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# Writing as becoming-woman: Deleuzian/Guattarian reading of women's prose

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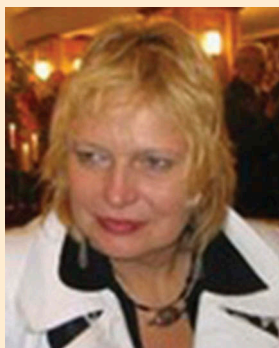
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**Abstract:** The methodological approach and starting point for this article are the idea of the difference between men and women creators as suggested and discussed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. As Deleuze and Guattari discuss the case of becoming-woman using the example of Virginia Woolf, her creative work is also a subject of reflection. This distinction is also applied to reveal the special case of becoming-woman in the prose of Lithuanian writer Giedra Radvilavičiūtė (b.1960) who has published two books of short stories: *The Planned Moments* (2004) and *Tonight I Will Sleep Near the Wall* (2010) and one of literary critique: *Persecution of the Texts*. One of her essays, *The Allure of the Text*, was included in the anthology *Best European Fiction 2010*; in 2012 she was the laureate of the European Union for Literature. The peculiarities of women's writing are the ability to move at molecular speed; molecular movements presuppose writing as a rhizome: writing in heterogeneous streams. The becoming-woman in writing means the intensity of the speed of movement between the lines, the lines of life and the line in-between life and the text, the ability to include personal experiences. Life is also felt as a very dangerous thing in itself. To become a woman in writing or in life means to have the ability to slice like a knife through everything. This ability of becoming-woman to become a master of simultaneous multiplicity makes a woman writer something of a clairvoyant.



Jūratė Baranova

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jūratė Baranova (official surname Rubavičienė, pen name Ana Audicka) is a Professor in the Philosophy Institute at the Vilnius University. She has published the following books in Lithuanian: *20th Century Moral Philosophy: a Conversation with Kant* (2004, 2015), *Philosophy and Literature: Contradictions, Parallels and Intersections* (2006), *Nietzsche and Postmodernism* (2007), *Cinema and Philosophy* (with co-authors, 2012), *The Phenomenon of Jurga Ivanauskaitė: Between Surrealism and Existentialism* (2014). She has also edited and published books in English: *Between Visual and Literary Creation: Tarkovsky and Ivanauskaitė* (2015); *Lithuanian Philosophy: Persons and Ideas* (2000), *Contemporary Philosophical Discourse in Lithuania* (2005), and with co-authors: *Rhythm and Refrain: In Between Philosophy and Arts* (2016). She has written the books of essays: *Meditations: Texts and Images* (2004) and *The Fear of Being Drawned* (2009). She is a member of the Lithuanian Writers' Union.

### PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Deleuze and Guattari discuss the case of writing as becoming-woman using the example of Virginia Woolf. This article includes the case study of the Lithuanian writer Giedra Radvilavičiūtė (laureate of the EU for Literature in 2012). Her essay *The Allure of the Text* was included in the anthology *Best European Fiction 2010*. The peculiarities of women's writing are: the ability to move at molecular speed; molecular movements presuppose writing as a rhizome: writing in heterogeneous streams. The becoming-woman in writing means the intensity of the speed of movement between the lines; the lines of life and the line in-between life and the text, the ability to include personal experiences. It is also feeling life as a very dangerous thing in itself. To become a woman in writing or in life means to have the ability to slice like a knife through everything; to become a master of simultaneous multiplicity, to become something of a clairvoyant.

**Subjects: Aesthetics; Continental Philosophy; Feminist Philosophy**

**Keywords: becoming woman; Deleuze and Guattari; Giedra Radvilavičiūtė; Virginia Woolf**

### **1. Introduction: in what sense can women's prose differ from men's?**

This article belongs to the series of articles that could be named “Deleuze studies”: at international conferences worldwide, different aspects of Deleuzian/Guattarian insights have been implemented to reflect different trends, examples and artwork. This experience revealed that Deleuzian methodology is extremely flexible and productive for reflecting different aspects of art. However, in those insights the concept of the differences between the creations of women and men has never been explored. This concept seems intriguing. The main aim of this article is to reflect upon the differences between the writing of women and men taking Deleuzian/Guattarian art philosophy as a methodological approach.

