



“The Salmon’s Spring Out of the Water”: A Deleuzian Reading of Freedom in Iris Murdoch’s *The Unicorn*

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Abstract

The issue of “freedom” has been one of the core concepts in the history of literature and philosophy since classical times. This concept considerably contributes to the ongoing discussions of Iris Murdoch’s *The Unicorn* (first published in 1963). Unlike most of the previous studies of the novel, whose central focus is on the transcendent, moral, or biographical readings of the text, the present study draws on Gilles Deleuze’s Poststructuralist philosophy to address the immanent aspect of freedom, as the main thematic concept in the novel, as well as such related notions as power, love, desire, and becoming to determine the degrees of freedom achieved by the major characters, Hannah Crean-Smith and Effingham Cooper. The main objective of the study, therefore, is to see whether or not the two main characters can ultimately find proper lines of flight. The findings suggest that although Hannah is encoded and territorialized in the Gaze castle, she ultimately turns into a body without organs (BwO). However, Effingham fails to become an active body in his interaction with Hannah. While Hannah undergoes an absolute positive deterritorialization through her death, Effingham obtains only a relative negative deterritorialization because returning to the “real” life constantly threatens a body’s force and renders an absolute form of freedom impossible.

Keywords: freedom, Deleuzian criticism, *The Unicorn*, body without organs (BwO), deterritorialization, ethics

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Introduction

Freedom, will, action, power, and happiness together form a key concern in the history of Western thought. In the second half of the twentieth century, Gilles Deleuze (1925-95), the Poststructuralist French philosopher, opened up new horizons to freedom in his works, a number of which were written in collaboration with the French thinker Félix Guattari (1930-92). Deleuze and Guattari (2009) believe that real freedom remains inaccessible in a capitalist society since the system imitates decoding "bodies" to produce a new form of social repression. A body's movement to eliminate its static identity and fixed organization exposes it to experience a kind of desire free from Oedipal and coded investments. Potentially creative and flowing bodies that seek new machinic constructs turn into a "body without organs" (BwO), which opposes the organization of coded organs. Indeed, for Deleuze and Guattari (2004), it is by attempting to become a BwO that one can experience pure "becoming." In addition, having been influenced by Baruch Spinoza and Friedrich Nietzsche, Deleuze moves beyond the limiting, traditional "moral" ideas of good and evil toward "ethics," which in a broad and positive sense refers to how one might live (Ghaffary & Anushiravani, 2016), that is to say, to eliminate the concepts of prescription, law, and transcendent frameworks that are not within the immanent plane of life.

Freedom, suffering, and the will to power are among the dominant thematic concepts of *The Unicorn* (first published in 1963), the quasi-Gothic novel by the British writer Iris Murdoch (1919-99). The narrative revolves around Hannah Crean-Smith, a lady who, like a fairytale princess, lives in a grand, ancient castle named Gaze and spends her days sipping alcoholic beverages in her room. She is the character around whom the other characters develop, the center that the others define their identity by setting themselves off against it. Effingham Cooper, one of Hannah's lovers, considers freedom as a shallow idea better not to be discussed with Hannah, while Max Lejour, a neighboring philosopher, believes that morally everyone is a prisoner. These viewpoints considered, which definition of freedom best applies to Hannah, and how does her freedom affect the others who keep confirming or rejecting her right to be free?

Apart from the characters, the Gothic and fairytale atmosphere of the text raises philosophical, ethical, and political concerns about the nature of the challenging concepts mentioned above. What is interesting is that although the temporal setting is the twentieth century, one feels that the story is taking place in a Victorian or pre-modern context. Except for the means of transportation (cars, trains, and planes), there are no significant modern or contemporary elements in this fictional universe. This raises the question of whether human beings' concerns or problems have changed in the modern period or not, whether human beings have changed with the advancement of science and technology—and even philosophy in a sense—or not. The answer appears to be negative because although human beings have progressed horizontally, they have not taken a step forward vertically, remaining unable to resolve their spiritual or mental problems without reaching any definite or concrete answer. A proper way to tackle these issues can be assuming the

Deleuzian critical approach, which among other things addresses the new ethico-political possibilities freedom can open up in one's life.

To date, the concept of freedom in *The Unicorn* has been interpreted allegorically, morally, mythically, and symbolically. Among them, the account closest to Deleuzian thought is the one proposed by Byatt (1994), who briefly posits that "who has most restricted the freedom of the others is not clear; it is a *network*" (p. 204; emphasis added). It meets the initial criterion that bodies form a network of desiring-machines to become a BwO, even though Byatt (1994) does not mention anything positive about the network. Thus, the objective of this study is to examine how Hannah moves toward becoming a BwO, how she makes connections with other bodies, and how multiple degrees of freedom are achieved by Effingham in relation to Hannah in Gaze's territory. Besides, rather than studying Hannah symbolically, the present research attempts to "ethically" analyze how she takes her own life despite her religious and moral beliefs and examine whether she dives into chaos and ends up as an empty BwO or becomes a full BwO.

Considering the above discussion, the present study deals with the following questions:

1. In what ways does Hannah achieve freedom and become a BwO, according to Deleuze and Guattari's definition?
2. In what ways does Hannah's becoming a BwO affect Effingham's freedom in the Deleuzian sense?

