

Université de Montréal

**Deterritorialized Male Subjectivity:
Liminality, In-betweenness, and Becoming
in Migrant Literary and Cultural Contexts**

Par

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Cette thèse intitulée

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Présentée par
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Résumé

Cette thèse résulte de la recherche d'un sujet dépourvu de tout repère à ses liens relationnels. Elle rompt les territorialités de la narration et va au-delà des seuils du sujet, à travers des mouvements rhizomiques et en suivant les lignes littéraires et culturelles qui permettent d'échapper aux forces emprisonnantes d'assujettissement. Cette étude traite des sites marginalisés de la transformation et de la dislocation, en passant par les sites de la résistance et de la décolonisation. Ma lecture de *la littérature migrante* et, des littératures indigènes, la déterritorialisation et la décolonisation s'entrelacent en trois sites majeurs au sein: la liminalité, l'intermédialité et le devenir. Ces sites ne représentent pas seulement les formes esthétiques innovantes qui traversent les seuils de l'identité dans notre culture contemporaine, mais ils assistent aussi ce projet à son but ultime de réinventer et de réarranger la relation entre le soi et l'autre vers de nouveaux débuts. Cette nouvelle perspective munie de l'éthique de s'engager dans la situation, s'abstient d'émettre un jugement et entend prévoir des possibilités d'une transformation révolutionnaire aux niveaux politique, social et économique.

Dans ce projet, les mouvements de déterritorialisation émergent dans les écrits et les productions artistiques de Richard Mosse, Chris Abani, Rawi Hage, Leslie Marmon Silko et Thomas King et fournissent les possibilités d'une certaine réflexion sur les seuils de différents sujets masculins en crise. Ce projet s'adresse, en premier lieu, à la Chose sous-jacente qui se déplace entre-deux territoires et perturbe le désir de capturer son essence; en revanche, suivant Deleuze et Guattari, elle se déplace avec les mouvements nomadiques des sujets masculins qui deviennent des simulacres assujettis dans divers sites de désapprentissage. À titre d'exemple, ces sites de désapprentissage illustrés dans *Incoming* et *The Castle* de Richard Mosse dissocient la

matérialité du déplacé de son image et informe le discours sur les façons à travers lesquelles l'existence est mise en danger, limitée et violée par la représentation.

À travers *GraceLand* d'Abani, ce projet examine des modes de liminalité et des cérémonies d'initiation et reconnaît les expériences vécues des sujets masculins dans des structures culturelles différentes. Dans les romans de Rawi Hage, j'explore les façons à travers lesquelles la masculinité s'arrange ou se réarrange, de façon créative, dans des actes de performance. Cette thèse revient sur le sujet de la liminalité par le biais de *Ceremony* de Silko et de la narration post-apocalyptique de l'identité de Thomas King. L'analyse aborde certains des enjeux que les hommes indigènes et ceux qui affirment les identités masculines doivent affronter. Ainsi, dans le dernier chapitre, la convergence harmonieuse des voix indigènes et des littératures indigènes et migrantes situe ces lignes de fuite qui pourraient se rejoindre ou refuser de se croiser, ou se désintégrer dans le flot de la violence.

Mots-clés : Littérature migratoire, Décolonisation, Déterritorialisation, Masculinité, Subjectivité masculine, Rhizome, Cérémonie, Liminalité, Devenir, l'intermédialité.

Abstract

This dissertation stems from the search for a subject without reference to the webs of relations that hold it. Through rhizomatic movements, it breaks territorialities of narrative and moves beyond the subject's thresholds by following literary and cultural lines of escape away from imprisoning forces of subjugation. The investigation flows along marginalized sites of transformation and displacement and through sites of resistance and decolonization. In my readings of migrant and Indigenous literatures, deterritorialization and decolonization intertwine at three major sites: liminality, in-betweenness, and becoming. These sites are not only innovative aesthetic forms that cross the threshold of identity in our contemporary culture; they also participate in the project of reinventing and rearranging the relation of self and other toward new beginnings. The new perspectives that are offered engage ethically, avoid judgment, and foresee the possibilities for revolutionary political, social, and economic transformation.

The movements of deterritorialization that emerge within the writings and artistic production of Richard Mosse, Chris Abani, Leslie Marmon Silko, Thomas King and Rawi Hage provide possibilities for reflection at the thresholds of different male subjects in crisis. This project first addresses the underlying Thing that moves in between territories and confounds the desire to capture its essence; instead, following Deleuze and Guattari, it moves along with the male subjects' nomadic movements as they become desubjectified simulacra in various sites of unlearning. In Richard Mosse's *Incoming* and *The Castle*, for example, such a site of unlearning separates the materiality of the displaced from its image and informs discourse about the ways in which representation endangers, limits and violates existence. Through Abani's *GraceLand*, this project further investigates modes of liminality and initiation ceremonies and acknowledges the lived experiences of male subjects in different cultural structures. In Rawi Hage's novels, I

explore the ways masculinity arranges or rearranges itself creatively in acts of performance. The dissertation also again turns to liminality by way of Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*, and Thomas King's post-apocalyptic narrative of identity. In this way, the harmonious conjunction of Indigenous voices and Indigenous and migrant literatures attempts to locate where these lines of escape might come together, refuse to cross, or crumble back upon themselves in flows of violence.

Keywords: migrant literature, decolonization, deterritorialization, masculinity, male subjectivity, rhizome, ceremony, liminality, becoming, in-betweenness

To My Father, Keyghobad

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Prologue

This project in its raw form, as an abstract idea, began to take shape when I returned to my country of origin Iran, from Ukraine, where I resided as an international student for 8 years. Upon my return, I began to view, for the first time, gender as a complicated performance, sometimes arbitrary, or even illogical. My obsessive reflection on masculinity continued in Canada, within the larger scope of migration and displacement, through the lens of the postcolonial writers that I was familiar with such as V.S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie. I enjoyed academic freedom (thanks to my supervisor) and libraries that I could not imagine before. The disciplinary constraints worked more as facilitators than restraints, and in spite of differences of opinion, sometimes my overenthusiasm, there were many individuals, and professors, writers and artists who assisted me in this project directly or indirectly by providing additional materials, words of encouragement and by reading and commenting on the early drafts of the chapters.

Here, I am more concerned with the way this project started. Becoming gradually aware of the idea of the threshold, through my double-vision—the eyes of a traumatized immigrant—I have decided to infuse my location/condition into my style and form of writing in order to highlight the delirious watchfulness of a displaced subject as a narrative style. I was hoping that this difference from territorial perspectives might give this project a fresh scent. There is a tendency here that accentuates particular forms of movement and privileges disjunctive relations over conjunctive ones, as I was seeking new possibilities, new belongings and new connections. Throughout the project, to my surprise I have noticed that I am not the only eccentric voice, I was able to find my own field of belongings in the defragmented voices of other migrant writers.

It was during the initial phase that I was ambushed by a more and more destabilizing questions. How to investigate a becoming? How to forfeit the expectation that the world of mobile bodies should conform to certain theoretical frameworks? How to investigate in a world of continuous motion? Thomas Neil suggests a new set of conceptual tools based on the primacy of motion. In *Being and Motion*, Neil highlights the increasing importance of motion in the context of global migration and when life becomes increasingly migratory. Neil claims that “the expectation that the world of mobile bodies will conform to a static model of states, borders, and political behavior is causing millions of people around to undergo immense suffering” (2). This suffering is related to the living experience of the displaced. It is not difficult to experience it within our displaced bodies and through the eyes of our friends and colleagues. There is also another layer of violence that happens through the structure of language and the territoriality of various disciplines. Therefore, it was necessary to define another objective for this project and to break the metalanguage, which has been historically oppressive.

Following the method that Guattari calls an ethico-aesthetic paradigm, my attempt was to view the world through the migrant writers’ transformative style. I was seeking new perspectives on displacement, deterritorialization and the relation between movement and masculinity to reach the opening between movement and language. This project led me to a productive and paradoxical coming together of different discourses and disciplines. Paradoxicality, particularly in the discourse of masculinity, lies in manyness and oneness, and in multidimensionality: in the way it can be expressed without necessarily appearing in the language. Massumi notes that “[i]t is not easy to arrive at a conception of a whole which is constructed from parts belonging to different dimensions” (*Semblance and Event* 25). Investigating the ethics of survival in the margin, for instance in the works of Chris Abani, and Rawi Hage, or even in Richard Mosse’s

surreal thermographs, was not only concerned with aesthetic techniques for communication. The aestheticization of the miseries, the ugliness or the romanticization of a victimized Other sometimes can be used to convey messages. The depoliticization in migrant writing is also a political move that communicates a more profound meaning about life, about movements, and the way we can evaluate modes of existence (based on their potentialities), and the way we can support movements that elevate life or create harmonious coexistence. Thus, by giving an ontological primacy to movement, this investigation reflects on the opening up of different disciplines into a transdisciplinary space of negotiation. Perhaps one of the most significant results that emerge from the project (and has the potential for further investigation) is how movements deterritorialize being/existence and loosen its thresholds. This project, therefore, suggests ways to avoid pathologizing liquid forms of subjectivity and cherish the ‘positive’ potentials.

In my dissertation, I mainly focus on the ways in which movements of deterritorialization could become deconstructive-reconstructive of power relations. Mapping those movements could not be done in a vacuum, nor without taking into account issues of, ‘race,’ gender, class and marginalization. Although there is a personal stake in many aspects of this project, and a lot of resistance from my own body, my own subjectivity, I could relate many aspects of these chapters to my lived experience or at least an abstract version of it. Empathy is not always constructive. Stories that resonate with my lived experience would not necessarily give me an authority to speak about their truths but certainly give me some insights, motivate me to reflect on them and to do research on the specific corners and nuances inaccessible to bystanders. The dissertation also has a more significant and impersonal aspect. The feeling of getting a grasp of something that goes on outside the limits of my thinking, and the limits of the

languages that speak me. I tried to keep an open mind, not to impose a form on this research, to avoid the pitfall of another overcoded political message, a half-solution. Instead, my focus was on listening, and on finding that communal ground that makes us share an occasion, an event or a sensation of it.

To construct a framework whose parts resonate across different disciplines, this investigation embraces a reflective engagement with migrant literature and the ways it attempts to accommodate complexity, paradox, and chaos through movements of deterritorialization and its self-creative advance. There were also some risks and constraints involved. I had to avoid a cherry-picking approach, had to keep the integrity of the voices, and contextualize them as they are in separate chapters, or sub-chapters of this project. The first chapter draws the framework of the movements, the philosophical structures of this project and highlights the perspectives that I wanted to cherish. There is a creative side, here, as it begins from deferred dreams, from shattered selves. There is an explosion in the first chapter that is in tune with the incoming of delirious accounts of the displaced subjects. It does not follow a clear intention. Formalistically, the explosion happens through the Deleuzian figure of the Exhausted. The Exhausted shatters itself by laughing himself into abstraction, abject images, fragmented memories, and pure affects. For me the first chapter also functions as a Deleuzian Literary Machine. Whenever I felt lost, (usually after finishing each chapter) I found my way by going back to it in order to revise my ethics, to forget, to refresh my laughter, and to abandon my self akin to a disoriented scuba diver who follows bubbles to find the way up to the surface. Massumi also suggests when thinking “verges upon the limit of what it can think [...]the thinking must then turn back before it breaks apart like a spaceship entering a black hole” (*Semblance and Event* 19).

In the second chapter, I address Richard Mosse's thermographs as creative points of contact with the Other's body. The body of Other in Mosse's works, *Incoming* and *The Castle* persists in existence even in extreme conditions of placelessness, when it dissolves into abstraction. My first encounter with Mosse's thermographs was in MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt in September 2018. Mosse's response to the mass migration crisis in *Extreme Nomad*¹ was an intensive touch that moved me and this chapter to unlearning sites full of innovative political and ethical implications. *Incoming* was revealing another line in nomadism that redirect me from my genealogical investigation of the concept of Nomad in Deleuze and Guattari's *a Thousand Plateaus* and Deleuze's "Shame and Glory". Watching Mosse's *Incoming* was an unlearning experience. Those nightmarish scenes disturbed my thought and carried my writing into new plains.

Abani's *GraceLand* is more explicit in expressing masculinity. *GraceLand* is also about the rites of passage. Masculinity is expressed in Igbo culture in its oneness and manyness simultaneously. I could personally relate to it within my memories, similarities in ceremonies, for instance in the practice of *Zibh*, in the ritual of the lamb sacrifice in my grandparent's place, in an in-between cultural location where tribal masculinity was expressed through religious symbolism. *Graceland* is also about how masculinity meets half-way with a non-human occasion of experience, the kolanut ceremony. Abani's *Graceland* was also important for this project as it provides an excellent case for the investigation of the notion of liminality, not only as a condition but as a literary strategy in the portrayal of the self as an assemblage (*agencement*).

¹ "With the works of Cao Fei, Richard Mosse and Paulo Nazareth, the exhibition EXTREME. NOMADS focuses on different aspects of contemporary forms of nomadic existence and addresses the dissolution of boundaries in politics, economy, society, and culture". Ray 2018
<https://ray2018.de/en/exhibitions/extreme-mmk/> Last accessed Dec 1, 2019.

The fourth chapter has two parts: post-apocalyptic narratives of identity, particularly in Thomas King's writings, and Leslie Marmon Silko's Healing narrative. In this project, I have considered the post-apocalyptic narrative of identity as a healing one. The fourth chapter prepares the ground for a future conversation and negotiation between displaced and Indigenous identities. In the methodological sense, doing research even as an unsettled immigrant on Indigenous lands has its issues and I should be aware of the consequences. The fourth chapter is also the acknowledgment of not only the Indigenous lands and Indigenous voices on the matter of decolonization but also the immense works of Indigenous and the so-called settler scholars on Indigenous masculinities. Decentralizing the discourse, here, is a way that the so-called 'ethnic' and Indigenous voices could be heard. While Indigenous literatures rightfully claim to be separate fields of studies and an entire discipline, my aim was to suggest the necessity for a space of negotiation in any transdisciplinary, transnational investigation of Indigenous concerns and ecologies. I was concerned with the ways in which an investigation could give back to Indigenous communities. Here, I have demonstrated the ways Thomas King and Leslie Marmon Silko both enforce movements of healing and hope, creating something with the power to restore the mind through movements of reterritorialization, land claim and different forms of activism.

The fifth chapter is mostly concerned with Hage's works. For me, there is an implicit message in Hage's novels. He points to new possibilities in the margin. Not only are Hage's figures capable of transforming themselves depending on the forces they encounter; they have the potential to open up new possibilities of life when they move away from reactive and collective allegories in order to survive. Although the antihero of *Cockroach* and Otto in *Carnival* are not very successful on that account. Fly in *Carnival* and Bassam in *De Niro's Game* follow lines of flight. They fly, figuratively, to open ends. I believe that there is a message here

about the ethics of memory and a paradoxical message about forgetting. It is as if the lived past of the body and its future go separate ways and the self cracks wide open, in the void —if I use Bhabha's terms— into a third space, with new possibilities for the production of meaning that measures progress from a marginal perspective and not by removing it from the equation or erasing the question of Otherness.

Throughout the project, I began learning about how I can articulate a location, (mine for instance) —the lived experience of my body as an immigrant, as a displaced male subject. In its transnational sense, I address the idea of the convergence of movements, wishing to foresee when and where they might come together in a critical moment of indecision wherein we might be able to act, and hope for a change for the better. I am also seeking ways that we might be able to recollect the pasts of different orientations toward a different future.

Introduction:

Movements of Deterritorialization in Migrant Literature

This project has its roots in my own experience as an international student in Ukraine, an Iranian immigrant in Canada, my daily struggles, and my long journey of becoming a Canadian citizen. The research behind this dissertation began as an attempt to understand various male subjectivities of resistance in migrant contexts. It followed an idealistic model for academic freedom. Edward Said takes the figure of the migrant or traveler as his model and notes that “inside the academy, [...] we should be able to discover and travel among other selves, other identities, other varieties of the human adventure” (*Reflection on Exile* 403). It was during the initial research that the integrity of my arguments become more and more destabilized by an ever-increasing field of questions inspired by Deleuzian and queer thinking. For me, as an ‘ethnic other’ to focus principally— to put it in Said’s terms— on my “*own* separateness,” my own ‘ethnic’ identity, culture, and traditions was becoming increasingly like placing myself as a member of “subaltern, inferior, or lesser races;” in other words, as we had been placed by “nineteenth-century racial theory, unable to share in the general riches of human culture” (403). The problem was not about the breadth and complexity of my subject of investigation, but in the way in which it morphed, transformed, and transgressed, sometimes in many seemingly contrary directions at once. And then again there was the hard question that Nabakov asks: “And even if the Thing could be caught, why should he, or anybody else for that matter, wish the phenomenon to lose its curls, its mask, its mirror, and become the bald noumenon?” (Nabakov *Bend Sinister* 152). This project thus adheres to an *ethico-aesthetic paradigm* to affirm migrant writers’ transformative, ever-renewing style and seeks to offer new perspectives on displacement and deterritorialization.

The inexpressibility of the displaced who faces all kind of injustice across various discourses motivates this investigation to resolve a problem. First, by bearing witness to the violence done by the structure of language and the territoriality of various disciplines², and second by breaking their metalanguage, which has been historically oppressive. In such an inter/transdisciplinary approach, this dissertation walks a fine line between literature, cultural studies, and international relations, and borrows various elements from indigenous studies, postcolonial studies, anthropology and philosophy, particularly the works of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Brian Massumi and Homi Bhabha. This project also applies Deleuzoguattarian concepts such as rhizome, flow and becoming to migrant literature. The epistemological shift that appears in non-Western migrant literature, for instance in the works of Rawi Hage, Chris Abani, and V.S Naipaul makes this investigation distinct from European and North American travel literature and its privileged ‘expatriate’³ subjects.⁴ Movements of deterritorialization are deconstructive-reconstructive of power relations and reflection on those movements cannot be done in a vacuum, nor without taking into account issues of ‘race,’ gender, and class. In this project, therefore, movements of deterritorialization are not simply a celebration of the aesthetic values of these flows in a borderless, global world, but also involve waking up into a nightmare. In “Making Difference,” Bhabha points out that “the migrants, refugees, and nomads need [...]

² Here, I am referring to Spivak’s *Death of A Discipline*, wherein she encourages border-crossing (1-25). Spivak Gayatri G. *Death of a Discipline*. New York: Columbia UP 2003.

³ “While the broad meaning derived from Latin describes ‘a person who lives outside their native country’, the majority of contemporary migrants are not typically referred to as expatriates and the term tends instead to be reserved for white Western migrants” (Fechter and Walsh “Examining ‘Expatriate’ [...] 1198).

⁴ See for instance Anne-Meike Fechter and Katie Walsh’s “Examining ‘Expatriate Continuities: Postcolonial Approaches to Mobile Professionals,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 36:8, (2010).

“to settle, claim asylum or nationality, demanding housing and education, assert their economic and cultural rights, and come to be legally represented” (“Making Difference” np).

Imagining a new method and accomplishing a new inquiry that “might produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently” –as Lather and St. Pierre suggest—implies creating meaning by resisting categorization and forming strange alliances (“Post-qualitative research” 653). The new approach must be able to bring together “both familiar and new voices” across an international frame (629). Such imagination calls for methodologies that allow reading across differences (personal repetitions) by “decolonizing the subject” (Smith & Watson) and seizing on virtual possibilities by “rethinking humanist ontology” (Lather 629). This approach determines the object of its investigation by constructing its problematic complex or virtual node through the paradoxical unity of self and other, the known and the unknown (epistemologically inaccessible objects), human and nonhuman, and rational and irrational. Such an approach provides “an optimistic or hopeful way forward” (Pearce and MacLure 1). This paradox, as Deleuze and Guattari suggest in *The Logic of Sense*, “destroys good sense as the only direction, but it is also that which destroys common sense as the assignation of fixed identities” (3). It denounces value-based judgments and articulates a self where the two poles of delirium⁵ are mixed; “the trick is to get comfortable with productive paradox” (Massumi “the Autonomy of Affect” 99).

This investigation also became an endeavor to trace being and existence in places of unbelonging in my reading of migrant literary and cultural contexts. Although these places of

⁵ machinic pole (machine-organ) and catatonic pole (the body without Organs). Pisters, Patricia.

“Delirium Cinema or Machines of the Invisible?” pp.105-106.

unbelonging might be expressed differently, they are often marginalized locations where the thresholds of identity are put at risk. Marginalization, in its extreme degree, de-situates the subject from its capacity to affect or to be affected by “all socially constructed significations represented by that space” (Ma 308). It approaches a kind of isolation and passivity related to the Deleuzian notion of exhaustion.⁶ Within the poststructuralist and postmodern paradigms, masculinity has been theorized as a constantly changing collection of norms and meanings and discursively produced, and embedded in gender relations between men and women, and among men.⁷ Yet migrant masculinities sometimes become individual endeavors in isolation, immobile movements, and wild fantasies that undergo deterritorialization and becoming. These exhausted, liminal and displaced entities sometimes occupy a location between dream and reality and give delirious accounts of their becoming/being that transcend their racialized, sexualized bodies.

For Edouard Glissant, “rhizomatic thought is the principle behind” his *poetics of relation* (11). The notion of rhizome, in Glissant’s reading of Deleuze, maintains “the idea of rootedness but challenges that of totalitarian root” (11). Reflecting on relations and belongings (even the lost ones or the ones yet to come) presupposes a reflection on the possibility of an identity “that would be self-identical to itself, that would refuse its relation to other” (Cadava 472).⁸

This insistence on relation belongs to an ethico-political project that seeks to rethink the axiomatics that support claims for the agency and responsibilities of subjects without

⁶ Deleuze, Gilles. “The Exhausted.” Trans. Anthony Uhlmann. *SubStance*. Vol. 24, No. 3, Issue 78. (1995) pp. 3-28.

⁷ See for instance Kimmel’s “Masculinity as Homophobia”, Sedgwick’s *Epistemology of closet*, and Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble* and Foucault’s *History of Sexuality*.

⁸ Apter, Emily and Cadava E. et al. “Forum: The Legacy of Jacques Derrida.” *PMLA*, vol. 120, no. 2, 2005, 472.

reference to the relations in terms of which these subjects are constituted in the first place. (472)

This project addresses this inexpressible and immeasurable thing, *hypokeymenon*, that persists in going through change or “interrupts a situation” and “the flow of meaning” by bursting into laughter (Massumi *Politics of Affect* 15). The displaced male subject and his movements of deterritorialization are excellent sites for the iteration of the affects that shape and move migrant thoughts, language, and style. Affect, here, as Brian Massumi suggests, “is simply a body movement looked at from the point of view of its potential – its capacity to come to be, or better, to come to do” (*Politics of Affects* 15). This movement takes many forms and does not necessarily find its origin in a nostalgic craving for a homeland. It also involves a creative and burning craving for new belongings that motivates an *aparallel* evolution.⁹ Movements of deterritorialization have the potential to naturally subvert the colonial control of peoples and territories. It is not unlike what Yiu-Tsan Ng calls “the subversive potential in minor practice of literature in a major language” that deprives, for instance, “the English language of both its hospitality on the local map and its dominance on the global one” (77). Migrant language connects the underlying thing to the world and founds its future. A territorialized reading will not do justice to such migrant writings, as the Thing would escape any imposing forms and traps. Migrant literature addresses in-between, smooth, and open-ended spaces. The migrant subject sometimes becomes inseparable from the passages to its limits and its changed state. Capturing

⁹ In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari quote Remy Chauvin in the context of the becoming-wasp of the orchid and a becoming-orchid of the wasp: “the *aparallel* evolution of two beings that have absolutely nothing to do with each other” (10). Jacob, *The Logic of Life*, and what Remy Chauvin calls “*aparallel* evolution.” pp. 290-292, 310-313.

the migrant Thing going through change might appear impossible but Bryan Cantley, for instance, designs such impossible and delirious machines that cut through the layers of transformation to capture the thing-in-itself as a distinct entity from the phenomena it gives rise to.

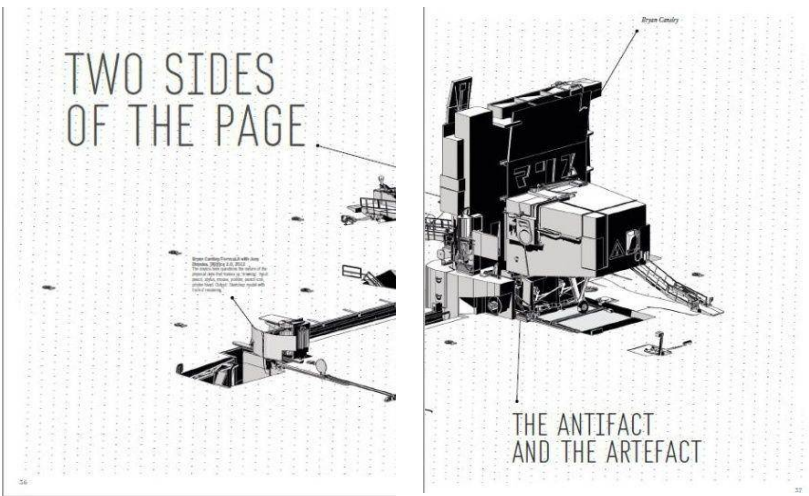


Figure 1.¹⁰ “Bryan Cantley/Form:uLA with Joey Dhindsa, [A]ll[i]ce 2.0, 2012”

The processes of deformation or transformation render innovative negotiations possible. This negotiation does not reduce the heterogeneity of the parties involved or hinder their potential for future rearranging. The transformation of the displaced subject as “an immeasurable entity into measurable identities and back again, into the thing (underneath),” as Cantley suggests, can also be the task of a literary machine that cuts through the text from different angles and perspectives, and through the multiple flux of (mis)reading, provides separate sites of cross-cultural contact or

¹⁰ Courtesy of Professor Bryan Cantley, “Two Sides of the Page,” p. 36-37. “The device here questions the nature of the physical data that makes up ‘drawing’. Input: pencil, stylus, mouse, pointer, pencil icon, printer head. Output: Sketchup model with Form-Z rendering” (36).

‘contamination.’¹¹ So negotiations could happen between those transnational, trans-indigenous, postcolonial and ‘ethnic’ sites to identify the shared problems of the colonized subject and its lost agency. As JanMohamed suggests, it also often involves “a confirmation of the shared nature of the problems faced by very different communities and traditions in consequence of the homogenizing force of cultural domination” (“Introduction” 6). The concept of becoming—inspired by Deleuze and Guattari—seeks to articulate an agency in migrant and displaced (not limited to male) subjects who escape their stereotypical representation and reconstitute themselves in different ways.

In *Deleuze and the Postcolonial*, Patton and Bignall suggest “finding lines of escape from forms of capture and containment” and identifying “the ways in which these lines of escape might come together, mutually reinforce one another” to develop strategies for mutual empowerment (Bignall and Patton 9). For Bhabha, this is a bridge that enable the escape and might get us to other banks: “the bridge that gathers, as a passage that crosses” (*Location of Culture* 7). Heidegger describes that “[t]he bridge lets the stream run its course and the same time grants their way to mortals so that they may come and go from shore to shore” (Heidegger “Building, Dwelling, Thinking” 152-3). For Heidegger, “the bridge is a place. As such it allows a space into which earth and sky, gods and mortals are admitted” (153). The bridge in this investigation is a trans-geopolitical space. It attempts to provide a foundational frame for those modes of cultural identification and political affect that form around issues of gender

¹¹ While the issue of cross-cultural contacts for postcolonial and postmodern scholars inspire creativity, it can also be considered as a site of contamination that endangers the purely authentic of the anthropologist’s dream or a political and cultural project (Brydon 136). In “the White Inuit Speaks,” Diana Brydon quotes Lola Lemire Tostevin that “‘contamination means differences have been brought together so they make contact’ (1989: 13)” (136).

(particularly male subjectivity), ‘race’, and the lifeworld of refugees, the displaced and migrants. The literary and cultural examples, in this thesis, are attempts at an ‘ethical’ revision of the concept of human identity itself. Not only do they seek places where cultural meanings overlap in the periphery or margins, but also those where neither holds sway. The inexpressibility of the migrant subject in the structure of language can also be marked by its heterogeneity, fluidity and constant transformation. Thus, this investigation also traces the resistance of the migrant body to the gaze that spends so much time trying to document it. In this regard, the project is also an inquiry into approaches and ways of thinking that might be able to articulate conditions of transformation and becoming.

This study integrates many approaches, to show the heterogeneity of so-called ‘ethnic’ sexual and masculine stories. Many of these stories are framed in defined geographical sites through particular rites of passage and ceremonies, such as in the case of Abani’s *GraceLand*, or Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Ceremony*. Many are shaped or affected by ‘race’, class, sexual orientation and other factors and singularities such as in Hage’s Beirut and Montreal. These different forms of masculinity often are temporary and go through changes in the larger picture of migration and displacement. This is precisely the moment when Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of deterritorialization bears fruit, although, adopting a Deleuzian style of writing sometimes becomes difficult, particularly when the subject is a deterritorialized one. A dissertation is not the ideal war machine-book against the State apparatus-book. It is certainly not that “*flat multiplicities of n dimensions*” and is not “asignifying and asubjective” (9). Therefore, I have tried to make the territories and plateaus as visible as possible and explain most of the geological movements, but there are also lines of flight and movements of deterritorialization that push the theory from time to time to that dimensionless universe where things become

affects or where there is neither subject nor object. Similar to Cantley's Entry Gate/Sign where "the observer and the observed exist on the same (view)plane" ("The Two Sides of the Page" 38).

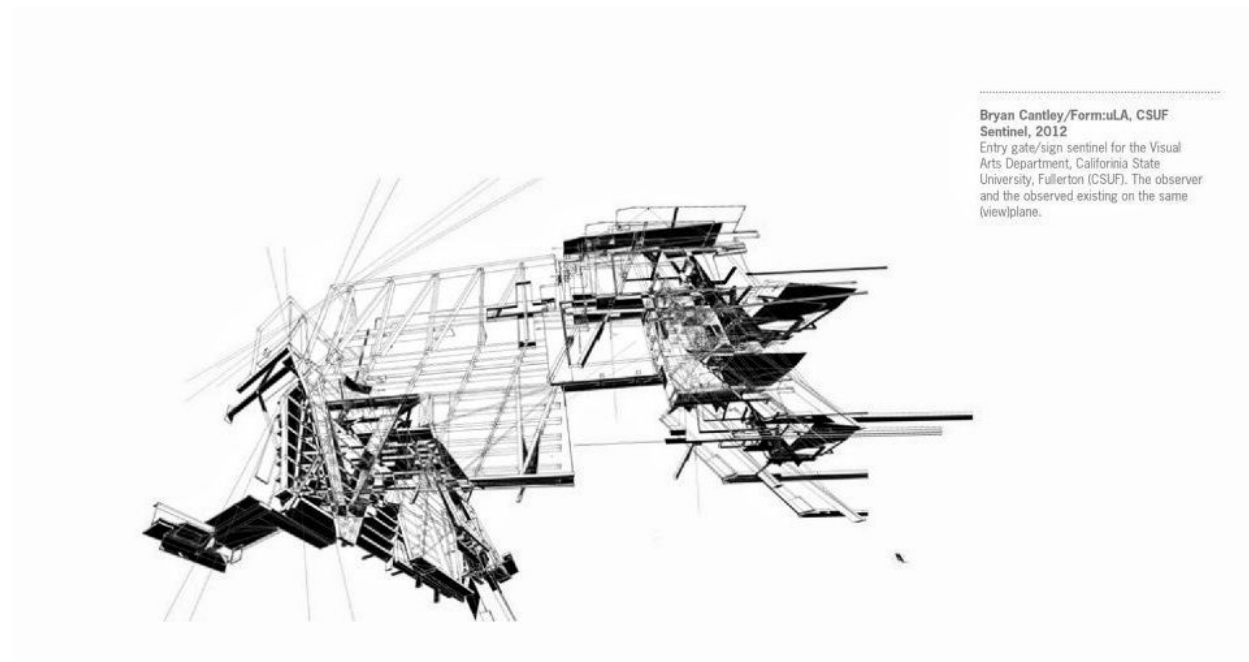


Figure 2.¹² "Bryan Cantley/Form:uLA, CSUF Sentinel, 2012"

Cantley's creativity comes from a timeless design by grasping different conditions of transformation simultaneously from several perspectives. Cantley's innovative perspective motivated my investigation to search for such a viewpoint. While subjectivity also goes through material processes of individuation, the event of being as in Deleuze, Whitehead, and Bergson is an activity of temporalization close to Heidegger's '*das Ereignis*' (Cloots 62).¹³ The dissolving 'ego', therefore, not unlike Cantley's design, blurs the frontier between subject and object, self

¹² Courtesy of Professor Bryan Cantley, "Two Sides of the Page," p. 38. "Entry gate/sign sentinel for the Visual Arts Department, California State University, Fullerton (CSUF). The observer and the observed existing on the same (view)plane" (38).

¹³ Cloots, André. *Deleuze, Whitehead, Bergson: Rizomatic Connections*, p.62.

and other, and the coming-to-pass of an event. De-subjectification acquires a new perspective in favor of affects and spectatorship.

Moving towards Deleuze and Guattari's ideal book was tempting. "The ideal of a book would be to lay everything out on a plane of exteriority," on the plane of consistency, or grid, "outside of all multiplicities" (9). Deleuze and Guattari highlight "the possibility and necessity of flattening all of the multiplicities on a single plane of consistency or exteriority, regardless of their number of dimensions" (9). The first chapter precisely begins with such lines of flight as parts of the rhizome, but each line ends up in a separate chapter. Each of these chapters then ties back to another as a kind of rhizome, "with its gaps, detours, subterranean passages, stems, opening, traits, holes" (415). There is a second organization that happens in the chapters. The chapters will boot up again in separate planes of organization. Each plane re-stratifies everything and restores power to signifiers that reconstitute their own subjects. The Thing becomes that British spy who desperately desires to be an Arab, the Igbo cosmopolitan dancer who escapes Nigeria, the nationalist Blackfoot who crosses the border, and the Lebanese refugee who befriends an albino cockroach and dreams about the revolution; they are "just waiting to crystallize" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 10). These abstract lines are there to unsettle the reader from what Edouard Glissant calls "the perspective of Western thought" and "its old obsession with discovering what lies at the bottom of natures" (190). These abject places, whether virtual or actual, are deeply connected.¹⁴ These are places where the very notions of scale and judgment cease to exist.

¹⁴ In "Violence and Laughter," Patricia Pisters notes "it is wrong to see the virtual as 'out of this world' – the virtual is an immanent force that has to be taken into account in *this* world.

In the second chapter, I take a step back to address “the problematic abstraction of ‘the other’ in nomadic thinking” (*Deleuze and the Postcolonial* 202) through the militarized travel literature of Thomas Edward Lawrence in Arabia and the Unlearning sites in Richard Mosse’s visions. Mosse’s thermographs demonstrate that ‘the other’ cannot be so quickly and permanently dissolved in abstraction” (Miller 2003: 5). The body-in-excess in such abstraction can become the target of the gaze and subject to different forms of violence and oppression. This chapter, however, reflects on other layers of meaning in the Deleuzian lines of escape through Nomad thoughts that move beyond dualistic conceptual constraints. While lines of escape are radically different, I was more interested in highlighting the ones that cut across the boundaries of ‘race’, class, and gender, not to prove a post-race and post-racist reality, but to present a new cultural condition akin to “the point at which simulacrum began to unmask itself” (Massumi “Realer than Real” 96). According to Massumi, images at such a point “are no longer anchored by representation, therefore they float weightless in hyperspace” (97). The displaced subject in such a becoming of a simulacrum becomes “realer than real in a monstrous contagion of our own making” (97).

The third chapter addresses the motifs of liminality and death in Chris Abani’s *GraceLand* wherein masculinity takes melancholic forms and goes into crisis. The old anthropological concept of liminality appears in both the contexts of initiation ceremonies and Elvis’ transcendence from his body and the patriarchal cultural flow. In *GraceLand*, there is a reciprocal relationship between liminal states and loss. Abani uses liminality and structural collapse as literary strategies, and as a *negative* force that make his narrative flow to its finality, another open-end. In his anthropological account of liminality, Victor Turner relates the concept of liminality to the eclipse of the sun or moon that highlights the creative potential of darkness

(“Liminality and Communitas” 94-95). Abani’s writing bears similarities with the writing that Julia Kristeva claims “sprang out of that very melancholia” (*Black Sun* 3). One does not write about melancholia, one writes with it. Kristeva defines melancholia as the experience of “an abyss of sorrow” and “a noncommunicable grief”, “not knowing how to lose” and being “unable to find a valid compensation for loss,” which leads to “the extent of having us lose all interest in words, actions, and even life itself” and “the feeling of being dead without necessarily wanting to die” (3). Being melancholic has also been associated with “the exposure to the void” and “melancholia as the creative genius of making *nothing* appear” (Kukuljevic 94). In *GraceLand*, liminality is contagious and moves from one body to another; it can bring society together to the point of uprising. It brings language to the state Kristeva refers to as asymbolia, where masculinity becomes entangled with the immediacy of other-than-human encounters with kola nut.

The fourth chapter prepares the ground for a future conversation and negotiation between the displaced and the Indigenous identities. This task was quite a difficult one for me, at both the professional and personal levels. The task was also inspired and informed by the American Men’s Studies Association 2019 conference at Brandon University on the traditional territory of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Assiniboine, Dakota, and Dene People, and my own unsettled being as an immigrant on Indigenous lands. Preparing this conversation was also about power and sovereignty and about a harmonious conversation with Indigenous voices toward solving a common problem and finding ways in which lines of escape from colonized subjectivity might come together. The shared problem of colonization requires mutual methods of decolonization from all sides: Indigenous, Postcolonial, and even Eurocentric and Postmodern ones. Initiating a

conversation requires initial preparation through what Buber calls ‘dialogical mutuality.’¹⁵ It involves listening to all parties and reflecting on “the possibility of effective political action at both the global and local levels” (Glezos 155). On the first day of the conference, “At the Boundaries of Ourselves: Masculinities and Decoloniality,” we took part in the construction of tipis and took part in land-based ceremonies with Community Elders Frank Tacan and Jason Gobeil from the Brandon Friendship Centre. Such a symbolic process and its fruitful result in gathering various voices together also encouraged my research. The symbolism in each step highlights the critical role of meticulous preparation of the ground for the conversation to come, word by word. Even though the first tipi that was constructed by the board under the guidance of Community Elders was burnt to the ground by some unknown individuals during the night, the next morning, additional five tipis were constructed by the conference attendees under the supervision of the elders.

¹⁵ “Spirit is not the I, but between I and *Thou*...Man lives in the spirit, if he is able to respond to his *Thou*.” (quoted in *Immediacy and its Limits* 33). Buber, Martin. *Ich und Du*, p.49; p.39.



Photograph.¹⁶ “Building Tipis at the ‘Boundaries of Ourselves’.”

That gave us valuable lessons about resilience, hope, and forgiveness. The fourth chapter was also a personal challenge for me to see myself as an uninvited guest and to rethink my webs of relations, the ones I was unfortunate to lose, and the ones I need and desire to build. It is also a joint discovery of self and Other, in the hope of transforming, as Said suggests, “what might be conflict or contest, or assertion into reconciliation, mutuality, recognition, and creative interaction” (*Reflection on Exile* 403).