The main aim of this article is to reflect upon the differences between the writing of women and men taking Deleuzian/Guattarian art philosophy as a methodological approach. The research starts from the idea of the differences between men and women as creators suggested and discussed by Deleuze and Guattari in the book *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (*Mille Plateaux. Capitalisme et Schizophrénie*: 2, 1980). They suggest a rather sophisticated exegesis for using the distinction between a man and woman in reflecting on literature and creation. They start from the dichotomy of the two sexes: “We know that many beings pass between a man and a woman; they come from different worlds, are borne on the wind, form rhizomes around roots; they cannot be understood in terms of production, only in terms of becoming” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 242).

What does it mean that a woman's world, different from a man's, can be understood only in terms of becoming? How concretely does a woman's writing reveal this? Deleuze and Guattari take the case of Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) as an example of such a woman's writing. In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* Woolf is always in their mind. Deleuze and Guattari refer to Woolf who once specifically questioned the concept of women's writing. She was appalled at the idea of writing “as a woman.” Deleuze and Guattari explain that in the phrase “to become a writer—to become a woman” they mean that “writing should produce a becoming-woman as atoms of womanhood capable of crossing and impregnating an entire social field, and of contaminating men, of sweeping them up in that becoming. Very soft particles—but also very hard and obstinate, irreducible, indomitable” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 276).

When discussing the problem of singularity and plurality they quote Woolf's text: “I am this. I am that” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 29). Stressing the importance of plurality for becoming in the chapter *Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible* they write: “Virginia Woolf experiences herself not as a monkey or a fish but as a troop of monkeys, a school of fish, according to her variable relations of becoming with the people she approaches” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 239). As the aim of this article is not to follow Deleuzian/Guattarian methodology in order to investigate Woolf's creative work, but rather the peculiarities of women's writing, it is mainly Woolf's insights into the creative work of women, as reflected by the two philosophers, that will be considered in this article. The study will also be broadened by including in the analysis the creation of the Lithuanian woman writer Giedra Radvilavičiūtė (Figure 1), because in her prose and interviews she also reflects and reveals the peculiarities of women's writing.

Lithuanian writer Giedra Radvilavičiūtė (b.1960) writes essays that seem more like short stories or novellas. She has published three books: *The Planned Moments* (2004), *Tonight I Will Sleep Near the Wall* (2010) and *Persecution of the Texts. Essays on Writers and People* (2018). One of her essays, *The Allure of the Text*, was included in the anthology *Best European Fiction 2010*; in 2012 she was the laureate of the European Union for Literature. In 2015 she received the most

**Figure 1. Giedra Radvilavičiūtė near Jorge L. Borge’s memorial board in Geneva. From the personal archive of the writer presented to the author of the article.**



important award for a writer in her country: the National Prize for literature. In English her creation is presented in the book (Radvilavičiūtė 2013) or in the collections of stories (Radvilavičiūtė 2005b, 2011). Deleuzian/Guattarian reading will be applied to her texts to discover new lines of flight for “becoming a woman” as a writer.

## **2. Women’s writing as a slice like a knife**

To become a woman in writing or in life means to have the ability to slice like a knife through everything, notice Deleuze and Guattari having in mind their favourite writer Virginia Woolf and her character Mrs. Dalloway. Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* quote from *The Diary of Virginia Woolf* (1980) and from the two of her novels: *The Waves* (1931) and *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925). In some sense, Deleuze and Guattari treat Woolf as a real writer, but also the character Mrs. Dalloway created by her. In *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia* they write: ‘Forms and subjects are not of that world. Virginia Woolf’s walk through the crowd, among the taxis. Taking a walk is a haecceity; never again will Mrs. Dalloway say to herself, “I am this, I am that, he is this, he is that.” And “She felt very young; at the same time unspeakably aged. She sliced like a knife through everything; at the same time was outside, looking on” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 38). The writer when becoming-woman becomes the master of haecceity as well: “Haecceity, fog, glare. A haecceity has neither beginning nor end, origin nor destination; it is always in the middle. It is not made of points, only of lines. It is a rhizome” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 263).