Literature Review

Deleuzian Criticism and Deleuze's Concept of Freedom

Deleuze and Guattari (2009) consider "schizo(phrenic)" desire positively since it is revolutionary and progressive. Consequently, in this state a chaotic arrangement replaces an organization of coded organs, which in turn deconstructs the subject. In view of this, Deleuzian criticism "immanently" attends to difference and "rhizomatic" multiplicities instead of hierarchically "arborescent" structures. Indeed, Deleuze's philosophy dismantles the transcendent illusory image of a presupposed subject. In literary theory, this idea would weaken the priority of having "a" theory because texts, like life, constantly differ and are open to new possibilities. This is why Colebrook (2015) believes that "[t]o read in a Deleuzian manner is to reread" (p. 209); therefore, a significant question to Deleuzian critics would be what the text "does as an event of becoming," not what it "means" (Colebrook, 2015, p. 201).

The Deleuzian understanding of freedom is a break with the previous subjective will of liberation, meaning that for Deleuze freedom is "a condition of the new" (Smith, 2012, p. 350) when one's understanding of oneself alters. Thus, freedom can be defined as becoming; in other words, freedom is leaving a confining, fixed "territory" to find a "line of flight" or escape route when the individual turns into a BwO and loses the previously imposed organization. As it turns out, breaking up with all territories and going through an "absolute deterritorialization" eventually

results in an apocalyptic situation where a new plane of immanence is constructed, and no "reterritorialization" is expected (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). However, in contrast with this positive aspect, there is a possibility of closure, a deterritorialization into a "black hole," a trap out of which there is no line of flight (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). This latter situation is in line with one's being obsessed with one's own subjectivity.

Nail (2017) offers a practical classification of different types of deterritorialization in Deleuze's thought, dividing them into four main categories: 1) "relative negative deterritorialization," 2) "relative positive deterritorialization," 3) "absolute negative deterritorialization," and 4) "absolute positive deterritorialization" (pp. 34-36). The first one occurs when deterritorialization is followed by a reterritorialization that succeeds in imposing the "majoritarian" codes in the end and a line of flight remains unachieved. In this case, "these desires become normalized as part of the state itself" (Nail, 2017, p. 35), and the capitalist-established ideology is reproduced. The second one produces new "desiring machines," and certain revolutionary forces are freed; however, the dominant organization, that is, the state, does not radically change. The importance of this type is that it triggers the appearance of a new people (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). The third one leads to the formation of an "empty BwO," a black hole where the body is destroyed instead of becoming disorganized. Finally, the fourth one, which is the ideal type, overcomes any form of reterritorialization, finds a line of flight, and brings about a new kind of people; thus, it is "capable of creating and sustaining a revolutionary movement" (Nail, 2017, p. 36). This classification system provides a basis for the present study so far as the degrees of freedom in the two characters selected from Murdoch's novel are concerned.

Studies on *The Unicorn*

So far, no Deleuzian reading of this novel has been recorded. Previous researchers have either sought to examine the author's intention or the text's allegorical, mythological, and symbolic meanings. For instance, in his foreword to the Spanish version of *The Unicorn*, Echevarría (2014) suggests the religious symbolization of the unicorn as Jesus Christ in order to justify Hannah as a sacrificial figure who would play the role of a "scapegoat" (p. 9). However, Hannah is more complex a character than what Echevarría (2014) attempts to present, as will be discussed in the present study. Later, Andor (2016) explores "unicornhood" in the novel and, thus, studies Hannah and Denis Nolan as the two representative unicorns based on medieval and Christian images. Contrary to such readings, the present study does not aim at analyzing the symbolic and mythological references to find the proper meaning. Rather, a Deleuzian approach toward minor literature studies how language sets the ground for "the *creation* of identity rather than the *expression* of identity" (Colebrook, 2002, p. 104; emphasis in the original).

Byatt (1994) studies Hannah's character based on Sigmund Freud's account of the king who desires others' protection. On this reading, Hannah enslaves and bounds the others, making them all dependent on herself. Byatt (1994) maintains that "Hannah's loss of innocence has *reduced* them all to animals" (p. 195; emphasis

added), which is not dissimilar to Deleuze's notion of "becoming-animal." Nonetheless, Byatt regards such a metamorphosis negatively, whereas in Deleuzian philosophy becoming-animal is a path to break out of subjectivity toward "virtual" reality, that is, to be freed of boundaries. The present study's main concern is to explore how Hannah's desire leads the other characters toward various degrees of freedom.

Besides, Effingham, as a courtly lover, is extensively discussed in many studies. Farhani Nejad (2017; 2018) interprets Effingham's courtly love to be egoistic. This claim would be paradoxical by Deleuzian standards since he believes that courtly love is opposed to pleasure. Deleuze and Guattari (2004) associate the former with unselfing and the latter with subjectification; therefore, it will not be possible for Effingham to be at the same time a courtly lover and an egoist. Moreover, Deleuze and Guattari (2004) denounce Lacan's assertion (2006) that courtly love signifies lack, on the grounds that courtly love is neither a lack nor a law toward "an ideal of transcendence" or any kind of "external pleasure"; rather, courtly love "constructs its own field of immanence" (p. 173). In this regard, a courtly lover constantly seeks absolute deterritorializations, awaiting chivalric quests during which he would fall in black holes (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004)—a situation reminiscent of Effingham's fall into the bog. Taken together, it seems that Effingham should either be an egoist or a courtly lover from a Deleuzian viewpoint, a case which is examined below.

