process and the shaping of experience more generally. The phenomenon of the echo has a derivative existence; it is the non-originary by nature. It is something that perhaps proceeds from a voice, but is not the voice itself. In this way, the echo seems to be insubstantial, something akin to an accident. Though the echo is the marker that always indicates another time, another voice, another image that is not fully present to the viewer in what she immediately perceives, it is nonetheless that on which the meaning of one's present perception depends. Thus, the origin of each echo, each image, or each meaning that informs (gives form to) any given experience is uncharitable, because its status as never

actually present resists being logically mapped out. Yet, the nature and wonder of the relative movement of phenomenal existence, in its differential or never-presentness, is powerfully evoked in the imagistic figuration of works of art that capture something of their own process of formation, like the visual aspect of Woolf's drafting process or Rembrandt's unfinished print aesthetic. In a sense, Woolf's manuscripts are themselves echoic, as their recurrent visual deletions and repeated fragments result in a similar temporal disjunction. However, the drafts' irregular temporality initiates a degree of active engagement on the part of the reader that differs from her more passive involvement with a "finished" product. As the viewer engages the manuscripts, she must negotiate between the degree to which she submits to the text's visual appeal and the extent to which she imposes an order on its fragmented and indeterminate phrases. In this way, Bernard's conflicted feelings about the extent of his human agency during his creative process offer a scenario comparable to the reader's complicated task of interpreting the drafts. In the Derridian spirit, a reading of the passage containing Bernard's crisis in the manuscripts itself requires a sort of passage, a "detour," through a visual supplement that will enrich our understanding of the reader's encounter with the text, further illuminate the meaning of the echoic structure of the novel, and enhance our knowledge of how the reader engages the artistic process recorded in the manuscripts.

Interpreting the Drafts

Commenting on the aesthetic resolution of the Rembrandt's *Old Man Shading His Eyes With His Hand* (figure 1), Peter Parshall, in his essay "Unfinished Business: The Problem of Resolution in Printmaking," describes the print as "convey[ing] an immediate encounter with a figure observed under fleeting conditions of gesture and illumination"

(11). In its incompleteness, the print aesthetic conveys the immediacy of the movement that Bernard notion of "general sequence" gestures at, as it appears to fully capture only a portion of the figure in direct view (*Waves* 188). Much like the reader's engagement with the incomplete drafts will show, the viewer's involvement with the unfinished print aesthetic is qualitatively different than her optical experience with prints exhibiting a high degree of aesthetic resolution, the typical finished product. The incomplete aesthetic does not allow the viewer to inhabit the work in the same way that the finished does, as the perceived lack of resolution creates a kind of tension that places demands on the gaze peculiar to the unfinished aesthetic. The tension the observer senses proceeds from a kind of resistance inherent in the print's structural incompletion. The very absence of aesthetic resolution prevents the viewer's gaze from simply consuming the image; thus the tension is symptomatic of the print's resistance to the totalization of the observer's vision. The print's structure demands that the eye work *with* its disruptive lines. The "incomplete" work guides the viewer's engagement as the eye follows the movement and flow of the lines from a space of full and complete articulation of the figure that breaks off into the sketch and faint outline that comprises the unfinished body. With the visual interruption created by the break (the dissolution of concentrated markings that comprise the finished area), the viewer senses that her optical awareness is altered *by design*. Even as the viewer's eye submits to the visual appeal of the print, the observer's mind actively engages in the contemplation of what the materiality of the print suggests. Similar to the effect of Bernard's instructional soliloquy in the mid-life section of *The Waves,* the composition's structural incompletion draws attention to itself as such, and thus demands awareness not only to the figure of the print (the ostensible subject of the work, its

product), but also its emphasis on its own physical markings and the physicality, or the action, of that which rendered them – the process of the maker. An analysis of the reader's encounter with the materiality of the sections that correspond to the parts of Bernard's previously discussed monologue, with a particular focus on the emergence his crisis in the second manuscript, will set into relief the interplay between visual perception and the linguistic articulation within experience that is the subject of Bernard's crisis.

An analysis of the image that follows (figure 2), which is from the second draft of *The Waves* wherein Bernard first appears in the seventh episode (what becomes the balcony scene previously analyzed), will help us to see how the visual deletion and the verbal fragmentation interact and produce a viewing experience that reorients our relationship to the materiality of Woolf's text. Just as the prints' unfinished aesthetic reorients the viewer's gaze to the subjects it depicts via its very incompletion, so do the manuscripts' fragmentations and deletions draw attention to the page's own structural incompletion, preempting the satisfaction that the reader generally receives from a smooth narrative sequence and thereby cultivating a different interpretive operation. Shortly after Bernard muses on his friends' reductive depiction of his trip to Rome, Woolf writes the following in draft pages 614/615:

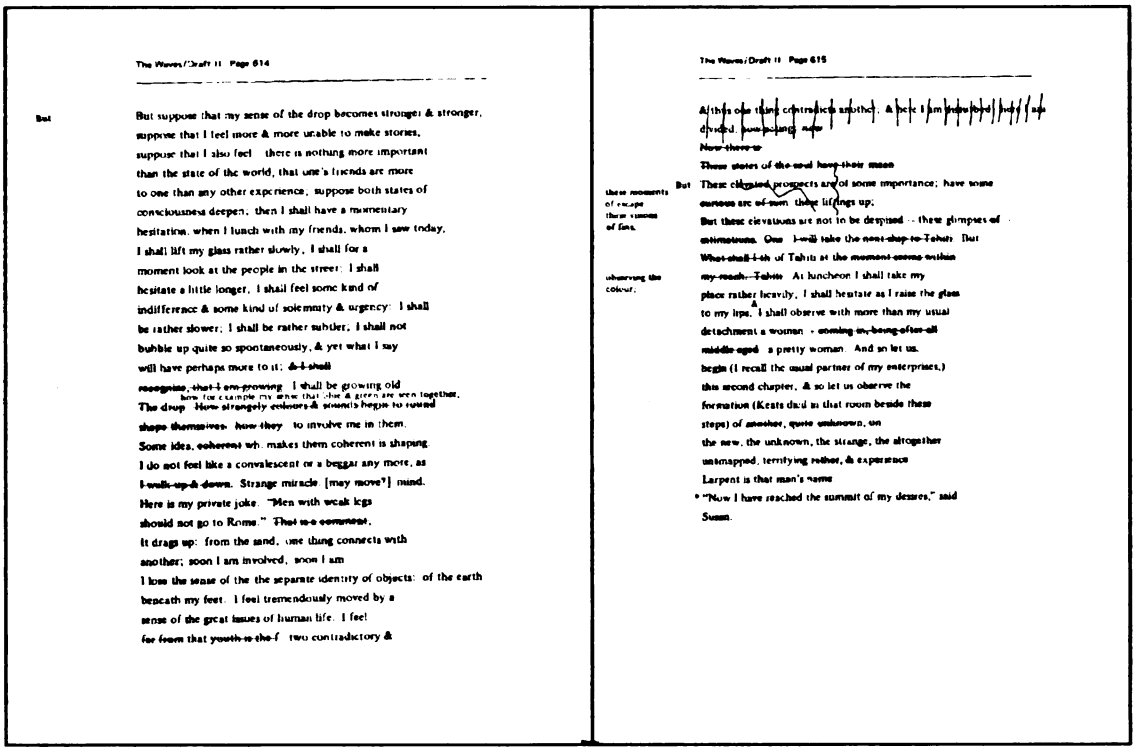

Figure 2: Holograph Draft Pages 614/615

Upon seeing these pages, the viewer's gaze is drawn to the most heavily-deleted areas and then to the other spots, such as Woolf's marginal notes, in which the normal typed line of a text transgresses the boundaries of the page-layout a reader expects from her book. These transgressions are what initially control the viewer's eye. In this way, the strong vertical marks on the top of page 615 in figure 2, which at various points intersect with horizontal deletion of words, attract the gaze within this particular context simply because they vary most from the mind's expectations. A conflict exists between the pull of the eye on the text as image and the conventional notion of how the intellect is to understand a text, as one generally responds to the lines of the page by reading them in

the usual left to right fashion, beginning with the top of the left-hand page and simply moving through the text to the bottom of the right-hand page.

This pull between the text-as-image and text-as-word is not unlike the tension visually manifest by the unfinished aesthetic of the prints. A look at what is considered one of Rembrandt's most "complicated" pieces, *Sheet Studies with a Women Lying Ill in Bed*, will attune our readerly gaze to the materiality of the visual aesthetic found in Woolf's drafts thus enhancing our understanding of the work her art performs in relation to the reader's involvement with the text (figure 3 below; Sell 63). In her essay "Quicke to Invent & Copious to Expresse: Rembrandt's Sketch Plates," Stacey Sell records that during the 1630's and early 1640's Rembrandt created a set of etchings that are commonly known as "sketch sheets" (57). These etchings though often signed and sold commercially actually resembled "pages torn from an artist's sketchbook" (58). His products not only came to foreground his process, but also they made the process itself the subject of the work of art. Creating prints that mimicked unfinished pieces and appeared simply as parts of an artistic process was "virtually unprecedented in European printmaking" (57). Rembrandt's "sketchbook" technique calls to mind Woolf's "notebook" artifice, which is emblematic of Bernard's continual process of composition and represents the perpetually unfinished piece of art that is the fictional corollary for Woolf's drafts.

Rembrandt van Rijn, *Sheets of Studies with A Women Lying Ill in Bed*, c. 1641/1642 Etching

Figure 3

Among the many fascinating features of *Sheets of Studies* that deserve comment are two which directly relate to the fragmented nature of Woolf's drafts and the viewing experience in which they involve the reader: the work that the viewer's gaze must perform and the effect of the artist's accidental markings, formally known as pentimenti. Similar to Rembrandt's *Man Shading His Eyes* (figure 1), the aesthetic of this print will not allow the observer's eye to easily inhabit or consume the image. Because this print does not abide by the laws of linear perspective that reflect the standard way of conceiving of space, the gaze must work differently than it normally would. Like the image of the drafts, the areas with concentrated ink attract the viewer's gaze; the eye is first drawn to the bottom left corner where the two darkest figures are located. Both the

lack of resolution and the jumbled placement of figures draw the observer's attention to the created nature of the piece. Even though portions the figures are representational, as they attempt to depict the human form, the peculiar juxtaposition of those forms do not cohere into one unified representational picture. Instead, the print aesthetic creates an awareness of its etched features not as figures but as marks. In doing so, they highlight the images' constructedness and thus gesture at the maker who designed that construction, just as the draft's editorial marks and fragments continually underscore Woolf's own creative labor. In describing the viewer's involvement in another Rembrandt print containing a similar juxtaposition of figures and exhibiting the same quality of finish (figure 4 in appendix), Sell comments that "in order to examine the landscape, the fragment of a self-portrait, and the mysterious disembodied eye, the viewer is forced to rotate the sheet [just as Rembrandt had to rotate the sheet as he etched the figures into the plate], scrutinizing individual forms to determine where one ends and the next begins" (62). The viewer's involvement with the print aesthetic and reader's engagement with Woolf's drafts are both characterized by the same type of active engagement Sell defines.