Radvilavičiūtė describes the short portion of her life as a similar rhizome of haecceity. Life radiates various signs just here and now, in every particular moment. The writer just has to open his eyes and transform the impressions into sensations:

On a dreary summer day a teenager boy begs near a café; “Ma’am, my mother’s been gravely ill for several years now. Could you maybe ... ” The tourist couple walks past arm in arm—the elderly man and the elderly woman. The elderly man extends and holds her purse open while she searches worriedly for money and eyeglasses. A sleepy cat spread itself out on the asphalt, lying flat as a pancake because a wasp whizzes over its head like a bullet. At the beauty salon, the hair stylist asks me; “Did you dye your hair yourself?” “Myself, yes”, I respond. “It shows”, she confirms. When I return the teenager sits at the table in a café terrace and, looking into the

distance, starts eating cream puffs bought with money for his “gravely ill mother”. As I drink a cup of coffee, I count them—nine in all. And he deserves them. For his ever so convincingly created narrative. One could call that story “buyable”. (Radvilavičiūtė, 2006)

The writer in becoming-woman becomes also the master of simultaneous multiplicity. Deleuze and Guattari write: “In *The Waves*, Virginia Woolf—who made all of her life and work a passage, a becoming, all kinds of becomings between ages, sexes, elements, and kingdoms—intermingles seven characters, Bernard, Neville, Louis, Jinny Rhoda, Suzanne, and Percival. But each of these characters, with his or her name, its individuality, designates a multiplicity (for example, Bernard and the school of fish). Each is simultaneously in this multiplicity and at its edge, and crosses over into the other” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 252). Deleuze and Guattari notice that each chapter of Woolf’s novel is preceded by a meditation on an aspect of the waves, on one of their hours, on one of their becomings: “Each advances like a wave, but on the plane of consistency they are a single abstract Wave whose vibration propagates following a line of flight or deterritorialization traversing the entire plane” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 252).

One can discern in Radvilavičiūtė’s essays the one plane on consistency through which the main narrator is moving: it is obvious that she, like Mrs. Dalloway, will never transgress the limit of her plane of consistency. But on the other side, she, the same as Mrs. Dalloway, is constantly deterritorializing and traversing the entire plane. Radvilavičiūtė’s narrator reflects about herself:

I have the total freedom to be as I am. Sometimes—energetic, bright, cheerful and witty. And sometimes—categorical, angry, sweating because of every trifle and trembling. And all the world can become schizophrenic because of the last unfinished work, I have a right to walk to and fro through the rooms on Saturday morning with a radish in my teeth, with the roots on my palate, and with the end of a pencil loosen the power-ports of the room flowers. To listen to the child’s stories about Britney. How many plastic operations she has had done to become like the others. H. Miller said that if a whore in Paris is missing a front tooth, it gives her some charm. But if the tooth is missing the American whore—it is end of her career (Radvilavičiūtė, 2004, p. 41).

One can say about Radvilavičiūtė’s narrator the same as Deleuze and Guattari said about Woolf: “She felt very young; at the same time unspeakably old”. She writes very freely, with a youngster’s drive. On the other hand, she constantly feels as if she is one hundred and fifty years old. She feels “unspeakably old” when she thinks about people who live behind her and below her, when she feels how nightmares collect in the brain like coral reefs; when wanting to distance herself from some unbearable moments she tries to think of Krzysztof Kieślowski’s (1941–1996) or Andrei Tarkovsky’s (1932–1986) movies. She feels so unbearably old that she constructs the novella in her imagination with the imagined scenario of her possible funeral (“Essential Changes”). But this series of the “unspeakably old” woman runs simultaneously in a witty style. This ‘youngster’s style is inseparable from a special type of irony with which she approaches the world. The irony is interconnected with self-irony and meta-reflections about the trajectories of the writer’s job and the peculiarities of such a type of creation. Her narrator constantly jokes about the possibility of becoming “a real writer”, which means a writer who is writing not novellas, but novels. One of her characters in the novella *A Long Walk on a Short Pier* is imitating the becoming of a “real writer” after a well-known publisher phoned her and suggested she write a real novel for his publishing house. The narrator starts to reflect: “Did I really not have it in me to write a book? A real one. Some three hundred pages. Two hundred fifty, at the very least. Pamela Anderson managed it. Madonna. Even her little daughter is writing now, I hear. (Mama’s editing it.)” (Radvilavičiūtė, 2013, p. 66). In order for a writer to make her image, jokes the narrator further, one needs to begin with three things—a face, a name, and a lifestyle. She remembers getting a letter from some aging American man whose surname is Faulkner, and reflects how she would change her name in the beginning to Giedra Faulkner. In order to change her lifestyle, she took a spare pair of panty hose, a bottle of valerian extract, some brandy, a small volume by her favourite writer Nabokov and her daughter’s photograph and left home to seek a “real writer’s” adventures. She knows that: “Writers

are damned. The truly talented and passionate ones abandon their children entirely. To wives and husbands. Sisters and brothers. Fate and the law. Writers follow the rhythm of their hearts; they live apart, humming with everyday life despite keeping their eyes on eternity. In order to protect his or her talent, in order to go on providing so much happiness to thousands of very likely unhappy people, a writer cannot have either a house, or a job, or a money, or any sort of peace, spiritually speaking. He must be steeped in loneliness. Must torture himself. Drink a lot, and starve a lot ... At this point, the rhythm of my heart, without my even remembering this point, testified that I was on the right path. Inventions must be the writer's daily and only bread" (Radvilavičiūtė, 2013, p. 70).