The fifth chapter addresses the ethical turn in Rawi Hage’s novels. Hage identifies the forces of marginalization and those flows which produce separation, antagonism, and resentment in displaced and underclass inhabitants of the metropolis. Marginal Literature may appear as a

¹⁶ Photograph by Ali Zamanpour.

deviation from Deleuze and Guattari's definition of "Minor Literature" (*Kafka Toward a Minor Literature* 17). Marginal Literature does not necessarily originate from "a strategic position within a community" or "[take] on a collective value" (17). Migrant Literature also escapes, in many cases, from its collectivity, seeking other (seemingly liminal) collectives and multiplicities not through assimilation but rejection. In *Death of the Discipline*, Spivak also proposes "an attempt to depoliticize in order to move away from a politics of hostility, fear, and half solutions" (4). In such a reading, the collective dimension of the personal efforts of members of the marginalized group sometimes take on a transnational character that can critically engage with both its own marginalized community and the marginalizing forces of globalization. Deterritorialized movements sometimes are rooted in the awareness of the limits of so-called 'ethnic' priorities and epistemologies, an awareness that might isolate the subject within its collective. Hage escapes from such a metaphorical death by crossing into a literal death in *Beirut Hellfire Society* when the "[d]ead spectators [cheer] with muddy popcorn in hand, dusting the earth off their jackets, straightening their hair with holy water, applauding with bony fingers, laughing with sunken faces and absent eyes and missing a theatrical performance in the presence of the entombed crowd" (181). Such points of enunciation are constructed through a reflective distance and a movement away from the knowable, crossing its boundaries and borders. The deterritorialized male subject is not merely an immigrant, but he is also among those who transcend borders.

Hage's deviant cosmopolitan subjects combine survival strategies with politically dangerous laughter. His subjects escape forces of marginalization that exclude them from the grand spectacle of life and move toward an imaginary and sometimes delirious future. In Hage's writing, the detachment from coping with what Naipaul calls "the world as it is" (*Bend in the*

River 1) is not simply illustrated by his ludic surreal style but in his minor gestures toward openness and new beginnings. This new beginning is not forgetful of the history that created the location of the displaced subject in the dominant culture, but it does involve different readings of history that make possible alternative futures. In “Making Territory: Rawi Hage’s Novels and the Challenge to Postcolonial Ethics,” Mark Libin highlights the tension created by Hage in response to contemporary discourses that often illustrate an imaginary refugee or victimized other who is innocent (73). For Hage, there is no need to victimize the subject in order to ethically engage with its position. The marginalized positions are the conditions that created a denied or alienated subjectivity in the first place. The chapter also addresses Rawi Hage’s novels, *Cockroach* and *Carnival*, in the context of Quebec anglophone literature that stands apart from Canada’s Minor Literature. Hage’s novels tell the story of anti-heroes in constant motion as they seek to survive their social and economic marginalization.

This project is also a constructive experiment to pass the thresholds of gender by pushing through the image of the abject other (Migrant and deterritorialized male subjectivity) towards the place where meaning collapses” (Kristeva *Powers of Horror 2*) and colonial languages are no longer able to serve their purpose. The ‘stuttering’ and becoming in migrant literature in the works of V.S. Naipaul, Rawi Hage, Chris Abani, as well as the grounded perspective of Indigenous writers such as Leslie Marmon Silko and Thomas King set the tone for new debates that do not ‘speak for’ or ‘speak about’ the Other’s experience but engage instead in alternative forms of ‘listening’ that, as Bignall and Patton suggest, “capture the heterogeneity and irreducibility of the lived experience of the subject ‘on its own terms’” (Bignall and Patton 3).

Chapter 1

The Order of the Underlying Things (Hypokeimenon)

This chapter is to be seen as a ‘literary machine’¹⁷ that produces innovative perspectives and is intended to fulfill certain functions which is not to invent yet another ‘disease’: non-Western deterritorialized male subjectivity. “We get the solutions we deserve based on the problems we have posed for ourselves” (Bryant 40). This chapter, therefore, seeks to escape from neurotic territoriality and isolated positions hoping to create rhizomatic mobility with complex “contrapuntal relationships,” not only within a “logic of literature” but within a logic of ‘life’ (Smith “Introduction” xiii). It is an *ethical* move with its own complex ontological status, with its “variable relations with other domains such as science, medicine, Art” (*Essays Critical and Clinical* xii). The relation between literature and Life as an intricate labyrinth wherein “all men would lose their way” (Borges *Collected Fiction* 122) not only functions within a creative enterprise of thought, it also renders “sensible aggregates” by communicating in terms of percepts and affects (Smith x-xii). Deleuze regards life as a Spinozian impersonal and nonorganic power that goes beyond any lived experience, “A powerful nonorganic life that escapes the strata, cuts across assemblages[*agencements*], and draws a line of nomad art and itinerant metallurgy” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 507). This chapter also keeps an eye on life, as a lived experience and the ‘non-sharable’ affects, memories and states we “continually recover in

¹⁷ “The literary machine functions as the relay for a future revolutionary machine—not at all for ideological reasons, but because it provides a collective utterance, missing everywhere else in the milieu: *literature is the affair of people*” (Deleuze, Guattari and Brinkley “What is a Minor Literature?” 17).

dream, delirium, creative relation, feelings of love” (*Guattari Reader* 195) and the emergence of deterritorialized forms and lines of flight through crises.

The renunciation of judgment does not deprive one of the means of distinguishing “good” and the “bad.” On the contrary, good and bad are both states of the becoming of Life, and can be evaluated by criteria that are strictly immanent to the mode of existence or work of art itself. (Smith *Critical and Clinical* liii)¹⁸

The desire to escape judgement or rather to affirm an alternative appear crucial for minorities. It is a desire to escape codification, and territorialization and a call for experimental readings.¹⁹ Deterritorialized literature not unlike ‘Minor’ literature implies a way of living, a form of life that must be evaluated not only critically but also clinically, in its melancholic separation and “desperate attempt at symbolic reterritorialization” (19) in the Artist’s style, and in the way he (or she) marks a territory, ‘like a dog’, or by systems of any kind—conceptual, linguistic, musical, pictorial or affective. “Style, in a great writer, is always a style of life too, not anything at all personal, but inventing a possibility of life, a way of existing (*Deleuze Negotiation*)”, as the writer lives in a world of fragments, in a “dispersed anarchic multiplicity, without unity or totality, whose elements are welded and pasted together by the real distinction or the very absence of a link” (*Anti-Oedipus* 356) as *pure singularities* or pure affects. Pure affects imply an

¹⁸ “The more the segments are hard or slow, the less the assemblage[*agencement*] is capable of effectively fleeing or following its own line of escape or its own line of escape or its points of deterritorialization, even if this line is strong and these points are intense” (D&G *Kafka* 87).

¹⁹ John Cage uses the term, experiment, “not as descriptive of an act to be later judged in terms of success and failure, but simply as an act the outcome of which is unknown” (Cage 13). The experiment of reading or mapping as Deleuze and Guattari suggest is the production of a “reading which will constitute its own affirmation” (Deleuze, Guattari, and Brinkley “What Is a Minor Literature?” 14)

enterprise of desubjectivation where there is no longer “one subjectivity that experiences pure feelings; rather, it is the pure feeling²⁰ that promises a subject” (Lyotard 20). The aim of literature, for Deleuze, is not the development of forms or the formation of subjects, but the displacement or catapulting of becomings into affects and percepts, which in turn are combined into “blocks of sensation” through their virtual conjunction (*Essays Clinical and Critical* xxxv). Deleuze regards criticism as dealing with a text as “merely a small cog in an extra-textual practice” that prolongs the text (xvi). In such an approach, one does not read works of literature as texts, or treat writing in terms of its totality. The critic is not an archivist who merely produces a collection of “representation[s] of what others have thought” (Bearn 13). The critic does not engage with the text as a commentator because such engagement reduces a work of literature to “an object of consumption subject to the demands of the literary market” (Smith xviii). This investigation embraces such an approach in its reflective engagement with the works of literature and also in the ways it attempts to accommodate complexity, paradox, and chaos through movements of deterritorialization.

This chapter is divided into five parts and a conclusion: the first part, **The Marginalized, the Minor, the Exhausted, and the Object**, questions the categorization of subjects into different existential territories and the way such taxonomy exhausts the possibilities of the displaced. The second part addresses the paradoxical notion of **Literature as Delirium**, foregrounding its ‘ethical’ intervention. The third part, **Literature, Ethics, and Morality**

²⁰ Brian Massumi in “The Autonomy of Affect” highlights the distinction between ‘What subject feels’ (emotion) and affect as an autonomous intensity; the same distinction is also present in this dissertation: “Affect is most often used loosely as a synonym for emotion. [...] emotion and affect if affect is intensity—follow different logic and pertain to different orders” (88). “Affect is as good a general term as any for the interface between implicate and explicate order” (99).

addresses an engagement with literature away from systems of judgement and moral orders (e.g., Abrahamic) beyond any form of prescribed Good and Evil. The fourth part addresses **Laughter** as an autonomous affect; it aims to unsettle/destabilize colonized representatives and identitarian readings. Such laughter, an indefinite one, aims to generate a flux of deterritorialization in its *negativity*. It points to a line of flight from ‘affective mapping’ of ‘being man’ in its different forms to create “a new image of thought – or rather, a liberation of thought from those images which imprison it” (*Difference and Repetition* xvii). This investigation revisits gender at every turn through its rhizomatic movements following literary and cultural lines of escape away from imprisoning forces of subjugation. The final part, **Laughter and the Literature of Abjection**, connects the eruptive burst of laughter –often seen in French Poststructuralism (McDonald 1) — to the cracking up of ‘subjectivity’ toward the abject ‘other’. Such laughter destabilizes “the realm of Symbolic signification” and provides lines of escape from “the boundaries on which notions of self and society are founded” (*Mayer* 222).

The Marginalized, the Minor, the Exhausted, and the Object

In *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, Deleuze and Guattari take an ontological stance when they address Minor Literature and are quite precise when they establish its criteria by answering the question they pose, “What Is A Minor Literature?”: “The three characteristics of minor literature²¹ are the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual to a

²¹ The Problem and misunderstandings that usually occur for many readers with regard to some of the general concepts Deleuze and Guattari propose (eg. Minority, Man, Nomad, Minor Literature) call for an intervention “to resolve local situation[s]” (*Difference and Repetition* xx). Even if the definitions of those concepts seem self-explanatory. Sometimes they lack immediacy with the *actual* and *now* or the ‘flow of the presence’ and can be considered from time to time as a metaphorical abuse by readers and critics, at the beginning of the 21st century. The second chapter thoroughly investigates such ‘differences’.

political immediacy, and the collective assemblage[*agencement*] of enunciation” (D&G *Kafka* 18). Rawi Hage, for instance, seems to relate himself to “the post-colonial literature produced by writers of colour in Quebec” (Hage “Writing in Quebec”), as part of a collective that stands apart from Canada’s Minor Literature. Hage believes that artists always sense “deep resentments within the populace and [act] upon them by giving them poetic expression” (Hage “Writing in Quebec”). Such fragmented, deterritorialized, and heterogeneous collectives produce—as Deleuze might call it—a *formless* and *unformulated* (“the exhausted” 5) overflow of writing that can be considered a challenge to the coding mechanisms, “whose aim is somehow or other to recodify everything that ceaselessly becomes decodified at the horizon of our[/Western] culture” (“Nomad thought” 142). Categories such as Migrant Literature, Migration²² Literature, literature of displacement, the Literature of Exile and Displacement, Literature of the refugees (e.g., Poems of Guantanamo, Nauru, and *Abu Ghraib*) or even “Marginal Literature” (18) that Deleuze and Guattari ironically propose but for which they do not establish criteria, can no longer capture or locate the nature of such writings as a whole the way their subjects of writing are going through change. The “nomadic force” within such unformulated cultural and literary creations, as Deleuze predicted, de-codify the discourse from within and “[accentuate] everywhere movements of deterritorialization” (*Kafka* 24). Erin Manning, in *The Minor Gesture*, compares such flows to a minor key that courses through the structural tendency/integrity of the major and problematizes its normative standards (1) Although Manning considers the minor flows “open to flux” (1) she believes that “its wilderness, is often seen as unrigorous, filmy, its lack of solidity

²² In *Migration and Literature* Frank suggests a shift in terminology from “migrant literature” to “migration literature”—“that is a move away from authorial biography as the decisive parameter, emphasizing instead intratextual features such as content and form as well as extratextual forces such as social processes” (Frank 3).

mistaken for lack of consistency” (1). Deleuze’s approach in “Nomad Thought” does not go through Marxism or psychoanalysis; it is a Nietzschean one:

[B]eyond all codes of the past, present, and future, to transmit something that does not and will not allow itself to be codified. To transmit it to a new body, to invent a body that can receive it and spill it forth; a body that would be our own, the earth’s, or even something written[...]. (“Nomad Thought” 142).

Such literary forms do not necessarily follow two of the most significant characteristics of Deleuzoguattarian Minor Literature. Such works of literature invent another metalanguage²³, one that may appear to a Deleuzian ‘Subject of the West’ (Spivak *Can the Subaltern Speak?* 66) as a deterritorialized one, “a minority construct within a major language” (D&G *Kafka* 17). The marginal, as Manning puts it, “may carry a special affinity for the minor and wish to compose with it” (*The Minor Gesture* 7). Therefore, not unlike Kafka’s ‘Prague German,’²⁴ the language creates also a form of stuttering that separates it from the local collective enunciation, and forms “another consciousness and another sensibility,” (17) “no longer that of names but of voices, a language that no longer operates with combinable atoms but with blendable flows” (“The Exhausted” 7), not unlike Chris Abani’s fragmented memories of Elvis, in *Graceland*, that blends anthropological accounts on Kolanut ceremony with the smells and the tastes of his mother’s recipes.

One of the central themes of such literary projects (unlike Minor Literature), however, is the *disconnection* of the individual from its political immediacy (‘bare life’), agency and power,

²³ “[N]o longer that of names but of voices, a language that no longer operates with combinable atoms but with blendable flows” (*The Exhausted* 7).

²⁴ “Just as a Czech Jew writes in German” (D&G *Kafka* 18).

as “the writer in the margin is completely[/relatively] outside his or her fragile community” (D&G *Kafka* 17) to the extent that the only collective *agencement* to which the subject belongs is a *liminal*²⁵ one (but not a nationalist one), a collective machine of expression that is deterritorialized enough to enter cosmopolitan immanence, as part of an idealistic project that concerns itself with the individual and ‘ethical’ practice of survival:

IN MY NOVEL COCKROACH, I wrote of a newly arrived refugee in a dire situation that leads him to suffer from mental illness. And to my ignorance, or perhaps pain, I disregarded the suffering of Quebecers. [...] Looking back at the contents of the novel, I realize what heresy I’ve committed towards my city, my province, and my home. (Hage “Writing in Quebec”)

Hage’s ironic response is also affected by his choice as “a francophone who chooses to write in the English language” and his refusal “to act as a spokesperson for the Middle East” or discuss “Islam, and its ‘problematic’ existence” (Hage “Writing in Quebec”). While writing in English in Quebec might be interpreted as the unwillingness of an exile to integrate or participate in a ‘city’ so proud of its Francophone heritage, it also highlights resistance by giving voice to “the schism between Quebec and its ethnic minorities”, and its most “flagrantly discriminatory employment practices” (Hage “Writing in Quebec”)²⁶.

The marginalized subjects of literature in Hage’s novels, also have the revolutionary characteristics of ‘Minor Literature’ as they also deconstruct the coding systems and provide a new

²⁵ An oppressed, queer and underclass collective.

²⁶ no page numbers (online version).

battlefront for the discourse that functions as a ‘combinatorial.’²⁷ How could the discourse ‘combine’ protagonists with no name when Hage exhausts them from their very names, as they become flies, spiders, dogs, and cockroaches? How one can speak of them if they do not introduce themselves to the series? (“The Exhausted” 7). Hage’s characters pursue the same solution that Deleuze suggests: they avoid each other, sidestep together, but they each sidestep in solitude and thus avoid the center absolutely (“The Exhausted” 15), godless, angry men, loners, thugs, and tricksters who are mostly ‘mad’²⁸. They are marginal figures that represent a kind of life that Manning describes as “neurodiverse through and through”; They “cannot be properly regulated,” “they exceed the bounds of the known” and “they move too much” (*The Minor Gesture* 5).

The fictional characters of writers such as Hage, Naipaul, and Abani, are marginalized and abjectified modes of existence. Not only are they capable of transforming themselves depending on the forces they encounter; they have the potential to open up new possibilities of life by moving away from reactive and collective allegories in order to survive. In *Politics of Affects*, Massumi suggests that in the margin, you might be forced to find a “manoeuvre you didn’t know you had and couldn’t have just thought your way into” (11). Transcendence, overflowing or ascending forms of existence are no longer the fruit of the European emancipation²⁹ project; they are the result of the overflow of displaced bodies and the creativity

²⁷ “The combinatorial is the art or science of exhausting the possible, through inclusive disjunctions” (“The Exhausted” 5) and concerns with the number of times a possible combination is realized. “To exhaust space is to extenuate its potentiality through rendering any meeting impossible” (13).

²⁸ It is the reminiscent of Hannah Arendt’s refugees who “fight like madmen for private existences with individual destinies” (“We Refugees” 269).

²⁹ “The emancipation of European man is the great irreversible process of the present day; and the tendency should even be accelerated” (Nietzsche quoted by Deleuze “Nomad Thought” 143).

in their personal stories with regard to their ‘transmutation.’ The bourgeois art’s reflexive preoccupation with its ‘own powerlessness and superfluity in the empirical world,’ as Adorno and Sianne Ngai observe, “is precisely what makes it capable of theorizing powerlessness in a manner unrivaled by other forms of cultural praxis” (*Ugly Feeling* 2). Although it might seem paradoxical to Deleuze’s claim (as Daniel Smith seems to locate in Deleuze’s *Critical and Clinical* project), in the literary projects that this investigation revisits, marginalized subjects do not, in fact, always judge life fatalistically from the perspective of their ‘sickness.’ For Deleuze, the exhausted mode of existence (*épuisé*) “exhausts all of the possible” (“The Exhausted” 3): “The tired can no longer realize, but the exhausted can no longer possibilate” (3). The Deleuzian ‘exhausted’ subject stands in the void and shivers in the open and “disengage[s] itself from memory and reason” (9), a crushing or liberating abstraction that turns him into images, fragmented memories, and pure affects. The ‘exposure to the void’, in such writing, as Alexi Kukuljevic locates in Baudelaire, on the contrary to (or in a continuation with) the Deleuzian ‘exhausted’ assists the melancholic subject to produce a subject separated from itself, “situated within the conflicting tendencies toward composition and decomposition, ideality and dissolution, the happiness of the melancholic lies, paradoxically, in becoming deader than dead, a corpse picked clean—bone”. (“Happy Melancholic” 205) :

“Yet, the image that I would like to here invoke is that of a happy melancholic. A strange breed modeled more on the laughing than the weeping philosopher” (206).

The marginalized subject, therefore, counters void with void, abstraction with abstraction (207), and perhaps life with humour. The subject’s empty response, for Kukuljevic, gives him “the most Romantic of affects, despair,” a delirious position wherein he is unable to make sense, to differentiate, or “to maintain the difference between the sign and its signification” (207). For

Kukuljevic, “suicide is the persistent danger that afflicts this position of the mind” (207). Rawi Hage utilizes such a position for the opening of his novel *Cockroach*³⁰.

Literature and Delirium

In *Essays Critical and Clinical*, Deleuze suggests a new relationship between the critical and the clinical, a project that could lead to mutual learning. For Deleuze, writing is supposed to be an “ill-formed” and “incomplete” form. It must avoid imposing a form on the matter of lived experience. Deleuze understands literature as “a question of becoming”, “in the midst of being formed” that “goes beyond the matter of any livable or lived experience” (“Literature and Life” 1). For Deleuze, “literature only begins when a third person is born in us that strips us of the power to say ‘I’” (4). Deleuze re-presents literature as “an enterprise of health” or in other words a spectacle of wrestling between an exhausted writer with delicate health and “things too big for him, too strong for him, suffocating things whose passage exhausts him while nonetheless giving him the becomings that dominant and substantial health would render impossible” (“Literature and Life” 4). Such writing for Deleuze has two important specificities: it is the account of “what [the writer] has seen and heard with red eyes and pierced eardrums” (5) and “a collective enunciation of a minor people, or of all minor peoples” (4).

Literature is a collective assemblage [*agencement*] of enunciation. Literature is delirium, but delirium is not a father-mother affair; there is no delirium that does not pass through peoples, races, and tribes and that does not haunt universal history. All delirium is world historical, “a displacement of races and continents. (4)

³⁰ to which I will return later in the chapter 5.

Deleuze represents delirium as a disease, “a disease par excellence”. Delirium can also be considered as an altered state of consciousness³¹ and as an ‘ill-formed’ epistemology wherein “they [the writer] can only get a grip on again by letting go of their ability to say I” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 265). Such an epistemological shift can only be possible by the minoritization of politics and the ‘stuttering’ procedures that may consist of decomposition, deterritorialization and pushing language to its limits. In “Deleuze’s Stuttering,” Jones points out that for such stuttering, “both language and thought will have to be used in unfamiliar ways (and not necessarily in harmony with one another) – ill thought, ill said – according to a newness and difference” (Jones 7). There is not a new mode for the stuttering of the images or forms. Thus, one should create a new method again and again: “a non-normative and relatively unfamiliar method of thought and expression that varies in both form and content” (7). Creating a *new* form of writing is not “a contradictory jumble of irresolute drafts” depicted by Borges as Tsui’s “chaotic manuscript” (Borges 81), but it is a ‘stuttering’ of language itself that is associated with the question of politics or the lack thereof in the margin. Hence, writing critically, for Deleuze, does not “isolate” the object of study from its vital flux but releases it from its pathological reterritorialization.

³¹ In *The Minor Gesture*, Erin Manning is doubtful about “the frame that would separate the nonconscious from conscious and locates a Bergsonian definition for states of consciousness that fits our investigation: ” ‘States of Consciousness are processes and not things;...if we denote them each by a single word, it is for the convenience of language; that they are alive and therefore constantly changing; that, in consequence, it is impossible to cut off a moment from them without making them poorer by the loss of some impression, thus altering their quality’ (2007:196)” (24).

Literature, Ethics, and Morality

For Deleuze, writing is an “ethical” move and not a “moral” one. Deleuze draws a sharp distinction between the two and uses the term “morality” to define, in general terms, any set of “constraining” rules, such as moral codes, that consist in judging, actions and intentions by relating them to transcendent or universal values (this is good, that is evil):

Ethics, which is to say, a typology of immanent modes of existence, replaces Morality, which always refers existence to transcendent values. Morality is the judgment of God, the *system of Judgement*. But Ethics overthrows the system of judgment. The opposition of values (Good-Evil) is supplanted by qualitative difference of modes of existence (good-bad). (Spinoza: Practical Philosophy 23)

What Deleuze calls ‘ethics’, on the contrary to Kantian ethics, is a set of “facilitative” (*facultative*) rules that evaluate what we do, say, think, and feel, according to the immanent mode of existence they imply. The immanent beyond –also present in Whitehead’s philosophy—gives value to the subject outside its historical determination. For Massumi, immanence or transcendence suggests a virtuality in between different ‘extremes’ such as “the dead, the living, and the human” (“The Autonomy of Affect” 99) that promises potential in a form of trans-subjective or trans-situational ethics (“Virtual Ecology and the Question of Value”). “Ethics in this sense is completely situational. Its completely pragmatic” (*Politics of Affects* 11). “The ethical value of an action is what it brings out in the situation, for its transformation, how it breaks sociality open” (11). Ethics also links literature and life by posing the question of *health*³² (Smith xiv-xv) and “affective relations among bodies in composite or collective” (*Deleuze and*

³² “[O]ne can speak of ‘good mental health,’ even if everything ends badly” (*Critical and Clinical* 20).

Ethics 33). Deleuze notes, in *The Logic of Sense*, “ethics is concerned with the event; it consists of willing the event as such, that is, of willing that which occurs insofar as it does occur” (163); but, as Bryant claims, for Deleuze, “willing the event is not a *passive acceptance* of what happens” (*Deleuze and Ethics* 32).

Immanent ethics, therefore, involves reflecting on the “often-painful dissonance we experience” and our struggles to live good lives (Lorraine 1). It also involves locating “the evolving capacities of the interdependent life-forms of the communities to which we belong” (1). Such ‘immanent ethics’ take us to “some place of the ‘always already’ that is neither too late nor too soon” (Lather 629) or, as Manning puts it, “[i]t is out of time, untimely, rhythmically inventing its own pulse” (*The Minor Gesture* 2). The ethical as Bryant suggests is “conceived as the emergence of a *problem*³³ [always a unique one] and the re-composition of a collective undertaken in response to this problem” (22) and should be thought of as a sort of construction or building rather than on the model of judgment (29). The task, therefore, as Levinas suggests “does not consist in creating an ethics” but is the attempt “to find its meaning” (Levinas 105). Deleuze does not tie the fate of problems to abstract and dead essences [What is X?], as Rationalism does but he does relate it to “the *strange* question of *when* ethical problematics arise” (Jun *Deleuze and Ethics* 26) and, “in the moment of uncertainty when new actors emerge within a collective” (30). Deleuze and Guattari, according to Nathan Jun, offer their ethics in terms of “line of escape” which among other things, are “the conditions of possibility for revolutionary political, social, and economic transformation” (4). Therefore, the ethical is

³³ “For Deleuze, problems are not a *psychological* or *epistemological* category, but rather an *ontological* category” (*Deleuze and Ethics* 36); “problems are not in the *mind*, but rather belong to the world (*Difference and Repetition* 280).

understood at the level of political activism, events, and processes³⁴; it might be more effective, particularly in its emphasis on creativity and novelty, than the application of pre-existing moral principles or of the solutions that conventional/traditional moral philosophy has to offer.³⁵

Deleuzian ethics is “simultaneously critical and constructive” and instead of prescribing or controlling a form, it grows out of experience (64). Ethics concerns itself with “the specificity or singularity of *event*, which are, in their turn, always specific to situations and which are irreplaceable” (31).

Laughter

“A serious and good philosophical work could be written consisting entirely of jokes.” (Malcolm, *Ludwig Wittgenstein* 27-28)

First of the four proofs of the Jewishness of Jesus: he lived with his mother until he was 28.

Second proof: he believed his mother was a virgin.

Third proof: his mother believed he was the son of God.

Fourth proof: he inherited a tiny little artisanal carpentry shop, and from a few pieces of wood and nails he founded a

³⁴ “Given this event, how is our collective to be built?” (*Deleuze and Ethics* 29).

³⁵ Ethics and morality may also be defined in terms of memory and geography. Avishai Margalit in *the Ethics of Memory* highlights another distinction: “morality is long on geography and short on memory. Ethics is typically short on geography and long on memory. Memory is the cement that holds thick relations together, and communities of memory are the obvious habitat for thick relations and thus for ethics” (8).

multinational corporation (in Derrida *Death Penalty V. II*).

To search for the *hypokeimenon/substratum* is to search for that substance, the underlying thing that persists in a thing going through change—its basic essence. This underlying and ‘distinct entity’ presumably exists prior to the perception of Jesus and his social existence as a Christian or a Jew, as Italian or Irish (as in other versions of the joke [e.g. Das MacHale *The Jesus Jokebook* 93]). For Fly, in Hage’s *Carnival*, “Jesus is an asexual circumcised revolutionary” (198), “an anarchist of an anorexic commie” (100) who provides no future for devoted young girls. Jesus, however, for Derrida, provides a hospitable gesture toward others or as Derrida observes in Levinas’ notion of the ‘unconditional law of hospitality’ a ‘fundamental openness’ to the other (all creatures) that precedes his subjective being (Fuh 1). But how does this ‘bare particulate’ fluctuates with each becoming, each hospitable gesture, and burst into laughter? The whole point here is not to laugh at the subject going through change, or to laugh the joke away going back to symbolic ordering of things, but to dwell upon the gap made by the laughter and to reflect on that which underlies, when for that short moment, we cease to be the subject.

For Slavoj Žižek, jokes are serious matters and have “positive stabilizing functions” (*Žižek’s Jokes* 1). According to Isaac Asimov’s short story “Jokestar”, it was “the mother of all jokes” that gave birth to spirit: “God created man out of apes by telling them a joke” (*Žižek’s Joke* 2). The role of jokes in the becoming-man of the ape is perhaps just another serious joke. Laughter, however, as an autonomous affect is another *moment of the world* that affects us and makes us ‘become’, escape the *ressentiment* of persons and the dominance of the established order. It carries life to “the state of a non-personal power” (*Critical and clinical* lii). Such

becomings are related to Deleuze's notion of haecceities, as "the mode of individuation of 'a life' that does not differ in nature from that of a climate, a winter, a summer, a wind, a fog, or 'an hour of a day' (e.g. Lorca's "A las Cinco de la Tarde"³⁶), "a perfect individuality lacking nothing, even though this individuality is different from that of a thing or a subject" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 261) because it "consists entirely of relations of movement and rest between molecules or particles, capacities to affect and be affected" (261). They are assemblages of nonsubjectified affects and percepts that enter into virtual conjunction" (*Clinical and Critical* xxxiv). Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* "distinguish assemblage haecceities (a body considered only as longitude and latitude) and interassemblage haecceities, which also mark potentialities of becoming within each assemblage (the milieu of intersection of the longitudes and latitudes)" (262-263).

This chapter follows by another line of escape; a Foucauldian burst into laughter. Foucault's laugh at "the blind Argentinian's" joke (*Carnival* 46), Burges' 'imaginary' Chinese encyclopedia, was a moment of catharsis, or in Derrida's terms, a yes-laugh. For Derrida, yes-laughter relates to "what awaits us" since the "question of hospitality is also the question of waiting, of the time of waiting and of waiting beyond time" (359). Foucault's laughter in that sense is a hospitable gesture of a self-appointed "new archivist" seduced by "diagonal lines" and the new order of things" (Deleuze *Foucault* 52). Similarly, Rawi Hage's anti-hero, Fly, in *Carnival*, is another Foucauldian new archivist who "fancies about librarian monkeys conspiring against the world" (*Carnival* 6). He describes his immense private library as a "tunnel of books"

³⁶ Lorca Federico G. "La cogida y la muerte", Poem [lament for ignacio sánchez mejías].

that “welcomes when a woman enters [his] house” (45). Not unlike Foucault, he has a strange way of ordering things:

I arrange them by character; the colour of their skies, and the circumference of their authors’ heads. For instance, James Joyce, because of the size of his skull, is located at the entrance. As for Rousseau, he comes towards the end, right at the window, and that is for ...his ever-constant need to relieve himself and to be close to nature. (*Carnival* 46)

Fly’s new order of things points out his desire to uncover what Foucault calls in *The Order of Things* “the unconscious of the science” (xi) or in a Deleuzian sense ‘the genetic code’ and the *singularities* behind every work of literature (Smith xxiv): the way they perceive the colour of the sky, the size of their skulls or even the patterns of their masturbations. Such ‘genetics’ or ‘singularities’ are precisely one of the two paradoxical features of ‘the vitality of life’. The second axis is “a power of creation capable of inventing ever new relations and conjugations between these singularities”, “a power of abstraction capable of producing elements that are in themselves assignifying, acosmic, asubjective, anorganic, agrammatical, asyntactic and placing them in a state of continuous variation” (Smith xxiv, lii).

The other aspect of such laughter can be found in Leo Strauss, as the main weapon of modernity, enlightenment against orthodoxy “an enlightenment mockery of the teachings of tradition” since it was able to advocate the notion of progress by mocking tradition, a form of mockery which represents a triumph over the past and “laugh orthodoxy out of a position from which it could not be dislodged by any proofs supplied by Scripture or even by reason” (Strauss, *Law and Philosophy* 29-30). Deleuze also reads Nietzsche in such ‘Untimely’ manner:

Nietzsche opposes history not to the eternal but to the subhistorical or superhistorical: the Untimely, which is another name for haecceity, becoming, the innocence of becoming (in other words, forgetting as opposed to memory, geography as opposed to history, the map as opposed to the tracing, the rhizome as opposed to arborescence). (296)

For Strauss, laughter is also a form of liberation from prejudice. Bakhtin stresses that laughing repression off the stage of history is “not merely metaphoric” (xxii). Similarly, Fly in *Carnival* asks: “Is there anything on earth or in heaven more potent than a good dose of mockery and laughter?” (*Carnival* 30) It is the only kind of laughter that for Hage and Bakhtin defeats “true open seriousness” as *it* fears “neither parody, nor irony, nor any other form of reduced laughter, for it is aware of being part of an uncompleted whole” (Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* quoted by Hage in *Carnival* 2). The people’s ‘ambivalent laughter’ is different, in Bakhtin’s view, from the negative laughter of “the pure satire of modern times”, when the satirist “places himself from above the object of his mockery, he is opposed to it” (Bakhtin 12): “The people do not exclude themselves from the wholeness of the world. They, too, are incomplete, they also die and are revived and renewed” (2). Paradoxically, Romantic laughter in its grotesque ways, as Bakhtin asserts, is another form of resistance, escape or reaction against the self-importance of the Enlightenment, against the cold rationalism, against an official, formalistic and logical authoritarianism (Bakhtin 37). The rhizomatic frameworks wherein laughter expresses itself within different cultural and spatiotemporal territories suggest an affective turn in our investigation. Laughter seems to work autonomously from its subject or its object. For France McDonald, laughter is not “an emotional response to humor” but it is “a form of affect capable of convulsing being” (“Ha-Ha and Again Ha-Ha” 541). Affect is able to create “nonconscious

affective resonances”³⁷ in “visceral” or “nonconscious” levels of the body “prior to intentions, meaning, reasons, and beliefs (Leys 435). France Macdonald calls laughter the “messy, convulsive, and involuntary” affect that “appears in French poststructuralism [such as Kristeva] as a metaphor for the productive cracking up of subjectivity” (541) that turns one's insides out.

Laughter and the Literature of Abjection

Kristeva’s laughter is an apocalyptic one, laughter as “a horrified and fascinated exclamation” (204). A form of laughter that can encode “a seeingness that, contrary to the philosophical revelation of truth, imposes through a poetic incantation that is often elliptic, rhythmic, and cryptogrammic the incompleteness and abjection of any identity, group, or speech. Such a seeingness asserts itself as the premise of an impossible future and as a promise of an explosion”³⁸ (205). Kristeva claims that the literature of abjection, through its language and its modern literary use of the abject creates a semantic ambivalence, a despondent mark of death, and a menacing gift of a burst into laughter: “not from the joy of a ‘very intense life,’ but the *jouissance* (the pleasure and pain felt simultaneously in sublimity) of an eminently fragile and blasted existence” (Johnson 127).

For Kristeva, the unthinkable nature of the impossible “primal scene” always assumes at least a double stance between the affects of disgust and laughter, and events such as apocalypse and carnival (Kristeva 138). For Bakhtin, on the other hand, carnival is a revolutionary act, or at least a kind of safety valve for passions that the common people might otherwise direct towards

³⁷ It is reminiscent of Charley Douglass’ “Laff Box” that was investigated thoroughly in Dylan Cree’s “Uselessness in Reserve? An exploration of the laugh track, “media” and *the frivolous*”.

³⁸ Kristeva identifies such laughter in the Great Palestinian apocalyptic movement between the second century B.C. and the second century A.D. (*Pouvoirs de L'horreur* (English) 204).

revolution (*Rabelais and His World* xviii). In that sense, laughter might symbolize an inward revolution that balances the subject from within rather than from without. “I drove and everything around me spoke of disappearance and decay” (*Carnival* 287), says Fly, in *Carnival*, depicting a dystopian city and its fragile taxi drivers with their radical nihilism. Fly contemplates the endings of things: “Everything ends with a flight, I thought ...the images of passing meadows in rearview mirrors, the dance of a bird towards the light, a horse’s last sigh before an end” (288). In the end, Hage chooses laughter over apocalypse for Fly: “I drove and I felt the sluggishness of my car against the cadavers of mud. I heard laughter and I laughed” (288). For Deleuze, the dissolution of the subject in such a chaotic and bifurcating world alters the status of the individual. Thus, the monad becomes the nomad and monadology becomes nomadology (Smith xxviii). In *Emanuel Levinas*, John Llewelyn highlights the same intrusion of the story of Odyssean return by the story of Abrahamic exile (45) that often ends by a ‘half awakening,’³⁹ *rêveil*, to the light of day in which personal subjectivity comes back (49).

Another famous example of laughter in the literature of abjection is the “Reply of the Zaporozhian Cossacks to Sultan Mehmed IV of the Ottoman Empire.”⁴⁰ What makes the

³⁹ “It becomes fully awake only if that subjectivity intending its world, awakened *to* it, is interrupted by the Other, *Autrui*. [...] that implies that the contentment of living monadically is a kind of drunkenness, a word of which Nietzsche makes much use [...] (Llewelyn *Emmanuel Levinas* 50). Such awakening, for Levinas (and Kierkegaard) “is a sobering, not simply a sobriety” (50).

⁴⁰ The original letter by Ivan Sirko is assumed to be written in 1676 but it has never been found, so the whole letter can be considered a legend or the work of imagination. In 1870, an ethnographer, Yakov Novitsky found a copy dated 18th century in the city of Dnipro. Nevertheless, the letter was a source of inspiration for many including the Poet, Guillaume Appollinaire, and the French singer-songwriter Léo Ferré. It was reimaged in the film *Taras Bulba* (2009) by Vladimir Bortko and the game *Cossacks: European Wars*.

expressed affect more powerful is the way laughter ties itself to the image of invincible Cossack. The Masculine figure of the Cossack has gradually become the official and national hero, both at the individual and the collective level (Bureychak 1). Cossacks were depicted in paintings and literature as fearless, risk-taking, brave and free men but strict followers of a code of honor—another version of the classic emblem of masculinity, the Spartan, only more drunk (Burns).⁴¹ Even Apollinaire “had to follow this bad boy”.⁴² Russian painter, Ilya Repin, painted this laughter over more than eleven years, from 1880 to 1891. The painting below well illustrates the Cossacks in their *agencement* in an almost mythical moment of writing their supposedly historical response to Ottoman Sultan Mohammed IV’s (1642-1693) ultimatum requesting their surrender.

⁴¹Burns, Peter. “How to be Masculine Like the Zaporozhian Cossacks”. 2015 <web> no page numbers (online version).

⁴² Apollinaire, G.LA CHANSON DU MAL-AIMÉ.



Figure 4. Painting by Ilya Repin: “Reply of the Zaporozhian Cossacks to Sultan Mehmed IV of the Ottoman Empire”

Ilya Yefimovich Repin’s most famous painting, *Zaporozhian Cossacks*, as Strachan claims tapped into the public anti-turk sentiment during a moment in history and the state of hostile relation between Russia and Turkey. The painting was bought by Tsar Alexandre III for 35000 roubles (Strachan 126). The Cossacks, in the painting, seem high-spirited and vibrant. They are sharing a euphoric moment contributing to the letter while laughing so hard that one of them is losing his balance. Ivan Sirko (the Hetmen) is keeping his calm writing the letter with only a mocking smile.

O sultan, Turkish devil and damned devil's kith and kin, secretary to Lucifer himself.

What the devil kind of knight are thou, that canst not slay a hedgehog with your naked arse? The devil shits, and your army eats. Thou shalt not, thou son of a whore, make

subjects of Christian sons; we have no fear of your army, by land and by sea we will battle with thee, fuck thy mother (Burn).

Along with the unusual aesthetic of the official response of the Kosh Otaman Ivan Sirko, with the whole Zaporozhian Host, to the Ottoman Sultan, I am mostly fascinated by the deterritorialized location and ‘grotesque’ imagery (Bakhtin) of Sultan Mehmet in different imaginary territories of the Cossacks’ rhetoric. The Grotesque, for Bakhtin, is related to the paradox in logic. It appears “witty and amusing,” but it maintains the idea of “the oneness of the grotesque world” (Bakhtin 33).

Thou Babylonian scullion, Macedonian wheelwright, brewer of Jerusalem, goat-fucker of Alexandria, swineherd of Greater and Lesser Egypt, pig of Armenia, Podolian thief, catamite of Tartary, hangman of Kamyanets, and fool of all the world and underworld, an idiot before God, grandson of the Serpent, and the crick in our dick. Pig's snout, mare's arse, slaughterhouse cur, unchristened brow, screw thine own mother!