What is most interesting about the prints however, are the pentimenti, or the "accidental" markings of the plate that are then transferred to the paper on which the etching is revealed (62). These are visible in several places: near the top right of the bearded man's hat in the left foreground wherein we find traces of his hat's former placement and, to the right of that man, above the figure lying in the bed wherein an outline of where woman's shoulder and arm used to be is still visible above the now more fully etched figure. Of these pentimenti, Sell simply notes that these "alterations" and

"stray marks" are "accidental effects [which] are not as distracting" as they are in some of Rembrandt's earlier prints (62). From the point of view of this paper, the distracting nature of Rembrandt's trace-structures is very compelling for they are analogous to Woolf's manuscript erasures. The pentimenti in the prints offer a visual trope through which to understand some forms of erasure in the drafts that serve to illuminate the temporality of the manuscript page and its relationship to the final product. On one level, the editorial gestures indicate a kind of empirical trial and error. However, if they are viewed in a more complex way as spaces of alteration whose empirical existence in the drafts disrupts the temporal continuity of the narrative scheme, Woolf's pentimenti-like markings become much more interesting.

The temporal interruption of the authorial markings can be demonstrated by the reader's confrontation with the authorial voice within the general narrative flow of the manuscript page. While this happens on almost every page of the drafts, I take an example from the one with which we are becoming familiar in the context of this paper, page 614 (*Holograph Drafts* 614 or figure 2). Just after Bernard declares himself to have regained some agency and right before he lapses back into what appears to be a loss of that newly found agency, the draft reads, "I do not feel like a convalescent or a beggar any more, as/ I walk up & down. Strange miracle. [may move?] mind" (*Holograph Drafts* 614 or figure 5). Here the authorial intrusion comes in two forms: the deletion of I walk up & down" and the bracketed phrase "may move," the latter of which is of most significance here (614 or figure 5). In this instance, the reader encounters not only a collision of voices but also a confluence of temporal orders. The brackets are used to designate something like an authorial-note-to-self, wherein Woolf's voice as designer, the

one who "may move" portions of the text, is distinctly heard in the midst of Bernard's voice. Because the bracketed statement is inserted in the middle of a character's soliloquy, it functions for the reader as a kind of interference in the movement of the narrative. In this way, the bracketing operates in much the same way that the cancellations function; they call attention to themselves and disturb the narrative chronology. With the phrase enclosed in the brackets, the authorial voice reads as a peculiar interpolation into the time of represented by the narrative logic. Explaining the temporal disruption affected by such editorial markings, David Ferrer's "Open Space of the Draft Page" says that they are "an extrinsic temporal dimension" which "interferes with the conventional use of the two dimensions of the page: the typosensitivity[3] of the draft page is combined with the chronosensivity,[4] and the spatial layout can be translated only partly in terms of temporal succession" (263). The insertion of the "extrinsic temporal dimension" to which Ferrer refers is the interference of Woolf's compositional time with both the narrative time and the moment of reading (263). Three diverse temporal orders fuse. Such erasures thus alter the static and linear nature of the page, turning it into a more fluid text that both shows authorial movement and initiates the active engagement of the reader, who must work to make meaning from the disruption of the narrative scheme.

The movement latent in such visual aesthetics and the kind of participation it elicits from the viewer creates a condition of involvement that mimics Bernard's struggle to understand the nature of activity and passivity involved in his representations of

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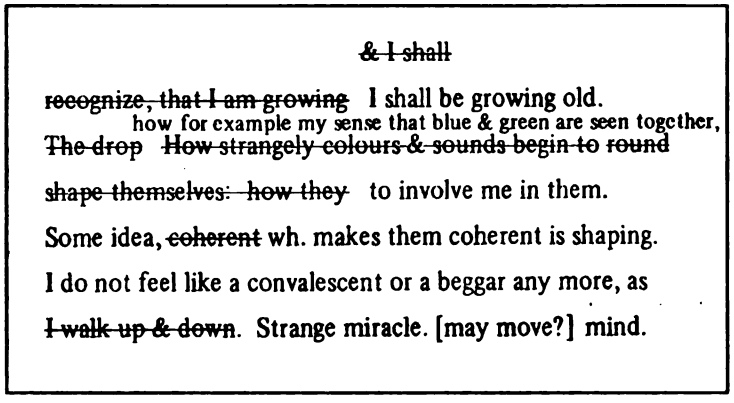
[3] Ferrer defines the usual typosensitivity of writing as the way in which "a word written to right of another word normally comes after that word" (262). Typosenstivity is similar to what I call the linear sequence of the typographical line.

[4]Though Ferrer never explicitly defines chronosensivity, his use of the term implies a meaning aligned with what I refer to as narrative time.

experience. In an attempt to make sense of the contents of Woolf's drafts, the viewer must negotiate between the way in which the text's pentimenti-like erasures appeal to the gaze and the mind's desire to actively read the page in the conventional left to right fashion. As with Rembrandt's aesthetic, the visual character of the manuscripts complicates the viewer's involvement in the art. When the observer begins to read from the top of the first page (*Holograph Drafts* 614 or figure 2), in a fashion that corresponds to the Western conventions of reading, the gaze is pulled to the sections that transgress this formulaic readerly mode to which the intellect is trained. The physical layout of these pages seems to demand that we read somewhat differently. The eye moves as it would when reading an image in a print to the middle of the page where the ink strongly asserts itself. If we do indeed follow the visual pull of the page and begin to read the deleted section, we start to seek out that which is under erasure. Following our gazes' natural attraction to the center of the text on 614 (figure 5), we arrive at the place where Woolf is working through Bernard's crisis. Woolf writes:


~~& I shall~~

~~recognize, that I am growing~~ I shall be growing old.
how for example my sense that blue & green are seen together,
~~The drop How strangely colours & sounds begin to round~~

~~shape themselves: how they~~ to involve me in them.