Method

This research adopts the Deleuzian literary-critical approach to conduct a qualitative library research based on content analysis. Adopting this critical approach sheds new light on the concept of freedom in *The Unicorn*. Moreover, among other Poststructuralist literary theories, Deleuzian criticism is chosen since its positive approach opens up new possibilities for the text, goes beyond traditional concerns, and analyzes the text from an "ethical" rather than a "moral" perspective. This theoretical framework does away with the dominant biographical, "transcendent" readings of Murdoch's fiction in which her novelistic works are interpreted in light of the themes discussed in her own philosophical writings (such a "resistant" reading has been practiced in the case of Murdoch's other novels by Ghaffary, 2019; 2021). Besides, Deleuze and Guattari (2009) believe that Freud-Lacanian psychoanalysis fails to critique the psycho-political power that channels subjects. Instead, Deleuze and Guattari (2009) propose "schizoanalysis," a reading strategy that values the creation of new concepts and freedom and also recognizes schizo minds that constantly desire new connections and "machinic assemblages."

Results

The Unicorn's narrative revolves around Hannah, a lady who, like a fairytale princess, lives in a grand, ancient castle. She spends her days sipping alcoholic beverages in her room. The novel begins with the arrival of a governess, Marian Taylor, at the mysterious Gaze castle. There, she finds that the wealthy Hannah is locked up by her husband, Peter Crean-Smith, because seven years ago, she was

caught having an affair with the neighbor's son, Philip Lejour. Hannah was then imprisoned and watched over by a small number of "jailers" after a bitter struggle with Peter. Things are set to change now, toward the end of the seventh year, with the rumor of Peter's return to Gaze.

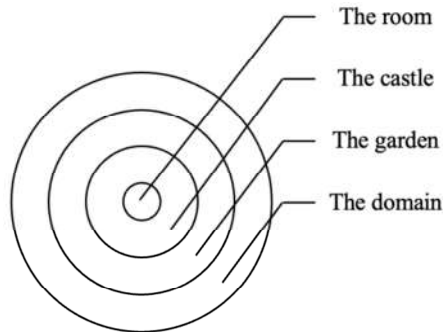
The Overcoding Territory at Gaze

Prior to any becoming and deterritorialization, there is a state of being and territorialization from which a body departs. On this account, it is important to discuss the features of the territory in which Hannah is placed before addressing her becoming. Life at Gaze is quite encoded, as expected in an enclosed organism. In hierarchical systems, axiomatic codification allows the dominant system to fixate flows in favor of the majoritarian benefits, disconnect forces from desiring productions, and prevent any formation of a full BwO (Deleuze & Guattari, 2009). Accordingly, at Gaze, every movement or flow inside the organism is restricted or structured as a social means of coding.

Hannah is initially bound "to the domain" via her marriage, according to Denis, she is later restricted "to the garden" following the first rumor of her husband's return (Murdoch, 2000, pp. 62, 63). At the time of Marian's arrival, Hannah is confined to the castle and near the end of the novel, when there is another rumor of Peter's coming back, she will be imprisoned in her "room for ever," Marian assumes (Murdoch, 2000, p. 242). In this situation, the flows of the state power intend to reterritorialize Hannah's constant deterritorializations, which results in developing a new kind of reactive and axiomatic assemblage each time Hannah is on the verge of displacement, leading to the most extreme form of reterritorialization. As Deleuze and Guattari (2004) warn, a line of flight—the point where forces are free of codes and organisms—might become futile, lead to the worst, sink into a black hole, take "the path of greatest regression," and reconstruct "the most rigid of segments," which is "worse than not escaping at all" (p. 227). Figure 1 depicts the process of Hannah's gradual, multilayer restriction over seven years:

Figure 3.

Hannah's Gradual Reterritorializations



Among the four kinds of deterritorializations previously explained, these confinements are the consequence of relative negative deterritorializations, immediately followed by forms of reterritorialization that have effectively confined or hindered Hannah's possible lines of flight. In figure 1, each of the concentric circles stands for a line of flight turned into a line of destruction. As the narrator states, a "legend" has spread among the locals that if Hannah "comes outside the garden she will die" (Murdoch, 2000, p. 64). This usage of the term legend can be taken as a euphemism for superstition, which seeks to establish Hannah's fixed identity. Forging a unifying identity means to "repudiate the will itself" (Deleuze, 1983, p. 7); thus, through superstition, the dominant ideology at Gaze intends to stop Hannah's will to power as a desiring machine. In point of reality, the symbolic stone wall of the centralized, organizational, moral convictions is far more challenging to break down than the physical walls of the Gothic castle engulfing her.