So the Zaporozhians declare, you lowlife. You won't even be herding pigs for the Christians. Now we'll conclude, for we don't know the date and don't own a calendar; the moon's in the sky, the year with the Lord, the day's the same over here as it is over there; for this kiss our arse! (Burn)

The abject represents itself in the Cossack’s rhetoric in different forms and variants, such as filth, defilement, incest, bestiality, cowardice, sin and idiocy. The Hetman⁴³ marks his territory and the

⁴³ Hetman is the highest military and political title used by Ukrainian Cossacks. Until the establishment of the Cossack Hetmanate the title was used interchangeable with Kosh Otaman.

boundary of the self and therefore constitutes the limits of the speaking subject. The Sultan, however, seems to represent the crisis of abjection. The Hetman disavows all of the Sultan's entitlements and gives him "a precarious state in which the subject is menaced by the possibility of collapsing into a chaos of indifference" (Kristeva 39). The Sultan's dislocated subjectivity cannot settle in any spatiotemporal location and only occupies heterotopic spaces. He is even denied his calendar and therefore is doomed to the lowest depth of inferiority to kiss Hetman's bottom. Such laughter also connects the past and the future. Not unlike Sultan Mehmet IV who would continue his reign, his 'presence', on the right bank of Dnipro for almost a decade despite his representation in Hetman's plans for his virtual becoming, the dislocated subject's presence and social existence were independent of the representation of the object or its abjectified image in Hetman's discourse.

The Ottoman Sultan occupies in "The Zaporozhian Reply" the privileged epistemic positioning, the perfect 'third space', in Cossack's imaginary map. He is the abject of all the nations known to the Cossacks. The Sultan in Kristeva's terms can be portrayed as neither subject nor object. He is "ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable" and represents the crisis of the subject (*Power of Horror* 1). Žižek notes in "Abjection, Disavowal and the Masquerade of Power", that in our daily lives, "we deal with what Julia Kristeva calls 'abject' in a variety of ways: ignoring it, turning away from it with disgust, fearing it, constructing rituals made to keep it at a distance or constraining it to a secluded place" (1). The abject is pinned down between disgust and laughter, "a burst of laughter and a mark of death" (Kristeva 138). A burst into laughter can thus be seen in Deleuzian logic as the moment when objective contents and subjective forms collapse and give way "to world of fragments, to a

chaotic and multiple impersonal reality from which the work of art assumes its full meaning” (Smith xxii).

The permanence of such laughter, as an autonomous affect, is not necessarily a sign of postmodernity, and it is not historical evidence of Zaporozhian masculinity or the Sultan’s ‘barbarity.’ It is a part of the underlying thing, persistent enough to reach its minimalist form in one of Donald’s Trump’s tweets⁴⁴. The crisis of abjection in the Zaporozhian imaginary map was liberated from the temporal or spatial properties of the object, its age, length or weight. It could expand to other categories such as ‘race,’ gender and sexuality, suitable for heterotopic spaces such as contemporary ‘locker rooms.’ Apiah and Bhabha in “Cosmopolitanism and Convergence” argue that “[b]ody parts, excreta, criminality, animality—these disfigurations of disrespect are not only attacks on identities or differences” (173). Politicians often “go barbarian” to legitimate an already inplaced hierarchy and political rule “to place minorities beyond the pale of citizenship by repeatedly relegating them to an irredeemable ‘second nature’ that denies them the capacity to be bearers of human rights and fully participant, active citizens” (173). To “grab them by the pussy”⁴⁵ is, therefore, also an act of abjection even before it can be considered as ‘sexual assault.’ The abjected subject supposedly loses its boundaries. While the deterritorialized subject (in this case female subjectivity) loses its enunciative privilege



⁴⁵ Access Hollywood video leaked to the Washington Post 2015.

as it is reduced to “objects to be described’ in their specificity” (Foucault *Archeology of knowledge* ch.2), the crisis of abjection abstracts away all the sensible qualities and makes a coded social existence impossible, therefore providing the abject through laughter with a line of escape from patterns of subjugation. Even for Kant, it is the inaccessibility of the noumenal domain that provides the possibility of the very “spontaneity” that forms the core of transcendental freedom (*Critique of the Practical Reason* 152-53). That is perhaps also one of the logics behind the subliminal horror in Margaret Atwood’s *Handmaids tale*, or the humanoids’ never-ending torture, rape, and mutilation in Stephen Williams’ *West World*. Not unlike Kristeva’s depiction of abjection wherein the subject consciously or unconsciously reappropriates its abjectified state to reach metaphorical death or other forms of transcendence:

I abject *myself*, I spit *myself* out, I abject *myself* in the same movement by which ‘I’ claims to be me. This detail, which is perhaps insignificant, but which they look for, they load with meaning, appreciate and impose on me, this trifle turns my insides out: thus, they see that *I* am in the process of becoming another at the cost of my own death.

(Kristeva and Lechte “Approaching Abjection” 127)

For Žižek, “*our freedom persists only in a space in between the phenomenal and the noumenal,*” between pleasure and pain or as Lyotard views it as a Kantian sublime, feeling as a ‘movement’ from pain to pleasure (*Organs without Bodies* 38). For Fly, this is where “the so-called sexual liberation movement and the religious self-floggers intersect” (Hage *Carnival* “Target”). The question is not what brings the subject to the limits of his/her condition as human beings but *what happens* when *it* reaches its threshold. When the boundaries of the organic and non-organic

fade away and the body “detaches itself as a living being,” the “whole body falls beyond the limit, cadere, corpse” (127).

Many migrant writers such as V.S. Naipaul and Ravi Hage find such ‘in betweenness’ in their own (self)experience, in being a former (post)colonial and becoming cosmopolitan. Naipaul gives voice to cosmopolitan homelessness. Salim, his narrator, in *A Bend in the River*, finds value in his abjection: “I began to understand at the same time that my anguish about being a man adrift was false, that for me that dream of home and security was nothing more than a dream of isolation, anachronistic and stupid and very feeble. I belonged to myself alone” (151). Salim locates his agency in a sudden withdrawal from different forms of nationalism, from Gandhi and Nehru: “I was going to surrender my manhood to nobody,” but Salim (no matter what his reasons might be) desires upward mobility in a cosmopolitan city. “For someone like me there was only one civilization and one place—London, or a place like it” (152). Everything else, for Salim was just “make believe” (155). His cosmopolitan rootlessness gradually shifts toward global ruthlessness. “I’m tired of being on the losing side. I don’t want to pass. I know exactly who I am and where I stand in the world. But now I want to win and win and win” (155). The Jouissance felt because of the absence or collapse of previous subjugating forces (virtual centres of power)⁴⁶ produced by individual, collective and institutional factors and the desire to compensate for the set-backs, persists through change and history and manifests itself again in the form of an obsessive desire to win, as in Trump’s famous speech: “We’re going to start winning again. We are going to win so much. We’re going to win at every level... You might even get tired of winning and you say please, please, it’s too much winning. We can’t take it

⁴⁶ “We might say that these virtual centres of power are our own subjectivities” (“Academy: ‘The Production of Subjectivity’ Simon O’Sullivan)

anymore and I say, no it isn't. We have to keep winning. We have to win more" (Trump 2016). Naipaul 's protagonist, Kripal Singh, in *The Mimic man* takes another stand on such line of flight:

Once we are committed we fight more than political battles; we often fight quite literally for our lives. Our transitional or makeshift societies do not cushion us. There are no universities or City houses to refresh us and absorb us after the heat of battle. For those who lose, and nearly everyone in the end loses, there is only one course: Flight to the greater disorder, the final emptiness: London and the home counties. (*The Mimic Man* 8)

The controversial ideas on 'Flight', for Naipaulian protagonists, demonstrate the relation of fabulation (Bergson) and events. The *real* line of flight is a survival becoming of the 'creature' within (The underlying thing) that can move in any way and take any shape, or form.

The shift of the abject and its arbitrary fluctuation from one intensity to another is the essence of Deleuzian rhizomatic mobility and can be traced in various forms of extreme marginalization. The abject follows rhizomatic patterns in search of positive affect in pseudo-positive multiplicities, which sometimes fall into the category of what Laurent Berlant calls 'cruel optimism', a "fantasy of good life, or a political project", "the prospect of the change that's gonna come" (1-2). Even if the abject resists the subjugating/liberating forces or any form of linguistic interpellation, its movement might not make sense in any form of a prescribed revolutionary de/reterritorialization. In the same way, Guattari calls movements such as the Islamic revolution in Iran as "the immense subjective revolution" or "large movements for subjectivation" that do not necessarily move in an emancipatory direction (*Guattari Reader* 194).

In *A Bend in the River*, Salim begins to understand that “everything which [he] thought had made [him] powerless in the world had also made [him] of value” (153). Similarly, Hage’s Cockroach demands “Look at me! Look at my wings straight and hard, look at the shine of their brown colour, look at my long whiskers,...look at all my beauty. All of it is natural. I have never needed rags or jewels” (*Cockroach* 284). Hage and Naipaul’s literary language free thought from what Claire Colebrook calls “the finitude from life”: “for we need not to see language as that system to which man submits because he must speak and labour with others” (*Deleuze and the Meaning of Life* 104). “Language has its own density and order that cannot be reduced to the unfolding of man as a historical organism who has the capacity to reflect upon but never fully coincide with his conditions” (Colebrook 104). For Guattari, “it was a serious error on the part of structuralist thinking to claim to bring together everything concerning the psyche under the sole direction of the linguistic signifier!” (*Guattari Reader* 194). Guattari suggests a redefinition and highlights “the heterogeneity of the components converging to produce subjectivity” and not “only within its memories and intelligence, but also within its sensibilities, affects, and unconscious fantasies” (194). In contrast to ‘linguistic subjectivation,’⁴⁷ Deleuze and Guattari suggest the concept of rhizome that avoids imposing forms from outside. Rhizomatic mapping, therefore, resists systems of representation but yet does not describe the self as a state of fact. The self, here is the construct of ethico-aesthetic paradigms with “an unconscious of flux and abstract machines, more than an unconscious of structure and language” (*The Guattari Reader* 198).

⁴⁷ I am highlighting the contrast between these two phrases: I speak language/language speaks me.

Naipaul, and Hage both resist this early Foucauldian idea that “man is a face drawn in the sand between two tides (Deleuze 2006, 74), and refuse to think of “humanity as inscribed, or marked out between modes of forces, between seeing and saying” (Colebrook 105). An idea that Foucault, himself, also later developed as “the aesthetics of existence” (*History of Sexuality V.3*) wherein he investigates the construction of the experiences of oneself and the way “the individual constitutes a certain relationship to him- or herself” (Huijer 61). This time, however, it is not only through power-knowledge axiom. Foucault adds another way of thinking that Deleuze calls a *pensée-artiste* (thought-as-artistic), a posteriori to the early Foucauldian moments of thought-as-archive and thought-as-strategy (J. Smith 75-76). Jason Smith revisits a Deleuzian reading of the late Foucault, in “A Taste for Life” with regard to the return to the figure of the “self”:

The return to the figure of the “self” in the late Foucault is not a return to the subject as an unchanging *subjectum* that undergirds and accompanies all of its representations but a specific event or movement that [withdraws] from the space of power by performing an operation on it, “straddling” or “folding” it in such a way, Deleuze proposes, that it is made to “affect itself” rather than act on *other* force. (Smith J. *A Taste for Life* 75)

The Foucauldian process of subjectivication, for Deleuze, makes more sense as an “intensive mode” and not as a personal subject. The Deleuzian “mode of existence” is, therefore, a property of substance, or as Smith notes “‘an affection’ of substance that expresses substance in a certain way or mode (*modus*)” (76). Such reflection on the substance as an “active affection, affections of the self by self” (76) necessitates a revisiting of John Locke’s theory of substance. John Locke argues in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* regarding the ‘real’ essence distinctive

from the nominal substance. When the ‘sensible properties’ are abstracted away from the abject, there is still something left to which the properties had adhered—some unobservable and unknowable thing, which allowed the object to exist independently of the *sensible properties* that it manifested in the beholder (Book II, chapter XXIII: Ideas of Substances). Locke’s theory of ‘Substratum’ can be seen as exemplified in the account of a BBC journalist during the Balkan War wherein he almost catches the Thing when it loses its masks: According to Allan Little “the Bosnian war gave to the lexicon of conflict a grotesque new euphemism: ethnic cleansing” (“Grief of Bosnia War Lingers On”). Little interviewed an old man emerging from a wood driven from his home in the central Bosnian town of Jajce:

I asked the man how old he was. He said he was 80. May I ask you, I said, are you a Muslim or a Croat? And the answer he gave me still shames me as it echoes down the decades in my head. I am, he said, a musician. (Little “Grief of Bosnia War Lingers On”)⁴⁸

The moment of truth, or as Little calls it the moment of “shame”, is when he understands what it means to “[reduce] the lives of fully rounded, blameless and accomplished human beings” into their properties (“Grief of Bosnia War Lingers On”). The romanticization and prioritization of a carrier(Techne), of a displaced person over his ‘ethnicity’ or ‘religious’ beliefs does not necessarily liberate, but at least it is a form of representation that, in this moment, might generate an affective shift from total apathy to partial sympathy, and generate for the displaced subject a ‘line of escape’. Žižek calls such an epistemic shift “a deeper voyage towards the inner treasure -

⁴⁸ Little, Allan. “Grief of Bosnia War Lingers On”. *BBC News*. 6 April 2012. <
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17636221>> no page numbers (online version).

or, what Plato calls the 'Agalma' which makes one a worthy person, which makes a commodity the desirable commodity" (Žižek *Pervert's Guide to Ideology*). Deleuze suggests the term *Homo tantum*, for someone "with whom everyone sympathizes, and who attains a kind of beatitude" (*Two Regimes of Madness* 387):

There is a moment that is no longer anything but a life playing with death. The life of an individual has given way to an impersonal and yet singular life that disengages a pure event freed from the accidents of the inner and outer life, that is, from the subjectivity and objectivity of what happens. A *homo tantum* with whom everyone sympathizes, and who attains a kind of beatitude. This is a haecceity⁴⁹, which is no longer an individuation but a singularization: *a life of pure immanence*, natural, beyond good and evil. (*Critical and Clinical* xiii)

Although he does not seem to "[require] content in something that has been deprived of all content" (Bennett 199), the abject's creative response to the 'Western' reporter is a line of flight that legitimizes his social existence and argues for his right 'to be,' although it is a ludicrous gamble with his life to prove his life worth living. The 'investigation,' in this dissertation, is not

⁴⁹ "First proposed by John Duns Scotus (1266–1308), a haecceity is a non-qualitative property responsible for individuation and identity. As understood by Scotus, a haecceity is not a bare particular in the sense of something *underlying* qualities. It is, rather, a non-qualitative property of a substance or thing: it is a "thisness" (a *haecceitas*, from the Latin *haec*, meaning "this") as opposed to a "whatness" (a *quidditas*, from the Latin *quid*, meaning "what")." (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari revisits this "mode of individuation [Haecceity]" (261) in their works and the term play a significant role in their thinking: "There is no general prescription. We have done with all globalizing concepts. Even concepts are haecceities, events."

a search for the hypokeimenon but is rendering conditions of transformation, transcendence, transgression, and revolution.

Conclusion

Becoming musician in this sense is becoming a trickster or, to use Guattari's term, a movement away from the traps of science, or subjugation and an escape towards "ethico-aesthetic paradigms" (Guattari, 1999, p.10). It is to take on a more personalized approach that is oriented from inside-out, rather than from outside-in. The old man's escape from the Balkan War, camouflaged as a musician, reminds me of the question that "the inhabitants of Paris" ask Rica, the fictional Persian traveler, in Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes*. "How one can be Persian? Rica, who "did not believe himself to be so curious and unusual a person" is puzzled by the attention he receives from the Parisians. He claims "never was a man seen as much as I was." To conduct an experiment "to see if there was still anything remarkable about [his] countenance", he changes his "Persian costume and dresses as a European [...]" "But, if someone happened to tell the company that I was Persian, I would immediately hear a buzz around me: "Oh! Oh! is he Persian? What an extraordinary thing! How can one be Persian?" (Letter 30) In "How to Be Persian Abroad?", An Old Question in the Postmodern Age," Nasrin Rahimieh argues that Rica, "[h]owever, 'free of all adornments', ...runs the risk of being reduced to a 'non-existence.' He seems to be left with no choice between the extremes of alterity and erasure of all difference" (166). Rahimieh brings out the postmodern question of the eighteenth-century text about the absence of "an essence to long for or to preserve," when both subjectivity and identity fail to provide an *existential territory* for the displaced subject.

To search for an underlying thing for many writers and philosophers, is to provide one with a line of flight from entrapment and ‘exhaustion’ and to heighten an individual’s agency; to empower a ‘being’ to act and undergo other affections or, in the worst of cases as Jason Smith argues, “to reconfigure the relation between the external parts actualizing [one’s] essence so that they cease to belong to [the self] and take on a new life” (736). For Deleuze and Guattari, “the self is only a threshold, a door, a becoming between two multiplicities” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 275). Deleuze and Guattari intentionally choose the terms multiplicities and *agencements* as a substitute for Spinozian substances to reject the static essences of the self⁵⁰ and highlight its *polyphony* (Bakhtin); not unlike the Bearded Lady in Hage’s *Carnival* who asserts that “there is no void...there is only motion” (Hage 26). The task for Deleuze and Guattari is to search for its geology rather than its ontology, giving the underlying thing a dynamic quality rather than a static one and illustrating *it* as a process or eventual continuity that will “lead it to produce its own lines of singularity, its own cartography, in fact, its own existence” (*The Guattari Reader* 137): “you are longitude and latitude” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 262). The task is not to discover the location of the self as it is always in motion between two multiplicities, two articulations, but to acknowledge its existence which is “necessary in order to pass from one to the other” (355). However, “‘between’ the two, in that instant, even ephemeral, if only a flash, it proclaims its own irreducibility” (355).

On the other side of every apophatic denial of the postmodern genesis of the marginalized subject, there are lines of flight that dismantle the involuntary memories of the past and “the

⁵⁰ Levi R. Bryant in *Deleuze and Ethics* characterizes the Deleuzian position as empiricist: “he is not referring to *epistemological* issues pertaining to how we *know*, but rather to an *ontology* that rejects pre-existent and transcendent forms or essences and that emphasizes the pluralism of being” (31).

neurotic's dreams of a tranquilized and conflict-free existence" of the future (Mark Seem "Introduction" *Anti-Oedipus* xviii). Each *agencement* of affects, events, words, and other intensities is attached to perpetual states of explosion and implosion aiming for new forms, new intensities and eventually new *agencements*, "[f]or if the plane of consistency only has haecceities for content, it also has its own particular semiotic to serve as expression. A plane of content and a plane of expression" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 263).

Chapter 2
The Nomads in No-Man's-Land
and the Sites of Unlearning in Richard Mosse's *Incoming* and *The Castle*

[...]how natural a mistake to believe that you could burn or tear or hack your way into
the secret body of the other! (Coetzee 46 *Waiting for the Barbarians* 46)

It is unlucky to reach a nomad's tent in the master's absence.

(Freya Starks 70)

In this chapter, the concept of nomad and nomadological reading are derived from Deleuze and Guattari's insights in *A Thousand Plateaus*, "Nomad Thought," and "Shame and Glory." The problem life poses to itself does not stay the same and is always under transformation (Massumi *Politics of Affect* xi); consequently, Nomad as a concept and as a critical tool for thinking and analyzing follows its own becoming and needs proper problematization and detailed addressing. In "Deleuze and the Postcolonial: Conversations, Negotiation, Mediations," Patton and Bignall take the old conversation between "Deleuze and the Postcolonial" further and engage with various aspects of the concept in the project of decolonization (1). Following an unlearning project⁵¹, this investigation returns to some of the crucial points addressed by Deleuze and adequately discussed by Bignall and Patton and

⁵¹ I was inspired by Dana Ariel's Methods of *verlernen*, translated as unlearning in English and forgetting in Hebrew. The unlearning process involves both passive and active engagement, it suggests an act of undoing, a form of return and even erasure or remaking. Ariel, Dana. "about."

<<https://www.danaariel.com/About>> Last time accessed 2019-07-04.

suggests innovative perspectives on the contemporary dislocated, migrant subjects. It engages actively with Richard Mosse's insights on the matter of border crossing. Mosse's *Incoming* and *The Castle* create excellent cases for this investigation. These unlearning sites provide visual tropes of resistance by re-presenting the displaced through a nomadological framework. By that, Mosse gives agency to the body of the displaced and re-appropriates technologies of representation that renders structures of common identification, and human rights visible.

When dealing with modes of existence such as the dislocated male subject in the literary and cultural contexts addressed in this dissertation, it is necessary to map out the political stakes and a more precise re-meaning of Nomad as a concept. Deleuze's reading of T. E Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* in "Shame and Glory." is not only significant for the affirmation of the percept of Arabian desert but also asserts Lawrence's transgressive⁵² move toward becoming-Arab as a form of becoming-nomad in *A Thousand Plateaus*. This chapter began as an inquiry into the relation between the Deleuzian concept of Nomad and the displaced subject of the 21st century, but it became overtaken by the question of 'minority becoming' and the 'weaponized gaze' in the works of artists such as Richard Mosse and writers such as Lawrence and Rawi Hage. In searching for the question, the chapter grew toward another deviation that regards Deleuze's philosophy, as Peter Lenco suggests, as "much more comprehensive than 'just' a philosophy of minoritarian resistances" (*Deleuze and World Politics* ix). Here I explore the way Nomad, as a philosophical concept and as an ambivalent imaginary tool overcoded by "a long

⁵² Many scholars have examined Lawrence's transgression and in particular his literary sensibility and romantic attitude toward the Arab Other and the Arab cause (Denis Porter). Kaja Silverman sees his sexuality and his cross-dressing "as his effort of disidentifying with his own national group" and sexuality. (Mutman 75)

tradition of Eurocentric primitivism and a fascination for the other,” might still have the potential to address the issue of mass migration today (Kaplan 88). Nomadic tribes in neocolonial societies, precarious dwellers in Megacity slums, displaced indigenous populations, and refugees trespassing artificial borders or imprisoned inside the walls of concentration camps are not the same and nor in a static position. Not unlike Lawrence, they are in constant motion and transmutation and do not necessarily manifest any form of freedom as promised in the figure of the Deleuzian Nomad. Migrant literature, not unlike world politics, as Lenco suggests can be “characterized by fluidity over stability, change over fixity, ambiguous forces over clear processes, ignorance over knowledge, and paradox over clear logic” (1).

The first part of this chapter, **On Nomad and Nomadological Reading: T. E. Lawrence’s ‘Becoming Minoritarian’** acknowledges the incommensurability of the *imaginary* Nomad as a philosophical concept on the one hand and dislocated subjects or nomadic tribes on the other. This investigation loosens the grip of the self-referential Orientalist metaphors in “Nomadology” by not considering Nomad as a collective identity. It also compares the notion of becoming minoritarian in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* and minority becomings in contemporary cosmopolitan and nationalist literature. It explores the concept of Nomad in relation to a cartography of the potentials of the displaced subject who moves into and out of the immersive field of life’s complexities in a way that is not oriented, - or reoriented - to pre-defined or pre-articulated directions, but inventively, as Massumi suggests; by letting life modulate its own course (*politics of Affect* 117). The second part, **The Weaponized Gaze: the Target Gaze of the State**, investigates the symbiotic relation of the weaponized gaze and the ambivalence of visibility in Deleuzian Nomadism and the ways both abandon the norms of visuality. The interdisciplinary shift, in this part, moves this inquiry from what can be said by the various

meanings offered by the concept of Nomad to what can be made visible. Here, tactical applications and the power of abstraction lead us to the discourse of territory and (in)security. A case in point, Richard Mosse is a conceptual documentary photographer and filmmaker who uses a variety of techniques to defamiliarize his audience and challenge its perception. While his earlier work offered a new perspective on the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo by using colour infrared film, his more recent heat maps of refugees in *Incoming* and *The Castle* is the focus of our investigation. Mosse asks the hard question of what it means to document and be objective. The **conclusion, Nomadic Thinking as an Anti-essentialist Strategy**, explores Nomadology's *imaginary* thinking about inventing yet another unborn people, and an uncodable, untimely body that can resonate with the contemporary deterritorialized narratives, including migrant literature, literature of migration, literature of exile and displacement, and the literature of the refugees. These new bodies, in Richard Mosse and Sarah Kwash's "415 men" demonstrate that Nomadism is no longer just an imaginary space for philosophical and historical abstraction. The displaced bodies of the Other, however, still offer resistance in their silence inward march, their imaginary subjectless bodies cherish narratives of survival, and function as gathering spaces for both familiar and new voices across transnational and transindigenous frameworks of mobility and movement. These imaginary bodies articulate rhizomatic growth detached from structuralist and identitarian thinking and call for methodologies that allow reading across differences (personal repetitions) and encourage freedom of movement and mobility rights.

On Nomad and Nomadological Reading: T. E. Lawrence's 'Becoming Minoritarian' and Minority Becoming

Reading the Nomad as a metaphor, as a collective identity or as a 'thought image' can generate a totalizing and reductionist effect. Such a reading adheres to the totalizing gaze of the state, unlike Deleuze and Guattari's explicit intention to go beyond arborescent thinking. Banking on collective identities ignores multiple characters of different groups of people and of individuals who are "the same" only to the extent of their *différance*.⁵³ That said, Nomad as a 'conceptual motif' facilitates ways to approach other concepts such as War Machine, forces, and flows. Nomad supposedly represents a *new* being in "an Unformable and unformed outside" (Deleuze *Foucault* 113); it implies "a mass in which all individuality, all subjectivity, has been effaced" (Kawash 134). It is not a collective model and nor an individual one. Kawash claims there is a difference between the collective and the Deleuzian unindividuated body. For Kawash, there is a separation, a rupture from the past, from the lives from which these new bodies were separated. These new bodies take on certain autonomy, a life of their own. Now, these bodies⁵⁴ "speak only to give voice to their transformed being as organic materiality: sickness, hunger, cold, injury" (135). It is as if these bodies have lost, or been depleted of, their memory or their history. There is a liberating factor, for some, in forgetting the thresholds of a collective identity,

⁵³ Derrida notes that "[t]he sign is usually said to be put in the place of the thing itself, the present thing, "thing" here standing equally for meaning or referent. The sign represents the present in its absence....The sign, in this sense, differed presence" ("Différance" 9) Derrida also concerns itself with "the authority of presence, or of its simple symmetrical opposite, absence or lack" (10) Here I highlight the *différance* between Nomad as a concept and the people summoned by *it* as a playful strategic departure that goes beyond the opposition between the two as it is also a strategy without finality.

⁵⁴ Samira Kawash's essay, "415 Men," is concerned with one particular event and the deportation of 415 Palestinians from Israel on 17 December 1992.

and what society or a religion inscribes as the subject's *essence*. Avishai Margalit in *The Ethics of Memory* reflects on *destruction* (hakhurban⁵⁵), and the moment a community is “irretrievably destroyed” (*The Ethics of Memory* VIII).⁵⁶ In an ‘ethincal turn,’ Margalit suggests “a community that thinks predominantly about the future and reacts to the present” (IX) by avoiding to become “communities of memory” and in not serving as “soul candles” (VIII).

In another example, in Hage's *Beirut Hellfire Society*, the antique dealer is eager to help Pavlov the protagonist off his Persian Carpet:

Let me help you liberate your people! Get rid of it all, all these artifacts that contribute to and justify tribal and religious affiliations! All these relics are an emblem of past disputes and contested land. Hand them to an expert outsider and watch how peace will prevail! Bombs shall cease and flowers shall bloom when all these historical artifacts are sold and shipped to France, *La Republique!* (51)

In Hage's *Cockroach*, the protagonist is also eager to forget and forgive humanity, at least at first: “at the first sip of beer, the first fries”, “for its stupidity, its foulness, its pride, its avarice and greed, envy, lust, gluttony, sloth, wrath and anger”, “its rivers of piss, its bombs, all its bad dancing”, “for not taking off its shoes before entering homes, before stepping on the carpets of places of worship” (*Cockroach* V). In *Beirut Hellfire society*, the forgetfulness is summoned sardonically by “oily brown balls of hash” that should be “eagerly lit, and slowly inhaled, with eyes closed...in anticipation of numbness, and forgetfulness of mass killing of this world” (231).

⁵⁵ “the way Jews traditionally referred to the destruction of the Temple by the Romans, who then drove them into exile” (*The Ethics of Memory* VIII).

⁵⁶ Margalit, here, refers to his own Jewish relatives and when their “huge families in Europe were destroyed” during the war. (VII-VIII)

The forgetfulness is also depicted through the mourning figure of the Lady of the Stairs: “her silent affection, her gestures, her madness and caresses that had made him feel whole” (*Beirut Hellfire Society* 132). With the Lady of the Stairs and perhaps even the protagonist, Pavlov, everything becomes detached from its continuity. Everything becomes simulacra. “A dance performed by death itself” (76). There is no way to cope with such excess of death and grief in Hage’s Beirut. Existence becomes Pavlov’s exile and “nothingness his home” (130). The real detaches itself from its artificial resurrection, and the explosions become laughing matters for their musicality (126). Even death can be “watched from above with an air of detachment, perhaps even superiority” (83).

Mergalit avoids deceptive metaphors with dissimilar features (49). This investigation also intends not to combine the domain of collective psychology with the domain of individual psychology. The individuals’ endeavor to move forward is a different matter. Humans forget in order to move forward; the act of forgetting as detachment and decentering is finding the location “between the event and the account of its retelling” (Manning “For a Pragmatics” 99). It provides—even just for a moment—potentials for over-seeing,⁵⁷ change of perspective, and moving in *New* directions. It is a practical survival strategy that assists in learning, innovation, and change. Massumi also suggests “the lived past of the body” as an *agencement* of relations that holds us. “That past includes what we think of as subjective elements, such as habits, acquired skills, inclinations, desires, even willings, all of which come in patterns of repetition. This doesn’t make the event any less rooted in the body” (*The Politics of Affects* 49). Instead of

⁵⁷ “Übersehen does not really mean to over-see. It means to miss, to over-look” and to let a moment become absolutely what it is and let a subject be born of the process. (Manning “For a Pragmatics of the Useless, or the Value of the Infrathin” 98,99)

forgetfulness or “starting from scratch,” Massumi suggests the reactivation of pasts of different orders in the passage towards a changed future. “In taking up the past differently, it creates new potentials for the future” (50).

Nomadic thinking, for Deleuze, summons “a pure dispersed and anarchic multiplicity, without unity or totality” (*Anti-Oedipus* 356). Such whole also produces, for Deleuze, “a “peripheral” totality that, alongside its parts, is a *new* singularity fabricated separately (Smith “Introduction” xxiii). This totality is not as a fragmented organism, but a new body, an “emission of preindividual and prepersonal singularities” (*Anti-Oedipus* 356). It is not a body that existed before, and it cannot be represented as a historic, continuous, coherent subject (Kawash 134). The Deleuzian Nomad-as-pastiche is created by fragmented images from the sometimes incommensurable communities and habits, and the already existed (mis)representation of tribal myths in different historicized periods. Deleuze describes this method in “The Powers of the False” (*Cinema* 126) where he insists that “the multiple must be made,” (*A Thousand Plateau* 7), that it is never given in itself. This production of the multiple entails two tasks: obtaining pure singularities, and establishing relations or syntheses between them so as to produce a variable Whole that would be the ‘effect’ of the multiplicity and its disconnected parts” (Smith “Introduction” xxiii). Massumi suggests that each segment of Deleuze and Guattari’s writing tries to combine conceptual bricks in such a way as to construct this kind of intensive state of thought” (*A User’s Guide* 7), along with an inconvenient body to inhabit it. The ‘inconvenient body’ creates a crisis for the coding mechanism of the state. For Thomas King, forming “a drum group” is the origin story of such inconvenience (*Inconvenient Indian* x). King notes about his participation in a group of not quite professional “Waa -Chi-Waasa singers,” a group of Anishnaabe, Métis, Coastal Salish, Cree, and Cherokee musicians, who had “nothing much in

common: “We’re all Aboriginal and We have the drum. That’s about it” (*The Inconvenient Indian* x). He continues:

Indian became Amerindians and Aborigines and Indigenous People and American Indians. Lately, Indians have become First Nations in Canada and Native Americans in the United States, but the fact of the matter is that there has never been a good collective noun because there never was a collective to begin with. (King *The Inconvenient Indian* xiii)

‘Nomad’ sometimes appears as another collective noun as it addresses numerous groups of people with different affiliations and different degrees of internal organization. It is a mosaic that forgets existential differences but that aspires to a whole; to be a metaphysical enemy of the state, a flow of revolutionary potentials. Such fabulation makes many scholars uncomfortable. Caren Kaplan, for instance, argues that Nomadism does not allow “the other to speak for itself: the Third World functions simply as a metaphorical margin for European oppositional strategies” (Kaplan, Caren 88). But there are also others who are more sympathetic readers. Bignall and Patton, trace many such as, François Dosse, Elias Sanbar (Palestinian intellectual) and Guillaume Sibertin who view Deleuze and Guattari’s non-traditional position as a strategic marginal one that offers “alternative forms of listening” (3) and “which is authorized by its own decentring in relation” (2):

Over and above such specific interventions in support of decolonisation, many of Deleuze’s philosophical writings, both alone and with Guattari, develop concepts and frameworks of discussion that resonate with themes and issues pertinent to postcolonialism. (2)

To avoid the risk of “becoming mere metaphors” (Lenco 42), one of our tasks here is to distinguish “the false friend” from “the true friend,” “the concept from the simulacrum” (*What is Philosophy* 9), the constructive experiment from the representational interpretation. This investigation, as process-oriented research,⁵⁸ tries to avoid reduction to, and encapsulation by the heritage of the eighteenth and nineteenth century tropes of European travelers, particularly the Victorian and Edwardian notion of Nomad. Such tropes become naturalized in the literary imaginary of the early twentieth century and minimize or even sometimes eliminate the attempts to locate the substitution of signs of the real for the real (Baudrillard 11). They create a simulation in which the Nomad can be a single, internally coherent image. The imaginary nomads in *A Thousand Plateaus*, sometimes represent groups of people by underlining similarities and general biological processes. Nevertheless, Nomad, for Deleuze, is more of an impersonal and unconscious and sometimes transcendental intensity “open to the infinity of singularities through which it passes, and at the same time it loses its center, that is to say, its identity as a concept and as a self” (Smith “Introduction” xxix). It adheres to the common definition of the simulacrum and becomes “a copy of a copy whose relation to the model has become so attenuated that it can no longer properly be said to be a copy” (Massumi “Realer than Real” 2). In *A Users’ Guide*, Massumi locates other attempts to construct such a smooth space of thought (*A Users Guide* 6):

Spinoza called nomad thought ‘ethics.’ Nietzsche called it ‘gay science.’ Artaud called it ‘crowned anarchy.’ To Maurice Blanchot, it is the ‘space of literature.’ To Foucault,

⁵⁸ Brian Massumi in *Politics of Affect* suggests that a process-oriented exploration tries not to reduce, not to encapsulate: “It does not end in an overview. Rather, it works to become more and more adequate to the ongoing complexity of life. This means that it does not arrive at any final answer” (xi).

‘outside thoughts.’ Deleuze and Guattari also employ the terms ‘pragmatics’ and ‘schizoanalysis.’ And in introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus* describe a rhizome network strangling the roots of the infamous tree. (*The Users Guide* 7)

Hage locates another fragmented whole in the circus, a prominent motif in *Carnival* (Hage has also published a collection of photos titled “Le Cirque” in *Granta*). Not unlike Deleuze’s figure of Nomad, for Hage, “a circus is fluid in its movements, and has a perpetual love for metamorphoses and disguise” (“Le Cirque” 1). A Circus, for Hage, “should not be represented in its fragments” as it advocates “a triumph over perceived inadequacies of the self” (1).

...a circus is, historically and in the imagination, a place of refuge for all those rejected, abused or orphaned by war and mayhem. A circus is a travelling nation, disregarding the borders of nation states and the homogeneities of beauty. (I)

The figure of the Nomad as an ambivalent rhetorical trope of idealization/abjection is traceable in European Travel literature. Deleuze himself delves into T. E. Lawrence’s *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* and reads it quite differently from the postcolonial perspective of Edward Said, for example, who is mostly concerned with orientalism and colonialism.⁵⁹ Deleuze, as an anti-representationalist philosopher, decenters his reading around the making of a hybrid and migratory selfhood in Lawrence’s writing and therefore inspires different forms of “resistance against the imperial ‘state-form’” (Bignall and Patton 2) embodied in the figure of the Nomad. For this reason, debunking the myth of the Nomad seems necessary, in order to avoid the pitfalls of the term and to receive Nomadology as an open system.

⁵⁹ Mahmut Mutman investigates both readings in a comparative way in “Resonance of Light: T. E. Lawrence”.

While different nomadic people share many elements which are directly related to economic necessities and lifestyles, contrary to popular belief their geographical movements are limited and restricted by many factors. Many follow a regular path that, in times of peace and prosperity, is limited to only a few territories as they move their herds in search of fresh pasture and water. Nomadic tribes, particularly in modern and contemporary societies, are in a constant relation (and not exclusion) with the nation states in the vicinity. The tribe's economy requires the security of the livestock against wild animals and theft. Sometimes hunting provides them with other food sources. Guns/weapons, horses/camels and the tents are the most basic survival elements for many forms of 'nomadic' life and appear frequently in their cultural and artistic expression, such as in various handcrafted carpet and textiles. Nomadic lifestyles, like any other way of living, can be the subject of idealization or debasement. Conflicts often emerge as tribal laws, and nation-state law do not necessarily overlap. As the nomad's sense of belonging is usually in favor of 'thick relations'⁶⁰ and somatic ones, the tribe's social order can be prioritized over the State in times of crisis, chaos, and misfortune. The tribe's agility provides autonomous mobility in a time of drought, and its self-sufficiency in matters of security allows for a call to arms for self-defence or even a raid in a time of crisis for its survival. It also gives tribes the ability to negotiate an alliance with any state or power. The figure of the nomad in travel narratives, and their occasional opposition and resistance to the state or the neighbouring settler communities, as well as their relatively varied life styles, provides inspiration for various literary devices and tropes of resistance, sometimes manifests as an idealized metaphor for the freedom of the soul and of a nostalgically-imagined past of medieval simplicity and moral absolutes. In

⁶⁰ Mergalit in *Ethics of Memory* reflects on the notion of community of memory, that is "a community based not only on actual thick relations to the living but also thick relations to dead" (69).

Seven Pillar of Wisdom, for instance, Bedouin's soul is set in motion by the exterior force of an empty desert. This is a movement that cannot be stopped:

The Beduin⁶¹ of the desert, born and grown up in it, had embraced with all his soul this nakedness too harsh for volunteers, for the reason, felt but inarticulate, that there he found himself indubitably free. (38)

The Bedouin's mobility in the 'empty' desert is a prominent theme in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*; As for Lawrence, the Arab's "virtues lay in mobility and intelligence" (44). Robert Young in *Postcolonialism* takes issue with the effect of colonization in such representational tropes. Young notes that "[f]rom the European perspective, the land appeared empty because it was uncultivated and not settled; the introduction of farming then made the nomadic life of the indigenous people impossible" (24).

The trope of the 'empty' landscape was a prominent theme in art and literature when it addressed *new* territories, for instance, in Canada. It can be seen in the works of the Group of Seven, the Canadian landscape painters and their scenic, 'empty' Great White North and their ways of idealization of such empty prosperous landscape. This emptiness entangled with the idea of 'wilderness' —as O'Brian and White also trace— was supposed to create a national identity "inseparable from the geography and climate of Canada's boreal land mass" (*Beyond Wilderness* 3). O'Brian and White claim that the landscape has always been fetishized in the name of national identity, for instance in the case of the Andean highlands in Ecuador, or the pampas grassland of the River Plate basin in Argentina (4). "The 'empty' northern habitat particularly in such illustrations, "was declared to be there for taking" (4) and constituted a Canadian essence in

⁶¹ I have not changed the spelling of the term, "Beduin," in my citation from *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*.

the expense of its Indigenous people, or even its “urban, multi-ethnic ethos” (22). In “Frontier Photography,” Paglen also locates the motif of “taming the west” in the works of “the patriarchs of western photography” such as Carleton Watkins, Eadweard Muybridge, Timothy O’Sullivan. Taming the west, for Paglen, is about “bringing symbolic and strategic order to blank spots on maps through surveillance, imaging, and mapping” (227).