This ironic style at the same time negates and affirms. On the one hand, through irony, it shows the phantasmagoria of the writer's profession. On the other hand, it reveals some truth about the sources of real creation. Radvilavičiūtė's narrator is not romanticizing the writer's profession, as Deleuze and Guattari frequently did (they used to repeat: the writers know even more). On the contrary, she considers it to be the most inhuman of all the possible jobs in the world. If there is some dichotomy or clash between writing as the creation and the real-life lived, Radvilavičiūtė's narrator without hesitation takes life's side. The side of those who, because of the uniqueness of the writer's profession, feel abandoned. She considers writing not as a divine spark of creation, but just as a spiritual or intellectual game. It is not very easy. On the contrary, it is serious. "Writing essays is a hybrid war with oneself," she said in one of her interviews when receiving the National Prize in literature. (Gerbutavičius R, 2016). But in any case, real life is much more important than any game is. Writing comes after life lived. Not before and not instead of it, as if following Soren Kierkegaard's insight: "One lives forward, but understands backward". 'First I need to live through a little bit of life, and only afterward turn it into credible fiction. Sometimes it works out. Most often not (Radvilavičiūtė, 2013, p. 33).

In this sense, Radvilavičiūtė's irony is reminiscent of Proust's irony. Deleuze opposed Proust's irony to Socrates', meaning that in Socrates, intelligence *still* comes before the encounters; it provokes them, it instigates and organizes them, but Proust's humour is of another nature: one must be endowed for the signs, ready to encounter them, and one must open oneself to their violence.

### 3. Life as a very dangerous thing

The intelligence always comes after; it is good when it comes after.: "< ... > *There is no Logos; there are only hieroglyphs.* To think is therefore to interpret, is therefore to translate" (Deleuze, 1972, p. 101).

In this aspect, Radvilavičiūtė's prose can be compared to Woolf's: by the intelligence which comes after. There are obvious differences: Woolf wrote novels; Radvilavičiūtė, writes short novellas. Woolf preferred to paint large impressionistic pictures with words; Radvilavičiūtė is able to be very short. Woolf is well known and famous throughout the world. Radvilavičiūtė is famous mostly in her own country. Woolf has a unique fame; Radvilavičiūtė a unique ironic style. Woolf created a literary space from the flow of consciousness of different characters and these flows intermingle and create one inner reality almost without any separation. In Radvilavičiūtė's novellas, the flow of consciousness coincides with the main narrator's voice. All the other characters are only actors, playing a secondary role in the main narrator's inner life. But the flow of consciousness of Radvilavičiūtė's narrator can be compared with Clarissa Dalloway's flow of consciousness, when Woolf gives her the main voice. All the other characters play a second role to Clarissa's reflections. Woolf just enlarges the scenery by involving equally the thoughts and emotions of Clarissa's and that of her beloved Peter Walsh with that of Septimus and his wife. Radvilavičiūtė's narrator is much more intelligent than Clarissa; her inner life differently to Clarissa's is inextricable from the culture and the world she is living in. But for both writers—Woolf and Radvilavičiūtė—the most intriguing thing that is encouraging for creation is life itself and the fluctuating emotional response to the life of their narrators and characters. Both writers are also trying to understand and to catch by the use of the words what life really is. And both use the imaginary. They both suggest a presumption that despite the

outer side of events mainly the inner side of events is what really matters. They both are trying to structure life by a series of moments of being, interconnecting the past and present, and they both have a deep intuition that life can be approached only in relation to death.