Decoding Hannah

Categorizing, classifying, possessing, interpreting, or "overcoding" Hannah is what people around her are constantly doing to make sense of her (in)action. For instance, Hannah has achieved a tremendous and deep peace of mind, according to Denis, since "she has made her peace with God" (Murdoch, 2000, p. 66). There is a "reactive triumph," an "ascetic ideal," or a "will to nothingness" (Deleuze, 1983, p. 57) in such a belief that will end in a body's becoming nihilist. Deleuze's philosophy is in conflict with Denis's assertion since it results in a denial of life, for such a narrow perspective undervalues the diversity and originality of Hannah's life experiences and abandons the concept of immanent experimentation in favor of ideal salvation. Hannah is, therefore, plunged into a "familialist" vision by Denis (see Deleuze & Guattari, 2009, p. 117).

Of all the characters, it is only Max who does not take away any power that Hannah might hold. Besides, he is the only one who does not strive to jump to a hasty conclusion on what / who Hannah is, feeling that she cannot be dogmatically classified. Effingham depicts Max's study as facing "inland with a view of stony nibbled grass" from where Gaze is not visible (Murdoch, 2000, p. 79). This description is relevant to Max's nonjudgmental attitude on the grounds that he is most probably the only one who does not "gaze" at Hannah since he also never leaves his room.

Max's attitude runs counter to Stewart's (2002) claim that Max misjudges Hannah and keeps staring at Gaze. Even when Max witnesses the others' attempts to make sense of Hannah, he believes that they have all "turned towards her to discover a significance in their sufferings, to load their own evil on to her to be burnt up" (Murdoch, 2000, p. 268). For example, when discussing Hannah with Effingham, the latter feels that "one mustn't think of her as a legendary creature, a beautiful unicorn" (Murdoch, 2000, p. 98), but Max comes up with an alternative connotation for the word "unicorn," i.e., its relationship with the figure of Jesus Christ. Despite Brandabur's (2016) claim that both Effingham and Max regard Hannah as a scapegoat, one can argue that Max dismantles Effingham's effort to essentialize Hannah by bringing up other instances of what the concept of unicorn may imply.

Therefore, the implication of Max's alternative understanding is to deconstruct Effingham's entrenched, limited view of a unicorn. In fact, Max's anti-essentialist view of what a unicorn signifies is analogous to Deleuze's anti-foundationalist, non-hierarchical thoughts that make it possible for machines to form new assemblages, connections, and momentary functions.

In the same line of argument, a unicorn is a "supernormal" and "unclassifiable" entity that transcends traditional realms between humans and animals like a phenomenon of bordering and forming multiplicities, comparable to what is known as the "anomalous" (Gardner & MacCormack, 2017, p. 10) or "hybrid" (Suhr, 1964, p. 91). In Deleuze and Guattari's (2004) terms, the anomalous "has only affects, it has neither familiar or subjectified feelings, nor specific or significant characteristics" (p. 270). Being anomalous, Hannah constantly moves between the two extremes of the binary opposition of human and non-human, while Max plans to challenge the distinct categories into which she may be classified. In his philosophical dialogue with Effingham, Max further states that Hannah would be much better off if she did not feel guilty for her actions throughout her marital life since guilt "keeps people imprisoned in themselves" (Murdoch, 2000, p. 98). According to his ethical stance, good and desire are interchangeable terms, in accordance with Deleuzian ethics. This section has attempted to provide an analysis of how, unlike the other characters who try to interpret Hannah and understand what she possibly "symbolizes," Max reads Hannah in a way that disembodies her and constantly deterritorializes what she can signify so as to free her from imposed codes.

Hannah's Becoming a BwO

In this section, the question of Hannah's becoming a BwO is examined, which is crucial in answering the first question of the current research. To this end, the first subsection begins by postulating that although Hannah is physically silenced in the narrative, her becoming-active impacts on the narrative's becoming rhizomatic. The second subsection explains how becoming non-human (bat, vampire, and salmon) opens up new possibilities of developing a body's potential to shatter the boundaries of a human body's organism and then moves to seeing how these are applied to Hannah's case. The third subsection discusses how suicide can be Hannah's ultimate way of affirming her will to power.

Hannah's Silenced Voice

Hannah was a reactive force from an early age, governed by her family, who had planned her arranged marriage. Hannah's later personal transformation is affected by her relationship with her father, who serves as a social, psychological, and moral judge. Hannah's father has her trapped in a cycle of repeats, just as an image of the authoritarian system, or a "suspicious agent of anti-production" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2009, p. 298), who represses machinic assemblages. Hannah's father wants her to have a peaceful existence, one in which she is only a passive participant in her experiences rather than one in which she is actively involved.

Not only Hannah but also the novel's language and plot structure come under this ideological domination. Hannah's voice is never heard in the text. The reader never finds the chance to enter her consciousness; instead, either Marian or Effingham, as the internal focalizers of the narrative, takes the lead in developing the story and fragmentarily represents Hannah's putative discourse. Marian is cast in the role of the internal focalizer in twenty chapters (1-7, 15-19, 25-29, 31-32, 34) and Effingham in fifteen chapters (8-14, 17, 20-24, 30, 33, 35). As the narrative draws closer to its end, one can see that the shifts between these two internal focalizers rapidly change. There is no conventional narrative authority. As the text nears its end, Hannah is seen from an increasing number of changing viewpoints that build a network without a center since a network, according to Deleuze, serves to both oppose and generate other networks (see Stivale, 2008).