Richard Mosse is also informed by “the violent history embedded into the seemingly empty landscapes all around” (Paglen 226). In an “Interview by Forensic Architecture”, Mosse signals that the unexplored territories of the nineteenth century has become “extra-territory” and “a place outside of sovereignty” (Forensic Architecture⁶²). Mosse highlights that in practice these extra-territories have become “extra-legal spaces—lacking sovereignty, like high Seas” (Interview by FA). These spaces, such as “the desert along the border between the US and Mexico, along the sea and desert borders of Europe,” and the Sahara Desert are being mobilized and weaponized as buffer zones, as hostile environments in which “the unpleasant spectacle of our refugee ‘crisis’ can be outsourced, delegated or exported” (Interview with FA).

The motif of ‘empty’ desert in Lawrence’s writing, however, points also to another direction. The desert’s emptiness in Lawrence’s imagination supposedly touches the Arab’s ‘soul’ and whoever gets in touch with such landscape. It creates a sublime effect that gives the subject its sacred freedom: “In his life he had air and winds, sun and light, open spaces and a great emptiness. There was no human effort, no fecundity in Nature: just the heaven above and the unspotted earth beneath” (38). The emptiness in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* also has roots in

⁶² no page number in online version. Mosse, Richard. “Richard Moss,” *Kaleidoscope*. Interview by Forensic Architecture. Issue 34 -SS, 2019. <http://kaleidoscope.media/richard-mosse/>

different forms of Christian and Muslim mysticism (Sufism) as the primordial state of creation and *it* can be filled with the immanence of God.⁶³ For Lawrence, “the abstraction of the desert landscape” is also cleansing:

The abstraction of desert landscape cleansed me, and rendered my mind with its superfluous greatness: a greatness achieved not by the addition of thought to its emptiness, but by its subtraction. In the weakness of earth’s life was mirrored the strength of heaven, so vast, so beautiful, so strong. (240)

Deleuze’ reading of *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* is also highly focused on the way Lawrence relates ‘Arabs’ to the desert and its emptiness. Where the “great emptiness” of the desert renders the Bedouin “near God” (13). God for Lawrence’s Bedouin is not “anthromorphic, not tangible, not moral nor ethical, not concerned with the world or with him” (13).

Lawrence’s Bedouin “could not look for God within him: he was too sure that he was within God” (13). Lawrence kindles a form of Spinozian immanence that is also present in Deleuze’s writings. “There is a private desert that drives him to the Arabian deserts, among the Arabs” (“Shame and Glory” 117). However, in later scholarly works on the Deleuzian Nomad (such as Massumi, Kawash, Lenco and so on) the nomad as a philosophical concept keeps its

⁶³ The old question in Greek theology *creatio ex nihilo* (creation out of nothing) and *creatio ex deo* (creation out of being of god) can be traced in both Christian theology (for instance in the kenotic ethic) and the question of Fitra (فطرة) in Islam. Lawrence also refers to “an unintelligible passionate yearning” that drove prophets “out into the desert” (13). “There they lived a greater or lesser time in mediation and physical abandonment; and thence they returned with their imagined message articulate, to preach it to their old, and now doubting, associates” (13).

distance from living people and appears incommensurable with different nomadic groups or habitats. This is more in line with our approach.

As Deleuze notes in *Critical and Clinical*, Lawrence in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* does not resist projecting himself or his world onto the Other. For Deleuze, the image Lawrence projects onto the image of the ‘Arab’ is not deceptive “because there is no need to correspond to a pre-existing reality” (“Shame and Glory” 119). Deleuze and Guattari’s Nomadology in this regard becomes less a critique of ‘the state philosophy’⁶⁴ and representational thinking than a constructive experiment to go beyond hegemonic narrative and representation by generating a revolutionary fantasy through the abject Other. Such an intervention poses the problem of being in ways that unsettle the state philosophy and royal science and its arborescent and linear thinking. It creates a schizophrenic detachment from the world “to engage it in unimagined ways” (Massumi *User’s Guide* 1). For Deleuze, even a set of impossibilities can create possibilities: “Without a set of impossibilities, you won’t have a line of flight, the exit that is creation, the power of falsity that is truth” (*Clinical and Critical* 133). The impossibility of one’s own place also creates a line of flight, tracing a path between impossibilities. It mobilizes acts of resistance and is “the fundamental affinity between the work of art and a people who are missing” (*Clinical and Critical* xlvi). Deleuzian philosophy, as Bignall and Patton suggest, is a political practice that actively resists forms of conceptual capture by creating movement in thought, beginning lines of flight that prompt an established representation of worldly reality to

⁶⁴ Brian Massumi in *A User’s Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia* notes: “State philosophy is grounded in a double identity: of the thinking subject, and of the concepts it creates and to which it lends its own presumed attributes of sameness and constancy. The subject, its concepts, and the ‘external’ objects to which the concepts are applied have a shared, internal essence: the self-resemblance at the basis of identity” (4).

flee” (*Deleuze and the Postcolonial* 9). Samira Kawash reflects on the same question in “415 men” in its most visceral, basic sense: “how does a people be in a space predicated on their nonbeing?” (132) Storytelling mobilizes the power of the false⁶⁵ and *new* people may refuse “to submit to the force of history” (132) and resist “the collapse back to the body understood as the material extension of individual, interiorized subject” (134), this “melting away into the interior” (135). Inventing “a people as other than the colonized other,” “that never is but only *becomes*” implies imagining “politics outside a postcolonial dialectic of state subject and Other, a dialectic that necessarily resolves itself into yet another ordering of identities” (132).

How can art politically connect the impossible, the discontinuous, the irrational, and the fragmented? Rawi Hage offers an insight when he highlights the motionlessness in photography, the celebration of stillness (“Le Cirque” I): “a photograph is nothing but a tool to render the world into stillness” (I). He sees the aggression in halting the time of the moving, in transforming an object or in making visible a clown, a freak, or a refugee like himself. The Bohemian photographer in *Beirut Hellfire Society* ironically views photography as a way to “hack away at humanity’s delusions” and “interrupt the long walk towards the cross” (262). To ‘shoot’ in order “to abolish all beginnings and endings” (262):

I chose the medium that is the most disruptive to being a spectator. I render everything into slices of space and time. The world should become a series of unrelated histories, a collection of particles. We should deny the world its interconnectedness. Otherwise, we

⁶⁵Samira Kawash notes that “[b]y ‘false’, Deleuze does not mean untrue, fanciful, or contrary to fact. Rather, he means the impossible, the discontinuous, the irrational, the fragmented, that which cannot be absorbed into the order of ‘legal connections in space and chronological relations in time’ (*Deleuze Cinema* 2 132)” (“415 Men” 134).

are nothing but a sick species who imagines that we are part of an eternal spectacle, a never-ending continuum. (262)

The Bohemian deplures “the narrative of spectacle, and the lies that come with it” (261) and “cuts the flow of the spectacle into something still. Into fragments” (262). By denying the world its ‘interconnectedness’ his initial aim is to refuse to participate in the act of “kill[ing] each other to see ourselves as heroes in our father’s stories” (262). But is it possible to “catch the bombs and stop them from falling?” (263) Or to escape, as Kawash notes, “the structuring force of identity and difference, self and other, which permeates our language and our consciousness” (“415 Men” 132). Even in this nonnarrative relation of movement, of bodies and space, the incoming of the displaced, these desubjectified subjects in search of security, can be rendered as an alien invasion. These deterritorialized bodies form a ‘subjectless subjectivity’ can also be positioned as extreme Otherness⁶⁶, external to the machinery of capitalism, as a *line of flight*, “a door, a becoming between two multiplicities,” Western and Non-Western male subjectivity (*Critical and Clinical* xxx).

Deleuze’s description of the Nomad is based on the assumption of its independence: “It is not a matter of knowing if the objects are really independent, it is not a matter of knowing if these are exteriors, the setting described is presented as independent of its description [...], and stands for a supposedly pre-existing reality” (126). The Nomad in such setting is re-presented as a collection of noncommunicating fragments that are joined together by a tyrannical unity that makes a ‘plan’ out of a problem. Nomadology’s political task is to contribute to the invention of

⁶⁶ It is reminiscent of the exhibition titled “Extreme. Nomads” With the works of Cao Fei, Richard Mosse and Paulo Nazareth focused on different aspects of contemporary forms of nomadic existence in MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main May-September 2018.

yet another unborn people ('un *peuple à venir*'), a people who are *missing*.⁶⁷ Kawash highlights the moment "it (the body) emerges as body, rather than body of x, and what happens when we confront this body as a nonreferential image (What Deleuze sometimes calls 'simulacrum'), rather than as the image of X" (132) One first needs to accelerate the metaphorical death of those peoples who exist. In order to make such incarnations possible, one needs to erase and 'falsify' the reality of their lived experiences. For Deleuze, achieving "a true individuality" and acquiring "a proper name" is only possible by passing through 'the death of the subject' and linking "a collection of noncommunicating fragments or immigrants, and a tissue of shifting relations between them that must constantly be created or acquired" (Smith "Introduction" xlii). Such a plan is different from the practice of cultural assimilation to "an already existing people," (xli)⁶⁸ for example as advocated by the founder of Carlisle Indian Industrial School, Richard Pratt: "[k]ill the Indian in him and save the man"⁶⁹ (King 107) or the constituent Assembly's 1791 debate on Jewish citizenship wherein Clermont-Tonnerre argues: "One must refuse everything to the Jews as a nation, and give everything to the Jews as individuals..." (quoted in *Anti-Semite and Jew* xii).⁷⁰ For Jameson, metaphorical death is the ending of the autonomous bourgeois

⁶⁷ "car, s'il est vrai que c'est une solitude extrêmement peuplée, comme le désert lui-même, une solitude qui nous déjà son fil avec un peuple à venir, qui invoque et attend ce peuple, n'existe que par lui, même s'il manque encore..." (*Mille Plateaux* 467).

⁶⁸ Smith reminds Deleuze's readers of American revolution based on a *universal immigration* and the 'becoming conscious' of the immigrants bodies and their "very fragmentation and breakup" ("Introduction" Xli).

⁶⁹ "It is a great mistake to think that the Indian is born an inevitable savage. He is born a blank, like the rest of us. We make our greatest mistake in feeding our civilization to the Indians instead of feeding the Indians to our civilization" (quoted by King *The Inconvenient Indian* 108).

⁷⁰ Walzer, Michael. "Preface." *Anti-Semite and Jew*. Jean-Paul Sartre. Translated by George J. Becker. New York: Schocken 1976. p. xii.

monad, the ego (Jameson 15). The decentering of such a formerly centered subject does not create a manservant of the state. Instead, the result for Deleuze is a schizophrenic revolutionary.

To do so, Deleuze follows an accelerationist virtual methodology: “The task of a political literature is to contribute to the invention of this unborn people who do not yet have a language” (Smith “Introduction” xlii). Even so, such a process revitalizes an archetypal enemy of the state, the ‘Barbarian,’ the *Nomos* operating on other levels with different quasi-causes. While enemies of the state are interchangeable, Nomad could also substitute for the same form of *otherness* experienced by Jewish people. Zizek revisits the old question of the immanency of the destructive nature of such *Otherness*. “It is like asking why Jews were chosen as the object of anti-semitism?” (Interview Aljazeera 2014). Walzer in his “Preface” for *Anti-Semite and Jew* reads Sartre’s argument as follows “the anti-Semite ‘chooses’ the Jew only because he is available; any dispossessed, stigmatized minority, any ‘unhistorical people’⁷¹ could as easily be chosen” (“Preface” xviii). Zizek follows his question that “the *system* has a need for a certain embodiment of enemy [...] to cover up its own antagonism” (Interview Aljazeera 2014). In such a context, it is vital for the system to externalize its internal socioeconomic conflicts within the populace to reduce the pressure within the system.

It is not realistic to assume that such an idealized external enemy can beat the system from without. Zizek believes that the real threat to European and North America’s Identity is

⁷¹ Unhistorical People, for Walzer, is a term “borrowed from Hegel and Marx and suggests a political/cultural backwater, cut off from all progressive currents” (Walzer “Preface” xiii). The term has been criticized for its evolutionist approach that prescribe an evolving into modern/historical people. The notion of progress here appears as a Eurocentric one that views “tribal people” as backward and primitive. (See for instance Zubairu Wai’s *Epistemologies of African Conflicts* 56)

their own ‘right wingers’. Sartre delved into the question in *Anti-Semite and Jew* many years earlier, although he was more concerned with the people who are incapable of understanding or coping with the real sources of their struggles and so they can be easily manipulated. Without the underclass Other, they will be at the bottom of a “strongly hierarchical society” and “run the risk of falling into bitterness, into a melancholy hatred of the privileged classes” (*Anti-Semite and Jew* 19, 20). The existence of the Nomad as the ‘illegal’ border crossers, and the figure of the displaced, as the ‘illegal’ dwellers in Megacity slums, appear necessary for the nationalist polity. It brings back the members of the declining social classes the sense of belonging to the nation. The existence of such Otherness revitalizes the sense of entitlement to the right and privileges of citizenship as the “inborn right to the indivisible totality of the country” (20). Losing such a prospect brings down the quality of citizenship at a low valuation. The unbearable existence in the outside of non-citizenship, therefore, valorize the membership within sovereign polities. Benhabib notes in *The Rights of Others*:

Every nation has its others, within and without. In fact, nationalism is constituted through a series of imaginary as well as very real demarcations between us and them, we and the others. Through membership practices the state controls the synchronic and diachronic identity of the nation. (Benhabib 18)

The sacrifice of the Other to “the mirage of a united and patriarchal nation” renders a ‘mechanical solidarity’⁷² between certain social classes (*Anti-Semite and Jew* 50). While the figure of the Jew could function as an internal enemy, the figure of the displaced as the Other is vital for the symbolic ordering of the system. The border-crossing movements in the context of

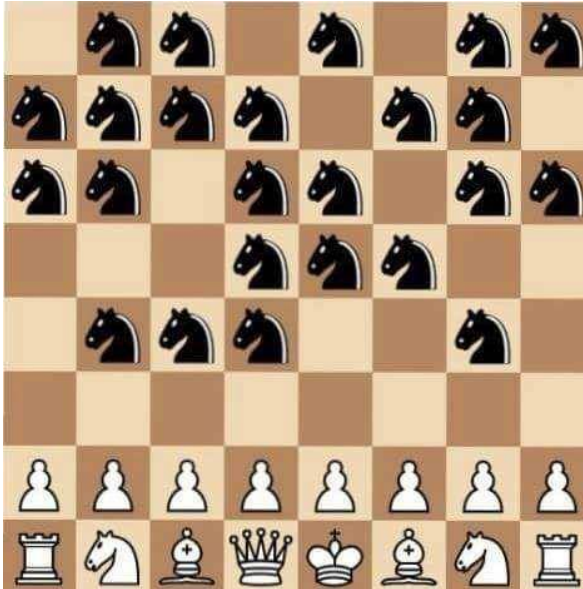
⁷² “[...] anti-Semites are numerous, each of them does his part in constituting a community based on mechanical solidarity in the heart of organized society” (Sartre *Anti-Semite and Jew* 20).

the national security must be viewed as an intrusion from the ‘outside’. This is the precise moment, where the figure of the Nomad as a line of flight encounters a twist as if it is a victim of a delirium that communicates more and more with fascism and a paranoia manifested in Great Walls, Islamophobia, and immigration policies.

Nevertheless, Nomadism follows a reverse, deterritorialized logic in Deleuze and Guattari’s treacherous rebellion against capitalism and oedipalized thinking. Even Deleuze and Guattari re-present the *imaginary* Nomad through historicizing it in an overcoded Orientalist reading of Chinggis Khaan. Nomadology categorizes Chinggis Khaan’s ‘invasion’ not as the rise and fall of just another empire with its history but as an ‘organic description’ of a more ‘primitive’ than ‘savage’ multiplicity.⁷³ Deleuze refuses to see another aggressive state apparatus in his War Machine, so he re-presents it as something Other, “external to the apparatus” (6), as a War Machine in “a pure form of exteriority” (6). Such an image, for instance in the case of Chinggis Khaan, led Deleuze and Guattari to view the Mongol invasion, not as an act of war by a ‘State’s military institution’ (7) or as another ‘conquest of State power’ but as the ‘natural’ act of ‘the war machine’⁷⁴ that should be seen as “another species”, of “another nature”, “of another origin” (7) much like the parody of a chess game by an anonymous artist depicted in a meme.

⁷³ “No doubt the War machine is realized more completely in the “barbaric” assemblages of nomadic warriors than in the “savage” assemblages of primitive societies. (*A Thousand Plateaus* 359)

⁷⁴ Daniel Smith in “The Place of Ethics” describes such a social order as the third category of the four typical Deleuzian assemblages⁷⁴: “Nomadic *war machines*, which effect an arithmetic synthesis capable of occupying and distributing themselves over a smooth space and are by nature external to the state” (Smith 261).



“Playing Chess with Nomads”

The confrontation of the *Polis* and the *nomos*, the State and the War Machine or a game that would confront a nomadic War Machine like Go’s army and a state army like chess is a subject of interest for many scholars and artists such is the modern-day myths of the battle of Polish light Cavalry, Uhlans (A Tatar/Tartar word for “Hero,” or “Rider”), or Red Army (and Cossacks) cavalry against German Panzers (tanks) during Second World War in the battle of Krojanty in 1939, (Budanovic) and the battle of *Kushchevskaya* in 1942 respectively⁷⁵.

Deleuze and Guattari also designate a form of exteriority for the state’s military institution and cite the mistrust that states have toward their military institutions as evidence. The man of war is located between two heads, between two articulations; he is “trapped between two

⁷⁵ Encyclopedia of Safety, Encyclopedia of Safety, “Cossack courage”, 2011.

[http://survincity.com/2011/03/cossack-courage/..](http://survincity.com/2011/03/cossack-courage/)

poles of political sovereignty,⁷⁶ which he turns against himself” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 355). Lawrence also appears to occupy such an in-between location. For Deleuze, it is this location and perhaps some inner quality that makes him betray both, “England as much as Arabia, in a nightmare-dream where everything is betrayed at once” (117). Such a quality makes Lawrence a powerless figure in comparison to Ulysses, “a man of the nascent modern State”; he is not even comparable to Hercules, or Achilles, who “[had] enough strength to proclaim their independence from Agamemnon, a man of the old State” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 355). For Deleuze, Lawrence’s enterprise is a destruction of the cold and concreted self, “carried out to its limit” (117): “Every mine he plants also explodes within Lawrence, himself, he is himself the bomb he detonates” (117). Nomad acquires meaning for Deleuze the same way “Lawrence designates meaning for the Arab Revolt” (Said 242). Lawrence’s refusal is a solitary man’s disavowal to be more than “the disciplined” military organ of the state apparatus; he turns against himself “to become a double suicide machine” (357). For if the war machine promises transformation, it is difficult, for Kawash or Paul Virilio, to locate the line between becoming a war machine and being dead (Kawash 139).

[I]f ‘to be is to inhabit,’ ...not to inhabit is no longer to exist. Sudden death is preferable to the slow death of he who is no longer welcome, of the reject, of the man deprived of a specific place *and thus of his identity*. (Virilio 78)

The post-modern existential rupture, not unlike Lawrence’s, is the self (*Moi*) who “is now nothing more than a character whose actions and emotions are desubjectified, perhaps even to

⁷⁶ The political Sovereignty for Deleuze, comes from Georges Dumezil analyses of Indo-European mythology and has two poles (two heads): the magician-king and the jurist-priest (*A Thousand Plateaus* 351).

the point of death” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 356). The inability of ‘Arabia,’ to reach a unified independent state⁷⁷, in Lawrence’s view, perhaps lies within the way Deleuze and Guattari identify ‘war’ in ‘primitive’ societies as “the surest mechanism directed against the formation of the state: war maintains the dispersal and segmentarity of groups, and the warrior”, so the fate of Lawrence is not far from that of the warrior who is “caught in a process of accumulating exploits leading him to solitude and prestigious but powerless death (394). The economy of violence, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, is an inseparable part of the war machine: “the war machine, with breeding and training, institutes an entire economy of violence, in other words, a way of making violence durable, even unlimited” (437).

Robert Sinnerbrink in “Nomadology or Ideology? Žižek’s Critique of Deleuze” notes that Deleuze (and Guattari) are forced to embrace the neo-romantic figure of the dissolved nomadic subject, whose decoded flows and libidinal becomings would supposedly provide a radical political potential in the face of globalised capitalism” (15). Lawrence is also a political manipulator who finds no escape and “must take up ...[his] mantle of fraud in the East” and wraps himself in it completely (*Seven Pillars of Wisdom* 235). He reaffirms to his readers: “it might be fraud or it might be farce: no one should say that I could not play it” (235). Deleuze and Guattari have no magic belief in the Nomad, nor do they have an illusion about it. They invest in its abstract image, not simply as a quest for aesthetic art forms or pure affects but also to make another form of seeing, and a radical shift in perspective. Nevertheless, Lawrence, “the first great theoretician of guerilla warfare” (Deleuze “Shame and Glory” 121), one of the first bringers of

⁷⁷ Lawrence views the inability in pro-Arab societies and Arab leaders who “preferred an Arabia united by Turkey in miserable subjection, to an Arabia divided up and slothful under the easier control of several European powers in spheres of influence” (*Seven Pillars of Wisdom* 16).

arms and money to the insurgencies in Middle East, took pride and at the same time felt ashamed for funding the Bedouin insurgencies against the Ottoman Empire and deceived the tribes with the futile dream of sovereignty. Deleuze and Lawrence both invested in the Nomads as an absolute Otherness to bring down the empire.

Creating or highlighting an apparatus in language to articulate such ephemeral experience also captures, codifies, or normalizes it and makes it communicable through different technologies. The romanticized Nomad will not always remain out of touch, in a neutral frame of reference, as he poses a radical challenge to the state's totalizing gaze. Massumi notes that "molarity cannot tolerate anything remaining outside its purview, it must expand its domain in an outward drive of conquest of the 'Other', identified as *Enemy*" (*A Users Guide* 115). Such molarization becomes identical to paranoia, a constant searching for enemies everywhere, through surveillance, as the state potentially creates 'the enemies' it seeks to avoid.

Modern political literature, cinema, and schools play significant roles in the constitution of minorities; the media constantly produce and affirm affects in the conjunction of the flux of deterritorialization (Contact zones). Reterritorialization, in this sense, is a subjection to an already molded model that can be potentializing, "only what it potentializes is limited to a number of predictable paths" (*Politics of Affects* 19). For Massumi, it is the disciplinary institutions (cinema, schools, etc.) who do the dirty work of transcendence⁷⁸: "[t]heir function is to see that a body is channeled into the constellations of affects and orbits of movement set out

⁷⁸ "The unity of a molarized individual is transcendent (exist only from the point of view of the forms of expression to which the individual is subjected, and on their level) and redundant (doubles the individual's multiplicity in a supplemental dimension to it; constitutes a surplus value)" (Massumi *A Users Guide* 55).

for it by its assigned category. That category is a map of habit, a coded image enveloping a life's path" (*A Users Guide* 114).

Naipaul's protagonist in *The Mimic Man* claims that "Once a man is stripped of his dignities he is required, not to die or to run away, but to find his level" (8). Such *finding* implies acquiring a kind of knowledge of the thresholds of the *new* identity, a kind of class consciousness that includes a person's racialized, gendered, and socioeconomic positioning defined by the state, its laws and institutions. Assimilation here means to act like a 'responsible citizen,' "[to] measure up to Molar Man" (*A Users' Guide* 121) and perform and represent a predictable political entity. Locke argues similarly in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* that "the complex idea we use when classifying a thing as being of a certain kind also determines what it is for a thing of that kind to continue in existence" (Chapter xxvii 121). Minorities, therefore, as Massumi suggests, "are expected to become equal-in-theory but in practice less powerful versions of the same: children of Molar Man" (122).

In Deleuzian nomadology, becoming minoritarian for the dislocated subject is a different process and problematic, as it is more a matter of political action than identity. A political action that resists, and escapes as Assef Krebs suggests, "the coercion of law and the predominant norms," and its institutions, political order and social structures |(Krebs "Minority and Becoming," 1). "[...]It is a substantial position that often lacks power" (Krebs 1). A Minoritarian movement is not only a quality or characteristic, it is rather a "process of ever-changing identities, of potentiality, of becoming (*devenir*)" that deterritorializes itself from majority (Krebs 1).

Becoming minority, becoming a woman, becoming a little girl or becoming an animal – all represent forms of molecular politics that subvert molar identities and steady positions. (Krebs 1)

The revisiting of Deleuze’s reading of *the Seven Pillars* also contributes to a better understanding of Deleuze’s idea of being-man as a majority. Man, for Deleuze and Guattari, serves as a supreme standard, an unassailable unit for ‘the faculty of judgement’⁷⁹ or —as Massumi calls it— “the police force of analogy” (*A Users Guide* 4). There is no becoming-man, for Deleuze, as the European heterosexual male, (the embodiment of the so-called ‘the subject of the West’⁸⁰) is the molar entity par excellence. In that sense, becoming-nomad and becoming-Arab, for Deleuze, functions through molecular becoming. In the Deleuzian classification, deterritorialized non-western male subjectivity appears to highlight a point of rupture, a fragmented unity, exhausted in its potentials and more in line with queer subjectivities as it lacks rights and liberties of ‘the Molar Man’ and his children, minorities. He becomes the marginal, ‘the exhausted’ or even worse, the Nomad. Kawash argues that “[e]ven the most marginal or deviant have their proper place in modern society” (137). The homeless shelter, the insane asylum, the prison, and the refugee camp are only some of those heterotopic spaces that marginal entities inhabit. In Deleuzian thinking, Non-Western male subjects follow local codes “in terms

⁷⁹ “For judgement has precisely two essential functions, and only two: distribution, which it ensures by the *Partition* of concepts; and hierarchization, which it ensures by the measuring of subjects. To the former corresponds the faculty of judgement known as common sense; to the latter the faculty known as good sense (or first sense)” (Deleuze *Difference and Repetition* 33)

⁸⁰ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. “can the Subaltern Speak?”. *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*. Patrick William and Laura Chrisman (ed.), Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf 1994. pp.66-111.

of language, ethnicity, or sex.” Those subjects, for Kawash, can only be depicted in their territories.

Kawash argues that “from the point of view of representation, the condition of desubjectified placelessness does not exist, for there is no way to represent a not-subject that is in no-place” (138). For Kawash, therefore, displaced entities create a challenge for coding mechanisms and “[o]nly a perception that is not predicated on truthfulness as presence can account for such a body” (138). So if these bodies escape the constellations of affects outside their assigned categories, they become unidentifiable and therefore a challenge for the system. Massumi notes “if bodies can be duplicitous, passing as one identity while continuing to incarnate another, everybody is a potential enemy” (*A Users Guide* 115):

[A system of interiority] can only deal with an unidentified body by putting it to the test, either assigning it an acceptable category and taking into the fold, or assigning it a bad category and attacking it. Incorporate or annihilate. (115)

The ‘iterability’⁸¹ of the Deleuzian concept of Nomad with its radical revolutionary potential in various discourses can also be located/identified in migrant literary and cultural contexts. The advantages to create such epistemic shift in literary studies accounts for “a theory of emergence and change, as well as sensitivity to the modalities and expressions of human experience” (Lenco 42). Moving to a new territory and deciding or being forced to find a new ‘home’ in another (man’s) land has the potential to create the same rupture in the symbolic ordering of the systems and languages that speak us. Although nomadic subject, as Rosi Braidotri notes, is a myth, or a “political fiction” (*Nomadic Subjects* 4) it provides political resistance “to hegemonic and

⁸¹ Jacques Derrida. "Signature Event Context". *Margins of Philosophy*. pp.307-330.

exclusionary views of subjectivity” (23). Nomadology prepares us for Unlearning sites that allows thinking “through and across established categories and levels of experience” (*Nomadic Subjects* 4) and by that Deleuze paves the way toward deconstructing static and permanent identities and therefore a site for disenchanting and losing all illusions of sovereignty (16). Richard Mosse, provides this investigation with those sites that possibilitate the same kind of ‘double reading’. *Incomung* and *The Castle* are case studies that redraw the forked path between the discourse of security and the sites of visibility.

Weaponized Gaze: The Targeting Gaze of the State

Saint-Amour in his introduction to *The Castle*, Richard Mosse’s collection of thermographs of human subjects’ border crossing and their transformation into figures of incarcerated refugees, distinguishes two different forms of gaze in Michel Foucault’s lecture, “Society Must be Defended.” The first form is a disciplinary technology which was historically used on the citizens in order to create “individualizing effects” (Foucault 249). The second form works alongside statistics, epidemiology, and demography and “brings together the mass effects characteristics of a population” (250). The biopolitical state creates a contrast between the lives of those bodies that can be instrumentalized, those who are codable, manageable and docile on the one hand from those outside the walls who should be seen as a flow of uncodable bodies on the other (*The Castle* 18). The second technology, as Foucault asserts, “is centered not upon the body but upon life: a technology which brings together the mass effects characteristic of a population” (249). Kawash views in such technologies “the limitations of a politics of representation: representation can only be the representation of the subject within the state, while the mass, as the state’s excess that it can neither assimilate nor efface cannot be represented” (135). In other words, those images can only figure as a mode of abstraction, as an emergence of

new potentials. It cannot be “contained in any actual form assumed by things or state of things” (Massumi “Sensing the Virtual” 16).

For Deleuze, behind such an abstract image there is nothing but an ‘absence of being’(Genet), “an emptiness that bears witness to a dissolved ego”⁸² (*Critical and Clinical* 119). Mosse’s images can also be viewed as pure intensity or—as Deleuze calls it— “the genesis of the ‘unknown body’” (*Cinema 2* 210) For Deleuze, “Abstract ideas are not dead things.”⁸³ Deleuze views Lawrence and his ‘Arabs’ the “manservant[s] of the abstract (“Shame and Glory” 119). It is wrong to link the abstract to the being it resembles. Simulacrum only represents its own reality and that is why it always becomes the object of a double reading or “double theatricality” (119) when it returns to “its principle of production” and prepares its “own rebirth in a new regime of simulation” (Massumi “Realer than Real” 97). The image, however, empty of its former essence will rise up to replace the old. In *Incoming*, there are points at which simulacrum unmask itself and shatters the grid of representation. Those images, as Massumi suggests “are no longer anchored by representation,” as they “implode into the undecidable proximity of hyperreality” (“Realer than Real” 97). Mosse captures such faceless, subjectless subjects with his weapon grade camera. Nevertheless, there is still a disturbing reality hiding beneath these images of unknown and absent figures as if they are between being and individual.

⁸² “Character must not be confused with an ego. At the most profound level of subjectivity, there is not an ego but rather a singular composition, an idiosyncrasy, [...]” (“Shame and Glory” 120).

⁸³ “Abstract ideas are not dead things, they are entities that inspire powerful spatial dynamisms; in the desert they are intimately linked up with the projected images—things, bodies, or being” (“Shame and Glory” 119).

Mosse challenges narration and perception and highlights ‘a crisis of difference’ at the boundaries of the organic and the inorganic by seeing heat instead of light.



Figure 3.⁸⁴

“In a becoming, one term does not become another; rather, each term encounters the other, and the becoming is something between the two, outside the two. This ‘something’ is what Deleuze calls a pure *affect* or *percept*, which is irreducible to the affections or perceptions of a subject” (Smith “Introduction” xxx). The displaced, in this regard, and also in *Incoming* and *The Castle*, become something *other*, an unbearable war machine. However, such language has an unintentional side effect and risks depersonalizing and dehumanizing individuals. Richard Mosse generates a double exposure in his narratives and abstract images. Mosse criticizes the “battle

⁸⁴ Richard Mosse. Still from *Incoming*. 2014-17. Digital c-print on metallic paper. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

field situational awareness” and “long range border enforcements” that reduce subjects to movable bodies while making visible the abstract bodies’ creaturely struggle for human warmth (Blakemore *How Richard Mosse Documents Life in Photography* interview).



Figure 4.⁸⁵

Mosse’s artistic innovation reappropriates military-grade thermal cameras to critical ends. Paul K. Saint-Amour asserts that such repurposing alters the constellation of heat, ‘race’ and time in the gaze of the state exposing warm bodies to the eyes of the border enforcers and military target analysts (“Mapping Heat in Time” *The Castle* 15, 18). Saint-Amour locates two provocative messages in Mosse’s images: “To the refugee viewer these images say, This is how your body is seen- as betrayed by its own heat signature,” outside its social structures of relation, order and meaning, “always potentially torn.” “To the non-refugee viewer they say, This is how your state

⁸⁵ Richard Mosse. Still from *Incoming*. 2016. Digital c-print on metallic paper. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

sees the body of the other” (18). The State captures such bodies outside the binaries that form mind against body, and subject against object in an abject placelessness where it separates the body from its surroundings as a desubjectified locus and an intensified zone of heat. In “415 Men,” Kawash also locates such desubjectified bodies through “mode[s] of corporeality that [escape] structures of identity and subjectivity” (133). For Kawash, it “is not an implicit return to the violent abstractions of philosophical idealism that relegate the body to the fleshy, contaminated world of substance” (133). The body through Mosse’s lens is a corporeal spectral entity that returns as resistance, resilience and difference. It exists in excess of the subject and as a counterpart to the displaced individual as a human subject. Its heat signature can be neither effaced nor assimilated as it is not transcendent but immanent. It needs to be pinned down, imprisoned, regulated, assimilated or rescued. Such cameras also have humanitarian functions and are being used, for instance, in the Mediterranean search and rescue missions of refugees crossing the sea.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ UNHCR reports that the number of lives lost on the Mediterranean exceeded 2,000 in 2018. “UNHCR continues to be very concerned about the legal and logistical restrictions that have been placed on a number of NGOs wishing to conduct search and rescue (SAR) operations, including the Aquarius. These have had the cumulative effect of the Central Mediterranean currently having no NGO vessels conducting SAR”. (The UN Refugee Agency) < <https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2018/11/5be15cf34/2000-lives-counting-mediterranean-death-toll-2018.html>> Last time accessed in May10, 2019.



Figure 5.⁸⁷

Mosse, in Deleuze's terms, abolishes the visible world. What remains "are forces, nothing but forces" (Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 139). Bodies in *incoming* and *the Castle* emerge through the play of heat. The heat circulates in the spaces between bodies. Bodies move along with the heat like flows, sometimes on foot, sometimes on boats and sometimes on whatever moves or floats. They are continually emerging from outside the walls, moving toward the center, across the water or through borders, towards the walls and the wired fences like the promised invasion.⁸⁸ It is the point where simulacrum unmask itself.

⁸⁷ Richard Mosse. Still from *Incoming*. 2014-2017. Digital c-print on metallic paper. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

⁸⁸ A reference to part of Donald Trump's Tweet on 7:41 AM - 29 Oct 2018 where in he refers to a group of asylum seekers as invaders: "This is an invasion of our Country and our Military is waiting for you!"

In *The Castle*, we find them trapped and exhausted once again. They have become fixed and stable. “Held in spaces of enforced waiting, many of these figures wouldn’t have exhibited motion even with a much longer exposure” (Saint-Amour “Mapping Heat in Time” *The Castle* 17). The main focus here is, as Deleuze notes, to capture, or as Saint-Amour asserts, “to constrain motion, to contain, to detain” (17).

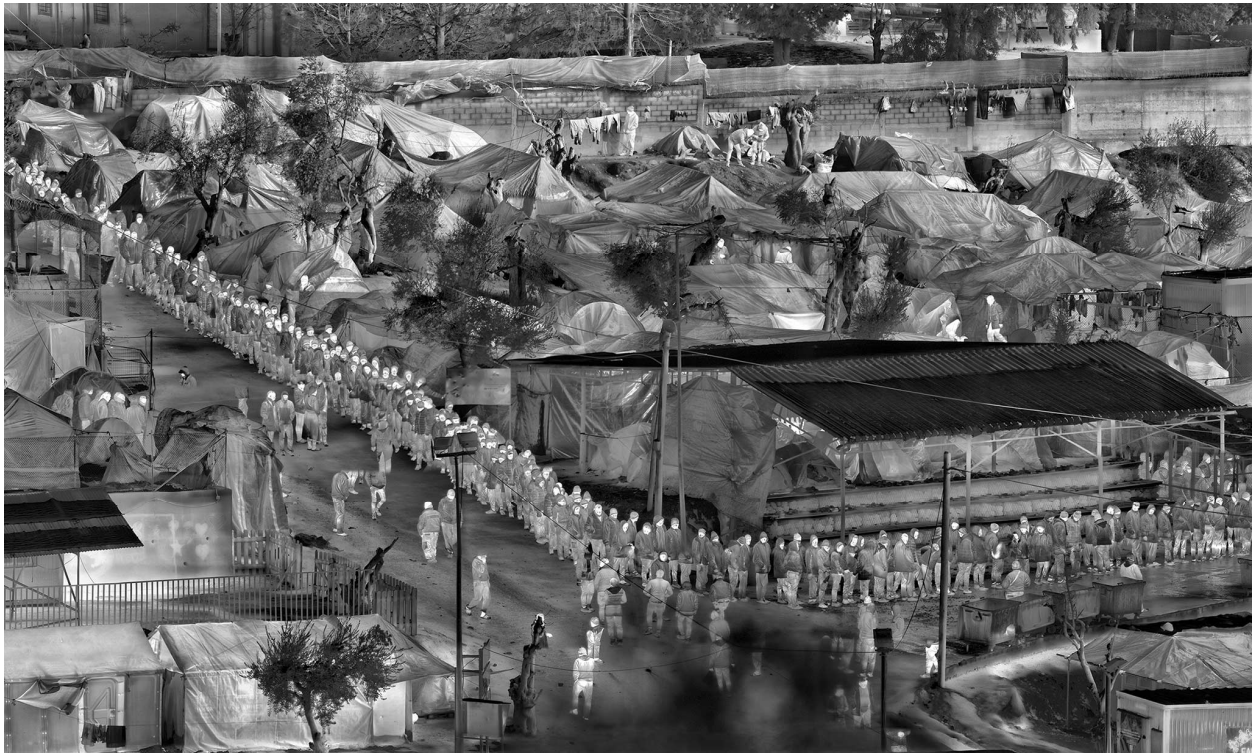


Figure 6.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Richard Mosse. *Moria in Snow I*, Lesbos, Greece. 2017. Digital c-print on metallic paper. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.



Figure 7.⁹⁰

Richard Mosse captures the exhausted in the camps, reduced to ‘bare life’ and “constricted in (their) ability to affect and be affected” (Kawash 137). They are still resilient; they resist total obliteration. For Kawash, such bodies “cannot be represented as a positive presence,” as they are “constrained to occupy the smallest possible space and to consume the least possible substance” (“415 men” 137).

⁹⁰ Richard Mosse. Still from Idomeni Camp, Greek-Macedonia Border. 2016. Digital c-print on metallic paper. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.



Figure 8.⁹¹

In “the keep,” Richard Mosse writes about even harsher measures enforced by the state against “the ever-present specter of the ubiquitous Enemy⁹²” (Massumi *A Users Guide* 117). Mosse notes on his own experience while filming the refugee camp near Boynuyogun on Turkey’s southern border with Syria. While his primary purpose was to begin photographing the camp below, he noticed a military outpost.

