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The Particle and The Wave (2015)

THE WAVES

he sun had not yet risen. The sea was indistinguishable from the sky, except that the sea was slightly creased as if a cloth had wrinkles in it. Gradually as the sky whitened a dark line lay on the horizon dividing the sea from the sky and the grey cloth became barred with thick strokes moving, one after another, beneath the surface, following each other, pursuing each other, perpetually.

As they neared the shore each bar rose, heaped itself, broke and swept a thin veil of white water across the sand. The wave paused, and then drew out again, sighing like a sleeper whose breath comes and goes unconsciously. Gradually the dark bar on the horizon became clear as if the sediment in an old wine-bottle had sunk and left the glass green. Behind it, too, the sky cleared as if the white sediment there had sunk, or as if the arm of a woman couched beneath the horizon had raised a lamp and flat bars of white, green and yellow spread across the sky like the blades of a fan. Then she raised her lamp higher and the air seemed to become fibrous and to tear away from the green surface flickering and flaming in red and yellow fibres like the smoky fire that roars from a bonfire. Gradually the fibres of the burning bonfire were fused into one haze, one incandescence which lifted the weight of the woollen grey sky on top of it and turned it to a million atoms of soft blue. The surface of the sea slowly became transparent and lay rippling and sparkling until the dark stripes were almost rubbed out. Slowly the arm that held the lamp raised it higher and then higher until a broad flame became visible; an arc of fire burnt on the rim of the horizon, and all round it the sea blazed gold.

The light struck upon the trees in the garden, making one leaf transparent and then another. One bird chirped high up? there was a pause; another chirped lower down. The sun sharpened the walls of the house, and rested like the tip of a fan upon a white blind and made a blue finger-print of shadow under the leaf by the bedroom window. The blind stirred slightly,

"We flash past signal-boxes; we make the earth rock slightly from side to side. The distance closes for ever in a point; and we for ever open the distance wide again."

-Virginia Woolf, The Waves

Music arising from an algorithmic measurement of the distance between the 1,265 semi-colons in Virginia Woolf's, The Waves; 11:42 min. An Indian writer and performance artist, Himali Singh Soin's speculative practice works within the expressive potential of abstractions, by running interferences in a conceptual realm where identities, ideas and ideologies are liminal, still awaiting articulation. Her

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constructed cosmologies of the 'unsayable' evocatively translate into a ficto-critical exploration of the simply 'not-yet-said'. Her cosmologies of meaning borrow metaphors from outer space, its situations of alienation, intimacy and ancient and contemporary literature, where books are spineless and philosophical problems become problems of justice.

Profoundly fluent in the textuality of colonial and post-colonial literature, Soin's The Particle and the Wave is a visual, sonic and algorithmic experimentation of Virginia Woolf's 1931-novel The Waves, in which she collaborates with algorithmist and friend Dario Villaneuva on calculating the number of semi-colons Woolf used in her writing of the novel – a total of 1,265, and then imposing the coded distance between them on a C-Dorian scale. In English grammar, the semi-colon encapsulates disruption as much as it does connection, resulting in a fluidity of meaning-making that is selfreferential and repetitive. Woolf, whose stream-of-consciousness style interposes extreme interiority with a passed-around plurality, is synonymous with the semi-colon in the literary world for Soin. Soin's impassioned attempt to anthropomorphize the semi-colon as a figure – a particle and a wave – rests it on the threshold between a microcosm and a macrocosm, framing the particulars of individual existence within the universality of human conditions. She extends the scaling of such dialectics to any defined aspects of a self formed in relation to a non-self entity, while still being informed by it, citing psychogeography and global dynamics as valid extrapolations of characters informing the fictional world into which they are constructed. In the performative life of this work, Soin illustrates these wave-like emotional frequencies as an evocation of marginalia, allowing the projection to dominate both the endangered text it presents as well as her corporeal spine. Soin's accompanying book prints, which contemplate, among other things, the sound a semi-colon makes when it strikes, are diarist, choose-your-own-adventure renditions of thoughts floating in and out of cognition.