Interestingly, as the story unfolds, the shifts between the focalizing characters become increasingly noticeable. The narrative becomes more destabilized, starting with the thirtieth chapter, the section in which Hannah's progress toward becoming a BwO accelerates. According to Deleuze and Guattari (2004), a BwO seeks to produce a less unified basis for mechanical encounters, thereby speeding up the movements of desire. This is the effect of Hannah's becoming on the novel's narrative structure. Furthermore, another argument must be made concerning Chapter Seventeen, the only chapter where both Marian's and Effingham's thoughts are accessible to the reader. The importance of this narrative style is that in this chapter Marian and Effingham are united to lead and define a life project together to release another body from constraining bounds. As a result of the interconnection of the discontinued, multiple voices participating in this chapter, the narrative "becomes rhizovocal": When experiences and bodies are connected through their voices, a noncoherent "rhizovocality" occurs in which "conflict, confusion, and possibility proliferate" (Jackson, 2003, pp. 706-707), such that the decentralized focalization allows for new differentiating fields of possibility at the same time that the narrative is evolving in unrestrained, different ways. This is also comparable to a polyphonous discourse, for polyphony, as Deleuze (1998) argues, "is not a totality but an assembly" (p. 59). Therefore, becoming-rhizovocal is a means of finding a line of flight in the narrative and a way of overcoming an authoritarian, arborescent, coherent voice in describing Hannah, in such a way that although her inner voice is not heard, her becoming a BwO makes it difficult for the narrative to describe her from one single focalizer's viewpoint. Having defined what is meant by overcoming the power of ideological dominance in silencing a force, the following sub-section moves on to discuss the importance of Hannah's experience of becoming-animal by giving up on a fixed human identity.

Hannah's Becoming-Nonhuman

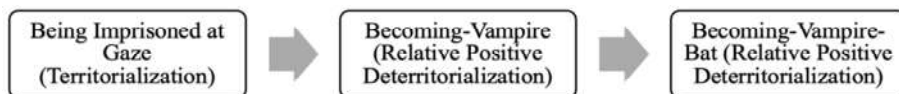
Becoming-animal is crucial and significant in leading Hannah toward forming a BwO. In Chapter Four of the novel, when Denis brings a bat into Hannah's room, Marian feels like "she could hardly bear Mrs. Crean-Smith and the bat together as if they were suddenly the same grotesque helpless thing" (Murdoch, 2000, p. 40). In fact, Hannah and the bat are not identical; rather, they just express the same "affects," i.e., pre-subjective nonpersonal intensities of life expressed by a body as a

way of establishing desiring-production (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). This narrative situation is in line with Deleuze's (2003) argument about Francis Bacon's paintings in which the artist constitutes "a *zone of indiscernibility or undecidability* between man and animal. Man becomes animal, but not without the animal becoming a spirit at the same time, the spirit of men, the physical spirit of man" (p. 21; emphasis in the original). Deleuze (2003) goes on to say that the sense of becoming-animal is not the sentimental identification between a human being and an animal, but it forms a "deep identity" since "the man who suffers is a beast, the beast that suffers is a man" (p. 25). Interestingly, Hannah addresses the bat as a "nice beast" (Murdoch, 2000, p. 40), while it remains a bat to Marian. Now, one might wonder what it is that renders this interaction between Hannah and the bat unique. Hannah's room is as dark and lonely as a cave, and bats generally reside in caves. Perhaps, this is why Hannah empathizes with the injured bat. On this view, the bat's death foreshadows Hannah's death at the end of the narrative. Additionally, part of what Hannah virtually experiences as a bat is not about their shared perceptions but rather is the bat's way of connecting to and interacting with the world. Hannah's becoming-bat is the outcome of her alliance with the world as well as the affects she and the bat have in common.

Becoming-animal is fulfilled in bats in a mythical way. In the Book of Leviticus, the bat is considered to be "both bird and mammal" (MacCormack, 2009, p. 142). When Marian perceives the bat, she notices its "little toothy mouth" (Murdoch, 2000, p. 40). Most probably, it is a vampire bat, in which case it resembles the human vampire. Furthermore, vampire bats and human vampires are both nocturnal creatures (Pisters, 2003). Throughout the novel, there are several instances when Hannah's room is mentioned as being dark and curtained. During Marian's first visit to Gaze, she is surprised to discover that there is no electricity in the "three-storey eighteenth-century" castle (Murdoch, 2000, p. 13). Torches and oil lamps are the sole sources of light. To be more exact, Hannah undergoes becoming-vampire-bat. Put another way, if becoming-vampire is the deterritorialization of a being-man, then becoming-bat leads to what Deleuze and Guattari (2004) call a "double deterritorialization" (p. 338) of the same process. The path of Hannah's transition from her fixed state of being to the process of becoming-different is represented below in Figure 2:

Figure 2.

Hannah's Becoming-Vampire-Bat



It should be stressed that Hannah's becoming a vampire or bat does not suggest that she is a vampire or a bat because to make such a claim would reduce this reading to a molar understanding and a false representation; rather, it demonstrates how she interacts with multiplicities, which leads her to explore lines of flight that stretch without any particular beginning or ending.