⁹¹ Richard Mosse. Boynuyogun Camp, Hatay Province, Turkey. 2017. Digital c-print on metallic paper. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

⁹² Massumi elaborates on the term and its synonyms such as “unspecified enemy” (ennemi quelconque) in Paul Virilio’s work and *A Thousand Plateaus*. (*A Users Guide* 191)



Figure 9.⁹³

Observing the activity of the outpost from a spot hidden from view he noticed “what looked like a sniper” in the watchtower and another soldier “operating a thermal viewing device” not unlike the one Mosse uses to surveil them (“The Keep” *The Castle* 21). Mosse’s Syrian helpers explain that every few hours “you’ll hear shooting here. Anytime, day or night. They shoot anyone trying to flee the war and wade the river to cross from Syria to Turkey” (21). The soldiers appear to shoot indiscriminately; Mosse quotes from his Syrian helpers that a little boy was killed while he and his mother were trying to flee to the Turkish side of the border. Mosse brings to attention the outsourcing of border security from EU back to Turkey. “The same country that shoots refugees

⁹³ Turkish observation point overlooking Syrian border and refugee camp near Boynuyöğün Camp. From “The Keep” *The Castle*. p.21. Courtesy of the artist Richard Mosse.

crossing its southern borders receives billions of euros in compensation from the EU for receiving them” (21).

In *Beirut Hellfire Society*, Rawi Hage depicts how a photographer nicknamed Abou Bohemia’s becomes a sniper during the civil war in Lebanon. The Bohemian is asked if he is willing to kill, “and that might involve killing everything and anything that moves. Everything is a target!” (285) The Bohemian was ready for the task “without hesitation” (284). Hage describes the Bohemian’s training and his nihilistic attitude toward life poetically: “During the rest of his indoctrination to shoot he managed to kill two snakes and ten lizards. He refused to shoot birds because, he declared obscurely, they were capable of migration and flight” (264). The Bohemian is sent to the sixth floor of an abandoned building with two other sharpshooters aiming “their rifles towards the opposing faction in city” (265) and is instructed that “no one should cross that road. No one. Not cars, not humans, not even a dog, nothing” (265). And he is instructed not to move a muscle during the sunset since the hole will work like camera obscura and the enemy will know where exactly he is hiding: “The light will go through the hole to the outside, and when you move back, your body will cover the hole again.” The Bohemian, however, cannot resist the beauty of the sunset and “the large ball of fire that was sinking into the Mediterranean Sea” (266). He moves to “(bid) farewell to the light and the ball of fire” and gets shot by the enemy sniper “witnessing the end of the day” (266).

Conclusion: Nomadic Thinking as an Anti-essentialist Strategy

This chapter has constructed a bridge between the concept of Nomad and the gaze in literature and photography. It began with the fundamentals of Deleuze's nomadological reading of *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* in "Shame and Glory." "Shame and Glory" is particularly interesting in that it addresses many important concepts besides Nomad, such as gaze, flow, becoming, and masculinity. This critical engagement with Nomad as the subject of the gaze was deemed necessary in order to revise the ways nomadology poses the questions of conquest, movement, security, and empire. The Chapter's aim was not to holistically apply a postcolonial reading to Deleuzoguattarian 'nomadology', and to read it only as an ideological idealization or as an evasive rhetoric. Instead, it proposes an awareness of the ambivalent potentials of the concept of Nomad, its revolutionary and transgressive potential as well as its weaponized reappropriation by the state. The Unlearning sites in *Incoming* and *the Castle*, as well as *Hage's Beirut Hellfire Society*, expose the other side of the nomadic abstraction, a political and ethical dimension that is largely absent in the earlier writings on Nomad subjects.⁹⁴ These Unlearning sites call for responsible interventions whenever it is necessary, taking, for instance, the displaced subject as the subject of a nomadological investigation, we are no longer celebrating something 'still to come' or 'external to the operations of capital.'⁹⁵ Instead, we are addressing an already

⁹⁴ In "Intensive Mobilities: Figurations of the Nomad in Contemporary Theory," Thomas Sutherland for instance locates in Hardt and Negri's notion of "universal nomadism" the "new transversal mobility of disciplined labor power" (61) and in the fluid and mobile workforce that globalized capital depends upon. Sutherland also highlights the contrast between Rosi Braidotti's transnational polyglot feminist post-woman (*Nomadic Subjects* 256) with Cresswell's "true nomads of our age—refugees, displaced people, and the mobile working poor" (Cresswell 54).

⁹⁵ Thomas Sutherland, "Intensive Mobilities: Figurations of the Nomad in Contemporary Theory," p. 940.

weaponized framework that facilitates human right violation. Nomad in such regard will become less and less about movement, mobility, and lines of flights than access to the road, ‘bare life’ and Minority becomings.

We have explored forms of expression and epistemologies that open up new potential for innovative thinking around deterritorialization, a condition that many dislocated individuals can relate to. Deleuze and Guattari—as Grant Hamilton notes in “Becoming-Nomad”—suggest “other ways of perceiving and understanding the world” (185) that follow a Foucauldian analysis not by “break[ing] the surface of the incomprehensible other” (Hamilton 184) nor by adopting “the top-down method of a striated State-thought” (184). Hamilton describes becoming-nomad as “the bottom-up vector associated with intensities, threshold, qualities and affects” without posing “the question of objects and origins” (185). The Unlearning sites, for instance in Mosse’s works, are politically-engaged art that attempts to counter or reveal state structures that produce, outsort or export violence to extra-legal-spaces. Mosse works also invite the viewer to confront his own complicity in the violence and to perceive the extent to which “our governments and our society have failed—and continue to fail—these people” (Interview by Forensic Architecture).

The concept of the rhizome and rhizomatic growth offers a fruitful intervention and detachment from structuralist and taxonomic thinking. Lenco describes it as “a two-poled, though non-dualistic ontic system which functions through the relationship between the actual and the virtual aspects of a material reality” (42). In *Deleuze's Literary Clinic*, Tynan explains the problem of military organisation, as dramatized by Lawrence in his military memoirs, is related fundamentally to problems of group subjectivity and questions of collective belonging: how can one belong to a group without the shameful feeling of compromising one’s own individuality? But similarly, how can one stand outside the group, as a military leader, for

example, without the shame of regarding others as a homogenous mass? How, in other words, is it possible to be both one and multiple? (157). “[W]e can go further and say that delirium is a mode of propagating virtual collectives, or what Deleuze and Guattari call multiplicities, which are themselves based around the poles of legitimacy” (157).

Literature is Delirium, and as such its destiny is played out between the two poles of delirium. Delirium is a disease, the disease par excellence, whenever it erects a race it claims is pure and dominant. But it is the measure of health when it invokes this oppressed bastard race that ceaselessly stirs beneath dominations, resisting everything that crushes and imprisons, a race that is outlined in relief in literature as process (*Critical and Clinical* 4).

Richard Mosse’s delirious heat maps bring to attention the ambivalence of visibility by working out the problem of perception, just as Merleau-Ponty does in *The Visible and The Invisible* (196), when he writes about his “unsettling feeling”:

An unsettled feeling grew within me, related to the use of weaponised optical technologies in the targeting of refugees by snipers not far from where I myself stood doing something similar at precisely the same moment. (“The Keep” *The Castle* 22)

The ‘unsettling feeling’ must be felt in order to alter the framework of perception. Mosse calls for locating such “pressure points within representation” and “to press on them and allow the viewer to feel these points of tension” (22). “The Abandoning of traditional frameworks of subject and representation,” as Kawash argues, helps us locate the violence in “something in excess of law, state, the subject, or representation” and to confront the “breakdown of subjectivity, intention, and action” (129). It calls for a renewed consideration of events, “with the

way events emerge as having happened, and the way we perceive the happening of these events” (127) as a dimension of these events. The technologies of Othering put mechanisms in motion that not only produce marginal and vulnerable individuals but makes them unrecognizable. In *the Castle*, the unrecognizable paradoxically renders visible the non-visible forces such as heat and the gaze, that are normally implicit in typical representational narratives. It also creates a massed entity, a univocal mass that poses an even more radical challenge to the state as “manifestations of pain and suffering” that “simultaneously belong to nobody and everybody” (Hamilton “Becoming-Nomad” 187). Those in-between entities create a new being that “exposes the excess of state and subject: bodies, forces, and movements that resist the identities of state and subject and of truth and justice” (138).

Chapter 3

On Liminality, Death, and Melancholia in Chris Abani's *GraceLand*

“A hundred lashes, no sound, or else you still be boy.”
(*GraceLand* 295)

Chris Abani illustrates two parallel ceremonies, in *GraceLand*: the kola-nut ritual, and the ceremonial and disciplinary procedures that inculcate the male role and subjectivity into the young Igbo male body. Both appear through fragments in different chapters of the novel, are entangled with the smells and tastes of Elvis' deceased mother's recipes, botanical notes on herbs with healing and magical powers, and anthropological accounts. The smells and tastes recall the past, not unlike Proustian involuntary and autobiographical memories. The story's *mise-en-scène* fluctuates geographically and also through a nonlinear temporality, back and forth throughout the life of its protagonist from Afikpo, a small fishing town, to Lagos, the most populous city in the western part of Nigeria. The kola-nut ceremony, deeply rooted in Igbo patriarchy, is presented as deeply sacred and exclusive to male members of the community and regulated by a strict hierarchical order while the initiation ceremony is the first stepping stone to becoming a man.

Abani creates an *agencement* (assemblage) from the disciplinary procedures that designate the male role and subjectivity into the young Igbo male body. The initiation ceremony in *Graceland* takes place in the context of the postcolonial struggle of a ghettoized underclass living in the shadow of skyscrapers and resort beaches. Between the dialectical relation of the global and the local, it addresses complex problematics of the relationship between masculinity, marginality, and liminality. Living in between global and traditional

codes, Elvis is able to navigate (un)compromising and (in)flexible cultural forms: becoming an Igbo man or earning his living by dancing and imitating Elvis Presley. The loose assemblages of affects, gender performance, rituals, and events in *GraceLand* allows for a deterritorialized and transdisciplinary investigation of the arbitrary rearrangement of forms in a rhizomatic network. These forms, however, are open and can begin anywhere and end in whatever way, they acknowledge ‘the lived past of the body’ and emphasizes that the body carries its past.⁹⁶ It also highlights the cultural aspects, and the significant role of the male subject’s lived experience in his gendered performance. Massumi also highlights in *Politics of Affects* that “the cultural ‘laws’ of gender are part of what makes us who we are, they’re part of the process that produced us as individuals” (18). The past, however, does not fatalistically move the subject toward a future. Massumi suggests that “the past that the body carries” includes levels and can be reactivated “towards a changed future, cutting transversally across dimensions of time, between past and future, and between pasts of different orders” (49). In *GraceLand*, the lines of escape are everywhere, in Elvis’ flight with a fake passport to the United States in order to begin a new life or in a revolution led by ‘the King of the Beggars’, in a collective sense. These moments highlight—as Aycock also suggests— “individual identity-formation” and an anti-essentialist approach that take “identity through a selective inclusion and exclusion of histories, voices, and experiences” (12, 14).

This chapter is divided into three parts and a conclusion: The first part, **Liminal**

⁹⁶ “That past includes what we think of as subjective elements, such as habits, acquired skills, inclinations, desires, even willings, all of which come in patterns of repetition. This doesn’t make the event any less rooted in the body” (Massumi *Politics of Affects* 49).

Forms, Liminal Phases, and Liminal Entities explores the ontological as well as the political stakes of each spatio-temporal definition of liminal intensities. I investigate liminality as a way of thinking many frontiers with paradoxically opposite conclusions in mind. This investigation does not aim to judge but to facilitate an open-ended dialogue to clarify the concept and its potential horizons. The second part, **Masculinity, Liminality, and Death** investigates the male subject's liminal experience triggered by the proximity with his own death and the way he perceives his own *negativity* and the inevitability of 'not being there.' Such liminal phases in *GraceLand* also emerge through the protagonist's encounter with dead bodies (both mutilated corpses and witnessing the actual moment of dying), and the loss of a source of sustenance (mother). Here, I explore how such experience forms, shapes, or deconstructs the subject's gendered identity. The liminal experience manifests itself in the novel through forms of transcendence of characteristics of the living body that might be considered authentic, natural or essential, and focusing instead on dynamic movements from within, - at once artistic and existential 'performances' - that go beyond the poles of power and identity. The motif of death pervades the novel in different forms: loss of a loved one, suicide, killing, Honour killing ("Mercy Killing"), public execution, massacre, and metaphorical death. All contribute to our investigation of the alliance between death, liminality, and male subjectivity. The third part, **Becoming Man, Becoming Kola Nut: Rites of Passage in Abani's *GraceLand*** explores the liminal state summoned through ceremonial frameworks in Abani's novel. This part reflects on these two ceremonies in *GraceLand* in a Deleuzian framing as a rhizomatic network that is indeterminate and has no beginning or end. It observes the strange *agencement* between the gendered performance and the kola-nut ritual, and the interplay of beings that build an open-ended assemblage.

Assemblage thinking offers “a more-than-human perspective on liminality” (Mulcahy 111). Abani characterizes Elvis in a liminal space of becoming, in an ongoing process, an emergent of different arrangements in the margin of a postcolonial state, in between local and global. “What is *between* is where the real action is” (Cooper and Law 245). In the **conclusion**, I will also highlight to some extent the political stakes on the former investigations on liminality and the ambivalence in thinking with liminality.

Liminal Forms, Liminal Phases, and Liminal Entities

The relatively old concept of ‘liminal’⁹⁷ describes the position of the subject on the threshold. Liminal entities might occupy a position at, or on both sides, of a boundary. Such positioning is ambiguous as boundaries both separate and join. The concept has been re-introduced and developed further by some recent critics. Arnold van Gennep’s concept of liminality⁹⁸ rediscovered by scholars such as Arpad Szokolczai, Bjørn Thomassen, Kath Woodward, and others is not limited to its earlier anthropological contexts. It has the potential to open up new transdisciplinary possibilities to address gender fluidity—and in the context of this dissertation—in displaced and minor masculinity and marginalized ‘male subjectivity.’ This chapter is not merely a genealogical investigation of liminality, but it initiates innovative discursive and virtual connections and alliances between relevant concepts such as trauma, death, and melancholia.

The aim is to create rhizomatic frameworks and horizons to theorize and make visible

⁹⁷ From Latin *līmen*, plural *limina*, “threshold”.

⁹⁸ The term was first Coined by Arnold van Gennep in 1909.

the paradoxical experiences of deconstruction and revitalization⁹⁹ of old forms, as well as the emergence of new forms, of masculinity. This investigation follows Bhabha's principle in *The Location of Culture*: "it does not make a claim to any specific or essential way of being"; rather, it goes 'beyond' and toward the "unknowable, unrepresentable, without a return to the 'present' which is the process of repetition" (3-4). To speak 'beyond' here for Bhabha suggests speaking "neither for the nation nor the globe":

[Postcolonial writers and thinkers'] purview is the colony, the city, the neighborhood, the region—and more recently, the refugee camp. These places are smaller than the globe and less sovereign than the nation, but more complex in their scale, more densely, peopled by liminal lifelines. (Appiah and Bhabha "Cosmopolitanism and Convergence" 189)

Beyond, for Bhabha, suggests "the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity" (*The Location of Culture* 2). In Bhabha's Beyond, there is "a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction" (2).

Liminality and death seem to be very much entwined, particularly when scholars consider liminal states as forms of structural collapse. Liminal states are naturally ambiguous,

⁹⁹ The concept of revitalization/remaking identities is a part of indigenous projects whose aim is to empower communities from inside by teaching, learning, and practicing indigenous traditions and histories. Kawika Tengan's *Native Men Remade* is an excellent example of such practice wherein Tengan argues that "culture, place, and gender are deeply intertwined and cannot be separated from one another" (5) and therefore "the loss of the old ways" (religious formations, political systems, cultural practices, and relationships to the land) will create dysfunctional men that will eventually lose their place and role in society (5).

challenging cultural networks of social classification. They extend beyond van Gennep's initial investigation of 'rites of passage' in historical and cultural contexts. Liminality conveys different meanings in different literary, philosophical, cultural, and historical contexts. Some scholars (such as Lucy Kay, Zoë Kinsley, Terry Phillips, Alan Roughley)¹⁰⁰ prefer to use the plural form of the term, 'liminalities,' to highlight the heterogeneity of the concept. Turner, in turn, represents almost any "limbo of statuslessness"¹⁰¹ as a liminal experience. Liminality then, in this context, is a paradoxical co-presence or an escape from opposites or hierarchy—high/low; good/bad; beginning/end. The liminal state, for Szakolczai, and Thomassen describes society as a whole in a time of crisis or transition while, for Turner, it symbolizes the womb and refers to an egalitarian *Communitas* of the poor, the deformed, the marginals' and 'the inferiors' (Turner 110). Such a definition also connects the discourse of liminality with the Bakhtinian grotesque and carnivalesque, a prominent theme in Hage's *Carnival*. For Turner, it is the revolutionary egalitarian potential of the *Communitas* that makes "those concerned with the maintenance of 'structure' to regard [liminality] as dangerous and anarchical or polluting to persons, objects, events and relationships" (108-109). Nevertheless, Turner and Szakolczai both describe the moments of becoming (change of status) as liminal. Szakolczai's application of Turner's liminality seems to take more of a conservative turn; Szakolczai considers liminality to be a dangerous form and only considers it as a temporary condition of transition toward a

¹⁰⁰ Lucy Kay and Zoe Kinsley and Terry Phillips and Alan Roughley. *Mapping Liminalities: Thresholds in Cultural and Literary Texts* (Berlin: Peter Lang 2007), 7-17.

¹⁰¹ Victor W. Turner, "Liminality and *Communitas*". *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Transaction Publishers 1969), 100. "The 'Liminal' and the 'inferior' conditions are often associated with ritual powers and with the total community seen as undifferentiated".

preexisting position in the social structure: “A liminal situation should only be provoked if one has a proper ‘form’ in hand to impose on the soul of those whose emotions are simulated by being put on the ‘limit’” (Szokolczai 157). Other scholars such as Mulcahy, Bauer, and Kraftl invest in the pedagogical potential of affectivities “in the interstitial space between agents” (Kraftl 50) and consider liminality as “the most illuminating field of study” because it addresses “spaces *in-between*, the in/formal boundary zones.” Such spaces afford “a more flexible understanding of spatialities, rationalities and materialities of learning” (Bauer 620). In *Politics of Affects* Massumi also reflects on too violent intervention that can lead to “great suffering” and to “things falling apart rather than reconfiguration” (43). Massumi calls for “nonviolent ethic” and “great deal of understanding about how things are interrelating and perturbation, a little shove or a tweak, might change that” (44).

Victor Turner, in his “Liminality and Communitas” (1969), revisits Arnold van Gennep’s (1909) abandoned theme of the ‘liminal phase’ and *rites of passage* and traces their link to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon (Turner 94-5).

Turner draws a model which Deleuze might consider as rhizomatic, since he represents liminality as a nexus or a knot in a network of becomings.



As Tsing argues, “to learn about an assemblage, one unravels its knots” (83). Such a representation has the potential to account for resilience, heterogeneity, interconnectivity, intersectionality, multiplicity, and perhaps the imperceptibility of desire. It provides a more explicit point of departure for this research and offers a map of the complexity and connectivity of gendered performance and the way in which transformation, crossing, and other practices connect to each other in emergent ways.

Masculinity, Liminality, and Death

In “Liminality and Affectivity: The Case of Deceased Organ Donation,” Stenner and Moreno observe “affectivity summoned during a liminal transition,” or what Deleuze might call a deterritorialized state. Here, masculinity can also be explored through the ways the ‘male’ subject loses its grasp of external reality and inner self-coherence, and therefore becomes highly vulnerable to experiences of suggestibility, mimesis, social influence, imitation, contagion, (and paradox, I would add) and so forth (Stenner and Moreno 24-25). Such affective space is the result of the breakdown of the subject’s structural position as he enters a phase of transition that can be described as “highly mobile and volatile” (23). Stenner and Moreno address “the appropriation of the dead by the living” (2) and explore the way the death of a family member or a loved one brings the other family members into ‘a liminal phase,’ melancholia, and eventually mourning. The appropriation of the dead by the living in Stenner and Moreno’s case also takes a literal turn, and the organs facing the death of their body will now need to be “freed up for other transitions,” as the stage needs to be “set for a completely new phase” (4). Stenner and Moreno search for more ‘human’ or effective ways to make such transitions possible, since getting legal consent from family members who are now

in a liminal phase (2) might produce an ambivalent situation that necessitates an ‘ethical’ intervention. In *GraceLand*, the singularities of such a situation highlight a significant link with masculinity. For instance, liminality might be seen, in *GraceLand*, as overcoming the limits of (knowable) life and sovereignty over the body. The proximity with death and to some extent with dead bodies (necropolitics) could also put to the test the subject’s belief in his autonomy. Stenner and Moreno’s article as well as Abani’s *GraceLand* can both be approached, although differently, through Mbembé’s idea of “the romance of sovereignty” as a belief based on the subject’s individual autonomy that makes it “the master and the controlling author” of his or her own meaning, limits and body (Mbembé 5).

Elvis, Abani’s protagonist, a teenager who is “still so stubborn, still so proud,” experiences a series of events and transgressions that contribute to his transformations (165). Abani’s storytelling gradually becomes more violent, and toward the end of the novel it reaches the point of subliminal horror where Elvis trembles from “the cumulative effect of all the terror he had witnessed” (228). He watches how people stone an “accused thief” to death in a scene his friend calls “necklace of fire” (228). The narrator describes the scene as “comically biblical, yet purely animal” when the crowd “baptizes” the man with petrol and sets him on fire with a tire around his neck (228).

Abani summons subliminal horror when he calls the fire horrifying, “yet strangely beautiful” (228). In the novel, sublime horror can also be found in the quest of the colonel, a villain who personally supervises the tortures and takes “pictures throughout” (163). One of his men calls him “an artist” who is “looking to find de beauty of death” (163). In one of the last scenes, Elvis, who is hired unknowingly for a job by the colonel’s people, smuggles teenagers from Nigeria to Ghana to sell them for the harvesting of their parts for organ transplant in

American hospitals. Elvis and his friend, Redemption, find themselves between coolers with separated heads and “de spare parts” and living bodies of drugged kidnapped “kids” (237).

Abani illustrates a form of dissociation with the body in Elvis when he understands that he is part of the “trading” of the “spare parts” (242):

He stared out of the window, but kept seeing the heads in the iced cooler. He felt strange, like there were two parts of him, each watching the other, each unsure. He watched from another place as his hands trembled and his left eye twitched uncontrollably. (*GraceLand* 242)

For Stenner and Moreno, the (anti-structural) liminal moment of transition is only temporary and should be endured only until the subject “is able to cobble together and incorporate a new identity status” (23), which some critics such as Peter Messent call “postliminal identity” (*Mapping Liminality* 138). The postliminal phase can also be related in different ways to the Deleuzian notion of reterritorialization as a form of restructuring in a new territory or a new *agencement* in an abstract sense. Another example in Abani’s *GraceLand* is the street-vendor who is reminiscent of Mohamed Bouazizi, the Tunisian street vendor who set himself on fire on 17 December 2010 and inspired/triggered the ‘Tunisian Revolution’ and the so-called Arab Spring. In such a context, according to Szokolczai and Thomassen, liminality seems to be contagious, or at least “both social and personal.” In such a context, a liminal society might be considered as a transitional society (Thomassen 4).

Abani’s street vendor seems to be an unimportant figure, in the novel, an emergent figure of a ‘liminal society.’ Nevertheless, he provokes a ‘liminal phase’ in Elvis, not unlike Bouazizi, Abani’s vendor is a victim of police harassment and views his life suddenly as unlivable, or maybe too shameful to bear when a policeman carries his smuggled second-hand

clothes to “the bonfire.” As the clothes “crinkled and burst into flame,” Elvis, drawn to the fire, walks over and stands watching (73). Even though Elvis tries to calm the street vendor by saying “[t]ake heart, brother,” the man answers: “I get ten children” and continues: “I try to make money begging, but my spirit wan’ die. So I borrow money, begin to sell dese Okirika” (73). Abani depicts the vendor’s last “dance” as following: “The man screamed again and tore his clothes off, dancing around the fire naked, emitting piercing calls, bloodcurdling in their intensity... [and] before anyone could react, he jumped into the fire” (*Graceland* 74). The last thing Elvis hears before the man dies is his terrible laugh: “Its echo hung in the air. He never thought to ask the man’s name. ‘Ah, madman,’ someone sighed” (74). Abani’s mise-en-scene includes an assemblage of shame, dignity¹⁰² and economic collapse that leads to the unfolding, or implosion, of the ‘self’ into the void or abyss. Such a process seems to create a ‘liminal entity’ out of the subject. Turner suggests “liminal entities [...] may be represented as possessing nothing,” and may wear only a strip of clothing or even go naked (Turner 95). Abani depicts his character “like a dead star” as he “collapse[s] upon itself,” (*GraceLand* 74) a metaphorical illustration that evokes the Deleuzian moment when black holes resonate together “as though [they] were deterritorialized in the void” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 334).

In another scene, Elvis’ friend Okon offers him a drink and some food, paid by the money he earned selling his blood. Here, the structural bodily threshold shatters in the confrontation of ‘bare life’ (Agamben) with death. When the body returns to its naked form, the

¹⁰² Appiah in “cosmopolitanism and convergence” comments on such approach to dignity: “With regard to dignity, our word obviously comes from the Roman word *dignitas*. And that was, by definition, something that only some people had. And what we’ve done is to democratize it, to say it isn’t just the privileged few who have this entitlement” (Appiah, Bhabha 172).

options seem to be limited to self-immolation or selling the body: “If you eat well, you can give four pints in four different hospitals, all in one day. It’s illegal, of course, but it’s my blood, and it’s helping to save lives, including mine. Right?” (77) Back in the room, Elvis applies makeup to his face and becomes Elvis. Looking as much like the real Elvis Presley as possible, he admires himself from many angles and thinks that “it was a shame he couldn’t wear makeup in public” (77). He also imagines sharing the fate of “the transvestites that haunted the car park;” like them, “he would be a target of some insult, or worst, physical beatings, many of which were meted out by the police, who then took turns with their victims in the back of their vans” (77). As the boundaries of Elvis’ body fall, he becomes more perceptive of the forces of biopolitics and questions his “colonial mentality” that wishes he had been “born white,” or even “just American” (78). He thinks of himself as a “hairless panda” and “without understanding why,” he begins “to cry through the cracked face powder” (78). Later, when Redemption involves “a boy in a man’s work” (107) and teaches him to pack cocaine into small pellet-like packages for the ‘couriers,’ he understands that ‘the body’ itself, in its ‘alive’ and ‘dead’ forms, becomes the last stage of resistance and/or exploitation:

A courier will swallow dem. Depend on de person capacity dey fit to swallow like between two hundred and four hundred. Dat’s around two to four kilos. Dat’s why we packed dem like dat. So dey don’t burst in de stomach, and de last glove make it easy to swallow. (*GraceLand* 110)

Abani’s flirtation with death, and the deadly and the way *GraceLand* connects it with Igbo masculinity, seem to go beyond the ‘motto of survival.’ Death as ‘man’s negativity’ is also present in Mbembé’s concept of ‘necropolitics.’ Mbembé borrows this notion of death from Hegel’s *The Phenomenology of Spirit* and Bataille’s “Hegel, Death and Sacrifice,” wherein

“spirit attains its truth only by finding itself in absolute dismemberment” (Mbembé 14). In *Graceland*, Igbo masculinity, often becomes death that lives a human life. For Mbembé, “it is the definition of absolute knowledge and sovereignty: risking the entirety of one’s life” (15) and to “walk through the valley of the shadow of death” (*GraceLand* 171 Psalm23). Death, in such context, illustrates the world of violence wherein, ‘the sovereign’—often embodied in a male figure—as Bataille argues, “is he who is, as if death were not;” “he has no more regard for the limits of identity than he does for limits of death, or rather these limits are the same: he is the transgression of all such limits” (Quoted by Mbembé 16). In this regard, war, generates sites where masculinity consists fundamentally in the exercise of sovereignty, or in the exercise of power outside the law (*ab legibus solutus*). In *GraceLand*, such an extreme interpretation of manhood, does not limit Joseph, Elvis’ uncle in any ways, when he rapes Elvis and Efua, but it makes Sunday silence Elvis and threaten to kill him if he ever talks about it.

The war zone and the sites of a massacre constitute a Conradian ‘grove of death’ where the subject experiences a form of transcendence toward a nihilistic modern “*becoming-object* of the human being” (Mbembe 18). Such a will to power, as the essence of masculinity, is omnipresent in *GraceLand* in the fragmented pieces through which power forms-male subjectivity. In this sense, the transcendent male cogito is not always a resisting one; it may become the very force that subjugates. According to Butler in *The Psychic Life of Power*:

[F]ollowing Foucault, we understand power as *forming* the subject as well, as providing the very condition of its existence and the trajectory of its desire, then power is not simply what we oppose but also, in a strong sense, what we depend on for our existence and what we harbor and preserve in the beings that we are. (Butler 2)

Or as Massumi puts it: “Power doesn’t just force us down certain paths, it puts the paths in us, so by the time we learn to follow its constraints we’re following ourselves” (*Politics of Affects* 19).

Becoming Man, Becoming Kola Nut: *Rites of Passage* in Abani’s *GraceLand*

“With your finger on the king’s head, trace the star.

See? The lobes fall where its reach points. This is the first truth”

(*GraceLand* 24).

The first moment of becoming, in *GraceLand*, is when Elvis confronts his teenage cousins and “a gaggle of other boys ranging from ten to nineteen” who welcome him “on his first step to manhood as dictated by tradition” (20). Amanda Aycock in “Becoming Black and Elvis” claims that Abani does not celebrate such ceremonial becoming, as the ceremony has lost its traditional function. Now, there is merely the need “to get on with it” (Abani 20) “for the sake of appearances (rather than) a meaningful observance of custom” (Aycock 13). Aycock leaps forward and maintains the idea that the metaphorical and symbolic failure of a ceremony suggests “the fraught implications of attempting to achieve/enforce normative identity in the modern, globalized—yet intertwined—world” (Aycock 12). Aycock reads *GraceLand* as a transgression of the familiar and conventional *Rites of Passage*, and a celebration of the moments when things ‘fall apart’ or become outmoded. Mark Fisher relates such enjoyment in *The Weird and the Eerie* in its mixture of pleasure and pain (*The Weird and the Eerie* 13). Aycock explains Abani’s ‘genetics’ of writing as ‘Mongrelisation’ (“of culture and identity”), while also seeing in it Abani’s “thematic backbone” (Aycock 11). The term, “mongrelization” refers to the “biracial heritage” of the writer and his lived experience as a

“Nigerian-born Igbo-English novelist and poet now liv(ing) in Los Angeles” (Aycock 11). Therefore, Aycock sees the “nomadic existence’ and fluid categories of Abani’s protagonist and his identity as always in flux. Abani’s characters, such as Elvis and Madam Caro, can also be read as “too big for that world,” as they are characters that “traditional society [cannot] peg into a role” (*GraceLand* 25). I believe that one should also focus on Abani’s multiple levels of storytelling, and the way he negotiates the local and the global. For him, Igbo/Yoruba culture is not only “an ordered ideal over a chaotic and random world;” it is also “a symbiotic and fluid exchange of understandings that are in constant flux and change and in constant negotiation appearing static only in the moment” (*Global Igbo*).¹⁰³ Abani explains this permanent impermanence as a liquid force: the so-called ‘ike’ in Igbo or ‘chi’ in Yoruba/Igbo as a flux that is always processed and given shape through the trope of a journey. Abani’s ‘global Igbo,’ not unlike Campbell’s monomyth, has only one journey; there are many roads and many paths, but only one journey regardless of the many detours. Abani reflects on a realistic but idealized narrative of identity in its historical fluidity. In Abani’s interpretation of Igbo culture, the becoming ‘human’ is something we journey toward.

On the other hand, Abani views his “job as a scholar” as “not to give any power or centrality to any particular narrative but to trouble the narratives all the time” (*Global Igbo*). For Abani, creating this narrative for a writer is a difficult task as the writer’s body is the subject of the same kind of alienation. Thus, the difficulty lies in being in that place(body) and, at the same time, resisting the doctrine that subjugates it. It is a matter of finding innovative

¹⁰³ Chris Abani, “Global Igbo” (lecture presented at the 26th annual Chicago Humanities Festival, citizens, October 24, 2015) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mofJiqcrzr8>>, Last time accessed 2019-07-31.

narratives to transcend thresholds of body, gender, race, religion, and nation. This is not unlike the famous South African joke¹⁰⁴ with which Abani begins his speech on “Global Igbo,” where the protagonist's identity transgresses South African identity politics to escape the marginalization of the alphabetic ordering.

The initiation ceremony in *GraceLand* begins with Sunday, Elvis' father, teasing him: “It is time to cut your apron strings”; “Dis is about being a man. No women allowed.” Sunday maintains that “he has to learn how to be a man” (19). Sunday, “an out-of-work drunk,” is the one who emphasizes the exclusively gendered territoriality of masculinity. For the community, Sunday is just another “good man who has lost his way” (27). Even when the father might seem to be incapable of fulfilling his role, it is the rituals that take over and convey a designated gender role to the young boys. Like the kola-nut ritual, women take no part in the ceremony: “Female guests are [also] never presented with kola-nuts” (172). Elvis is given the big picture of the ceremony: “You are going to kill your first eagle” (19). Sunday presents the act of killing the eagle as the first step into manhood: “When you are older, de next step is to kill a goat, and den from dere we begin your manhood rites. But dis is de first step” (19). Joseph, Elvis' uncle,

¹⁰⁴ 8 passengers (2 black South-Africans and 6 white South-Africans) were on board, flying toward Nelson Mandela's inauguration ceremony in post-Apartheid South Africa. On the way, the plane develops a problem and one of the engines goes out. The captain comes on line and says: ‘ladies and gentlemen we are having a problem and the plane is losing altitude. We have two parachutes on board and in the spirit of the new South Africa we are asking for volunteers to jump off the plane’ and nobody moves and so he says: ‘following the still new South Africa we are going to go Alphabetically, All the Africans on the plane please jump off’ and nobody moves. He says: ‘all the blacks on the plane please jump off’ and nobody moves he says ‘well all the coloreds on the plane please jump off’ and nobody moves and so this young 9 year old black African kid turns to his father and says: ‘father if we're not Africans and we're not blacks and we're not colored what are we and the father says ‘dear my son we are Zulus’. (Chris Abani *Global Igbo*).

paints and prepares him for the ceremony and sends his son out to summon the male elders. He hands Elvis “a small homemade bow with an arrow strung in it. On the end of the arrow, pierced through its side, was a chick. It was alive and it chirped sadly” (19). The metaphorical substitution of an eagle with a chick, for Abani, demonstrates the cultural flexibility of Igbo rituals. A ritual, as part of the tradition, is an event, “like the sunset, or rain, changing with every occurrence. So too, the kola ritual has changed. Christian prayers have been added, and Jesus has replaced Obasi as the central deity” (291). Therefore, not only does the eagle become a chicken, but the male role also adapts itself to sociopolitical changes. Utilizing his own lived experience, Abani illustrates the cultural map of the Igbo through a Bildungsroman that renders the conditions for transformation, transgression, and revolution:

“Is this an eagle chick?” Elvis asked.

Joseph laughed. “Elvis, you funny. No, it is chicken, eagle is too expensive.” (18)

The Igbo’s symbolic order, in Abani’s view, has the potential to transform itself. Therefore, the eaglet can be replaced by a chick. It can even be purchased and pierced through its side on the end of the arrow, before the symbolic act of hunting/killing.

“It is alive,” Elvis said.

“Of course it is. You just shot it,” Joseph replied.

“I didn’t.”

“You did,” Sunday said. (19)

In an interview, Abani tells the story of his own first killing. He killed a goat when he was thirteen. The story, however, is more about the compassionate act of his friend, a former boy soldier, who closes the mouth and the eyes of the goat to de-humanize its suffering, and so to make the killing tolerable for him (“on Humanity” Abani). There is a similar reference to

goat's eyes in *GraceLand*, where Elvis and his friend connect death, killing, and manhood:

“Have you killed a goat before?”

“Many,” Hezekiah said.

“Are they easy to kill?”

“No. Goats are a different matter. Dey have eyes dat watch you, not letting you get away with anything. And dat bleat, so childlike. It's not easy. But den being a man is not, abi?”

“I don't want to kill anything.”

“Sometimes we have no choice.” (181)

Becoming man in *GraceLand* seems more about facing death than the act of killing. Abani traces the connections between male subjectivity and death in moments where being/becoming-man is only possible in an exchange with death. For Mbembé, however, the confrontation with death is not mainly related to a form of masculinity as it is to human subjectivity: “the human being truly *becomes a subject*— that is, separated from the animal—in struggle and the work through which he or she confronts death” (“Necropolitics” 14). To uphold death, for Mbembé, is the Hegelian definition of “the life of the Spirit;” “[t]he life of the Spirit, [As Hegel] says, is not that life which is frightened of death, and spares itself destruction, but that life which assumes death and lives with it” (14).

Being man, in *GraceLand*, is also about assuming death and living with it. The ceremony, in the novel, ends with re-presenting the ‘hunted chicken’ to the elders:

“Do we have a kill?” they asked in Igbo, all speaking as one.

“Yes, we have a kill,” Joseph replied.

“Was it a good kill?” the old men asked.

“Yes,” Joseph said.

“Where is the kill?”

Joseph pointed, and Elvis stepped forward. The old men smiled and looked at one another.

“In our day it was a real eagle.”

“Let’s just get on with it,” Sunday said. (20)

Sunday’s ‘getting on with it,’ for Aycock, is a symbolic refusal of the rigid order of tradition and the harmonious collaboration of that tradition with the postcolonial/neocolonial world. Another essential part of the ceremony is the etiquette of the patriarchal order of seniority. The ‘boy’ must present the kill to the elders, in the same way that he should present the kola nut to the eldest in the kola-nut ceremony.

The youngest male should also “carry the wooden kola bowl and show it to all of the guests in order of seniority and in order of clan” (183). On the other hand, it is the oldest man in the gathering who must offer the kola nut to the guest as a symbol of respect and hospitality (154); it is he, the oldest guest, who blesses the bowl (223): “He then passes it to the next in line by seniority (230). “And so the kola makes its journey round the room and is seen by the eldest of all the clans” (240). Abani explains the whole point of the ritual with the voice of an ethnographer:

The complexity of the kola-nut ritual comes from the peculiar way that age and lineage are traced among Igbo. Certain Igbo groups trace lineage along matrilineal lines, though others are unapologetically patriarchal. The kola-nut ritual provides a ritual space for the affirmation of brotherhood and mutual harmony while also functioning as a

complicated mnemonic device. (209)

Abani's effort is mostly focused on the cultural mapping of male subjectivity in Igbo culture. He is also observant of the discriminatory position of women and demonstrates his awareness of the privileged position of the male subjects and the different forms of discrimination toward 'female' agency. Thus, in her last days, Elvis' mother insists to her Mama, Oye, Elvis' grandmother, that she wants to be reborn as a boy next time.

We'll call you back to be reborn into the lineage again.

As a boy next time!

Why? They are such limited creatures. (37)

She reminds her mother that "de songs dat de women would sing when a boy was born"; "ringing from hamlet to hamlet, dropped by one voice, picked up by another until it had circled de town. And de ring of white powder we would wear around de neck to signify de boy's place as head of de family" (37). Elvis' mother compares this to the "mournful" song, "carried by solo voices," to alert the town "of de sadness of de family" (37). She also mentions that "de only reason Sunday hasn't taken another wife" is "because [she] bore him a son" (37). For Abani, there is also a "deeper philosophy to these rituals, a connection to land and history that cannot be translated" (230). "It [the ritual] is not as easy as it seems as it also defines being" (252).

In the final stage of the ceremony, Elvis is lifted onto the shoulders of Innocent, his oldest cousin: "He felt very grown-up sitting up there, seeing the world from that high" (21). They are accompanied by the group of young men, singing the praises of Elvis as a great warrior and hunter. The elders free the chick, tying it upside down to a branch next to others

that are in several stages of decay, and an old man plucks a tail feather from the bird and sticks it in Elvis's hair. The elders cut the tree bark and, dipping their fingers in the sap, trace patterns on his face (21).