Some idea, ~~coherent~~ wh. makes them coherent is shaping.

I do not feel like a convalescent or a beggar any more, as

~~I walk up & down~~. Strange miracle. [may move?] mind.

Figure 5: "Shaping" (draft page 614)

As the eye scans this section, it notes the major textual transgression – the lengthy interlineation: "how for example my sense that blue and green are seen together" (figure

5). The status of this phrase is ambiguous both in its positioning and in its meaning, as it floats in the space between the perfectly divided lines of the page. Because we do not know specifically what this phrase refers to, what principle its contents are an "example" of, we are unable to fully interpret it (figure 5). In order to make sense of the fragment, the reader must choose where in the manuscript to look for illumination. If she turns to the phrase that the interlineation corrects, she only finds herself further puzzled by the continuously dangling phrases like "The drop," followed by the equally ambiguous, though less fragmentary, deletion of "How strangely colours & sounds begin to round/ shape themselves" (figure 5). Bernard's concern with "shaping" here signals that Woolf is working through the notion of agency with which the character struggles in the final version, as he tries to determine whether he is passively involved in things as they "shape themselves" or if he is actively taking part in their "shaping" (figure 5; *Waves* 188). In this instance, Bernard appears to sense the way that things apparently outside of his control "shape themselves," forming their own story beyond his creative agency (figure 5). Yet, the pressure of the deletion qualifies the truth-value of this statement concerning the world's ability to shape itself and leaves the interpreter with uncertainty as to its precise relevance in this context. If we move forward in the text away from these relatively incoherent fragments, our mind is momentarily satisfied by Bernard's complete thought "I do not feel like a convalescent or beggar any more..." (figure 5). Even though this clause clearly states that Bernard is regaining some agency, as he feels relieved from the dependency that characterizes the "convalescent" and the "beggar," the line once again leaves the reader with uncertainty, as it trails off into the peculiar status of the

erasure that simultaneously was, is not now, and will become Bernard's "walking up & down," the terrace above the Roman streets (figure 5; *Waves* 188).

Seeking some resolution to these unfinished phrases to which the eye is initially attracted, the reader's position is analogous to Bernard's who looks to make coherency from the excessiveness of his visual encounters. To shape these phrases into a meaningful order, the mind wishes to return to the top of the page and work out the meaning of the fragments it has perceived through a linear analysis that seems more compatible with the readerly page than does a visual investigation of it. Following only the gaze's pull towards the deleted areas has left the mind unsatisfied. However, for the reader, who evidently does not possess the mind of the author who could understand the editorial markings and follow the page in a more linear fashion, the drafted page does not abide simply by the laws of linear reading but also by those of a visual image that tugs at our sight. Thus, the tension between the linguistic code and the visual code remains and occurs throughout the text in different forms as one seeks to work out the riddle of the various fragments. Like the observer's involvement in the Rembrandt aesthetic that Sell describes, the viewer must investigate this textual image differently, making sense of the oddly juxtaposed and incomplete ideas as they stand in the text. The sheer abundance of possible meanings one could construe from this small excerpt seems unfathomable (figure 5). The overwhelming amount of potential meanings any deletion could evoke in relationship to its substituted phrase, its immediate context, and its "final" situation in the finished product mirrors the excessive nature of phenomenal reality that Bernard struggles to adequately interpret in the novel. The page presents a kind of interpretive impasse that seems to force the literary analyst either to compare the cancelled phrase

with a specific moment in the final text or establish some other concrete interpretative standard by which to judge the draft's markings. However, that interpretive logic works against viewing the drafts as texts to be valued in and of themselves. It also mimics Bernard's conflicted experience in Rome – the imposition of his will upon the excessiveness of experience and his resultant disappointment in his reductive translation of his visual encounters. If we wish to view the drafts in a fashion that is not simply teleologically oriented (toward explicating the final product), then we must attempt to investigate the manuscripts by following a page's visual appeal, a method which simultaneously endeavors to work against as well as take account of the grain of the readerly line.

For example, attention to the visual appeal of the text on 614 (figure 2) leads the eye to scan the page and note the many repetitions of the words "I shall"; the phrases' structural similarity (the likeness of the physical shapes of the repeated letters) immediately catches the gaze as one examines the image. As the repetition of "I shall" registers with the eye, its linguistic meaning registers with the mind and indicates future trajectory – Bernard's set of emphatic intentions to "feel some indifference," "to be subtler," and "to not bubble up" (*Holograph Drafts* 614 or figure 2). The repeated "I shall" contains a verb tense that designates an intention not yet fulfilled, and it is one that dominates Bernard's discourse at various points in the narrative when he is unable to make sense out of the his immediate experience. During such instances, Bernard's solution to the crisis of translating the excessiveness of the moment is to simply project himself out of the present and into the future, thus avoiding his immediate linguistic quandary. In Bernard's latter promise, we can perceive an echo of the final version, as

the words recall his compulsive "bubbl[ing] up" of phrases as he paced the terrace overlooking Rome (figure 2; *Waves* 188). Yet, this apparent textual "echo" actually precedes the final product with which we are familiar. Looked at from this perspective, we may then conceive of the words in the drafts as the origin of those that exist in the published version – in other words, the final version becomes the echo of the drafts. In this way, the published text thus has a secondary rather than a primary status. In other words, instead of the finished version being the privileged "work of art," it becomes a bi-product of the dynamic creative process.