Deleuze and Guattari quoted Woolf who wrote about Dalloway: “She always had the feeling that it was very, very dangerous to live even one day” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 38). In one conversation while drinking coffee and thinking about the Russian poet Marina Tsvetaeva, Radvilavičiūtė’s narrator suddenly thinks: “I do not know what time of day she hung herself, but to me, it would be most believable if it were early morning (after first waking up)” (Radvilavičiūtė, 2013, p. 47). In *Mrs. Dalloway* Septimus commits suicide at the time of Clarissa’s party. She reflects on it, but feels no pity for him; she identifies herself with the young man, as if he were her other side: “She felt glad that he had done it, thrown it away while they went on living” (Woolf, 1992, p. 170). The next thought: she has to return to her guests at the party. In the novel *The Waves* Rhoda commits suicide. In the notebooks Woolf describes the event in more detail: “In a moment of extraordinary rashness, she killed herself. An open window had always presented to her an extraordinary attraction” (Woolf, 1992, p. 525). It was also Deleuze’s choice. Woolf filled her pockets with stones and entered the river Ouse.

#### 4. Personal experience and creation

Another point in common: Woolf and Radvilavičiūtė both rely on their personal experience. In the novel *To the Lighthouse* Woolf recollected the memories of her family life, and, as her sister reflected, created very real characters of her mother and father. The mother, the father, the grandfather, the grandmother, various relatives, the daughter, the friends, the cat and various neighbours, friends are also the main characters in Radvilavičiūtė’s essay-novellas. Woolf relied on her impressions from childhood (she used to stay near the sea) and created the metaphor of life as the rhythmical movement of waves: one-two, one-two. Radvilavičiūtė quoted the poet Aidas Marčėnas who wrote: “The river was simply like a vein through which my childhood flowed” (Radvilavičiūtė, 2013, p. 100). Rhythm plays a very important role in Radvilavičiūtė’s writings as well.

But no one creates with his or her memories or personal experiences. “To write is not to recount one’s memories and travels, one’s loves and griefs, one’s dreams and fantasies”, says Deleuze (1998, p. 2). To write is to become something other than a writer. The writer creates with style. Rhythm is part of the style. Deleuze says that American literature has an exceptional power to produce writers who rely on their personal experience to create a universal people composed of immigrants from all countries (Deleuze, 1998, p. 4). It seems that Deleuze in this conclusion was exaggerating. Proust was not an American writer, but was also relying on personal experience: for example, Laure Hayman wrote an angry letter to Proust when she recognized herself in his character Odette de Crecy. But because of his style, Proust also succeeded in creating a universal picture of the society he lived in, including three thousand different heroes. Woolf, relying on her personal experiences, also paints an impressionistic picture of her society. Through Clarissa’s stream of thought, the question of where the Queen is at the moment she is going to buy the flowers for her party comes quickly into her head: in the palace or not? And Radvilavičiūtė’s narrator also cares for “a universal people” coinciding with singular characters. But different to Clarissa, she is not thinking where the President is at that particular moment when she is going to buy radishes from the old women in Hale’s market in Vilnius. The old woman interests her more than the President does. She does not care about high society as Clarissa did and who was criticized by her beloved Peter for it. As a matter of fact, Radvilavičiūtė’s narrator is much more similar to Peter himself—much more open to the surrounding world. She lives in Vilnius (Wilno)—an international city. So she hears about everything that is going on around: she listens to telephone conversations on the buses and absorbs the slang of the city mixed from all the possible languages, she has discussions with a drunk beggar whom she found sleeping on her staircase. And her characters are from different nations (Lithuanians, Poles, Russians and Belarusians), from different social stratum and not from so-called high society. Her characters and the narrator herself are familiar with the slang of Russian professional assassins. She does not like long impressionistic expositions about every situation. She diagnoses the surrounding context in



brief—in a single remark. For example: “In Lithuania, you could figure out the length of the Soviet occupation by counting the number of Russian curses still in use” (Radvilavičiūtė, 2013, p. 10).