For Elvis' father Sunday, manhood is not about a failed or a successful hunt, since he and Joseph have prepared everything in advance for Elvis. 'Being man' is about not turning away from death. Sunday picks Elvis up and holds him close to the decaying birds. Elvis turns away from the smell. Sunday reacts: "Don't turn away from death. We must face it. We are men" (21). For Innocent, his oldest cousin, it is also about having a warrior's heart with which to confront upcoming events: "De trials of dis world things come as surprise, so you must have a warrior's heart to withstand dem. Dat's why your papa no tell you about today" (22). It is of course also about drinking with men: "Ah Elvis done taste him first blood, so as a man, he must drink with men" (22). Abani, as Aycock explains, celebrates "the perpetuality of 'becoming' as the meaningful, beautiful (if painful) aspect of life" (Aycock 12).

In *Graceland*, becoming often begins with a separation. This is often an event that creates traumatic, epistemic rupture in the permanence of experience. For Mark Fisher, trauma ruptures "the very fabric of experience itself" (22). It is the traumatic break from the past that allows "the new to emerge" (22). For van Gennep, and Turner, as Szokolczai notes, becoming an adult begins with a metaphorical death (a rite of separation) ("Liminality and Experience" 142): "A child must go through a painful separation from his family; he literally must die 'as' a child" (143). In *GraceLand*, this separation is staged gradually wherein the boy first kills an eaglet and later a goat. In such an interpretation, Elvis' *becoming-man* does not 'redeem' the negativity of the experience of killing: it sublimates it. "The absolutes of duty and responsibility toward an ethical obligation (Becoming Man or honouring a name) might also be defined as

another intensity or state of being in the Deleuzian sense, or as the responsibility toward an unwritten ethical code of honour, akin to Nordic or Germanic Sagas or Mongolian Yassa. These ‘tales of worthy men’ are patterns that create images of the desired ‘masculine identity.’ An escape from a behavioral ‘coding’ would imply immaturity or living as a boy. In *Graceland*, the ethical code of masculinity is deliberately broken and always in flux. Abani highlights the nuances in the ways that his characters, - Sunday, Joseph, Redemption, and Innocent, - lack a sustained consistency and constitute and articulate male agency by negotiating their survival in the margins; being-man, in such contexts, takes on many meanings and moves toward different directions. Such ‘freedom’ (as *Jouissance*) transforms death metaphorically into euphoria, “causing displeasure into a Thing that is both terrible *and* alluring” (Fisher 17). The Thing as Fisher claims “overwhelms, it cannot be contained, but it fascinates” (17). For Abani, “there are things that cannot be contained, even in ritual. The Igbo have a saying: Oya bu utu ndu. That is the joy of life” (299).

Abani-once again interrupts the logic of his narrative to demonstrate the ugly side of transgressing outside the boundaries of manhood. He examines the arbitrary alliances in which meaning becomes entangled with notions such as shame, honour, and love. Abani illustrates the violent ways in which a gendered performance might become regulated through such notions. In *GraceLand*, characters redefine their gendered performance by attaching new meanings to abstract concepts such as honour and love. Sunday defines parental love to Elvis and explains why there are a lot of deformed children begging: “Because their parents know dey have no future. So at birth, before de child knows pain, dey deform it because it increases its earning power as beggar. Do you see de love?” (188). In Sunday’s world bloody sacrifices, deforming children and the so-called ‘mercy killing’ masquerade as acts of love and are done

“for honor.” (*GraceLand* 187)

Honour¹⁰⁵(dignity) and shame seem to be controlling factures of masculinity in *GraceLand*; Sunday and Joseph are both ready to kill to own their narrative and protect their name. For Sunday, the measure of a man is his name (187). Sunday claims that his father was a houseboy to a white priest. For Sunday, he and his father were nobody. As they only could occupy a disenfranchised position of “servant’s children, mini-servant” in the traditional world, they were “white people’s slaves, a curse” and they were “disinherited of land, clan, everything” (187). For Sunday, it took “years of pain, suffering and hard work to build a name people could respect,” and so now he is prepared to defend it even if he has to kill someone. Sunday and Joseph pay Innocent to kill Godfrey, Joseph’s son, to keep their “name of honor,” (187) because they believed Godfrey was a criminal and the police would catch him eventually and execute him publicly (188), which would be a disgrace for their name. Nevertheless, Sunday is more¹⁰⁵ concerned with control over his name than with the truth and constantly refuses to believe that his brother, Uncle Joseph, is capable of raping his own daughter. For Elvis, this whole quest for honour, “honour killing” or as Sunday calls it, “mercy killing,” is disgusting: “This was all shit, all shit” (188). How can one carry a name when it “belongs to murderers and rapists?” (188) When Elvis reveals the truth to Sunday, his father searches “for possibility of a lie,” “as though he was subconsciously begging Elvis it not be true” (188). At last, what Elvis hears coming from Sunday, “was a howl. All animal, all death;” (189) “this

¹⁰⁵ Bhabha defines honour in three categories: Honour “as a structure of rights to respect, which is contingent upon a role (e.g. a Judge when she is in the court and not when “we are at dinner together”) (“Cosmopolitanism and convergence” 171). Honour can be earned by achievement, “not necessarily moral achievement” (171), and honour as dignity; “something that you get by being a person” (171).

was not the comfort he wanted, needed” (189).

- **Masculinity, Discipline, and Punish**

In cross-dressing Elvis, however, Abani’s *mise-en-scène* takes a Foucauldian turn. This time, becoming-man takes effect not through a ceremonial framework but through discipline and punishment. Aycock persuasively argues that Elvis’ cross-dressing is just a “gendered experience” in search of love and affection from an absent father. Aycock claims that the nine-year-old Elvis associates the girls’ appearance, their hairdos, their ‘femininity’ with ‘the promise of love,’ and he believes that his father will like him better, show him affection if he acts like a girl (Aycock 15). Sunday’s stand is clear: “No son of mine is going to grow up as a homosexual!” (62) Sunday makes himself clear to Aunt Felicia, who is trying to save Elvis from the beating: “When you have your own children, you can do what you like. But Elvis is my son. Son, not daughter (62)”. In the final scene, Sunday holds Elvis tightly between his knees to keep him from making any sudden moves and shaves Elvis’ head, to make a man out of him again. Abani evokes the contact of the razor as “the rough lick of a cat’s tongue,” (63) and relates the whole event to Elvis’ seeking attention. At the end of the chapter, Elvis’ ‘docile body’ calms between the pain of the beating and the joy of fatherly care: Elvis feels “himself relaxing into his father’s body” (63). Sunday continues that “I’m only doing dis for your own good. It’s not easy to be a man. Dese are trying times. Not easy” (63). Abani’s scene reminds the readers of Butler’s argument in *The Psychic Life of Power* that the attention and love necessary to a child’s existence are exploitable¹⁰⁶ (8). Abani depicts Igbo patriarchal rules as

¹⁰⁶ Butler’s argument, here, is focused on sexual exploitation, however, in *GraceLand*, the child’s need for love and affection creates a site wherein disciplinary power can enforce gendered norms.

rigid but also forgiving, accepting that “mistakes are expected until the boy becomes a man” (274). “This is the journey to manhood, to life; it cannot be easy. The old Igbo adage is: Manhood is not achieved in a day” (284). Abani maintains that “there is peril in this, and the loss of face is not only on the young neophyte, it is on his clan, as they have not taught him well” (263).

- **Becoming Kola Nut**

In *GraceLand*, Igbo culture is depicted as an open-ended entanglement of ways of being. Tsing argues that in such an assemblage “varied trajectories gain a hold on each other, but indeterminacy matters” (*The Mushroom at the End of the World* 83). In *GraceLand*, the learning of the assemblage happens through the unravelling of its knots, one of which is through the open-ended entanglement with kola nut. “The king’s head is the kola nut’s apex, or head. The lines of the star design clearly imprinted on it determine the number of lobes the kola nut will have” (*GraceLand* 24). The number of lobes the kola nut has is the key to the Igbo mathematical system. This number holds the truth of the clan. and it is also used in divination by dibias (healers) “to discern the path of the petitioners (46). “The number of lobes, determined by the line running across the kola nut’s apex, determines what kind of person petitioner is” (60). “Just like the kola nut, people have distinct lobes of energy. These determine their life plan. Four is the highest number, the king nut. The sorcerer. Three is the seer, the singer, and the shaper. Two is, the struggle to learn love” (*GraceLand* 70). Such assemblage thinking paradoxically engages with the body as a prefigured entity (with distinct lobes of energy) but at the same time develops more-than-human¹⁰⁷ modes of experience that

¹⁰⁷ Ally Bisshop explores the term more-than-human in her dissertation “Articulating Thresholds”: “The

are sensitive to the becomings of their surroundings. Igbo assign the Kola nut a particularly important role in their culture, cosmology, and human collectivities: “We do not define kola, it defines us” (46). Becoming kola nut in this sense is a way of integrating nature that is in line with the Igbo male communion and environment.

Abani states that “omenala” —“the way we have always done it”¹⁰⁸— is only one path (291) and that “there is only one history which is Igbo,” (299) but he views tradition itself as a fluid force and in constant negotiation. “Tradition is an event, like a sunset, or rain, changing with every occurrence” (291). Tradition, for Igbo, is not “a system of code;” instead, it is an uncodable force, and even when it seems that “the protocol is followed strictly,” (196) “this culture is always reaching for a pure lyric moment” (291). Therefore, the kola-nut ceremony is a metaphorical ritual that preserves and transmits cultural norms of masculinity from generation to generation. Even though those norms might change through time, the transformative ability of the Igbo culture, for Abani, is the essence of its survival. The kola-

concept of the ‘more than human’ is articulated by theorists in diverse domains of research. For instance, ecologist David Abram proposes this term to describe the sensuous, multi-sensory world existing beyond the human (Abram, 1997); geographer Sarah Whatmore uses the term to describe approaches to the world that are sensitive to the vital connections between the geological and the biological (Whatmore, 2002); anthropologist Jamie Lorimer (Lorimer, 2013) makes a claim for the need for a ‘more than human’ methodology alive to ‘the embodied, affective and skilful dimensions of our multispecies worlds that often elude research methodologies preoccupied with human representations’; environmental humanities research Michelle Bastian explores modes of participatory research in more-than-human worlds (Bastian, 2017) and vitalist Jane Bennett locates the human body within a network of vibrant ‘things’, in which there are ‘nonhuman vitalities actively at work around and within us’ (Bennett, 2010: 231)” (Bisshop 6).

¹⁰⁸ “History is at the heart of the ritual, marked in Igbo by the word omenala, which literally means ‘the way we have always done it’ (*GraceLand* 224).

nut ceremony works as an educative medium. It is “part hospitality, part etiquette, part protocol and part history lesson” (172). Abani goes even further and writes on kola nut’s role in the Igbo belief system as “sacred” and “a blessing” (3). “He who brings kola, brings life” (3). In *GraceLand*, the “greatest” way of worshiping is “the offering of kola in communion, the soul calling unto life” (17). Kola nut has a Eucharistic quality; it is the representative of a life that invokes a supreme deity and by association, the implication that the consumption of one [is] equal to that of the other” (17). Abani’s rhizomatic and ‘spidery’ writing —not unlike Beatrice, Elvis’ mother — spreads across *GraceLand* to claim “an ancient kingdom” (44) not only through the over-coded politics of gender, but also as a *Bildungsroman* made by interlacing threads of becoming: “this is the kola nut. This seed is a star. This star is life. This star is us” (3). Abani highlights the ‘genetics of the kola nut’ and allows a non-human protagonist into his story to unfold a culture across its ecosystem and the overlapping of its agents (humans, nonhumans, organic, and nonorganic) that makes a culture’s continuation and transformation possible.

Conclusion: The Ambivalence in Liminality

Szakolczai introduces the rite of passage not only as an event —the way Abani also does— but also as an experience, and he suggests that “experience is only possible if one first leaves something behind” (148). Although Szakolczai enters the Foucauldian discourse of cultural materialism, it is not entirely clear to what extent the ceremony, for him, is just another form of biopolitics that imposes a discursive limit on the subjects’ liminal experience. Abani also begins most of the chapters in his fragmented *Bildungsroman* with short anthropological notes regarding the kola-nut ceremony, thus providing the possibility for reading Elvis’ becoming-man in *GraceLand* through the eyes of scholars such as Szakolczai,

and Turner.

There are several stages in the rites of passage for the Igbo male. Of prime importance is the understanding of the kola-nut ritual. At the heart of the ritual is the preservation, orally, of the history of the clan and the sociopolitical order that derives that history. (*GraceLand* 34)

In traditional societies, “the transition from the liquid sensitivity of moments of becomings”, as Szakolczai affirms, was carefully structured and always supervised by experienced masters of ceremonies, e.g., shamans, elders or medicine men (“Liminality and Experience” 148). Not unlike Foucault’s definition of heterotopia¹⁰⁹, the location of the ‘event’ (of becoming) must be kept in the margins of public life, on the edges of the society, and carefully guarded by taboos (148). As Stenner puts it:

The affectivity summoned during a liminal transition calls for a highly ritualized and ceremonial framing such that a hard crust of ritual might protect the liquid sensitivity of moments of becomings, the better to pattern them into a socially authorized form. (Stenner 25)

The process of reterritorialization or, as defined by Szakolczai, the “genuinely formative experience of transition,” should be monitored carefully as the subject might change

¹⁰⁹ Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité*. Translated by Jay Miskowiec. 1967. Michel Foucault elaborated the concept of heterotopia to describe the space of ‘otherness’ that is simultaneously physical and mental. Foucault describes many types of heterotopia or spaces that exhibit dual meaning: a crisis heterotopia, heterotopia of deviation, time, ritual or purification and others: “[T]hese places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias” (“Of Other Spaces” 4).

fundamentally. The risk, here, is that the process might not go as planned and/or it cannot be reversed (Stenner 25). Here, the liminal phase seems to refer to an in-between state that begins with the separation/detachment from a hierarchical position and ends with the incorporation of a culturally acceptable upper position in the hierarchy.

Thomassen explicitly excludes the lived experiences of marginal and underclass subjects from his framework and refuses to consider their experiences as ‘liminal’ ones:

While liminality and marginality share affinities (being boundary-concepts), they are also different terms: that which is interstitial is neither marginal nor on the outside; liminality refers, quite literally, to something placed in an in-between position.

(Thomassen 8)

While Thomassen refers to Bhabha’s enunciative position as ‘to write from the in-between’ and considers his usage of the term ‘liminality’ as “a positive expression of cultural hybridity,” he sees liminality as just another concept. “Concepts are good to think with, but they do not bear their meaning within themselves” (4). For Thomassen,

Liminality explains nothing. Liminality *is*. It takes place. And human beings react to liminal experiences in different ways. Those ways cannot be easily predicted.

But they can be analysed and compared, and at the formal level they share important properties (*Liminality and the Modern* 7).

In “Liminality and Communitas,” Turner provides some supplementary –and to some extent contrary— qualities to describe liminal entities and communities. For Turner, liminal entities can also be “passive and humble,” and therefore, they are capable of forming “intense comradeship and egalitarianism” (95). They are also able to “cope with” new situations as

they are already “being reduced or ground down to a uniform condition” (95). Such qualities, for Turner, appear to imply having an accepting behavior and an aptitude for obeying instruction (95). Lucy Kay, in *Mapping Liminalities*, traces the liminal as “a place of threat as well as of promise, that can produce and perpetuate conservative as well as progressive and promising potentialities” (8). Such paradoxical insights and ambivalence¹¹⁰ coexist in *GraceLand*, where sublime horror and abundance of death are entangled with the revolutionary uprising of the underclass and the open-ending of Elvis’ final escape to the United States.

¹¹⁰ Mathew Omelsky, in “Chris Abani and Politics of Ambivalence,” explores the “restless oscillation between cynicism and idealism” and highlights at the same time the pervasive violence and restricting norms and at the same time “a certain euphoric optimism” in *GraceLand* (1).

Chapter 4

“That Other Indian”: Indigenous Reterritorialization in Thomas King’s ‘Inconvenient Indians’ and Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Ceremony*

In the context of decolonization, the concept of becoming in Migrant Literature foresees a different engagement with the Indigenous territories and knowledge. That involves a willingness to engage with, Indigenous histories in Indigenous terms and conditions instead of doing the research through the constant pervasive element of the Western central archive¹¹¹ and White mythologies.¹¹² In *Travelling Knowledges*, Eigenbrod suggests that a migrant reading highlights movement and processes and resists closure and definitiveness (xv). Such a reading, as Meaghan Morris points out, risks transgressing limits and borders: “colonization may be precisely a mode of movement (as occupation) that transgresses limits and borders” (Morris 43). To this end, I need to clarify my non-Western immigrant position when I address Indigenous literatures. This involves my embodied location as an immigrant in Canada that effects this migrant reading. My intention, however, is to move towards a decolonized language —as Homi Bhaba puts it— “a language of historical understanding and political action.”¹¹³ Finding a ground for a mutual project of decolonization necessitates a focus on transformative elements of culture. While, for instance, in Hage’s novels, displaced anti-heroes create their own vernacular and marginal dialects of cosmopolitanism, indigenous writers such as Leslie Marmon Silko (Laguna Pueblo)

¹¹¹ “What bound the archive was a family of ideas and a unifying set of values proven in various ways to be affective” (Said *Orientalism* 42).

¹¹² See, for instance, Robert Young’s *White Mythology* and his challenging engagement with traditional account of ‘World History’ as a Eurocentric myth.

¹¹³ (Foreword by Homi Bhaba, in *White Mythologies* by Robert Young x)”

and Thomas King (Cherokee) remember and revive the innovative character of their cultures not only by reaffirming the traditional practices but by finding freedom in the context they inherit.¹¹⁴ Telling new stories and imagining “new ceremonies,” for Silko are inspired by “the stories of the creation and continuation of the five worlds” and “the way they still made new Buffalo Dance songs each year” (*Ceremony* 249).

This chapter is a ‘minor gesture’ that cuts its way, however uninvited, into another world, another rhizome and “the futurity that orients it”.¹¹⁵ To this end, I take refuge, in the Indigenous worlds and the stories that orient them for the time being, to prepare the ground for productive future conversations. There have been many projects that involve Indigenous masculinities. Sam McKegney’s *Masculindians* and *Indigenous Men and Masculinities*, edited by Robert Alexander Innes (Saulteaux) and Kim Anderson (Métis), are two of many books that reflect on some of the issues that Indigenous men and those who assert male identities must contend with and are focus of mine in this investigation. In *Trans-Indigenous*, Chadwick Allen (Lakota) invites “specific studies into different kinds of conversation, and to acknowledge the mobility and multiple interactions of Indigenous field of inquiry” (xiv). There can be a reciprocal relation between grounded perspectives and Migrant views; the knowledge rooted in the land and the perspectives earned by nomadic thinking enrich the movements of deterritorialization and decolonization. These projects and views can share their analytic insights particularly in the case of confrontation with loss and rupture caused by colonization. The conversation to come must prepare the ground

¹¹⁴ In her short story, “Goodbye Snauq”, Lee Maracle notes: “Find freedom in the context you inherit; every context is different; discover consequences and change from within, that is the challenge. (Maracle 13)

¹¹⁵ Manning *The Minor Gesture* ix.

for mutuality, recognition, and creative interaction of the displaced and indigenous Other in a decentralized manner to foresees the possibilities for revolutionary political, social, and economic transformation.

A “conversation to come”, as Manning notes in her introduction to *Nocturnal Fabulation*, “is one that invents interlocutors, one that refuses to know in advance where the encounter will lead” (*Nocturnal Fabulation* 7). This imaginary conversation happens through the contrapuntal texture of the indigenous, ‘ethnic’, displaced and particularly ‘mixed’ voices. Leslie Marmon Silko, in *Ceremony*, calls it the convergence of the lines of cultures and worlds, “in the middle of witchery’s final ceremonial sand painting” (246), when human beings become “one clan again, united by the fate the destroyers planned for all of them” and “become the story that was still being told” (246). Seeing and hearing the world as it always was with “no boundaries, only transitions through all distances and time” (246) is precisely the kind of Nomad thought that escape overcoding. Hearing the becomings of the world might “propel the growth of a still-emerging field toward still-unexplored possibilities” (Allen xv).

To this end, this chapter is divided into two parts and the conclusion. The first part, **Post-Apocalyptic Narratives of Identity and the Thresholds of ‘Nativeness’** addresses the relation of Indigenous narratives and perspectives —especially of North-American Indigenous communities with the loss of their members, their lands and the prohibition of their cultural practices during the never-ending colonizing process. The destruction that came upon North-American Indigenous cultural practices from different oppressive forces, including the residential schools (or American Indian boarding schools), assimilationist missionary efforts, forced dislocation (e.g. The Long Walk of the Navajo, The Trail of Tears) and broken treaties

have been the subject of investigation of many Indigenous and settler scholars.¹¹⁶ The post-apocalyptic narrative, from another point of view, suggests an epistemological shift that, as Allen puts it “record[s] an Indigenous history that does not end with the coming of Europeans but extends into contemporary times” (*Trans-Indigenous* 22).

In the second part, **the Ecologies of the Worlds in Silko’s *Ceremony: Ceremonies, Healing narratives and Becomings***, I will revisit Silko’s *Ceremony* and how its post-apocalyptic narrative sheds light on the entanglements between the ecologies of risk, the polluted ecosystems of the Earth, a toxic environment caused by the largest open-pit uranium mine and the testing of atomic bombs, human communities and non-human subjects. *Ceremony* also reflects on the impacts of the Second World War on the individual and community level and highlights its male protagonist’s healing journey and his becoming. In *Ceremony*, Silko particularly encourages the quest for sovereignty over meaning through a metaphorical fight with what Betonie, the medicine man in the novel, calls witchery. **Conclusion** follows the Silko protagonist, Tayo, and his reterritorialization through interconnectivity as a form of a planetary alignment with Pueblo territory and other-than-human subjects.

¹¹⁶ I have to acknowledge the works of Lawrence Gross, Sidner Larson, Sam McKegney, Kim Anderson, and Thomas King from each of whom I have borrowed in the course of this writing.

The Post-Apocalyptic Narratives of Identity and the Thresholds of ‘Nativeness’

“I claim to be male but in fact only
one of my parents was male.”¹¹⁷ (Durham).

“Indian penises are unusually large and colorful.”¹¹⁸ (Durham)

Several Indigenous Nations and scholars use the word ‘apocalypse’ in an attempt to describe how their communities have been affected by colonialism. In “Postapocalypse Stress Syndrome and Rebuilding American Indian Communities,” Anishnaabe scholar, Lawrence Gross, states that “American Indians, in general, have seen the end of their worlds,” and there are no Indigenous cultures in North America that are “unaffected” or “in complete accord with [their] precontact culture[s]” (Gross 1). Gross further traces features of Postapocalypse Stress Syndrome in its effects on individuals and social institutions. Gross describes the signs and syndromes at an individual level, but he is also very much concerned with the collapse of

¹¹⁷ “I am a full-blooded contemporary artist, of the subgroup (or clan) called sculptors. I am not American Indian, nor have I ever seen or sworn loyalty to India. I am not a Native ‘American’, nor do I feel that ‘America’ has any right to either name me or un-name me. I have previously stated that I should be considered mixed blood; that is, I claim to be male but in fact only one of my parents was male”. (Quoted by Thomas King in *Inconvenient Indian* 203-204)

¹¹⁸ Written as a Graffiti/tattoo on Durham’s Self-Portrait in his exhibition at the Center of the World. While Thomas King endorses Durham as a Cherokee Artist, this chapter recognizes that the three federally-recognized and historical Cherokee Tribes and many artists and scholars reject Durham’s claims of Cherokee ancestry and he is not able to claim legally that he is Cherokee. (Turner “Jimmie Durham: At the Center of the World”). Durham stated in a 2011 interview, “I’m accused, constantly, of making art about my own identity. I never have. I make art about the settler’s identity when I make political art. It’s not about my identity, it’s about the Americans’ identity” (quoted by Ellegood “Curator”).

institutions (family structures, religious organizations, governing bodies, health care, and education systems). While individuals mostly rely on cultural structures in order to reach their potential, the collapse of community structures can also lead individuals to find themselves in liminal states (as the collapse of structure) as they lose contact with their field of belongings even unto future generations.

Indigenous cultures have a variety of linguistic, cultural and affective mechanisms that address, and give meaning to the event of loss and integrate into the living experience of the subject. The revitalization and incorporation of such mechanisms are parts of Indigenous healing practices. In “Mohawk Women Integrate the Condolence Ceremony into Modern Systems”, Jenni Monet (Laguna Pueblo), for instance, investigates a traditional grieving ritual known as “the condolence ceremony”¹¹⁹ in prayer and song “designed to rehabilitate their cases most in need” including “alcohol and substance addiction, and sexual assault response” (Monet np). In *Masculindians: Conversations about Indigenous Manhood*, Sam McKegney collected conversations and discussions with leading indigenous artists, critics, activists, and elders that involves insights on how events of loss effects male subjectivity. One of the themes brought up by many is the sorrow and perhaps ‘melancholia’ experienced by the individuals and communities in the face of the loss of loved ones and the ways such loss influences performativity of gender as well as creativity. Likewise Tomson Highway, a Cree novelist and musician depicts his own experience of sibling loss—one of the central themes of his novel (aside from that of the residential school), *Kiss of the Fur Queen*:

¹¹⁹ The condolence ceremony is “the sacred practice of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy is rooted in prayer and song. The idea is to clear the mind and body of negative, grief or concern” and was performed “following the death of a loved one or a great tribal leader” (Monet np).

“My brother, who died of AIDS twenty-one years ago—tomorrow is the anniversary of his death—he never went anywhere, he’s still here, still with me. Even biologically, I have his lips, I have his eyes, I have that. I even have his voice, apparently[...] when a man dies he goes to another circle. He goes to another circle. He undergoes transference. He doesn’t go to hell or heaven. He just stays here, which is why we believe that the planet is just filled with our ancestors. They’re still here, they never went anywhere” (*Masculindians* 24).

In his account, Highway explains a fragment of Cree cosmology in which things with biological life are living, animate creatures. That includes trees and rocks; “they all have a place in the circle” and possess “equal status” (24). So dying, in Highway terms, is undergoing transference. Likewise, Thomas Kimeksun Thrasher (Inuvialuk) expresses his own experience of the loss of his father as follows:

All prayers are lies. If I was alone, I’d be with him. I would have held him to the end. But my soul was hidden. I didn’t want to see him go. I knew he had to go; I knew he was going. Before. I didn’t want to put him away. I want to keep him with me. In me. So he’s in me still. I know where he is. It was the first headstone in Inuvik, the first headstone. He was a great man” (Thomas Kimeksun Thrasher *Masculindians* 70).

Highway and Thrasher's testimonies witness the significance of the personal, communal and cultural experience of loss and the different ways in which a subject/community makes sense and integrates the loss into their/its beliefs in order to build new entanglements and renew their gendered performance.

Similarly, Sto:lo author Lee Maracle describes the tension of digging graves for the dead on men and on the Earth, highlighting the limits of the Earth's healing and cleansing capacity: "The magnitude of grief" is too much for the Earth when "[t]oo many died at once" (31). Lee Maracle emphasizes the importance of traditional ceremonies to "release tension," therefore, during epidemics or massacres, "the living didn't release tension" (*Masculindians* 31) and so "the Earth herself, because she's the mother of those children, didn't release that tension either" (31). For Maracle, what she calls 'the Earth's tension' moves through male bodies as they are usually the ones "who had to dig the graves" (31). The tension creates 'paralyses' and 'locks,' particularly for men who are often in direct contact with it. (31) Maracle calls the paralyses from time to time "Madness" (32). The tension "locks us in position," and creates a form of 'paralysis,' and the inability of "giving voice to the unsaid" (32). Maracle affirms the necessity of "positive ceremonies"¹²⁰ to "undo" those locks and push through the paralysis and give voice to the unsaid (36).

The themes of resistance, 'resilience,' and survivance are prominent in Indigenous literatures and futurisms. these suggests that the Indigenous futures are still linked to the Indigenous past and the present, and form a continuous whole. Such accounts are also wary of reinforcing stereotypes in which 'authentic Indian' exist "only in the past or outside contemporary society, on the brink of extinction" (Allen 27). Indigenous identity, for Allen, is not based on copying an 'authentic' model of 'Indianness' and it resists assimilation and

¹²⁰ "Well, if you don't have positive ceremonies, you're going to have negative ceremonies—that's just how humans are. If you watch people that are getting ready to go to the bar, it's really ritualistic. Or go to bingo, it's ritualistic. Or, you know, get into a fight—there's a ritual before a fight" (Maracle *Masculindian* 36).

vanishing into the body politic of the dominant culture by differentiating its subject from what Rosi Braidotti calls the humanist ideal of ‘Man’ as the allegedly universal measure of all things” (“A Theoretical Framework” 2). Universal Man in the European (Western) model, as Braidotti puts it, “in fact, is implicitly assumed to be masculine, white, urbanized, and a full citizen of a recognized polity” (Braidotti *Transpositions* 136). Indigenous feminism and masculinities studies—as in the works of Leah Sneider and Bob Antone —dismantle “the Westernized male acculturation influencing the contemporary construct of being a Haudenosaunee man” and in “a homecoming journey” offer insights into other forms of Indigenous/migrant manhood (Antone 21). Such studies resist colonial concepts of race and gender that undermine the notion of complementarity among genders because they are seen to weaken Indigenous sovereignty (Innes and Anderson *Indigenous Men and Masculinities* 13).

Many Indigenous intellectuals support a double-process of self-identification and being claimed by an Indigenous community. This type of investment into one’s identity thus sometimes follows a modern form of nationalism based on a stable land base, archival projects, research libraries, and museums (Allen 75). In *American Indian Literary Nationalism*, Jace Weave, Craig S. Womack and Robert Warrior make a strong case for Native Nationalism. Simon Ortiz (Acoma Pueblo) —one of the important figures in the development of Native nationalism— in his foreword to this book insists that “Indians are still Indians” (xii) and that Indigenous Literatures do not rely on language¹²¹ alone but on “a way of life” (xi). Indigenous

¹²¹ Ortiz affirms that Indigenous languages are spoken less than before (xi). Reappropriation of the colonial language in the case of Indigenous writers who write in English or French, as Sarah Henzi also suggests “entails not only its mastery [...] but a means to an end”(iii) and as a way to “‘write back’ against oppression and injustice” (iii).

experience, in Ortiz terms, is “a way of that has its own particularities, patterns, uniqueness, structures and energy” (xi). Indigenous identity, however, as Ortiz suggests, “cannot be attributed to only one quality, aspect, or function of culture” (xi). For Ortiz, the oral tradition plays another significant part of Indigenous resistance as it carries out political, armed, and spiritual resistance against forced colonization (“Towards a Nationalist Indian Literature” 10). Grounded perspectivism in “tribal literary nationalism” offers “a microcosmic view of the world” that as Womack (Creek-Cherokee) asserts is not defined by isolation but “can lead to macrocosmic understandings and relations” (127). Allen highlights another form of nationalism that “reconcile the complexity of tribal diversity with a vision of Indian unity” (Allen 80). In Shawnee poet Nasnaga’s untitled poem, the conception of ‘Indian activism and unity’ imagines such Nativeness as “scattered” parts functioning as a “whole” (80). Allen’s reading of the poem focuses on the evocative imagery of “dust devils,” “[a] body of many parts/Scattered to the four winds” (80):

...My mouth speaks in many tongues.

Like dust devils, all are the whole.

I am Anishnaabe! (Nasnaga quoted in Allen 80)

Thomas King is a notorious writer who reflects on the thresholds of identity in North America. Nationalism, for King, also solves the dilemma of ‘race,’ “well enough because it does not insist on the accident of birth as a *sine qua non*” (*All my Relations* xi). His mixed heritage (Cherokee, Greek and German), being a Canadian in the United States and an American in Canada make it difficult for the dominant culture to romanticize him as an “authentic Indian” (Davidson 6-8). King’s style, not unlike Leslie Marmon Silko’s, involves constant border-crossing between written and oral forms and successfully brings Indigenous matters into a scholarly conversation

with other discourses such as postcolonial studies. In *The Inconvenient Indian*, King, in his humorous way, challenges many claims of ‘Indian authenticity’ that are rooted in the colonial imaginary and ironically calls such cultural simulacrum, “Dead Indian culture and spirituality” (58). The simulacrum¹²², for King, represents something that never existed (*The Inconvenient Indian* 54). King illustrates an Other subject, “Live Indian,” an ever changing subject full of vitality that takes various forms: dead, live, legal/Treaty/Status, and non-Status. ‘Dead Indians’ are most often not actually dead; they are living people with “bits of cultural debris”—war bonnets, beaded shirts, fringed deerskin dresses and so on—who perform an authentic Indianness in Redoes, powwows, movies and television commercials (54). As King remarks, “for us Live Indians, being invisible is annoying enough, but being inauthentic is crushing” (64). In his poem, “I am not the Indian You had in Mind,” King becomes that other Indian who lives just down the street, “the one you’re disinclined to meet”: “The activist alone in jail,” as well as “the doctor”, “the homeless bum,” “the elder with her bingo tails” and finally his father “who was never there”. (King “I am not the Indian You Had in Mind” np). Such omnipresence in the social life of North America, for King, is a reminder of Indigenous cultural persistence and adaptation (*The Inconvenient Indian* 165) and can be seen in the Indigenous Nations’ claims for sovereignty over land, self-determination, and meaning. “The question that really matters,” for King, “is the question of land” (218) because he views land as a permanent¹²³ and defining element of Indigenous culture: “Land contains the languages, the stories, and the histories of a people” (218).

¹²² King refers to Jean Baudrillard’s notion of the term (*The Inconvenient Indian* 54).

¹²³ “One of the great phrases to come out of the treaty process is ‘as long as the grass is green and the waters run.’” (*The Inconvenient Indian* 223)

For King, Indigenous Identity based on race, or a “blood-quantum requirement” (*The Inconvenient Indian* 204), “makes a rather large assumption, a type of *dicto simpliciter*” (*All my Relations* “Introduction” x) since “the word *Indian* in itself really doesn’t mean anything¹²⁴” (xi). King, instead, highlights some of the characteristics of ‘Native’¹²⁵ Literature: ‘Native’ Literature, as King describes it, avoids “the literary stereotypes and clichés” and its characters are not “the servants of a non-Native imagination” (xii). Most Native writers “consciously set [their] literature in the present” and “create for their respective cultures both a present and a future” (xii). They thus discover ways to make history their own. King also traces a deep relation between Native oral literature and Native writings (xii-xiii). For King, these boundaries are porous as many writers “begun to wander past these boundaries” (xv):

[Some writers] do not use traditional Native characters, nor do they make use of elements from oral literature, or create a strong sense of Native communities [...]. (They) may not even concern themselves with ‘authenticity,’ rather they are concerned with the range of human emotions and experience that all people share[...]. The limitations placed on us by non-Native expectations are simply cultural biased that will change only when they are ignored” (xv-xvi).

¹²⁴ Thomas King quotes from Wallace Black Elk in *Black Elk: The Sacred Ways of Lakota*, “You know straight across the board, hardly anyone really knows what is Indian. The word *Indian* in itself doesn’t mean anything. That’s how come nobody knows anything about Indians” (*All my Relations* xi).

¹²⁵ Probably the more contemporary and less problematic term here is to use the term Indigenous Identity and Indigenous Literature, but I have decided not to change king’s quotation. When *All my Relations* was published in 1990, using the term, “Native Literature,” was still the norm.

King takes issues with certain models of identity politics, calling them “grievous errors,” “lapses of judgement.” For King, they have done “a reasonably good job of injuring ourselves without the help of non-Natives” (162).¹²⁶

King is also alert to borders and the spaces in-between as a member of the Cherokee nation but living in Canada. For instance, in his short story, “Borders” King seeks to decolonize the territorial narrative by acknowledging Indigenous territories, histories and belongings traversing Canada and the United States. In “Borders,” the space in-between is where the real story is; here, the ‘no-man’s land’ between the two colonizing states becomes once again sovereign land for the Blackfoot nation (Siksikaitstapi), and in which the mother, through her son’s eyes, is able to reclaim her agency and proclaims her own irreducibility to a colonized subject. The story is about the family visit between a Blackfoot mother and her son, the narrator, with her daughter/sister, Laetitia, who “moved across the line, and found a job” (131). King’s story takes a political twist when it engages with variants of the same dialogue between the mother and the American and Canadian border guards: “Citizenship?” asks the border guard, “Blackfoot,” the mother answers” (“Borders” 136). Even when the question becomes more elaborate, the claim for sovereignty persists:

“Now, I know that we got Blackfeet on the American side and the Canadian got Blackfeet on their side. Just so we can keep our record straight, what side do you come from?”

I knew exactly what my mother was going to say, and I could have told them if they had

¹²⁶ King is quite critical of the exclusion of the Cherokee Freedmen (the descendants of the former slaves of the Cherokee) from the tribe and the Cherokee citizenship, or the requirement of CDIB¹²⁶ for voting rights (163).

asked me. “Canadian side or American side?” asked the guard. “Blackfoot side,” she said. (“Borders” 136)

King’s “Borders” is not only a manifestation of a tenacious resistance and resilience against colonization and forceful *inclusion*; it also involves Indigenous counterclaims to history, narratives, ‘truth’ and land outside the hegemonic narration of the settler nation-states of Canada and the United States. It draws its resistance from different aesthetic forms. In *Poetics of Relation*, Edouard Glissant believes in the passion that might revive “aesthetic connection with the Earth” that might change the diverse sensibilities of communities (149, 150). In this sense, one can read King’s “Borders” as one such story that resuscitates “the passion for the land where one lives” in-between “an aesthetics of disruption and intrusion” (151). Here one finds the fever of passion for surroundings and ecology and an “aesthetics of rupture and connection” among fields of belonging and unbelonging (151). Hardly a romanticized gesture, it is instead an epistemic shift that transforms reservations to land; the land “has no limits” and “is worth defending against every form of alienation” (151).

Some Indigenous stories follow reterritorializing paths that are not anthropocentric, and therefore do not pose the question of identity. These stories use traditional or even innovative narrative strategies. More specifically Indigenous feminism have provided frames of reference for the ongoing processes of becoming-subjects of Indigenous woman. The discipline locates political subjectivity and seek to construct alternative forms of listening¹²⁷ for the social and

¹²⁷ There has been a long discussion if the other can ‘speak for’ herself. Patton and Bignal, for instance follow Spivak’s claim in “Can the Subaltern Speak?” that “the authentic or ‘true speech’ of the subaltern remains always already outside the bounds of ‘what can be heard’” (3). Patton and Bignal suggest that Western intellectuals should not only resist the temptation to ‘speak for’ the colonized other but should

economic struggles of Indigenous women, while attempting to shed light on the tragedy of missing and murdered Indigenous women.¹²⁸ King locates stories that he describes as ‘timeless’ (*All My Relations* xiii): this timeless quality “speaks of the essential relationships that exist in traditional cultures – the relationship between humans and the animals, the relationship between humans and the land, and the relationship between reality and imagination” (xiii). The epistemological privilege afforded by such altered perspectives enlightens many hidden aspects of power and institutionalized knowledge. Bob Anton, and Kawika Tengan, for instance, try to revitalize traditional Indigenous masculine forms to elevate the lives of the vulnerable and young members of their communities. Some Indigenous narratives also call for an ontological shift that does not separate Bios from Zoe¹²⁹ the way Abrahamic and Greek epistemologies do. Silko, for instance, in *Ceremony*, puts life on earth and the quest for ecological balance and harmony at the center of her story. Indigenous narratives sometimes seek to highlight the relations between human and other-than-human entities and thereby have become sources of inspiration for many contemporary discourses such as Posthumanism, Ecofeminism, and Migration and Refugee studies, insofar as all are interested in finding ways to represent the profound interconnections between the human and its fields of belonging that includes non-human factors, agents and

work on “alternative forms of listening that is able to adequately hear and properly acknowledge the voice on its own terms. (Bignal and Patton 3)

¹²⁸ See for instance *Invisible Victims: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women* by Katherine McCarthy.