Addressing Hannah's growth does not stop here since how she feels about the salmon fish is just as important as her feelings for the bat. Hannah has always had a desire to flee, though it is never explicitly expressed. Her feelings for salmons jumping out of a pool conjure a fantastic vision. In Hannah's words, "[i]t's a most moving sight. They spring right out of the water and struggle up the rocks. Such fantastic bravery, to enter another element like that. Like souls approaching God" (Murdoch, 2000, p. 43). In truth, thinking of salmons as brave because they dare to leap out of the water suggests Hannah's desire to experience such a leap out of the water in which she has been drowning. Furthermore, she experiences herself as a shoal of fish that exist basically as a pack or multiplicity, rather than a specific or solitary salmon, just as becoming-animal does not mean becoming a specific animal but a pack or band of animals (see Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). One may feel that Hannah is experiencing the salmons as if she were becoming indistinguishable from the image she beholds. At this moment, her perceptions begin to enter the impersonal realm of sense.

As Denis once notes, salmons dare to fly high out of the water despite the possibility that they would hit a rock and perish instead of falling back into the water. Interestingly, Marian observes a dead fish the night Hannah takes her own life. There is no clear textual evidence that would indicate that the salmon reminds Marian of Hannah, but it is a sign of Hannah's becoming courageous, active, and a fish-like animal that dares to breach the established layers of its existence. In the end, Hannah proves to be a "minoritarian" body that seeks to deterritorialize the fixed subjectivity enforced on her throughout her life.

By her death, Hannah becomes one with her surroundings, an integral part of the scene as if she were becoming a living organ in the natural world. Here, it is worth noting not just the picture of the dead salmon but also the raging and probably impassable river on the night of her death. Denis relates Peter's death as follows: When the automobile drove into the sea, Peter started to pull himself out of the car, and it was at that point that the water, in a personified way and endowed with agency, "kept the door shut" (Murdoch, 2000, p. 261), as if the sea had swallowed Peter. Here, the language attributes a consciousness to the sea, portraying a "surrealistic landscape" (Trench, 2000, p. 10).

Thus, together with Denis, nature—with whom Hannah has become one—takes part in killing Peter, and it is no more certain to claim that Denis alone killed Peter, as Cosenza (1992) does, for the personified sea has an undeniably active role in killing him. This is important in understanding Hannah's becoming and the significance of her death. In sooth, Hannah's connection with nature forms a powerful force to diminish Peter's dominating power and protect the land against an uncertain future. To summarize, Hannah eternally returns to Peter, though differently. The effect of Hannah's becoming "*la mer, la mer, toujours recommencée* [the sea, the sea, the ever rebegun]" (Murdoch, 2000, p. 43) is similar to Tomazic's (2005) report on how Paul Valéry's poem foreshadows the deaths that are to come.

Hannah's Suicide as Action

Before proceeding to examine Hannah's suicide, it is important to note that Deleuze does not offer a rigid definition of suicide. As a Nietzschean thinker, Deleuze (1983) believes that life is to be praised and one is to affirm the will to power actively; however, elsewhere he claims that death "refers to the state of free differences when they are no longer subject to the form imposed upon them by an I or an ego" (Deleuze, 1994, p. 113). According to his second statement, one can argue that sometimes a force can affirm its ultimate becoming by taking its own life. It is almost certain that Hannah has been suffocating under the weight of the others' sympathies. It is as if a reactive life had gripped her throat. However, Hannah's will takes over the negative, reactive force. It instills in her a new desire to harm herself, but this time actively. Suicide, in Deleuze's (1994) words, can be "a protest by the individual which has never recognized itself within the limits of the Self and the I" (p. 259). Thus, Hannah can recognize the will to power as the will to affirmation and to escape "passive nihilism" due to her earlier painful experiences of resentment and the reactive spirit of retribution she had endured.

As Hannah embraces her destiny, she demonstrates a kind of "active nihilism," the "joy of destruction" (see Deleuze, 1983, p. 191), unlike a passive nihilist who is rendered powerless. When the moral system tries to force her into a fixed identity or order that she does not desire, she uses her creative destruction ethics to resist it. Had she chosen to tolerate being trapped in a static territory like being confined in her room (or, even worse, the rear room), she would have stupidly forfeited any other chance of escape (see fig. 1).

What is more, in writing her will, Hannah once again affirms her will to power, meaning that she will not allow the others to make choices about her and further possess her even when she dies. This is a powerful statement of her self-determination. Hannah, as a masochist body in the sense conceived of by Deleuze (1991), is aware of Effingham's inaction and the pleasure he derives from just watching her suffer. In this situation, she allows them to develop their sadistic ideas and gives them the impression that they are still strong when, in reality, she has already picked Max to be the recipient of her gratification. Furthermore, she does not let these other bodies inflict misery upon her; instead, she herself picks her successor. Hannah does not seek to appease the sadists but rather the one who does not take joy in her pain. This is reminiscent of what Deleuze (1991) dubs the "masochistic contract," which is a personal act of will on the part of the masochist that "excludes the father" and transfers "the task of exercising and applying paternal law" to the mother (p. 93). In doing so, Hannah is once again actualizing her potential power through her death. Death, in her case, is a component of the becoming process.