Deleuze sees the distinction between women in the creation and feminist art. Reflecting on cinema, Deleuze notices that female authors (as an example he often mentions Virginia Woolf) and female directors (as an example he mentions Agnes Varda, Chantal Akerman, Marguerite Duras, and Michele Rosier) do not owe their importance to “a militant feminism”. What is more important, according to him, is “the way they have produced innovations in this cinema of bodies, as if women had to conquer the source of their own attitudes and the temporality which corresponds to them as an individual or common gest (*Cleo from 5 to 7*, *One Sings, the Other Doesn't* by Agnes Varda, *Mon coeur est rouge* by Michele Rosier)” (Deleuze, 1989, pp. 196–197). As the most important examples of clairvoyants as the signs of modern cinema, Deleuze constantly mentions three women characters. First of all, it is Karin from Roberto Rossellini’s *Stromboli*, played by Ingrid Bergman. Deleuze in his interviews frequently mentions her only as a foreign woman (a Lithuanian on the Italian island Stromboli). Secondly, it is Irene from Rossellini’s *Europe* 51, whom he indicates as a bourgeois woman; and the third his beloved character is Gertrude from Carl Dreyer’s film *Gertrude* (played by Nina Pens Rode, for whom Gertrude was the most famous role). Deleuze sees all three as becoming clairvoyants because they suddenly started to “see” what is around them. They saw things the others do not see, the very essence of life. Why is mainly the woman able to apprehend this new vision of the world and life?

Deleuze, like Woolf or Radvilavičiūtė, is intrigued by this ontological and creative power of life. But “the aim of writing,” says Deleuze, “is to carry life to the state of a non-personal power”. Art and literature, says Deleuze in his *Essays Critical and Clinical*, has no other object than Life (the word is written with a capital letter).

### 5. Molecular movements in the woman’s mind

According to the philosophy of art from Deleuze’s and Guattari’s book *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, the writer is not writing as a man: a man is a molar. How one needs to understand this insight? It comes from Deleuzian other writings. Also, from the distinction between concepts of molar and molecular. Deleuze and Guattari ‘suggest that we are composed of three kinds of line: firstly, molar lines which correspond to the forms of rigid segmentation found in bureaucratic and hierarchical institutions; secondly, molecular lines which correspond to the fluid or overlapping forms of division characteristic of “primitive” territoriality; and finally, lines of flight which are the paths along which things change or become transformed into something else’ (Parr, 2010, p. 118). Man presents himself as a dominant form of expression, Deleuze states in the essay “Literature and Life”. Man claims to impose himself on all matter, whereas woman, animal and molecular always has a component of flight that escapes its own formalization. “The shame of being a man—is there any better reason to write?”, Deleuze asks rhetorically (Deleuze, 1998, p. 1). The writer is involved into a series of becoming. To write is to become something other than a writer. The becoming excludes the becoming-man as a sexual being. And creation involves the movements on a molecular level. “All becomings are molecular: the animal, flower, or stone one becomes are molecular collectivities, haecceities, not molar subjects, objects, or form that we know from the outside and recognize from experience, through science, or by habit.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 275) The movements and speeds of a woman are also molecular. So the first step in becoming a writer is becoming woman.. “My cousin once said,” Radvilavičiūtė writes in the essay *There are days*, “that all his life he was perplexed by the fact that one of his thoughts could be about some kind of salad, and another one about Fyodor Dostoyevsky or the ‘peculiarities of landscape’ in Thomas Mann’s *The Magic Mountain*. ‘How are you able to think in parallel along such different dimensions?’ he asked” (Radvilavičiūtė, 2004, p. 45).

The molar man asks the writer-narrator woman, who in her thoughts is always able to move in a molecular way. So the narrator answers that she is not any miracle. Not any exemption. ‘All women are able to think about a lot of things at the same time. That is a gift from God, but requires some effort. Similar to that of a flight operations officer who watches a screen without

taking a rest and without making any mistakes—all the planes are flying but do not collide<sup>1</sup> (Radvilavičiūtė, 2004, pp. 45–46).

Deleuze and Guattari always prefer minorities to majorities. There is no becoming-majoritarian; the majority is never becoming, writes Deleuze and Guattari. All becoming is minoritarian. And women, regardless of their numbers, and women-writers or other creators, are accepted by them as a minority because “they create only by making possible a becoming over which they do not have ownership, into which they themselves must enter; this is a becoming-woman affecting all of humankind, men and women both” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 106).

Deleuze and Guattari by this mode of becoming as becoming-woman do not have in mind imitating women’s entity or form, or even transforming oneself into it, but “emitting particles that enter the relation of movement and rest, or the zone of proximity, of a microfemininity, in other words, that produce in us a molecular woman, create the molecular woman. We do not mean to say that a creation of this kind is the prerogative of the man, but on the contrary that the woman as a molar entity *has to become-woman* in order that the man also becomes- or can become-woman” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 275–276). When a woman as a subject of enunciation says “we as women ... ” she is still molar, maybe she is feminist, but she is still not a writer.