Thus, the alterations of Bernard's soliloquy in draft two not only serve as prefigurations of his depiction in the published text, but they are also bound up in that peculiar temporality of the echo and simultaneously perform the several functions associated with it. Paradoxically, the draft acts as a kind of origin and something derivative, an antecedent and that which is secondary. In another article by David Ferrer called "Clemintis' Cap," he argues that the "dynamic of [the drafts] alterations" are exceptionally important in terms of the reader's experience of temporality of the text. He argues that "each trace comes to reorganize the semantic and spatial systems formed by all those that preceded it" (232). The reorganization of meaning that results from the deletions operates in much the same way as the echoic structure of Woolf's final product. Just as the novel's repetition and alteration of images continually figure, refigure, and prefigure meaning, so does each trace in the manuscripts consistently reconfigure both the linguistic and visual codes within it. Similar to the print's unfinished aesthetic, which resists the totalization of the viewer's gaze, the drafts present a structural refusal of linear interpretation. Their very incompletion prevents the closure affected by linearity's

determinate, end-oriented functioning. Though Ferrer does not attribute the temporal reconfiguration of the erasures to the tension created by the interaction between the visual and verbal elements of the page, his work recognizes the importance of the texts materiality (its spatial dimensions) and thus implicitly acknowledges the significance of the relationship among the physicality of the editorial gestures, the temporality of the text, and its possible meanings. However, Ferrer's argument, that the erasures transform the text that "precede[s] it," still operates teleologically, insofar as he seeks to explicate the final product by discerning author's progression towards that goal (232). He therefore fails to adequately account for how the reconfigurations of time manifest in the manuscript page affect interpretation.

To further elucidate the temporal complexity of the drafts and the insufficiency of Ferrer's desired reading, I provide a fairly obvious analogue for the manuscripts' temporal dimension. Though we do not always acknowledge it, the order in which a text is read is an important variable in the equation of how one makes meaning of it. Even as I write this essay, my memory of the final version of *The Waves* clearly influences my interpretation of that which was penned before them, despite the fact that I am attempting here to read the drafted pages in their individual contexts. In my endeavor to read Woolf's process, various orders of time intersect with one another and undercut the possibility of the truly teleological reading for which Ferrer seeks. For instance, the order of both my reading as well as Woolf's reading of her own manuscript determines the order of our respective compositions – what either of us writes first or second and how each then interprets that which we have written. The orders of reading and writing directly influence the order of interpretation – what we attempt to make sense of first,

second etc. These different orders of readerly and writerly experience cannot be disintricated from one another, and their indefinable interaction in one's textual experience produces a temporal state visually manifest by the indeterminate meanings of the deletions within the narrative time of the drafts that is anything but linear. Simply stated, there is no way to uncover the teleological progression of Woolf's creative process, because such is not the nature of the reading experience or the reading of experience. The echoic structure of *The Waves* is a fictional testimony to this reality. At the level of the character, Woolf's depiction of Bernard's endeavor to read his own visual experience is also paradigmatic of this fact.

As Bernard, a figure for the reader, grapples with the atemporal and alogical nature of immediate experience, we recall how these various orders of time engender uncertainty about his agency, as Bernard wonders to what extent he is reading or should willfully read experience and to what degree these different orders of experience are forcing him to be involved in them or to shape them in a particular way. When the reader looks at the top of page 615 (figure 6), which records Woolf at work on the text of Bernard's struggle, she finds a place of extreme tension, as words that denote conflicted states appear stricken with vertical slashes.

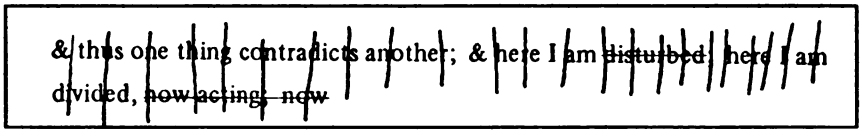


Figure 6: "Contradiction" (draft page 615)

The visual appeal of the vertical marks is forceful, because it operates radically outside of the normal horizontality of the typographical line. Both the semantic content of the ruled lines and the image of the vertical slashes convey a kind of disturbance in the text,

operating in a mimetic relation with one another, dually communicating a state of indeterminacy and conflict. The cancelled words themselves denote states of tension as they read: "contradict[ion]," "disturb[ance]," and "divis[ion]" (figure 6). The vertical marks that cover them exacerbate the turbulence linguistically signaled by the words, because they work in contra-diction to them, literally against the flow of the words in their typographical formation. For example, the sentiment expressed by the deleted fragment "one thing contradicts another" resonates with the reader's experience of this section, as the bold erasure marks and the denotative quality of the words work together to engender a feeling of discontinuity and conflict (figure 6). Woolf's erasures on pages 614 and 615 are particularly fitting as her series deletions attest to the author's own indecision about how she should cast Bernard's view of the nature and extent of human agency: "soon I am involved ... two contradictory & & thus one things contradicts another ...I am disturbed... And so let us begin ...this second chapter ...observe the formation ...of another new...altogether unmapped, terrifying rather & experience. Larpent is that man's name" (*Holograph Drafts* 614-15 or figure 2). The "two contradictory" forces that pull on Woolf's mind as she decides how to present Bernard are the modes of passive "involve[ment]" in the world and active projection of linear logic, with Bernard's "the second chapter" representing his desire to actively chart a path through the "unmapped" territory of his excessive "experience" (figure 2). In the reader's encounter with the drafts, these moments of textual disturbance present another interpretive impasse. As the reader's gaze attempts to move just beyond the heavy deletion on the top of 615 (figure 7), her eye meets a sequence of further cancellations.