¹²⁹ . The two terms both in ancient and Modern Greek (e.g. Aristotle) seems to be more similar than their recent usage. “In the general terms, it appears Zoe references the biological aspect of life, the state of living, while bios can be thought of as referring more specifically to the length of living” (Panourgia *Posthuman Glossary* 68) Braidotti believes that in contemporary context the ontological shift “brings to an end the categorical distinction between life as *bios*, the prerogative of *Anthropos*, as distinct from the life of animals and non-humans, or *Zoe*” (“A Theoretical Framework” 4-5)

intensities. Such discourses often treat the planets' bio-geo-chemical cycles, elements, and the Earth itself as concrete entities and as material actors (Parikka *Posthuman Glossary* 112). The transdisciplinary conversation between the scholars must be beneficial for all sides and therefore the scholars who investigate and do research on Indigenous works and with Indigenous communities have to think of the ways in which the discipline and the research can give back to those indigenous communities. Jimmy Thomson asks the question in the most direct way: "Research on First Nation land often exploits the people who live there. What discoveries could come out of true collaboration?" ("Indigenous Knowledge and the Future of Science" 1) ¹³⁰

The Ecologies of the Worlds in Silko's *Ceremony*: Ceremonies, Healing Narratives and Becomings

My grandmother would not leave this hill. She said
the whole world could be seen from here. (*Ceremony* 131)

Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* adapts and incorporates Indigenous storytelling to the form of the novel. *Ceremony* is one canonic literary creation that mirrors the Pueblo community's ecology and responds critically to the crises affecting its entanglements with the

¹³⁰ Henzi locates examples of such collaborative and inspiring projects: "*Reasoning Together*, by The Native Critics Collective; *Across Cultures, Across Borders: Canadian Aboriginal and Native American Literatures*, edited by Paul DePasquale, Renate Eigenbrod and Emma LaRocque; *Aimititau! Parlons-nous!* collected by Laure Morali, and which led to further collaborations between Native and nonNative writers in Québec; *Telling It: Women and Language Across Cultures*, edited by The Telling It Book Collective; and *Give Back: First Nations Perspectives on Cultural Practice*, a chapbook edited by Maria Campbell et al., and published by Gallerie: Women Artists' Monographs" (Henzi 57).

outside world. Ecology in *Ceremony* emerges as a process of becoming-together of nature and culture. Silko constructs a multilayered story by weaving together different ecologies of the worlds. *Ceremony* highlights the interconnectivity between community and individual by exploring fields of potential in the other worlds inspired by Pueblo culture. The novel speaks to the visible world, or ‘the fifth world’¹³¹ —the toxic Earth, caused by the largest open-pit uranium mine and the testing of atomic bombs— but also to the situation of the war veterans, and their journey of becoming. Silko avoids imposing a single form on the matter of lived experience, and in the case of war veterans, traces their becomings for the better or worse. Silko is mostly successful, in reattaching value¹³² to her protagonist’s lived experience and ‘singularities,’ and in revitalizing Tayo, the protagonist, and his potential for healing and for becoming a productive member of his community. The historical context of the novel - the war, the drought, and the mining – has led to the exhaustion and the emptiness of the land that is echoed at both individual and community levels. Silko’s narrative does not entrap Tayo in the abject image of a dysfunctional veteran, on the contrary, it recognizes his condition as a liquid state, as a liminal phase that promises futurity. Silko narrates the transformation of a personal and communal sense of loss, figured metaphorically as that of the land “hard hit by the drought,” and into an ecology

¹³¹ While the Fifth World in the context of creation myths in the Central and North America has different connotations (e.g. in Aztec, Hopi, Navajo, and Pueblo mythology), it often refers to the present world that follows sequential cycles of life that comes before. See for instance: Stookey 2004:20, Doyle 2004, Locke 2002.

¹³² Brian Massumi uses Guattari’s notion of value to ‘reforge’ it beyond its normal compass –exchange-value and use-value – “outside the framework of capitalism” —the way Raymond Ruyer puts it— as “[...]a dance, not a statue” that “re-ally itself [...] with what is such as it is, positively all of itself” (Massumi, “Virtual ecology and the question of value” 345, 346). Raymond Ruyer, *La philosophie de la valeur* (Paris: Armand Collin, 1952), 204.

of the future, where grass and plants could grow, and “people [could be] happy again” (*Ceremony* 22, 256). Revisiting Silko’s *Ceremony*, a classic in North American Indigenous literature is an attempt to investigate the significance of story-telling as a way to reconcile with the past and to heal by confronting the events of loss at an individual level. Silko’s worlds, in this sense, create a virtual ecology wherein the objects/events like “jungle rain” are eternal with “no beginning or end” (11). Events appear repetitively in the story’s layers like cycles or around a spiral toward a center, or towards “the point of convergence” (246).¹³³

Old Grandma shook her head slowly, and closed her cloudy eyes again. ‘I guess I must be getting old,’ she said, ‘because these goings-on around Laguna don’t get me excited any more.’ She sighed, and laid her head back on the chair. ‘It seems like I already heard these stories before . . . only thing is, the names sound different.’ (*Ceremony* 260)

Silko also addresses the moment, when for her protagonist the *I* as a bordered territory falls apart and the thresholds of existence become uncertain. Existence, for Silko, makes sense through ‘its relations,’ fields of belonging, and sovereignty over meaning. Hence, when those relations break apart, the body moves dangerously beyond its boundaries. Silko’s healing narrative imagines a future for war veterans in which they are able to rebuild their feeble entanglements and reconnect their loose filaments with their communities and their stories, but also with animals, plants, and the Earth. The effective healing ceremony, therefore, for Tayo, follows two steps: answering the call from home and cleansing from “[a]ll kinds of evil [that] were still on him” (144):

¹³³ Such an event in this sense, can also be seen in Whitehead’s philosophy, when it “haunts time, like a spirit. It comes and it goes” (Whitehead *Science and the Modern World* 87).

Walk home
 following my footprints
 Come home, happily
 return belonging to your home
 return to long life and happiness.¹³⁴ (143)

Old Betonie, a Navajo medicine man, encourages Tayo at the end of the first stage off the ceremony to fight of the witchery: “this has been going on for a long long time now. It’s up to you. Don’t let them stop you. Don’t let them finish off this world” (152). In *Ceremony*, witchery can also be considered as a “flash agent” (166). Flash agents emerge between contact zones of cultures, and as Edouard Glissant notes, they “are in tune with the implicit violence of contacts between cultures” (*Poetics of Relation* 166). Betonie explains, for instance, that the moment when “the fifth world had become entangled with European names: the names of the rivers, the hills, the names of the animals and plants—all of creation suddenly had two names: an Indian name and a white name” (68). When the “single clan name” ‘crushes’, each person stands alone. Jesus Christ saves “only individual souls”, unlike “the Mother who loved and cared for them as her children, as her family” (68). Silko not only manifests the turbulence in the ‘contact zone’¹³⁵ as witchery, but also fights over its meaning within the colonial frontiers, coming up with the idea that “all things European [are] invented by a tribal witch” (“Preface” *Ceremony* xvi).

The story opens on the one hand in the middle of a different Indigenous story about Turtle Island – one that begin long before the arrival of Columbus. It also inspires agency for its

¹³⁴ I do not change the format of Silko’s poem to MLA to keep it the way it was published in *Ceremony*.

¹³⁵ Marry Louise Pratt describes the contact zone as “a site for linguistic and cultural encounters, wherein power is negotiated and struggle occurs” (Creese *The Routledge Handbook* 24).

subjects and foresees community members who are responsible for their bodies, actions, communities, and surroundings. In *Ceremony*, witchery is also portrayed in its mythical form, in the fourth world below, as a destroying, deceiving, unreliable gambler who seeks the destruction of the world and causes a drought by trapping “the storm clouds on his mountaintop” (94). While witchery, in *Ceremony*, appears to be responsible for everything, it only works through small manipulations (130). Silko’s resistance happens at the narrative level, and is revealed in the way that Tayo must fight the authority of the White “science textbooks” (94). The metaphorical fight against witchery, in *Ceremony*, is also a battle over narrative control and the way the story must be narrated. Resisting witchery for Silko is a form of liberation from the authority and hegemony of the dominant discourse that marginalizes the Indigenous subjects (94).

Tayo’s becoming a liminal entity without a clear position in the structure of his impoverished, marginalized community thus provides an excellent site for investigating Silko’s healing narrative as an Indigenous insight into male subjectivity in crisis.¹³⁶ Tayo’s ambivalent desire to at once self-identify with and reject his collective — a community that also simultaneously claims and rejects him — can be investigated on many levels. Tayo is called “part white” and “half-breed” (57) and experiences marginalization from both sides, a kind of ‘singularity’ that gives him a double-edged reflective distance from both cultures. Tayo is in an in-between¹³⁷ place that allows him to “speak for both sides” (42). Tayo also oscillates in an

¹³⁶ Tayo’s traumatic experience has also been addressed as a liminal state in works such as Paulette Elizabeth Bane’s thesis, “Creating a new *ceremony*: Liminality and Transformation in Leslie Marmon Silko.”

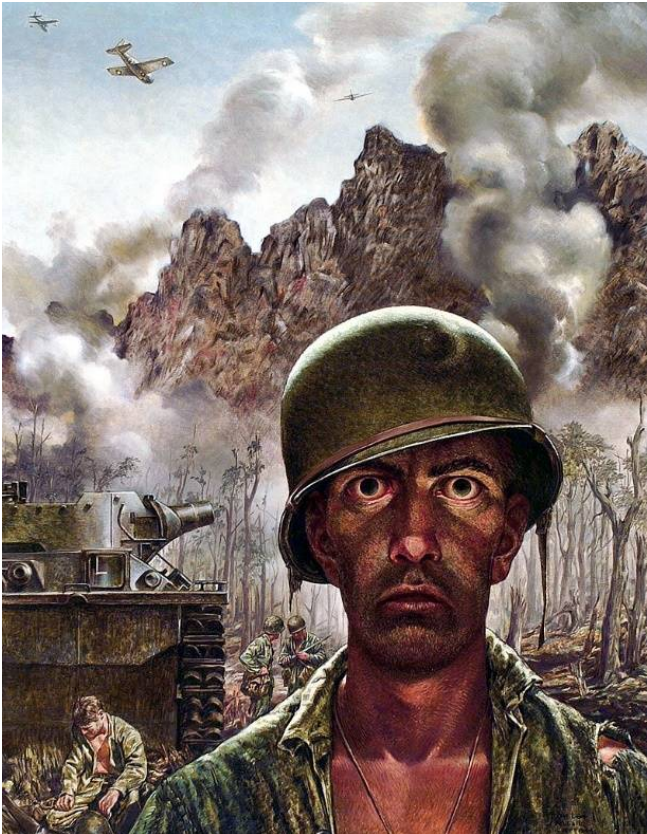
¹³⁷ In “Living In-between: Tayo as Radical Reader”, Michael Hobbs locates Tayo “in-between white science and Laguna tales” a position that eventually empowers him to create his ‘internally persuasive discourse’ and write his own ending to his story” (Hobbs 305).

unbearable state between and beyond the thresholds of his abject existence. “He had known Auntie’s shame for what his mother had done” bringing shame and disgrace to the family by going with a white man (57). Tayo also suffers from traumatic memories of torture and battle fatigue, and mourns the loss of his cousin, Rocky, who died during the Bataan Death March during World War II, as well as the death of his uncle Josiah that occurred during his absence from the community. Tayo experiences a separation from Pueblo culture when he puts on the U. S. Marine uniform, becoming one of “MacArthur’s boys” (40). Yet, the traumatized protagonist comes back to the Laguna community not with medals and honors but with a shattered sense of identity.

The novel begins with “dreams of black night and loud voices” that rolls Tayo “over and over again like debris caught in a flood” (*Ceremony* 5). Silko depicts Tayo’s ghostly experience: “[f]or a long time he had been white smoke. He did not realize that until he left the hospital, because white smoke had no consciousness of itself[...]. The smoke had been dense; and memories of the past did not penetrate there, and he had drifted in colors of smoke, where there was no pain, only pale, pale gray of the north wall by this bed” (14-15). He is sent to a mental hospital and later describes the place to Old Betonie who is supposed to perform a ceremony for him: “It was white. Everything in that place was white. Except for me. I was invisible. But I wasn’t afraid there” (123). The becoming smoke appears to be a coping mechanism, a way to tolerate pain and traumatic memories. In “Animals and Theme in *Ceremony*,” Beidler reads Tayo’s ‘becoming’ objects (smoke, fence, etc) as losing vitality and the ability to grow, becoming “useless and inanimate,” and becoming closer to death (19). “It was too late to ask for help, and he waited to die the way smoke dies, [...] fading until it exists no more” (16).

However, For Betonie, the Navajo medicine man, such refuge is worse than death: “In that hospital they don’t bury the dead, they keep them in rooms and talk to them” (123).

Tayo’s experience also bears similarities to many accounts of shell-shocked, and battle-fatigued veterans. The post traumatic experiences of soldiers on the front lines during the war has been examined by experts and artists such as Thomas Lea who popularized and physically inscribed the term “Two Thousand Yard Stare” in his painting “Marines Call It That 2,000 Yard Stare”, published in *Life* magazine, during World War II. Other war photographers¹³⁸ also captivated this affect on the facial expression of soldiers:



¹³⁸ See for instance Ray Platnick’s “Rifleman of 22nd Marine RCT,” *The World War II Multimedia Database*. <http://worldwar2database.com/gallery/wwii1674>.

Painting: “Marines Call It That 2,000 Yard Stare”¹³⁹

In her “Preface” to *Ceremony*, Silko writes about her experience of writing the novel as a way to remember those kind but exhausted men who were always around and available in her childhood; she wanted to “understand what happened to the war veterans, many of whom were survivors of the Bataan Death March” (xvi). Silko’s male characters bear similarities to her “cousins and relatives [...] who returned from the war and stayed drunk the rest of their lives” (xvi). Silko in *Ceremony* focuses on the de-forming effects war has on Tayo and illustrates Tayo’s empty gaze in a mental hospital:

He had seen outlines of gray steel tables, outlines of food they pushed into his mouth, which was only an outline too, like all outlines he saw. They saw his outline but they did not realize it was hollow inside. He walked down floors that smelled of old wax and disinfectant, watching the outlines of his feet; as he walked, the days and seasons disappeared into the twilight at the corner of his eyes [...]. (*Ceremony* 15)

While Tayo highlights the outlines of things, he is concerned with the emptiness/hollowness of things as well as his own; as if he lives in an almost dimensionless world where the outlines alone persist – even “sounds were becoming outlines, vague and hollow in his ears” (16). Silko describes Tayo’s liminal world as “a gray winter fog on a distant elk mountain where hunters are lost indefinitely, and their own bones mark the boundaries” (*Ceremony* 15). For Betonie, the

¹³⁹ Lea comments on the painting: “He left the States 31 months ago. He was wounded in his first campaign. He has had tropical diseases. He half-sleeps at night and gouges Japs out of holes all day. Two-thirds of his company has been killed or wounded. He will return to attack this morning. How much can a human being endure?” (Thomas Lea *Life Magazine*)

Navajo medicine man, witchery makes people forget stories of creation and continuation and makes them “see only the losses” (249). For Silko’s medicine men, ‘reality’ as we know it is entangled with the dark force of witchery. The stories sometimes become “all we have to fight off / illness and death” (2). That is why for Silko, the stories are important to save and *ceremony* “refers to the healing ceremonies based on the ancient stories of the Diné and Pueblo people” (“Preface” v). As noted by Larry McMurdy in his analysis of *Ceremony*, “the stories help the people move from imbalance and disorder back to a kind of balance, the balance that comes from the accuracy and depth and beauty of the stories” (xxii). The stories thus shift people’s attitude toward life and living things as well as the Earth.

Silko’s worlds are harmonious if the balance between humans, animals, and the Earth is carefully maintained. Silko demonstrates the interconnectivity between all three as well as the mythical world where she calls “the fourth world below” (82): The spider woman waits, there, “in certain locations for people to come to her for help” (94), she knows how ‘Sun Man’ should defeat the ‘witchery’ (the gambler) and free the storm clouds and “bring rain and snow to the people” (94). Silko continues in another related story that the green-bottle fly asks “the mother of the people” for forgiveness for the people, for the way they were behaving when “animals disappeared, the plant disappeared, and no rain came for a long time” (101). The motif of drought, in *Ceremony*, symbolizes a ‘lock’ or a ‘curse’ that needs breaking. The Elders warned the people that “the balance of the world had been disturbed; people could expect droughts and harder days to come” (186). The Mother will not send the people food and rain again unless the old Buzzard purifies the town first (105-106). The old Buzzard will not purify the town unless ‘the hummingbird and the fly offer him tobacco. There is no tobacco because of the drought, so the mother of earth advises them: “go ask caterpillar” (152):

Caterpillar spread out
 dry corn husks on the floor.
 He rubbed his hands together
 and tobacco fell into the corn husks.
 Then he folded up the husks
 and gave the tobacco to them. (180)

While the association of tobacco with healing/peace and as an offering to the creator and the ancestors is prominent in many Indigenous cultures, in *Ceremony* tobacco appears to offer the last piece that facilitates the connection between the mother/Earth and brings the remedy for the drought.

In *Ceremony*, Tayo's pain is described as "solid and constant" (38), as a hollow in his belly or chest that folds into the black hole and makes him wait "for the collapse into himself" (124). Tayo becomes the guilty subject when he claims responsibility for the death of his uncle Josiah: "While we were gone. He died because there was no one to help him search for the cattle after they were stolen;" (124) Tayo feels guilty for being "miles away" and could not do anything for Josiah who loved him (124). He also feels guilty for cursing the rain clouds during the Death March, believing he is the man responsible for "tear[ing] away the delicate strands of the web" that connects everything together (38). In *Ceremony*, Tayo's sense of guilt is not only his source of pain and distress; it attaches Tayo to his subjugation and makes him the subordinated subject of his own reflection. Tayo's affirmation of his guilt moves him in the unending path, a circle, that reinforces the dominant arrangement of the witchery. "I was supposed to help him. So he'd make it back. They were counting on him. They were proud of him. I owed them that much. After everything that happened. I owed it to them" (132). Betonie

sees “the trickery of the witchcraft” in the anger and the frustration and the guilt (132). He believes that “there are no limits to this thing, [witchery]”: “When it was set loose, it ranged everywhere [...]” (132). For Betonie, we fought “as much as we could do and still survive” (127); but, he cautions, it is also wrong if one believes that “all evil resides with white people. They want us to separate ourselves from white people, to be ignorant and helpless as we watch our own destruction (132). “I tell you, we can deal with white people, with their machines and their beliefs. We can because we invented white people; it was Indian witchery that made white people in the first place” (132). Witchery is thus not white or even that mighty; it is not “responsible for everything that happens” (130); it “only manipulates a small portion” (130) “Witchery works to scare people, to make them fear growth” (126); it makes them forget when they are “at an important place” in their own story (124) and, ultimately, will try to prevent Tayo “from completing [his] ceremony” (125). Therefore, finishing the ceremony is only possible with a critical engagement with one's own story and a heroic struggle with witchery that manipulates and makes people fear growth.

Tayo's engagement with his own story and his social condition begins even before meeting Betonie when he dismantles his past, his desires, and impulses. Silko's “half-breed” protagonist's melancholic self-denigration unravels his own and his friends' ‘cruel optimism’¹⁴⁰ toward “all the promises [the white people] made” to Tayo and Rocky (127). Berlant explains ‘cruel optimism’ as an optimistic attachment to an absurd cluster of promises that is “an obstacle to your flourishing” (*Cruel Optimism* 1, 23). In *Ceremony*, cruel optimism appears embedded in the khaki uniform promising proximity to the cluster of things that the uniform represents in an oppressive system of social relations. The affective structure in Berlant's concept can be

¹⁴⁰ Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*. 2011

explained through Sedgwick's terms: "affects can be, and are, attached to things, people, ideas, sensations, relations, activities, ambitions, institutions, and any number of other things, including other affects (Sedgwick 19). The uniform represents patriotism, as well as upward mobility from a disenfranchised position with regard to its socioeconomic, racialized, and gender relations toward "the fantasy of good life" (1). Tayo confesses that "[w]hite women never looked at me until I put on that uniform, and then by God I was a U.S. Marine and they came crowding around" (*Ceremony* 40). He continues that, in bars: they no longer "asked if I was Indian; sold me as much beer as I could drink" (41). Nevertheless, the traumatic event of war can be informative rather than formative in the sense that it gives the experiencer a deconstructive vision on institutionalized affects such as patriotism. Thus, when Tayo sings ironically, "America! America! God shed his Grace on thee," he builds another counter-narrative with the reflexive distance when even "his voice sounded far way": "One time there were these Indians, see. They put on uniforms, cut their hair. They went off to a big war. They had a real good time" (*Ceremony* 41). He continues: "These Indians fucked white women, they had as much as they wanted too. They were MacArthur's boys; white whores took their money same as anyone. *Ceremony*, reveals the unrelenting crave for equality, and power that makes the young men join the Army: "These Indians treated the same as anyone. Wake Island, Iwo Jima. They got the same medals for bravery, the same flag over the coffin" (41). One can thus read Tayo's narration as elaborated upon a tragedy, which Berlant calls the "fear of loss of a scene of optimism" (*Cruel Optimism* 24). For example:

See these dumb Indians thought these good times would last they didn't ever want to give up the cold beer and the blond cunt. Hell no! They were America the Beautiful too, this was the land of the free just like teachers said in school. (42)

Losing the prospect of hope, for Berlant, can be “so breathtakingly bad” that it “can feel like a threat to living itself” (24). Silko repeatedly illustrates the reproduction of the attachments to those momentary experiences of power, and equality through reunions of Tayo and his friends in the bars and their attempt “to sink the loss in booze, and silence their grief with war stories about their courage, defending the land they had already lost” (169). Tayo’s story takes a twisted turn that also addresses the deep-seated racism, discrimination, and social hierarchy entrenched in American culture:

Don’t lie. You knew right away. The war was over, the uniform was gone. All of a sudden that man at the store waits on you last, makes you wait until all the white people bought what they wanted. And that white lady at the bus depot, she’s real careful now not to touch your hand when she counts out your change (42).

Tayo, therefore, dismantles his childhood friends’ cruel optimism by denying them of their “honoured masculinity,” to borrow R.W. Connell’s concept. In “On Hegemonic Masculinity and Violence,” Connell investigates “the hierarchy between men and women and hierarchy among men” (90). Even if the ‘hegemonic’ or honoured masculinity might undergo changes through time, it can be easily recognized through the figure of the White heterosexual man, and it is distinguishable from various marginalized, racialized, subordinated or complicit masculinities (90) in the historical context of the novel.

Silko also addresses the marginalization at the intersection of ‘race,’ gender, and socio-economical level when her narrator compares ‘Indian’ men and women and their sexual encounters with White society. *Ceremony* depicts “what it was about white men and Indian

women” (57). ‘Indian’¹⁴¹ women, such as Tayo’s mother, are a source of shame and disgrace when they decide to go with them (57). The story suggests that an ‘Indian’ man would be lucky and proud for a sexual encounter with White women., particularly when “a chief” in uniform pretends to be a fellow Italian Marine so he can “score” with “two white women” (58). Silko’s humorous poem suggests that the “chief” had to impersonate as an Italian to get lucky:

“Yes, sir, this In’di’n
 Was grabbin’ white pussy
 all night!
 “Shit, chief,
 That’s some reputation
 Your making for Mattuci!
 “Goddamn,” I said
 “Maybe next time
 I’ll send him a bill” (59)

Tayo’s story thus illustrates well the gender hierarchy of young Pueblo male subjects and the repressive social forces that manipulate their desires, their fantasies of equality, their assimilation, and upward mobility. It also portrays the image of the White female body as the most sexually desirable in American culture. Critics such as Randy Lundy¹⁴² and Jonathan Dewar try to contextualize the gender relation in Indigenous communities through “the experience of forced separation from family and community, segregation of boys and girls,

¹⁴¹ I use the word ‘Indian,’ here, to reflect on Silko’s meaning.

¹⁴² Lundy, Randy. “Erasing the Invisible: Gender Violence and Representations of Whiteness in Dry Lips Move to Kapuskasing,” *(Ad)ressing Our Words: Aboriginal Perspectives on Aboriginal Literatures*.

separation from sibling, and institutionalized living in loveless, proselytizing setting with strict, foreign, doctrinal gender norms” (Dewar “To Ethical Practices: Aboriginal Writing and Reconciliation” 156). Dewar, therefore, suggests that an investigation of what may appear as ‘dysfunction’ and ‘misogyny’ in some Indigenous communities must be properly contextualized.

Tayo’s journey moves gradually toward an in-between position where the worlds resonate perfectly and in harmony. In *Ceremony*, the balances and harmonies are always shifting, but they are “always necessary to maintain” (130). Silko’s symbolism with regard to animals provides a wholistic picture, a guideline for maintaining a problematic but harmonious in-between position. Bear-people and the Mexican cattle are the two mostly discussed examples in *Ceremony*. Old Betonie introduces a young boy, Shush (meaning bear), as his helper. When he was a small child, the medicine man, claimed and rescued him when he “wandered again” into a canyon “near the place which belonged to the bears. They went as far as they could to the place where no human goes beyond, and his little footprints were mixed in with bear tracks” (129). The Medicine man in the little boy’s story seems to be very careful about his ‘in-between’ state, and calls him back softly and step by step, for it is the return – or the reterritorialization – from being-bear back into being-human that might put the child in danger:

They couldn’t just grab the child
 They couldn’t simply take him back
 because he would be in between forever
 and Probably he would die.

They had to call him
 step by step the medicine man
 brought the child back.

So, long time ago
 They got him back again
 but he wasn't quite the same
 after that
 not like the other children. (130)

The transition “had to be made in order [for the boy] to become whole again” (170). As Hobbs argues, in “Living In-between,” “[I]ike the bear-child, both Shush and Tayo are caught in-between. Both have been partially reclaimed, like the child who ‘wasn’t quite the same/after that/not like the other children’” (Hobbs 305). In *Ceremony*, becoming-animal does not consist playing animal or imitating animal and the becoming appears real and as a state of being.¹⁴³ Such becoming also can be seen as a form of alliance that happens again when Tayo meets the mountain lion.

Tayo, for Beidler, “comes most dramatically to imitate” the Mexican cattle (Beidler 22). The Mexican cattle always appear to have the ability to find their way home and are able to forage like desert animals without eating grass or drinking water (*Ceremony* 75); they “run more like deer than cattle” (197). The Mexican cattle are a source of inspiration for Tayo. These cattle were “descendants of generations of desert cattle” (74) and “were everything that the ideal cow was not” (75). In “Laguna Symbolic Geography”, Edith Swan calls Silko’s mythological references, “place stories,” which are often about “a spiritual being who represents an aspect of nature and may appear either in the human shape of an animal (like Spider Woman or in the form of a person such as our mother” (235), entities that are about the relationship of human beings

¹⁴³ This bears similarity to Deleuze and Guattari’s becoming animal: “The becoming-animal of the human being is real, even if the animal the human being becomes is not” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 238).

and the territory they inhabit. The aim is to come to terms, to some kind of equilibrium with those psycho-geographical entities, “those people around you, those people who care for you and your environment” (Silko in Katz 22). Silko’s literary imagination thus seeks in-between locations for story telling and connects individuals with their natural surrounding. Deleuze and Guattari describe such a condition as being rhizomorphous¹⁴⁴. Silko’s bringing animals to the center of her stories also bears similarities to Rosi Braidotti’s “anthropological exodus” and the “massive hybridization of the species that topples the anthropocentric Human from the sovereign position it has enjoyed for so long” (*Nomadic Theory* 133). While cognitive and advanced capitalism, as Rosi Braidotti puts it, also invests in the actual erasure or “at least the blurring of the distinction between the human and other species, when it comes to profiting from them” (“A Theoretical Framework” 11). Such insights shed lights on colonizing strategies that become combined with racial logics and therefore create human subgroups that are indistinct from the nature and therefore can be considered as natural resource.

In “Reconstructing Indigenous Masculine Thought,” Bob Antone considers ‘ceremony’ also as “another significant component” in other Indigenous cultures in North America such as Haudenosaunee knowledge and identity. He locates cleansing ceremonies and songs that over generations made sure that returning hunters “[are] received by family and community, making sure that the power of the ability to take life within the hunter was cared for with cleansing that brought the hunter back to balance” (*Indigenous Men and Masculinities* 34). Silko’s *Ceremony* also suggests innovative ceremonies for healing warriors who are affected by “white warfare—killing across great distances without knowing who or how many had died” (*Ceremony* 36).

¹⁴⁴ “To be rhizomorphous is to produce stems and filaments that seem to be roots, or better yet connect with them by penetrating the trunk, but put them to strange new uses” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 15)

Tayo is in need of a ceremony, a proper one, even if White magic contaminates it. Betonie claims that facing the “witchery of all the world [...] cannot be done alone. We must have power from everywhere. Even the power we can get from the whites” (*Ceremony* 150). The changes suggested by Silko to the ceremony, and the transition of self through healing narratives thus produces an objective reading of the relationship between the healing ceremony and storytelling. It also takes into account the ‘shift’ in “elements in this world” by the irreversible impact of humans on a planetary scale (126). As noted by Anna Tsing in *The Mushroom at the End of the World: Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*:

We are contaminated by our encounters; they change who we are as we make way for others. As contamination changes world-making projects, mutual worlds—and new directions—may emerge. Everyone carries a history of contamination; purity is not an option (27).

As we see in *Ceremony*, Silko brought the same issues many years earlier. The aim of Silko’s healing narrative recognizes the roots of ecologies of violence in colonization, war, and ravaging the Earth and acknowledges the fact that maybe the ceremony is not “enough to stop them” (150). “We have to depend on people not even born yet. A hundred years from now” (150): For Silko, these are different aspects of witchery but the curing of such cultural disorders (e.g. the ongoing effect of World War II and The Vietnam War in the communities) should also come from within. Even when traditional ceremonies do not work, as Old man Ku’oosh suggests, “there are some things we can’t cure like we used to” (38). Silko’s narrative, not unlike Anna Tsing, suggests the need for the incorporation of new elements and innovations, or even the necessity to create new ceremonies (*Ceremony* 126).

Laguna Pueblo feminist scholar Paula Gunn Allen in “The Psychological Landscape of *Ceremony*,” argues that “the healing of Tayo and the land is a result of the reunification of the land and the people” (7). This points to Silko’s emphasis on the matriarchal system of Pueblo communities and the important roles that Pueblo women play in it as custodians of the culture. Although there are ill-fated characters in the novel like Helen-Jean and Tayo’s mother, who are both victims of poor conditions, there are also Ts’eh and Night Swan, who are strong and very influential figures with powers related to symbolic figures like Corn Woman and Yellow Woman. These figures reconnect Tayo and the community to the Earth and to life on the planet. Night Swan “uncover[s]” something inside men, “something with wings that could fly, escape the gravity of the Church, the town, his mother, his wife” (*Ceremony* 85). Tayo gets lost beside her, “deep beneath the surface of his own body and consciousness, swimming away from all his life before that hour” (99). Silko thus highlights the healing bridge that connects the individual with its surroundings and simultaneously illustrates humans as equal, intimate, and integral parts of the natural world.

Conclusion

Ceremony imagines ways to determine oneself, through lived experience, habits, the body, and fields of belonging. The act of story telling for Silko, is a constant arranging and rearranging of events so as to reach the moment where one is able to find his/her agency and a path. Silko encourages the reader to move through the novel decisively in accordance and alliance with our own desires, purposes, belongings and the planet: “The ear for the story and the eye for the pattern were theirs; the feeling was theirs: we came out of this land and we are hers” (255). *Ceremony* also imagines interventions that might facilitate such transitions and moves away from interpellations and false representations, and towards building connections with life

itself. The old Grandma, in *Ceremony*, still remembers a time “[when] animals could talk to human beings and many magical things still happened” (94). She knows that “the present time is the only certainty and this present sense of being was qualified with bare hints of yesterday and tomorrow” (*Ceremony* 192); *Ceremony* is like a neverending story, in the wheel of time. Tayo finishes his ceremony by getting help from Spider Woman, Corn Woman, Old Grandma and Ts'eh, the Mountain Lion and the caterpillar. Mystical forces that sometimes have both human and animal manifestations, like the Mountain Lion or hunter who wears a cap “made from tawny thick fur[...] it looked like mountain lion skin” (Swan 238). Tayo’s encounter with the Mountain lion is depicted as a sublime experience with the brute force of life. The Mountain lion appears to manifest a becoming in every instance of its existence connecting to “the mountain peaks with the winds, stopping for a moment to give the moonlight a chance “to catch up with him” as it moves “into the wind” (195):

“Relentless motion was the lion’s greatest beauty, moving like mountain clouds with wind, changing substance and color in rhythm with the contours of the mountain peaks: dark as lava rock, and suddenly as bright as a field of snow[...] becoming what [it] is with each breath, [its] substance changing with the earth and the sky” (196)

The Mountain Lion, in *Ceremony*, connects to its territory by deterritorializing to the point where it changes its substance in constant becoming from one thing to the other. Silko maps the gestures, colours and movements of the mountain lion making the way for other transformational processes and new connections. In “Animals and Theme in Ceremony” Beidler investigates the notion of ‘growth’ in the novel as Tayo moves away step by step from White exploitative attitudes and towards the animals and learn how to find respect for the life on the planet. *Ceremony*, as Beidler argues, is also “Tayo’s return from death to life” (19), from his invisible,

lifeless existence, at the Los Angeles Veterans' Administration hospital. For, in *Ceremony*, "things which don't shift and grow are dead things" (126). Silko thus follows an optimistic healing narrative, as Tayo might be able to walk "back to belonging", walk "home to happiness" and "to [a] long life" (144), and to reach the other side when he understands that strength comes "from here, from his feeling. It had always been there" and standing "there with the sun on his face", he thinks "maybe he might make it after all" (237). Silko's writing thus in each layer motivates movements of healing and hope, making something with the power to restore the mind.

Chapter 5

Liminality, In-Betweenness, and (In)visibility

in Rawi Hage *De Niro's Game, Cockroach and Carnival*

“Shit, I ain’t crossing, fuck.” (*Carnival* 50)

Rawi Hage illustrates the underlying layers of urban life in his semi-fictional cities:

Beirut¹⁴⁵, Montreal and an anonymous metropolis in North America. Immigrant and marginalized male subjects, the anti-heroes of his novels, are in constant motion to survive their social and economic marginalization. There is no longer the question of accepting social roles, but only the rejection of structure. The emergence of multiple but ephemeral forms of masculinity, in Hage’s novels, promises innovative narrative forms and new perspectives with regard to gender and marginal studies/border thinking¹⁴⁶. The invisible men, the tricksters, and the thugs fluctuate from one state to another as if they live a liquid¹⁴⁷ or liminal form. They are the nonconformist rebels of our time similar to archetypal shadow figures who use irony, street wisdom, and paradox as their personal ethical practices (Kostera 173). Hage gives voice to ill-

¹⁴⁵ *De Niro's Game* clearly happens in Beirut and the protagonist’s flashbacks in *Cockroach* also evoke the same impression, although in *Cockroach*, there is no clear reference to Lebanon or Beirut.

¹⁴⁶ “The borderline engagements of cultural difference may as often be consensual as conflictual; they may confound our definitions of tradition and modernity; realign the customary boundaries between the private and the public, high and low; and challenge normative expectations of development and progress” (Bhabha *The Location of Culture* 3).

¹⁴⁷ It helps to take into consideration Zygmunt Bauman’s concept of liquid modernity in order to engage critically with Hage’s characters. Bauman classifies different materialized forms of modernity. “Light Modernity let one partner out of the cage. ‘Solid’ modernity was an era of mutual engagement. ‘Fluid’ modernity is the epoch of disengagement, elusiveness, facile escape and hopeless chase. In ‘liquid’ modernity, it is the most elusive, those free to move without notice, who rule” (*Liquid Modernity* 120).

formed epistemologies that have defied enunciation but have the potential to lighten the darkest corner of any institutionalized narrative and open up innovative ‘lines of escape’. Hage steps outside the political agency or identitarian politics to see gender as a rhizome and allows his male characters in the margin to speak about the life of becomings in our cultural present, a *world gone mad*.

The Political demands for recognition and visibility emerge within the system of power, within its socio-institutional pattern of recognition and put the subjects in Hage’s novels in binarized positions of minority/majority or subaltern/hegemony. Hage’s male characters are sometimes disgusting and invisible like cockroaches or wild and brutal wolf-like thugs or just wait for a carnival to become animals. Nevertheless, the reader can empathize with their inhumane condition and comprehend some of their brave and (un)ethical choices. Investigating the male subject, here, is to experience being/becoming man in a world of difference through the cosmology¹⁴⁸ of the male voice. Such mobile enunciative and epistemic positions deal with territoriality, transcendence and resistance/violence. This investigation does not define maleness through an essential framework of the body, but queerly experiences its fluid subjectivity, becomings, and lines of escape. In *De Niro’s Game*, becoming thug is not only a form of survival but also a performative form of ‘masculinity’ toward visibility and recognition. In *De Niro’s Game* or *Beirut Hellfire Society*, thugs create their own rules and gain money, and power by establishing a fearsome recognized abject image to gradually climb up their ingroup hierarchy

¹⁴⁸ “In, effect, there is no longer a milieu movement or rhythm, nor a territorialized or territorializing movement or rhythm; there is something of the Cosmos in these more ample movements” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 327).

while in *Cockroach* and *Carnival*, Hage's narrators escape toward invisibility and mobility beyond the dominion of the law.

Rawi Hage's novels, for some readers, provide the possibility of an encounter with the Other. Nevertheless, such encounters are never merely some kinds of communication between the I and You designated in the statement; surprisingly it is also a 'step outside' toward an articulation away from what Bhabha calls "the collective body" in its traditional sense. Hage's protagonist, Fly, not unlike Bhabha seems to seek a Third Space for the production of meaning, a space that inhabits "the hybrid moment of political change" but he seeks it outside the collective experience of nationness and 'ethnic' or religious community interest. For Bhabha, "vernacular cosmopolitanism" or as Kristeva puts it "wounded cosmopolitanism", involve "conditions of duress or distress" and activities "driven by survival—economic, political, cultural—not sovereignty". It represents "a subaltern agency of translation" (Appiah and Bhabha "Cosmopolitanism and Convergence" 188) that "measures global progress from the minoritarian (and I add marginal) perspective" (*The Location of Culture* xvi).

The rearticulation of subject's desires, in Hage's novels, paradoxically construct the same in-between opportunities that Bhabha describes as "neither the One (unitary working class) nor the Other (the politics of gender) but something else besides, which contests the terms and territories of both" (*The Location of Culture* 28). The passage through a Third Space, this time seems conscious and it follows personal and individual (economic and survival) interests. It breaks the narrative of history and moves away from territorial, and ideological strategies. Hage particularly, in *Carnival*, creates absurd alternative histories with imaginary clown-like tricksters. For example the moment "a goy brother from New York" lands "on the page where Moses split the sea and the Jews marched between those suspended mountains of water"(49):

The goy brother from New York, who was holding a big apple in his hand and who was in it for the ride, was heard saying: I hope the motherfucker, that basket river-floater, faucker of Pharaoh's sisters and butcher of Baal the bull god, doesn't fuck it up.(49)

Fly's fictional traveler does not want to cross the parted sea when he sees "how muddy the bottom is, full of crabs going sideways and jelly creatures and shit" and refuses to follow "through a quagmire to claim a few olive trees and a herd of goats"(50):

Fuck it, I'll just go back and apply for Egyptian citizenship and become a cosmopolitan landed immigrant, I'll sell papyrus on the sidewalk, drive a chariot for hire, or work on them pyramids, yo. (50)

The paradoxical spatial relations of the marginal and the displaced with the metropolis and in nationalist and gender policies entail an assymetric form of encounter that generates fantasy through abjection. The refusal to *cross*, in Hage, also manifests a ruptured passage toward another becoming. The "cosmopolitan landed immigrant", is clearly not in another "promised land" instead, Hage's enunciative position lands him in an-*other* collective, a nation of banned, homeless, statusless exiles who live in a liminal limbo and in a carnival of becoming (50).