Hannah's attempt to form a strong body is stifled by one dogmatic point to which she repeatedly returns, namely the second rumor of Peter's return, as the stronger, dominant body, in Chapter Thirty. Hannah begins to realize it when she first learns of Peter's homecoming. At this moment, she asks for some tea for the first time instead of an alcoholic drink, indicating that she has stopped making her

body inefficient, empty, or cold, which would lead to no positive totality with empty BwOs. Hannah has always been able to endure that which is overwhelming or even frightening in her life due to her habit of drinking alcoholic beverages. Drinking tea heats her body, causes a kind of rupture in her being, and prepares it to be tied with an external BwO, and it does not destroy or fool her as alcohol does. An alcoholic body seems to be comparable to what Deleuze and Guattari (2004) refer to as a “drugged body,” which forms an empty BwO. Alcoholic drinks, like drugs, lead the body into black holes because although alcohol and “drugs are linked to this immanent, molecular perspective” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 313), they impose a limit on the body’s activeness, making it satisfied with an imitative, illusory image of a plane of consistency. Moreover, drugged bodies “continually fall back into what they wanted to escape” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 315). In Hannah’s case, giving up alcohol to drink tea signals her tendency to overcome further reterritorializations and the “eternal return” of the same.

As was pointed out in this sub-section, Hannah does not end up as an inactive force who passively waits for Peter to come back and unlawfully / immorally imprison her in the castle; she resists becoming an empty BwO and undergoing an absolute negative deterritorialization through the following acts: first, deciding her own death; second, writing her will; third, avoiding alcoholic drinks and, finally, actualizing this virtual power by taking action and killing herself. Moving on now to consider one of the other central characters, the following section examines Effingham’s journey of becoming at Gaze.

Effingham’s Desire for Hannah

Effingham visits Riders only in summers, a time conventionally remindful of happiness, freedom, youth, joy, and adventure. He is cast in the role of internal focalizer in the narrative discourse only after the eighth chapter, when he is on a train to the village after six months. As he describes it, Effingham’s feeling for Hannah is more of an “outrageous passion” (Murdoch, 2000, p. 71), a way to reassert his self-control. The key problem with his utterance is if this passion is identical to pleasure or desire, the difference between which is noticeable in Deleuze’s philosophy.

Effingham’s passion for Hannah should not be mistaken for schizo (phrenizing) love. His passion is for the sake of pleasure, a repressive desire driven by lack and outside the plane of immanence. Pleasure is an “interruption in the process of desire,” and it discharges the body of immanent desire because pleasure contains “a lot of hatred, or fear, of desire” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. 99). Accordingly, pleasure only leads to reterritorialization (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004).

Effingham’s desire for Hannah is Oedipal, paranoid, and a sick form of love, as opposed to schizophrenizing or schizophrenic love. He believes that Hannah had always been “the chaste mother-goddess, the Virgin mother” and that her sin “had been the sin of his own mother’s betrayal of him with his own father”; thus, he had always attributed to Hannah “his unconscious resentment of his own mother’s sin of sex” in the form of “Courtly Love” (Murdoch, 2000, pp. 232-233). The point is that his desire for Hannah has been sedentary. He is just interested in enslaving Hannah in another type of dependency, not in emancipating her from enslavement.

The difference between courtly love and chivalric love is that in the former the lover is a sentimental hero "internal" to love, whereas in the latter the lover is a war valor "external" to love (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. 101). Effingham is not interested in assisting Hannah for her own sake; instead, he has an external or transcendent purpose in mind: achieving his own honor and overcoming his castration anxiety. Effingham wants to have Hannah domesticated, under control, blocked, and coded so that he can restrict her freedom. This is contrary to what schizo love does to a body for, as Hardt (2007) states, one transforms and loses oneself when one falls in love and becomes different.

True love, or schizo love, is a practice toward "depersonalization on a body without organs yet to be formed" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 40). Put differently, schizo love is absolute positive deterritorialization. It disrupts organism and identity, so that the body can experiment with new flows, percepts, and affects. As Protevi (2003) explains, according to Deleuze and Guattari, schizo love is "anti-Oedipality itself" (p. 187). This is why Effingham prefers his recurrent dream about rescuing Hannah—wherein he can be the chivalrous knight—to trying to make it come true. Like an Oedipal subject, he wants to see Hannah enclosed within her bedroom, not in a wide-open space where new flows would circulate. Following Ghaffary (2021), if one considers an Oedipal body as a static image of a "being-man," as opposed to "becoming-woman" (p. 234), then one can argue that Effingham remains emblematic of a majority for whom becoming will be impossible. From a Deleuzian-ethical standpoint, Effingham is a "bad" individual who "felt his guilt merge with resentment, and with the sheer fear" (Murdoch, 2000, p. 235) of Hannah. Effingham has always wanted Hannah's capacity to act curtailed so that she would have to depend on him. He continues to be an Oedipal figure who does not transcend his restricted sense of himself since he can never transcend the Oedipal triangle. He ends up being a fixed figure who is narcissistic, apathetic, and incapable of becoming different.