The mind and the eye are relieved little in their attempt to read the body of the text, because the deletion prevents any perceptible narrative cohesion.

For this reason, the marginal notes are particularly attractive to the reader's eye. Their deviance from the main textual body tends to attract the reader's gaze, just as the other editorial markings usually do. Their position in the margin, free of the cancellations that dominate the central text, promises to clarify the confusion of the fragmented and erased body.

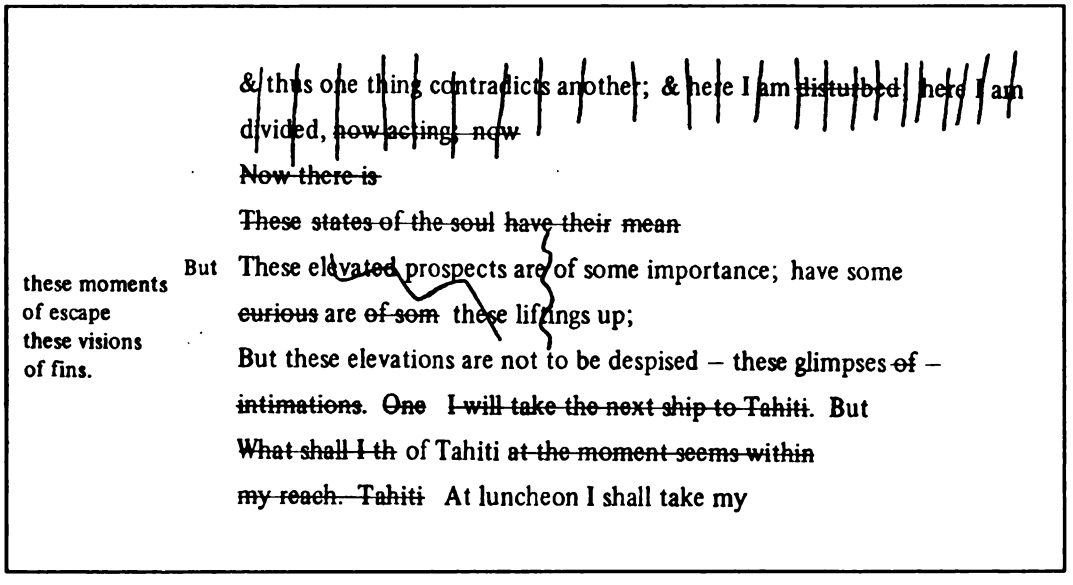


Figure 7: "Visions of fins" (draft page 615)

It is difficult to make sense of the erasure next to the marginal note that indicates an alteration in Bernard's soliloquy. In it, Woolf clearly relegates the importance of Bernard's meditation on "elevated prospects" (which apparently refers to the "great" or perennial human conflicts on the bottom of page 614) to something that is simply "not to be despised;" nonetheless, the reader senses little else but the author's continued struggle to work out the notion of agency within human experience. However, the marginal note

momentarily liberates the reader from the confused deletion of the central text, because it appears to be an explanatory side-note. It reads: "these moments/ of escape/ these visions/ of fins" (figure 7). Ostensibly unrelated to the immediate context, the image of the fin appears for the first time in any of the manuscript pages. These moments outside of the normal textual body are indeed those of "escape" for the reader in a dual sense – the margin is both a diversion from the confusing central text and a libratory mechanism from the conventional constraints that organize the sense of that textual body into a linear, readerly sequence (figure 7).

These moments of escape from the struggle in the text, both Bernard and Woolf's crisis of linguistic representation, are figured in terms of a visual phenomenon: the "vision of fins" (figure 7). But what appears as a simple moment of diversion from the tedium of translating the cancellation-fraught page becomes emblematic of a major disruptive force in *The Waves.* John Whittier-Ferguson approach to James Joyce's creation of the first page "Lessons," from *Finnegan's Wake*, can aid our reading of this marginal note. Whittier-Ferguson demonstrates how Joyce's fictional marginalia in their allegedly instructive and subordinate capacity, as the descriptive side-note, designed simply to highlight the meaning of the central text, actually fuse with that textual body. As a result of this fusion, Joyce's "Lessons" creates a paradoxical relationship between the body and Joyce's marginalia that undermines the reader's conventional belief that the peripheral notes and the central text are two distinct entities and deconstructs the idea that one is the subordinate mechanism in service to the other. Though Woolf's manuscripts can be read as type of gloss in service of the final product, they can also be *seen* as a subversive force, as an intrusion into conventional modes of reading that inevitably

reshapes our typical method of interpreting textual lines because it prevents our reading of them with the usual repeated left to right motion.

From our experience of the drafts, we see that they consistently operate on the reader via subversion of linear classifications, mainly through their variance from our readerly expectations of the typographical line. In this way, both Whittier-Ferguson approach to Joyce and my examination of Woolf's manuscripts agree with Roland Barthes' notion of "text" as a "subversive force," (157). In Barthes' "From Work to Text," he explains that the "text," unlike the "work," is not an object to be placed on a library shelf but rather a "methodological field," a "process of demonstration," and above all it is something experienced in the "process of production" (156-58). Barthes' contends that the text's inherently "subversive" or "transgressive behavior" "always involves a certain experience of limits" (157). According to Barthes, the text goes to the "limits of the values of enunciation (rationality, readability, etc)" (158). In my reading, the "text" of the drafts clearly refuses to abide by the established boundaries of conventional linear thought. Instead, they demand to be read as a disruptive image that contorts the page's "readability" and thus disturbs our habitual methods of interpretation. Not only are the marginal notes in Woolf's manuscripts subversive insofar as they challenge the old categories that divide the main body of a text from its margins, but also the drafted pages of *The Waves* participate in Barthes' notion of the text, because they are a site wherein the activity of artistic production is activated by the reader's working out of the authorial markings. Thus, the work that the drafts perform, the unconcealment of the struggle inherent in translating visual experience into language, is foregrounded in the image of the marked manuscripts. The drafts erasures both attest to the author's historical

and dynamic process of creation and actively engage the reader in deliberating about how to understand alterations like the disruptive image of the fins. In doing so, they generate a "methodological field" in which the pages' many verbal and visual signifiers play upon one another and open up the possibility for innumerable (re)interpretations of the what is typically considered the work of art, *The Waves* finished product.