To become a woman for a writer means to enter into a zone of the indiscernibility of women. David H. R. Lawrence and Henry Miller succeeded. The Lithuanian writer and art critic Alfonsas Andriuškevičius says that Radvilavičiūtė’s style of writing reminds him of the movements of a moth. These moth movements create multiple relations to everything around it: to the animal, the plant, and a thousand tiny things. Describing the peculiarities of her world-view in the programme for the International Contemporary Literature Forum *Nordic Summer: Reading Means Seeing* (August 24–27, 2006, Vilnius/Jurbarkas), Radvilavičiūtė reveals the inner anatomy of the appearance of this multiplicity of molecular combinations and the ability to move with molecular speed and to establish new relations with everything around it:

Under ‘Hobbies’, I might enter: breathing in the smell of apples heaped in the cellar of a country house. Or, listening to people’s conversations in a small dusty town: “Did you know that starting in July heating costs are going up?”. Swimming in a lake until God—who extends my pleasure—gives me the gift of jaws for a few minutes. Another pleasure is being surprised: I’m watching the film *Frida* and I recognize the exact same material from which one woman sewed a pillowcase for me” (Radvilavičiūtė, 2006).

## 6. Rhizome: writing in heterogeneous streams

The style of the writing in Radvilavičiūtė’s texts are characterized by a spare, very accurate and unexpectedly flexible use of language in which everyday life spans the mundane to accounts of extraordinary affect. In her essays, she unites with intermixing (similar as knitting the sweater) on equal rights rather heterogeneous streams: the impressions from everyday experience, the memories of lost time, the impression from the book her narrator had read, the impressions from the movies the narrator had watched, the impressions of reading popular journals, the reflections on the main values in life, about life and death and the meta-reflections about the peculiarities of writing as creation itself. Radvilavičiūtė for the contemporary writer suggests avoiding the one consequent plot with the ironic title of one of her essays: *I Suggest Shooting Down the Plot*. The plot of the narration “is shot down” as well in Deleuze and Guattari’s most philosophical writings. Rhizome instead of a tree is the form of the writing uniting the texts of Radvilavičiūtė with the two French philosophers. But her rhizomatic narration in writing (reminiscent of the movements of the moth) in her prose as a matter of fact has a very strict crystalline structure. The heterogeneous series interchange with each other to reveal the thought which remains unexpressed—behind the text, as Deleuze often says—the invisible forces of life lost in the heterogeneity of different lines of flight.

She reflected on her rhizomatic writing herself and compared it the creation of patchwork quilts:

Sometimes when I examine the quilt pictures, I bring my nose right up to them and I consider how the different textures and colours of the fabrics, in different forms and from different eras, have been sewn together, with the foresight, into a rational and geometric plot, laid with mine-stitches. I write in the same manner as a woman who makes those quilt pictures. I cut up the mottled language of the street and over this I stretch cottony and lofty quotations; then I allow one or another linen character to appear; I frighten myself and the reader with woolen truths, although sometimes I make these up in a polyester-like fashion, and I dilute it all with a fearful velvety poeticism. Later on, if it comes together, I affix the works to a rough, untreated canvas of generalisations (Radvilavičiūtė, 2008).

One of her essays, *The Allure of the Text*, was included in the anthology *Best European Fiction 2010*; she was the winner in 2012 of the European Union for Literature for her book *Tonight I Shall Sleep by the Wall* (published in 2010). The essay starts with a reflection of the several criteria for determining the quality of any effective text. She names several: after the text has been read, the narrative must force its way back into memory involuntary; the text cannot be far removed from experience; while reading the text, the reader has to forget everything around her/him; the narrative must reveal something new about well-known things. At first sight, it seems that the writer is writing an essay on literary studies, similar to Roland Barthes' *The Pleasure of the Text*. But when she approaches the final, the fifth criteria, the narrator confesses that she starts to panic for the reason she cannot "formulate something completely, in its totality" and "the ultimate truth becomes a mystery that I can't reveal without obvious hesitation" (Radvilavičiūtė, 2010, p. 179). It is better to find the tree with a hollow and to whisper the secret into that dark hollow. The narrator takes the idea from some Far East movies. The narrator probably had in mind Kim Ki-duk's feature film *Spring, summer, fall, winter and spring* (2003). She starts the narration with it and ends it with a slightly changed refrain, although expressing the same line of flight: by smearing honey on the camera lens she is talking as an organizer of the forum on contemporary literature (As the writer really was. See: Radvilavičiūtė 2005a, Radvilavičiūtė 2006, Radvilavičiūtė 2007, Radvilavičiūtė 2008, Radvilavičiūtė 2009). But these two heterogeneous series (the series of criteria of effective text, and the series of possibly hiding secrets) are intermixed with the two series distanced in time: the series of contingency of encounter (the narrator as an organizer of the international forum finds herself in the little town where the descendants of her beloved grandfather live; she visits these relatives, sees them for the first time in her life and reflects on her impressions) and the series of the time from the past (memories about her grandfather's fight with his brother and his two daughters, one of whom died in her teens). The intensity of the forces of the life concealed behind the texts and the crystalline type of the narration becomes visible only after reading this short story. The main point about which the narration is constructed is rather invisible from first sight: for Proust's narrator it was the taste of the madeleine cake. For the narrator of Radvilavičiūtė's novella, it was the impression caused by the photo of her dead cousin. It used to be the custom in Lithuania to take photos of the dead during a funeral and send them to relatives. The photo of the dead girl, holding the book in her hands, struck the imagination of the narrator when she was a teenager, the same age as the dead girl she never saw alive in her life (the granddaughter of her grandfather's brother he was fighting with):