The last epiphanic moment occurs to him when Hannah's selection of Max as her heir is disclosed, shattering Effingham's delusions: "she is taken from me entirely. Max will scatter the earth upon her. Max will speak her funeral speech. Max will tell the world what she was" (Murdoch, 2000, p. 254). Effingham imagines Hannah preferring a body over him, and hence he envies Max. Effingham is, in truth, a weak and reactive body, in the Nietzschean-Deleuzian sense, that is bitter and jealous of the active force. On this reading, Effingham has a negative perspective on Max, about which he resentfully reflects and as a result of which he characterizes himself as "good" and Max as "evil."

Now that Effingham realizes Hannah has appointed Max as her heir, he directs his rage and hatred toward Max as if he were the father in the Oedipal triangle. Deleuze (1994) maintains that "[t]he passive ego becomes narcissistic," and the narcissistic ego repeats itself in the guise of a lack (p. 110), and this is exactly what Effingham does in this narrative as his libido is not ultimately liberated. Effingham had long believed that "Max had lived for him, had lived his other life [...] on each return" to Riders before this happened (Murdoch, 2000, p. 79; emphasis added). This is an indication of "the eternal recurrence of Oedipus" conflict (see Ghaffary, 2021) in him since the Oedipal overtones remain with him all the way to the end. Thus, from this point, instead of becoming a schizo body, Effingham

preserves a paranoid, pitiful subjectivity that eternally recurs within “the daddy-mommy-me triangle” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 25). He even expresses his admiration for Freud. Therefore, it seems that Freudian psychoanalysis has had a profound influence on him. He is consumed with Oedipus and only Oedipus, staying a subject who is—to use Deleuze and Guattari’s (2004) words—“eternally psychoanalyzed” (p. 144). Therefore, as explained above, Effingham is not an active force capable of making a connection with Hannah, thereby liberating her schizo flows toward a line of flight.

Hannah’s vs. Effingham’s BwOs

Before comparing the kind of BwO Hannah and Effingham become, it should be mentioned that deterritorialization can be “physical,” “mental,” or “spiritual” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 68). As for Effingham, it is physical because in the end he physically leaves the territory without any mental or spiritual changes. In fact, he is filled with jealousy and anger toward Hannah and Max. Hannah, however, undergoes an absolute positive deterritorialization when she dies, leaving the territory physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Finally, it is crucial to note that the narrative begins and ends at Greytown Junction, the nearest railroad station to Gaze. Also, the novel is divided into seven parts. Seven is a significant number in the narrative since Hannah’s mystery commenced seven years prior to the novel’s narration time. As Marian points out, in fairytales a dramatic event occurs at the end of the seventh year. The narrative’s circular structure and the significance of its seven parts allude to the Nietzschean-Deleuzian notion of the eternal recurrence of difference. Decentered circles rather than circles of nihilism are what these returns address, which is to say that life is a constant flux, becoming, or recurrence of changes. This indicates that rather than a final state, identity, or idea of being, the novel’s ending is concerned with a differential structure capable of forming relationships with other bodies, shattering and parodying conventional notions of the fairytale genre, if one defines parody as a different repetition. Therefore, just as the eternal recurrence causes forces to become-active, there remains a chance to become-active for Effingham, who is relatively deterritorialized. Nonetheless, capitalism makes it impossible to think of an absolute positive deterritorialization, as is the case with Effingham, who is destined to return to where he came from.

Conclusion

The current study attempted to study active and passive forces in *The Unicorn*, focusing on the concept of freedom with a consistent Deleuzian-ethical approach and a consistent explanation of how the two central characters become entangled with it. In this respect, the results of the above analysis showed that avoiding a predetermined identity helps Hannah to become an active force and experience an absolute positive deterritorialization through her ultimate becoming, that is, her suicide, which answers the first research question. On the contrary, the Oedipal-narcissistic Effingham experiences a relative negative deterritorialization. First, it was explained how moral codifications limit Hannah’s capability to act and that it is only Max’s ethical reading of Hannah that can decode her, which is significant in realizing why he eventually becomes her heir. Then, it was

demonstrated that becoming-rhizovocal is a means of finding a line of flight in the narrative and a way of overcoming an authoritative, coherent voice in representing Hannah, in such a way that although her inner voice is not heard, her becoming a BwO makes it difficult for the narrative to describe her from one single focal point of view. This argument was supported by the discussion about the importance of Hannah's experience of becoming-animal and giving up on a fixed human identity.

Furthermore, to answer the second research question, it was argued that Effingham remains an egoistic figure unable to de-Oedipalize himself as he leaves the village full of bitterness. His desire for Hannah was also proven to be sick and chivalric, not courtly. It was finally concluded that so far as one returns to a capitalist society, finding absolute freedom remains inaccessible.

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Notes:

Inspired by Nietzsche's "becoming," which is both in flux and infinite, Deleuze argues that becoming is always in-between and in a constant, dynamic, and productive process of getting different, not an intermediary phase between two states. His definition subverts the Platonic notion of an essential and stable "being"; instead, he sees bodies constantly becoming different in assemblage with other body organs (Stagoll, 2010).

For the negative account of love and desire in Lacanian psychoanalysis, see Ghaffary & Alizadeh (2021).

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