In the published version of *The Waves*, the "marginal" image of the fin becomes the defining metaphor for the relationship between vision and the linguistic interpretation of experience that Bernard has been struggling to comprehend. In episode seven, directly following the terrace scene, Bernard slips into a kind of fantasy about visiting Tahiti. In this daydream, he envisages himself looking over a parapet toward the sea when the image of the fin emerges in his imaginative field of vision:

> I see far out a waste of waters. A fin turns. This bare visual impression is unattached to any line of reason; it springs up as one might see the fin of a porpoise on the horizon. Visual impressions often communicate thus briefly statements that we shall in time come to uncover and coax into words. I note under F., therefore 'Fin in a waste of waters.' I, who am perpetually taking notes in the margin of my mind for some final statement, make this mark, waiting for some winter's evening. (Waves 189)

In the above passage, many of the essential components of *The Waves* converge, the language of line and linear reason, the nature and impact of visual impressions, and the difficulty of translating visual experience into linguistic expression. In this instance, the "horizon" Bernard perceives represents both the line where the earth appears to meet the sky and a limit of mental perception. The image of the horizon line, an essential element in the linear perspective that dominates the way Westerner's conceive of visual space, figures the boundary of the human imagination. What is noteworthy for Bernard is that the vision of the fin ruptures this boundary line. When the horizon is broken by the

spontaneous emergence of the fin, it disturbs Bernard typical perspective. In this moment, he glimpses "something" that is "unattached to any line of reason," and he is therefore unable to immediately and effectively translate it into words (189). The disruptive vision challenges the confines of his habitual perspective and reasoning, as the unexpected sight registers in him with a kind of fullness that is beyond verbal articulation. Unable to process the enigmatic and profound "something" that the image discloses, Bernard reduces this experience to a fragment, "Fin in the waste waters" (189). Once again, he places it into the usual logical schema of his alphabetized notebook under "F," which he equates to the "margin of [his] mind," placing it there until the time when he might be able to "coax" the vision into words (189). Interestingly, the content of Woolf's physical margin in the drafts becomes the metaphorical "margin of [Bernard's] mind" in the finished version (189). In this way, the margin represents the site/sight that exceeds one's imaginative boundaries. Thus, the figure of the margin can be understood here as subversive in multiple senses. In its physical and metaphorical locations outside of the confines of the linear order, the margin both defines the very nature of the image and describes the structure of the kind of experience that is foundational to a story. The disruptive nature of the marginalia and its operation in the creative processes of drafting and interpretation become even more apparent as the reader approaches the last portion of manuscript two.

As Woolf nears the end of her second version, she appears to contemplate how both Bernard's story and her own narrative should end. When Bernard defines his conception of experience here, Woolf simultaneously describes the essential property of *The Waves*.

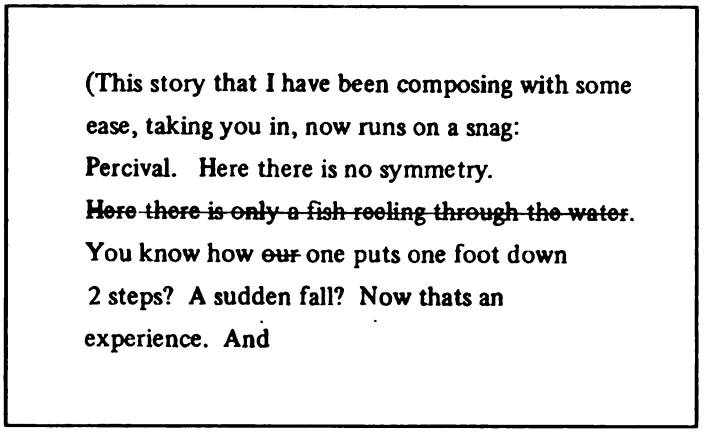

(This story that I have been composing with some
ease, taking you in, now runs on a snag:
Percival. Here there is no symmetry.
~~Here there is only a fish reeling through the water~~.
You know how ~~our~~ one puts one foot down
2 steps? A sudden fall? Now thats an
experience. And

Figure 8: "Experience" (draft page 761)

Like several other places in the drafts where Woolf's editorial marks and intermittent notes-to-self interrupt the general narrative flow, it is difficult to disintricate her editorial voice from the persona of her characters. The parenthesis that opens this section appears to indicate a part of the text that the reader should recognize as a parenthetical authorial comment. However, the parenthesis never actually closes and the contents of this page seem to apply equally to author and character alike. This ambiguity between Woolf's voice and Bernard's leads to a productive dual-reading of this passage that accounts for the confluence of two voices simply by considering the passage's meaning for both. In this section, Bernard indicates the difficulty of continuing his story, as he makes note of the "snag" on which his tale is caught, Percival (figure 8). As Woolf attempts to work her way to the end of the book, she, like Bernard her double here, must tie up all the loose threads. She thematizes her own process of approaching the end via Bernard's struggle to answer for all the parts that don't seem to fit easily into the story, in particular Percival. The status of the latter's character partakes of the logic of the echo, as he exists like a present-absence throughout the text. Percival has an indeterminate sort of being;