She holds a book in her hands - a prayer book, too large. And, standing by the casket, there are the bereaved mother and a ficus plant. I was the same age as the deceased girl at the time. Perhaps it was precisely this that overwhelmed me. I was constantly reminded of that girl lying in her casket and the lifeless (wooden) braids lying on either side of her—when I brushed my teeth, when I squeezed the pimples on my forehead in front of the mirror, when I took out my jewelry from a little apple-shaped box, and when I cried after reading stories about true love (Radvilavičiūtė, 2010, p. 182).

The different events in the glittering life of a young person are interconnected with the refrain of the effect caused by the mark of death. At the end of the novella, the entire heterogeneous series comes together and the knot is undone. The narrator visits her relatives and her dead cousin's grave. And the interconnection between the events of the present and the events from

the past produce the double meaning of the expression: the allure of the text. The most important are not the four criteria discussed at the beginning of the story. The most important is the fifth, the unaccountable: holding the secret of why this huge book was inserted into the hands of the dead girl. The novella ends with the discovery of the title and author, and the phases of the book the girl was reading before she died and why the family buried her with it. It was *Pan: From the Papers of Lieutenant Thomas Glahn*, not the Holy book as usual. But the narrator learned that only by the contingency of the encounter: when all four series of events interchanged. This text is very close to the understanding how Deleuze and Guattari define what a novella is. “The novella,’ write Deleuze and Guattari, ‘has a fundamental relation to *secrecy* (not with a secret matter or object to be discovered, but with the form of the secret, which remains impenetrable), whereas the tale has a relation to *discovery* (the form of discovery, independent of what can be discovered)” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 193).

In a review for *Best European Fiction 2010* the critic says that like so many of the European offerings, Radvilavičiūtė gives us metafiction; that is, a story told self-consciously about writing: “Radvilavičiūtė not only lays out five exceptionally sound criteria for a worthy text, < ... > she gracefully illustrates them in the story she tells” < ... >. “Conceptually as elegant as a physics equation, containing stories within stories, highlighting the interplay between text and reality as well as offering flesh-and-blood characters caught up in a layered narrative *The Allure of the Text* is superbly realized. So *The Allure of the Text* all by itself is worth the modest price of this book” (Rosko, 2010).

## 7. Conclusion

The surrounding life exposes itself through the text of the woman-writer because for the writer to become a woman means to be formed by the multiplicities experienced in life. The writer is the one who extracts new elements from these multiplicities of lived experience and establishes new relations between the variables of life. The task of becoming-woman in order to become a writer does not depend on gender. The woman as defined by her form, endowed with organs and functions and assigned as a subject, is also a molar entity. The song of life, Deleuze and Guattari write, is often intoned by the driest of women, moved by *ressentiment*, the will to power and cold mothering. This molar woman in order to write has also like a man to become the molecular woman. To become a molecular to gain woman in writing means the ability to move with molecular speed in unpredictable different heterogeneous lines: to create multiple relations to everything around. The molecular movements presuppose writing as a rhizome: writing in heterogeneous streams. The becoming-woman in writing means the intensity of a speed of movements between the lines; the lines of life and the line in-between life and the text.

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### Note

1. Trans. Romas Kinka.

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