he neither speaks nor is he ever fully described. Yet, each of the six speakers continually refers to him, repeatedly admiring him and constantly reflecting on Percival's significance to his or her own life. In this way, he functions as a type of mythical figure – a kind of transcendental ideal to which one refers but which remains largely inaccessible and fully unrepresentable. Emily Delgaro equates Percival's being in the novel with a kind of disruptive visual perspective, one similar to the vision of the fin. She argues that he is "less a character...than an object of desire," a kind of illusive point on the horizon of each person's individual dreams (110). Delgaro contends that Percival "literally vanishes at the convergence of lines of perspective that focus him as the desire of each character" (110). For Bernard, the other speakers, who are part of his circle of friends, are not difficult to factor into his storyline. But Percival's peculiarity deviates from Bernard's normal perspective, as he pushes Bernard's vision to its limits, to the vanishing point, thus posing an indefinable obstacle to his story's close.

Even though Percival inhibits the movement of Bernard's narrative, his disruptive and alogical capacity is paradoxically foundational for the story. As Bernard and Woolf imply, disruption, variance and asymmetry (those things which deviate from a linear trajectory) are what constitute encounters with phenomenal reality. For Bernard, stories proceed from the jagged edges of thought and experience, from things that tear into the general sequence of existence, like the sight of the fin that ruptured the horizon line. They run on that which challenges the typical boundaries of perception, like the figure of Percival who embodies the vanishing point of one's perspective. As Bernard says in the drafts, this story "runs on a snag:" *The Waves* is structured out of a series of obstacles, impasses, and contradictions, like the disruptive vision of the fin, the alogicality of the

echo, and the paradoxical absent-presence of Percival (figure 8). As the drafts reveal, phenomenality translates itself not through the language of linear reasoning, but rather by way of deviation from it. Woolf equates phenomenal experience not with a clearly definable sequence of events but with the unexpected moment when one slips down two steps and falls (figure 8), deviating from the firm expectation of stepping down just one. For Woolf, empirical reality appears to have the status of an accident, in multiple sense of the word: it is something like an unanticipated fall, a mistaken and crossed-out word in a text, or perhaps the trace of a figure's hat in an etching.

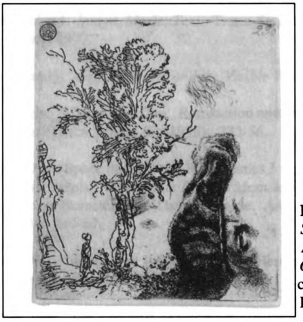
The disruptive and excessive nature of the visual as expressed by Bernard is an analogue for the reader's experience of the draft-as-image. The drafts allow the reader to perceive an aspect of the creative struggle not immediately perceptible in the final product; this visual experience is akin to that "something" Bernard sees in the vision of the fin (*Waves* 188). The disruptive moments in the drafts unsettle the reader's typical perceptual modes and open a way to think an image, a text, an experience, or a life (in Bernard's case) differently. The drafts' disruptive nature allows the viewer to gain a deeper sense of what the echoic structure of *The Waves* means to the relationship among visual experience, temporality, and the linguistic creation of meaning. The manuscripts make the reader aware of how the text repeated words and images operate on her, because its fragmentation and visual disturbance problematize her typical mode of reading and underscore their own incompletion, thereby cultivating a kind of active receptivity to the material process of creation. In the drafts, the reader must continually negotiate between the visual and linguistic codes in order to make sense out of the editorial marks, such as the marginal notes, that extend beyond the scope of the readerly

line and the linear imagination. Reading the drafts-as-image allows the viewer to perceive the textual apparatus in its formation and participate in the creative working-out of the artistic means as well as perceive language's inevitable erasure on the way to meaning.

By privileging the final version of *The Waves* over its drafts, the reader inherently subordinates Woolf's artistic process to the object of its production, concealing and demeaning the human labor of creation and stymieing the viewer's access to struggle inherent in the work of art. If we persist in the current critical vein to enshrine the final product as "the work of art," we will be mistaking its conventional privilege as "the work" for its natural superiority over the artistic process. Such an end-oriented mentality, which views the finished product as "the work of art," also tends to substitute the logic of linearity for a more difficult to imagine temporal dimension (or intersection of dimensions) embedded in a work of art. The teleological imagination, which is manifest in *The Waves* in the form of the line, tends to dominate the page, pictorial perspective, and human logic. In terms of physical vision, which becomes a trope for our ability to perceive, this linearity often restricts us to flattened appearances, to the illusory nature of things such as horizon lines. The drafts of *The Waves* visibly work against this reductive perspective. They present an opportunity to exercise the way in which our vision already takes part in the complicated temporal dimensions that our language most effectively translates when it seems to be in contradiction with itself, when it appears as it does in the manuscripts to be incomplete and fragmented, erased, written-over and marginally noted. As the primary sense engaged in reading texts (at least for the majority of us who posses the faculty of sight), their materiality comes to us foremost by way of vision. By attempting to engage with a page's subject matter, the reader must work

through the riddle of fragments and markings it displays which represent the work of the artist in process. In working through these textual pieces, the reader does not reconstruct Woolf's artistic process, but rather she sees how the struggle to make meaning is the work that the text does. Instead of simply being classed as an object, the text, as Barthes argues, is a "methodological field," and the art is the activity of making meaning within the limitations and disruptions that field (re)presents (Barthes 157).

APPENDIX



Rembrandt van Rijn,
Sheets with Two Studies:
A Tree and the Upper Part
Of the Head of the Artist,
c. 1641/ 1642
Etching

Figure 3

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