This Chapter is divided into four parts and a conclusion: The first part, **The Figure of Masturbator**, addresses the marginal and immobile movements of the displaced subjects. The marginal movement in *Carnival*, for instance, is depicted as repetitive and immobile but at the same time Untimely and imaginary. It promises futurity in somewhere else and for someone else. Hage articulates a voice from dark corners of the city, a voice that finds its ways from the line of escape within the material dynamism of the marginalized bodies toward an unimagined future. The second part, **In-betweenness, and the Politics of (In)visibility** traces the in-between

location of the exilic subject in different epistemologies and investigates the ways in which such locations provide innovative perspectives. The in-between locations, however, are not highly visible, the articulation of those positions might create ambivalent conditions that puts the subject at risk. The third part, **The War Machine, and the Thug** investigates the racialized and displaced male body in the poststructuralist paradigm and mainly through Gilles Deleuze's theory of Rhizome. Migrant masculinities constitute a challenge for the coding mechanisms as such non-hegemonic forms in many cases, do not conform or have access to performative possibilities of a gendered political and social existence. Displaced and racialized male subjects, the anti-heroes of Rawi Hage's novels, are inconvenient postcolonial subjects who do not follow 'Western' emancipation projects or perform a national or 'ethnic' form of masculinity. These antiheroes and their becoming thugs in-between the global and the local, or the state and the War Machine suggest avoiding conditions that re-fashion male bodies into what Deleuze calls a 'double suicide machine,' and unrecognized states of visible precarity wherein the subjects become an easy target for various marginalizing forces. The fourth part, **Creatureliness, and Planetary Decadence**, addresses Rawi Hage's third novel. The metropolis in *Carnival* plays the role of an ecosphere wherein animals and insects crawl, hunt, and survive. *Carnival* considers the 'creatureliness' of human beings and the human-animal relations as a shared embodiedness. Hage focuses on their mutual vulnerability in the decaying world not by idealizing the appeal to nature, but by imagining an innovative perspective on the city's decadence, its socioeconomic stratifications and the precarious condition of urban marginality. *Carnival's* setting is a human-disturbed environment, and the story is an original narration into the relation between capitalist destruction and collaborative survival of the underlying pervasive animalistic life within the city.

The Figure of the Masturbator

In *Carnival*, Rawi Hage's readers encounter the abject 'other' through the figure of a masturbator. In double entendre sentences, Hage's protagonist, Fly, laughs at Rousseau and his idea of masturbation as "*le dangereux supplément*" (the dangerous supplement)¹⁴⁹, and his educational and political programs: "As for Rousseau, he comes towards the end, right at the window" and suggests "fresh air" for Rousseau's illness, and a way to satisfy his urge for non-confinement by masturbation by placing 'his books' near the window. Fly makes condescending jokes about Rousseau's urinary problem, "his slim head size" (46) and "ever constant need to relieve himself" and concludes: "There is nothing like the cure of fresh air for cases of bladder infection, paranoia, and Cartesian thinking" (46). Fly, not unlike a Foucauldian new archivist is in search of a 'new order of things.' Fly deconstructs and sometimes dismisses ideas by putting them in new assemblages: Cartesian thinking, Rousseau's illness, and paranoia. The illness does not necessarily occupy a primordial central position, but generates 'delirium.' In "The Illness of Rousseau," Jean Starobinski investigating a genius' illness is not 'brushing aside' a discourse just by labeling it as a "neuropathic constitution" of a "morbid genius" (68). Rousseau's youthful follies, for Starobinski, are as much "the consequences of a urethral malformation" as Baudelaire's creativity can be explained by his syphilis, Chopin by tuberculosis, and El Greco by

¹⁴⁹ Baier in "A Proper Arbiter of Pleasure Rousseau on the Control of Sexual Desire" investigates in Rousseau's confession: "he engages in the very habit that he fears so much. His first-person account tells of the events leading up to the moment that he 'learned that dangerous means of cheating nature' and how it leads young men of his 'temperament to various kinds of excesses that eventually imperil their health, their strength, and sometimes their lives'" (Starobinski 2). Philippe Lejeune in "Le 'Dangereux Supplément' also notes that Rousseau does not take the role of "l'éducateur répressif" but he instead takes the role of a "coupable réprimé" (1010).

astigmatism (67). The question Starobinski asks is “why were not all sick people geniuses? Every artist leaves mortal remains, but we can never discover his art by inspecting them” (67). Starobinski, and Hage both reflect on the idea of ‘toxic’/sensitive delirium as an interpretative form. For Hage, delirium also manifests itself in the novel’s narrative forms, style (magic surrealism), and even ‘happy endings.’

In “Masturbation as a Way of Life,” Ryan Tracy investigates the symbolic relationship of the masturbator with failure and his “subjective failure before the law,” which is also a prominent theme in *Carnival*. Masturbation, for Tracy, is an act toward visibility and a demand *to be seen* (2). Fly’s ‘masturbatory’ reflection on these matters, from Rousseau’s perspective, betrays an imprisonment in futile or even ‘infantile’ fantasies outside ‘adult’ participation in sexual, social and economic exchange.” As Tracy highlights Rousseau’s judgement on masturbation is that it is “enslaving to self,” a habit, uncontrollable, based on a fantasy of reflexive self-interest of delayed pleasures—property, sociability and marriage (4). Fly ironically occupies the same intersectional space in the novel as an anti-social, unmarried person living in a rented apartment driving a rented taxi, living in a rich and detailed fantasy created by his vast library. Hage engages his protagonist with such historically overcoded anti-masturbatory narratives from time to time. For instance, a religious passenger asks Fly: “You should get married and have kids, [...], then you’ll know the meaning of life. Who do you think will take care of you and visit you when you are sick and old?” (*Carnival* 101). There are also similarities in the ways Hage uses the motifs of masturbation and unchaining. When Sally, one of Fly’s acquaintances, complains that the motif of masturbation is ‘a bit overdone’ in Jean Genet’s *Our Lady of the Flower*, Fly responds: “What else is there to do when you have a free spirit and you are confined to a small world of jailers and walls?” Fly asks again: “What else is there to do but

to summon the world and lament and masturbate beneath your jailer's nose, and break his keys and his chains?" (*Carnival* 145). Fly refers to masturbation as a substitute for activism when a person is confined in 'bare existence' and cannot gain a political identity and engage society as a discursive/social subject. For Fly, masturbation enables his *imaginary* visions in a virtual dream world, wherein he seeks refuge and exercises his political and gendered existence (Masturbari ergo sum). Fly also breaks the 'flow of presence'¹⁵⁰ by putting his "fist into motion" (*Carnival* 17). He knows well "when the fantasy is right," the madness of history can have a 'happy ending' and "short dictators are slain on Christmas day by orphans with guns" (17). Fly's 'masturbatory' fantasy from the ironic distance of his marginal existence gradually brings him farther from the possibilities of his lived experience toward the end of the novel. Fly answers the aforementioned question of the religious passenger: "The chambermaid and her mother [will take care of me], I said. The young local girl that I'll marry in the south. Like I said, it is all in the plan [...]" (101). Fly's narrative breaks the sequential experience of time by the body and moves beyond the boundaries of knowable territories by giving the details of what seems to be an inevitably happy future:

What a glorious ending, sir! What a reward for a hard life of solitude and wandering.

Imagine that I could sit every day on the beach, with the sea in front of my eyes and the white laundered sheets flapping behind my back.[...] I'll appear before [the tourists] in

¹⁵⁰ "Every point of presence is, as T.S. Eliot formulated it, a point of intersection of time with the timeless. That is the point of presence. Thus, the whole series of time would not be a series on a line at all but a series of present points in which none is ever past, but only past in relation to their present, not really past. Ontologically, really, it is always in relation to the presence, which is the same presence that constitutes my present here and now." (Vogelin "The Drama of Humanity" 181)

my ridiculous swimsuit that covers the tumbling parts of my decaying body. And, if I am lucky, I'll die watching the ocean against the backdrop of a white movie screen with memory fragments and episodic replays of my life bouncing on the washed bedsheets as they dance through the turbulent blows of life. (*Carnival* 102)

Hage's third novel pertains to the philosophical imagination of an escape, or as Fanon might say "the possibility of impossibility" and the desire to be "not only here-now," locked in thinghood, but to be "somewhere else and something else" (*Black Skin White Masks* 193). For Hage, masturbation also triggers a reflection on the intersection of class, gender, and fantasy. In *Cockroach*, Hage's second novel, the protagonist wonders if rich people, who are "always in a daze about beauty and sensuality, ever masturbate" and what they would fantasize about if they do. "Would they imagine a soft, handsome gentleman who walked around surrounded by flowers and floating smiles and deep and gentle voices? Were the colours more vivid in their dreams, the air just the right temperature, the towel and the sand the epitome of softness and delight?" (*Cockroach* 298).

In *Carnival*, the flying carpet and masturbation, are sometimes entangled and suggest a departure from the political framework of visibility into moments of euphoria by imagining mobility: "[e]very morning I open my palm towards the sun, lie down on my father's carpet, and happily masturbate" (*Carnival* 16). Hage depicts Fly's father with a number of definitive features. He was a camel rider who wore a turban and "came from the east," "beyond the dunes," he carried stack of rugs/carpet which were always floating above the ground. "He was a merchant and a lover of flight" and most likely a nonbeliever, or at least a non-Muslim as "he never laid his head on the floor" (27). He converts to Islam after "his carpet came to halt and

crashed in front of a thousand people. And then he thought of humiliation and death and the meaning of life” (*Carnival* 19); “when lost, one should follow the tracks of the camels” (131).

Bhabha claims that the postmodern condition does not rely on “the popular use of the ‘post’ to indicate sequentially (after) or polarity (anti). The wider significance of these gestures to the beyond is “the awareness that the epistemological ‘limits’ of those ethnocentric ideas are also the enunciative boundaries of a range of other dissonant, minority discourses, even dissident histories and voices – women, the colonized, minority groups, the bearers of policed sexualities” (*Location of Culture* 6). JanMohamad also supports the idea by claiming that “culture in its capacity as a set of ideological limitations” can be both constraining and conservative as well as liberating (“Introduction” 6). Fly’s flying carpet, Hage’s metaphorical cultural construct, also has its own enunciative possibilities and limits and the fictive side of Hage stories only offers an image of what can be imagined. Fly’s masturbation to the thought of his “father on his camel crossing the world” (*Carnival* 28) on one of his “non-flying carpets” (27) indicates—as Bryden also suggests—to the irregularity, unpredictability and stoppages in a camel ride (“Travelling by Camel” 11).

Fly’s imagination is another example of what Bryden, Deleuze, and Forster refer to as “le mouvement immobile” (Bryden 11).¹⁵¹ The distinction between movement and mobility is also significant in *Carnival*. His father’s riding a camel (becoming camel) suggests that he would

¹⁵¹ “As Deleuze points out in his essay on T. E. Lawrence, Lawrence’s writing itself unfolds like a camel ride, with unpredictable speeds, slownesses, spurts, and stoppages.[...] Citing the reactions of E. M. Forster to the spasmodic dynamic of Lawrence’s text, expressed in a 1924 letter, Deleuze observes : ‘Forster remarque qu’on n’a jamais rendu le mouvement avec si peu de mobilité, par une succession de positions immobiles (*HG*, p. 149) Forster remarks that never has movement been rendered with so little mobility, by a succession of immobile positions]” [1] (Bryden *travel in Literature* 11).

never “[survive] his journey back” as “a camel is a highly visible animal. Camels can’t hide, camels are too sluggish to fly, and too patient, too curious, too opiated, and too stubborn a creature to kneel for robbers, fall to dictators, or flee the cold” (*Carnival* 28). Fly, on the other hand is immersed in masturbatory ideas and refuses to be saved. He would rather take “refuge between the monkeys and the dogs” (96).

In-betweenness and the Politics of (In)visibility

The flying carpet determines the threshold of a *vertical* in-betweenness. “Carpets are the sacred thin crust that stands between the earth and the heaven,” said the man with a beard and a long robe to Fly’s father (*Carnival* 27). *Carnival* also presents another form of in-betweenness that LeBlanc classifies as a *horizontal* one. It is in contrast with the *verticality* of the in-between in Voegelin (Gnostic) and Neoplatonic philosophy, “between the presence of the divine and the ugliness of politics,” (LeBlanc 9-10) between the temporal and the eternal (17), and god(s) and animals. The horizontality of Bhabha’s in-betweenness is derived from a postcolonial perspective that considers the emergence of non-Western epistemologies and symbolizations: “when the hegemon is confronted by that over which it no longer rules, cultural differences emerge which must be articulated and negotiated” (LeBlanc 10). Thus, Brazil, in *Carnival*, represents a fully deterritorialized ground or, in Bhabha’s terms, an in-middle ground, a country that can be located in an ironic compromise of “almost the same, but not quite” (*The Location of Culture* 85-92). Brazil, in *Carnival*, is yet another instance that plays the same symbolic role of in-between. Fly’s desperate attempt to escape racial profiling fails when he picks up four drunk “numbskulls” (32) and they ask him ‘the question’ where he came from:

I knew perfectly well where that question would lead. I said Brazil, because that would turn the conversation to beaches and thongs and, if I was lucky, football and carnivals.

They would find something to agree upon, women on beaches, bikini dances and surfing[...]

But then one of those smartasses looked at my name on the dashboard and started to shout, What kind of Brazilian name is that? You are a fucking towelhead or one of those things there, from the desert and shit, Brazilian my ass, fuck. (*Carnival* 32)

The becoming-Brazilian of Fly, the taxi driver, is depicted as a form of resistance against the politics of visibility and systems of recognition. Subject formation, in Bhabha's universe, happens in 'the intercises,'¹⁵² and highlights differences (race/class/gender). Bhabha, not unlike Hage, argues that "the exchange of values, meaning and priorities may not always be collaborative and dialogical, but may be profoundly antagonistic, conflictual and even incommensurable" (*The Location of Culture* 2). Subjects are formed not always in a harmonious in-between; they can also be formed "in excess of, the sum of the 'parts of difference'" (2). By 'becoming Brazilian' Fly attempts unsuccessfully to claim the fluidity of a hybrid and occupy an in-between space of neutrality but his name on the dashboard gives him away. Such fluidity is finally uncontainable because it breaks down the symmetry and duality of self/other, inside/outside" (116). Fly cannot simultaneously play the role of a scapegoat (the Other) and be recognized as a neutral hybrid ground.

In *De Niro's Game*, the displacement of domains of difference in the case of immigrant masculinity makes the continuation of the intersubjective and collective experiences of *maleness*,

¹⁵² "[T]he overlap and displacement of domains of difference—that the intersubjective and collective experiences of *nationness*, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated" (*The Location of Culture* 2).

or cultural value impossible. When the protagonist, Bassam escapes to France, his first experience, arriving in Marseilles, is what Fanon¹⁵³ might call “a subjection to a violent corporeal redefinition” (Silverman 27).

“I heard one of them saying, *Une merde de beur ici chez nous*.

Hey, the driver called in French, we do not want filth like you here (Hage 192)”.

Living in-between does not grant the deterritorialized, dislocated or marginalized subject any promise of security or invisibility. There is always ‘a little detail’ that makes the difference visible. It can be a wrong pause, a vowel, a hand gesture, the skin color or the lack of a necessary document (*De Niro’s Game* 229) and then, the cycle of oppression begins. While Bassam has a gun and is mentally prepared to improvise and defend himself in such a violent situation, he seems to be less prepared for his later social isolation. Bassam even misses the falling bombs: “I longed for my lengthy walks under falling bombs. Bombs are not only for killing, I thought; bombs are like Morse code signals filled with messages, with words. But Paris has no falling bombs; Paris is a mute city” (222).

Kath Woodward investigates another form of liminality, in between looking and being looked at, a form of liminality that involves connections between “the inner worlds of feeling and emotions and unconscious forces to social worlds of rules, norms, social relations and cultural expectations” (1). She describes a sense of in betweenness in her introduction to *The Politics of In/Visibility: Being There*. “There is a boundary between being in the audience,

¹⁵³ Kaja Silverman, in *The Threshold of the Visible World* investigates Fanon’s “The Lived Experience of the Black Man” (Fanon 89), wherein Fanon explains “the way Other fixes [the subject] with his gaze, his gestures and attitude, the same way you fix a preparation with a dye” (89) and Silverman calls it corporeal redefinition/reconfiguration (Silverman 27).

however close to the action, and being on the stage” (1). For Woodward, there is also a liminal space between audience and cast, between watching and being watched:

There is a threshold between actors and audience and one crosses the physical space between the two domains, but this was also a psychosocial liminal space, combining the inner world of desires and fears and my perception and the perceptions of the rest of the audience and outer, social worlds of norms and practices: the internal awareness of being in the in-between space and the social context, with all its rule and expectation, not least of the audience as well as the (real) actors on stage. (1)

Woodward emphasizes the ambivalence of the liminal space between seeing and being seen.

“The matter of visibility is very differently inflected according to race, ethnicity, and disability as well as gender and generation” (2). “visibility and invisibility are deeply political” (2).

Woodward maintains that “seeing and being seen and the relationship between affect, emotion, and corporeality; between how we see ourselves and how others see us” (2), it is also necessary to consider the way we think the others see us. Woodward’s focus on such liminality highlights the ways (in)visibility effects the discourse of gender studies and displaced masculinities.

The quests for identity, visibility, and recognition are the central themes of many discourses rooted in identity politics. The recognition and positive images that minorities and marginalized individuals seek sometimes remain passively inside the territorial boundaries of those discursive fields. Such strategies become shorthanded in constructing the collective desire and therefore a collective representative voice able to protect the particularities of the cultural struggles in the margin. In *Ambivalenzen der Sichtbarkeit Über die visuellen Strukturen der Anerkennung*, Johanna Schaffer conceptualizes the idea of ‘the ambivalence of visibility’ to elucidate the adverse side-effects of such interventions in the life of marginalized communities.

Schaffer questions the production of knowledge in the same oppressive apparatus that marginalizes minorities. Paul Gilroy, on the contrary, suggests, in *Against Race*, that dispersed and fragmented communities sometimes seize unifying opportunities “under the most difficult conditions and from imperfect materials that they surely would not have selected if they had been able to choose” (Gilroy 12). They turn their complex traditions of politics, ethics, identity, and culture into “important sources of solidarity, joy, and collective strength”; they go far beyond merely affording protection and recognition and contribute significant moral and political resources to modern countercultures (12). Schaffer highlights that a recognized subject is inside the definitive territorial boundaries of the panopticon gaze. The discursive territorial boundaries of the subject are not separate from its biopolitics and governmentality and are directly related to its political visibility and political power. Schaffer puts into question the assumption that more visibility necessarily means more political power and argues that political power includes many subcategories and is related to producing political and theoretical knowledge, image and political act (13). Gonzales and Chavez, on the other hand, in “Awakeing into a Nightmare”, argue that the practices of “surveillance, immigration documents, employment forms, birth certificates, tax forms, drivers’ licenses, credit card applications, bank accounts, medical insurance, and mandatory car insurance—may frustrate anyone, citizen and noncitizen alike, because they enclose, penetrate, define, and limit one’s life and actions” (256). The scientific gaze of the ‘episteme’(Foucault), in all these cases and despite the (i)lligetemacy of its subject separates one out, from and among all the possibilities of beings and ‘becomings’ or as the narrator of *Cockroach* affirms traps it “in the cruel and insane world saturated with humans” (Hage 23).

Foucault defines episteme in *Power/Knowledge* as “the ‘apparatus’ which makes possible the separation, not of the true from the false, but of what may from what may not be characterized as scientific” (197). Exploring a recognized subject and its political powers in an episteme locates its relations inside “a more-or-less organized, hierarchical, co-ordinated cluster” (198). The political visibility of the subject highlights its relations to others and regulates it toward a particular form of stereotypical identity and in many cases ‘interpellates’¹⁵⁴ it as a marginalized one. Hage, in *Carnival*, illustrates the panopticon gaze of the state when Fly enters a fast food joint and visits the bathroom. There, he sees a policeman “taking a leak” (26):

I washed my hand and sensed him weighing me. So I entered the booth and locked the door, fearing the state would slap me with a ticket for not washing my face, failing to move out of authority’s way, or using too much soap that foams and grows bubbles that might pop like gunshots and cause panic and alarm. I waited until he was gone. And then I left [...]. (*Carnival* 26)

The same process gradually positions children linguistically and socioeconomically in society through the two institutions of family and school. Hage locates ‘a line of escape’ in his protagonist’s childhood memories: the narrator of *cockroach* is a self-declared master of escape: “As a kid, I escaped when my mother cried, when my father unbuckled his belt, when my teacher lifted the ruler high above my little palm” (23). The protagonist, as a kid, disappears from the

¹⁵⁴ “Althusser introduces the concept of interpellation, otherwise known as “hailing.” Ideologies “call out” or “hail” people and offer a particular identity, which they accept as “natural” or “obvious.” In this way, the dominant class exerts a power over individuals that is quite different from abject force. According to Althusser, individuals are interpellated from the day that they are born—and perhaps even before, since parents and others conceive of the role and identity that their child will assume” (Michel Lee).

teacher's ruler by dissociation with the body through fantasy, while "the falling blows across [his] hand" (23). He watches the teacher's ruler "as if it wasn't [him] who was receiving those lashes" (23). The narrator's disembodiment channels away from the affectual subordination of a melancholic mother and a punitive corporeal one in the school. Hage highlights the link between pain perception and the feeling of ownership of the body. Becoming Cockroach suggests a psychic 'split' or 'doubling' in the narrator's consciousness, however, his projected selfhood ('materialized shadow') takes the form of the metaphorical entity of an albino cockroach who confronts the disciplinary surveillance and biopolitics as a radical revolutionary. Becoming invisible and becoming-cockroach, for the narrator, are forms of resistance against the politics of visibility and systems of recognition. The cockroach as a metaphorical entity also manifests the emergence of class consciousness in the protagonist:

I saw the gigantic striped albino cockroach standing on two of its feet leaning against the kitchen door.

-...[T]he world ended for you a long time ago. You never participated in it. Look at you, always escaping, slipping, and feeling trapped in everything you do.

-It is not escape, I said. I refuse to be subordinate. It is my voluntary decision.

-Yes, yes, the creature said impatiently. Because in your deep arrogance you believe that you belong to something better and higher. You are what I call a vulture, living on the periphery of the kill. Waiting for the kill, but never having the courage to do it yourself. (201)

The encounters with the Cockroach and its lectures regarding the resilience and revolutionary potential of the post- apocalyptic cockroach community gradually prepare the narrator to accept his new *placement* in the margin of the underclass and "the courage to refuse, to confront" (203), and to take action in the sequence wherein he plays his role when the narrator assists Shohreh (an Iranian exile) to fulfill her personal revenge.

If there is an overlap between the discourse of (in)visibility and minority discourse, they are not interchangeable; both *Cockroach* and *De Niro's Game* deal with such overlap and the distinctive difference between becoming visible and becoming recognized. Being visible and recognized usually begins with a glimmer of hope for a state of equality. When Foucault asks: "and then, what happens?" he answers himself. "With one of them, a historical invasion, with the other a mythicojuridical event, but either way it turns out from a given moment people no longer have rights, a power is constituted" (Foucault *Knowledge/Power* 199). Such events, in its extreme forms, lead to almost apocalyptic or extinction level genocides that threaten or rupture the biological or cultural continuity of a group of people such as the Holocaust and the Holodomor. Internment camps during both world wars, Canadian residential schools, mass deportation, , and the massacre of Sabra and Shatila are other forms of 'crimes against humanity' that have become literary tools to criticize the 'State violence'. In "Requiem for our Prospective Dead", Brian Massumi claims that "what stands out is less the rupture of apocalypse, but rather its periodicity, its seriality. State violence has the ability to leap from one outburst to the next, as if its excess was transported directly from the past into the future without bothering to detour through the present" (49). When the machinery of war begins to roar, many claims of equality will be overshadowed by the discourse of security. Subjects will be classified into racialized and socioeconomic groups whose lives are only worth 'saving, sheltering, and mourning' if it serves the ideological apparatus of the state or produces surplus value. Judith Butler in "Performativity, Precarity and Sexual Politics" differentiates visibility and recognition and defines a recognizable subject in a positive sense through its performativity. For Butler "performativity has everything to do with "who" can become produced as a recognizable subject, a subject who is living, whose life is worth sheltering and whose life, when lost would be worthy of mourning" (xii).

Recognition, for Butler, might elevate subjects from the position of ‘precarity’. Butler explains ‘precarity’ as a politically induced condition in which “certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death. Such populations are at heightened risk of disease, poverty, starvation, displacement, and of exposure to violence without protection (ii).

Michel Warner’s investigation on the AIDS epidemic in *Trouble with Normal* and the story of the massacre of two refugee camps, Sabra and Shatila, in *De Niro’s Game* are two excellent case studies that highlight the issue of passive and active recognition and invisibility. In *Trouble with Normal*, Warner explores the issue of HIV prevention policies through notions of visibility and recognition. Warner argues that AIDS, from the beginning, “has affected most those populations lowest in the hierarchy of respectability” (197). Statistical ‘racial’ visibility demonstrates that “the rate of AIDS incident among Latinos is three times than of whites, among African Americans seven times than of whites. (200)” Although treatment for people with AIDS has dramatically improved for the tiny minority who have full health care, “publicly funded campaigns are scarce, vague, and ineffective” in the United States (201). Accordingly, here, we can see that visibility induces further stigmatization, shame, and more marginalization and enforces the cycle of shame and risk. In his conclusion, Warner brings up once again the idea of recognition. For Warner, recognizing the subject involves understanding its “real situation” and offering “ways of thinking” about it (201). Warner moves away from moralistic rants and in an ethical turn, illustrates the real situations of Gay men:

Gay men cannot be expected to eliminate their unconscious. They cannot be expected to live asexual lives, or to marry, as a bribe to moralists who will consider them worthy of care only on that condition. They cannot be expected individually or en masse to escape such deeply rooted cultural pathologies of male incommunicativeness, bourgeois

propriety, or bottom shame. They cannot be expected to be sexual without at least some dimension of risk. They cannot be expected to follow safer guidelines except as people belonging to a publicly accessible culture of safer sex (218).

Warner differentiates a passive recognition from an active and raises the issues that emerge from visibility and consequently its control and management. These terms can also be presented as stages toward becoming what Butler calls a recognized subject. Warner defines active recognition of Gay men with regards to AIDS, inside the frames of an actively funded and committed campaign of HIV prevention and a full public resource that combats isolation, shame, and stigma rather than sex (218).

In *De Niro's Game*, Rawi Hage depicts passive recognition through a historical event: the passive recognition of two refugee camps, Sabra and Shatila, under the supervision of foreign occupational forces followed by the massacre of the refugees. The camps' visibility and its passive recognition were facilitating factors in the massacre. The massacre was retaliation for the assassination by the newly elected Lebanese president, Bachir Gemayel, or as Rawi Hage calls him Al-Rayess (the leader) (Hage 177). In *De Niro's Game*, the militants' initial purpose is to kill men, and 'Palestinian men,' in particular, and it is after the first wave of killing that they decide to kill women and children as well. "We sniffed, and we shouted, For Al-Rayess! We rounded up men against a wall, women, and children against another wall. We shot all the men first. The women and children wailed, and we changed magazines and shot them as well. It was their cries that made me shoot them. I hate kids' cries" (177). This is one of those moments that Foucault designates as the openness of power (199 P/K). The recognized minority can easily lose all its hard-earned rights after for instance, an invasion, an assassination, or a 'terrorist' attack. The biopolitical state, in most genocidal cases, exploits the already racialized strata ("eugenic ordering of society") and mobilizes racialized/gendered anxieties to achieve "unrestricted state

control” through “the systemic genocide of others” (Foucault *History of sexuality* 149-150).

Warner also maintains this idea that “marginalized groups historically have had good reason to mistrust the government[...]and the enthusiasm [...] for protecting them. Gay men of all races, undocumented immigrants, the poor, and many people of color, are not likely to trust reassurances about confidentiality[...]” (Warner 207).

The discourse of visibility and recognition is also connected with ‘visuality,’ visual representation, and images. Not having a positive image or at least a realistic human-like image leads to an internalization of pain and self-visualization as an inferior subject, as a lesser-creature. Lisa Poupart, in “The Familiar Face of Genocide: Internalized Oppression among American Indians” investigates the materialization and internalization of oppressive discursive practices, “the very codes that created, reflected, and reproduced our oppression” (86-87). Poupart explains that marginalized subjects (“American Indians and colonized groups”) participate in, create, and reproduce Western cultural forms and “internalize Western meanings of difference and abject Otherness” and view themselves within and through the constructs that defined them as “racially and culturally subhuman, deficient and vile” (87). Visibility especially when it is regulated from ‘outside’ (the state apparatus), put the individual at risk of further oppression, restrictions and stigmatization.

In the literary context of Hage’s novels, it is also possible to trace some of the issues that Butler addresses as movements from precarious invisibility toward visibility, passive and finally active recognition. Precarity is the state where the subject is more or less invisible, in the sense that his status is still unavailable to the state. This invisibility, however, does not allow the subject to enjoy the rights and opportunities available to the majority. Butler links precarity directly with “gender norms since we know who do not live their genders in intelligible ways are

at heightened risk for harassment and violence” (ii). Hage’s novels allow the reader to compare war-ravaged Beirut with urban marginality: thugs of war with unemployed immigrants and urban nomads. Hage takes a more personal approach that is oriented from inside-out, rather than from outside-in, and gives voice to dark figures of exile and deterritorialization. Displaced and deterritorialized male subjects emerge as ‘other’ forms and grow rhizomatically through new existential territories. Being ‘man’, in such context, becomes a temporary assemblage, an articulation within a territoriality. In *Liquid Modernity*, Bauman suggests that “home – identities” are no longer permanent but “look fragile, temporary and ‘until further notice’, and devoid of all defences except the skills and determination of the agents to hold them tight and protect them from erosion” (178). Fly, in *Carnival*, responds to the religious passenger:

Are you married, brother? the man asked me.

No.

Girlfriend?

Never, I said.

You are not one of those, are you?

Gay, you mean. Not yet, but a fortune teller assured me that I might have a life-changing encounter one of these days. (100-101)

The War Machine and the Thug

For Deleuze, one should be “deterritorialized enough to enter the network, to submit to the polarization, to follow the circuit of urban and road recoding” (Deleuze, *A Thousand Plateaus* 432). Hage’s characters manifest different forms of deterritorialization and their abject forms make them capable of penetrating the fabric of the city and its (in)visible lines of fragmentation that racialize, sexualize, and marginalize its subjects.

Hage's characters can also be put in the categories that Brian Massumi calls "the designated internal enemies of state" (42). In "Requiem for our Prospective Dead", Massumi puts "the third world 'thugs' among other already established 'enemy' figures such as terrorists, drug-users, and welfare recipients, "fused into the figure of the criminal or social cheat, which in turn overlapped with any number of figures of 'deviance'" (42). Most of these figures—as Massumi locates—were dark of skin but the category could be extended to "anyone implicating their organs in unauthorized coupling" (42). The Deleuzian concept of the War Machine and John Welsh's reappropriation of the concept of the shadow,¹⁵⁵ can also be applied to Hage's novels to highlight in-between agencies, and the displaced and marginalized subjectivities in sites where the state as an 'organic unity' projects its shadow from the marginal to the war machine. In such a context, the external (war machine) and the shadow follow the same overcoding mechanism that promises lines of escape from rigid, repressive forces of marginalization, but in *reality*, creates what Deleuze calls a 'double suicide machine.' The 'war machine' destroys the pre-existing formations of the fragmented Beirut and refashions it into eternal figures. "Down below our white window, Christian cats walked the narrow streets nonchalantly, never crossing themselves or kneeling for black-dressed priests" (12).

Bassam describes his mother's apartment: "Here, in her kitchen, a bomb had landed and made a wide-open hole in the wall, giving us a splendid view of the vast sky" (17). Deleuze claims that "the smooth always possesses a greater power of deterritorialization than the striated"

¹⁵⁵ "The Shadow is one of the main Jungian archetype ([1959] 1990; [1921] 1977) and it refers to the negative, dark side of the human soul. The archetype contains unwanted, unaccepted traits, inclinations, aspirations and predictions discarded in the process of socialization. Jung believes that the shadow is a universal subsystem of the psyche, and it accompanies every person" (Kostera 64).

(*A Thousand Plateaus* 480) and therefore the smooth Beirut provides a greater possibility of an escape. Deleuze and Guattari claim that the war machine can be captured by the state and “has part in the evolution of the State” (427). The state “turns the war machine into a military institution, [and]... appropriates the war machine for itself (425). John Welsh, in “The Shadow: Alter-visibility in an Empire of the Seen”, uses the very same argument for the urban margin and appropriates the concept of ‘shadow’ as a machinic apparatus in capitalism’s topology. Hage also gives his readers, a chance to view emerging forms of masculinity not through an evocation of the historical revolutionary subject but instead through its personal ethical practice in becoming “the thing a person has no wish to be” (Jung *CWI6* par. 470).

Although Smooth Beirut, in *De Niro’s Game*, is a decentered and non-hierarchical ‘chaosmos,’ the process of ‘fragementation’¹⁵⁶ has already begun to take place. Hage extracts deterritorialized elements from the city and molds them into thug-like figures: ‘militia thug,’ and kids in military uniforms. Becoming thug, for Hage, is a process and Bassam finally realizes his becoming: “War is for thugs” (13). Hage’s characters’ encounters with state power and state violence accentuate not only the idea of resistance and/or escape, but also a movement from representational allegories toward “distinguishing the things whose changing relations form the events” (Whitehead *Aims of Education* 158). Events, in our case, refer to things that “come to us that is given and is not just the result of our constitution” (Cloots 61). Events always exceeds calculation and prediction and necessarily breaks free of constraints and cannot made to conform. Displacement, war, and Genocide can be considered as “exceptional events” that “take us by surprise and overtake us, outside of any contexts” (61). In Hage’s novels, the civil war, and

¹⁵⁶ The concept was coined by James Rosenau and, here, I am using it to emphasize on forms of order that might “emerge out of a newly prominent ‘turbulence’” (N. Parker 18-19).

the massacre of the refugee camps, and even the carnival are exceptional events that turn everything around—or as Claude Romano¹⁵⁷ suggests— "as if the world explodes and time is suspended" (quoted by Cloots 61). So, in such contexts, the figure of the thug, and the melancholic exile must be thought of as adjuncts or situations of the event, the products rather than the producer. Deleuze and Guattari believe that "it is not the nomad who defines this constellation of characteristics; it is the constellation that defines the nomad, and at the same time the essence of the war machine" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 466). For instance, Abou Nahra, "a high commander in Christian militia", is a former Arabic-language teacher" who now rules the city and is now "into Christianity, money, and power" (51). He is credited with setting up "a tax system to collect money from houses, gas station, and stores" and also establishing mini-casinos to support the war and fill his own pockets (51). Hage's characters, such as Bassam, George or Abou-Nahra become whatever comes along unless they defy or escape the limits of what exists.

Another typical figure in Rawi Hage's novel is the melancholic in exile, especially prominent in *Cockroach*. *De Niro's Game* and *Cockroach* seem to hold a thematic continuity, and both stories share a similar background. The living experience of the civil war, in the first novel, becomes the traumatic memories of the unnamed narrator of *Cockroach*. This continuity allows for an investigation of the transformation of marginal male characters. The marginality of the characters, in the novels, is directly related to their political and economic agency and their racialized identity. The 'deviance' in Rawi Hage's male characters is not necessarily related to their so-called 'sexual perversion' with respect to a 'moral' or cultural code or to a phallic

¹⁵⁷ Romano, Claude. *L'événement et le temps*. Presses Universitaires de France. 2015.

standard.¹⁵⁸ In other words, as Silverman suggests it is not only the *mise-en-scene* of sexual desire that marks the subject's position and political difference, it is also his 'racial' and class 'difference' that can play their crucial roles where he stands (8).

Deviance, in both novels, follows 'lines of flight' that disavow norms and break the narration whenever an opportunity rises: "Everything ends with a flight" (*Carnival* 287), an escape from war-torn Beirut or from the passivity of the 'bare life' in the margins. Bassam, the protagonist, beats the system at every corner by stealing and preparing for his escape. Bassam's escape begins with his refusal to be fixed or to be pinned down.¹⁵⁹ "TEN THOUSAND BOMBS HAD LANDED, AND I WAS WAITING FOR George" (11). Bombs fall and gradually transform Beirut from a striated space to a smooth space and change its sedentary population into 'Nomads.' I use the term Nomad in this context to initiate a Deleuzian nomadological reading of the novel. Such a reading, not unlike most other forms of reading is based on the ideogeographical positioning of the readers. To read the novel in Deleuzian way, one has to locate its characters outside an illusory wall that separates the state and the War Machine, *logos*¹⁶⁰ and *nomos* and place them in a liminal space between *polis* and *physis*¹⁶¹. In "Studies

¹⁵⁸ I am referring to Kaja Silverman notion of 'phallic standard' and phallic symbolism in *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* when she refers to moral standard of Christian heteronormative Western masculinity.

¹⁵⁹ Deleuze also highlights in Nietzsche, "a refusal to be fixed or to be pinned down, to be always moving even if one doesn't go anywhere", Deleuze says as follows: '[E]ven historically, nomads are not necessarily those who move about like migrants. On the contrary they do not move; nomads, they nevertheless stay in the same place and continually evade the codes of settled people' (Deleuze "Nomad Thoughts") (Douchars 2)

¹⁶⁰ "Logos refers to the law of State, as well as more generally to reason and discourse" (Holland 21).

¹⁶¹ "We could situate the unruly realm of nature or wilderness (*Physis*), on one hand, and the enclosed and regulated space of the city or the state (*polis*)" (Holland 21).

in *Applied Nomadology: Jazz Improvisation and Post-Capitalist Markets*,” Eugene Holland, highlights the importance of understanding the Greek term, *nomos*, in its original context for any kind of Nomadological investigation: “As distinguished from polis, nomos refers to space outside of city walls (originally pasture-land), a space not subject to the laws and mode of organization of the State (or city state)” (Holland 21). Hage, for some Western readers, narrates a unique but marginal perspective on life or maybe, in the case of Beirut, on life behind the wall that separates ‘us’ from ‘them.’ Hage’s stories form within the Lebanese Christian Community and his male subjects are stigmatized by their gendered, racialized, socioeconomic class, however, they still can provide subjects that are ‘almost but not quite’ familiar for the Western readers.

Beirut in *De Niro’s Game* is becoming a ‘war machine’ day by day. While bombs are ruining the city, the narrator realizes that he is pinned down waiting for George. He refuses to be fixed and continues: “Ten thousand bombs had landed on Beirut, that crowded city, and I was lying on a blue sofa covered with white sheets to protect it from dust and dirty feet. It is time to leave, I was thinking to myself” (11). This desire to follow a line of escape, in its Deleuzian sense, highlights turning down the melancholic passivity of Bassam’s mother toward her fate and the songs coming from her radio. Bassam’s ironical reaction to the melancholic song and the details gives prominence to the underlying war. “Nothing ever stopped those melancholic Fairuz songs that came out of it. I was not escaping the war; I was running away from Fairuz, the notorious singer” (11). The narrator illustrates the city in a chaotic ambiance where strong feed upon the weak, and everyone’s effort to survive breaks the boundaries of law and customs: “[...]and thugs jumped the long lines for bread, stole the food of the weak, bullied the baker and caressed his daughter. Thugs never waited in lines” (12). The narrator goes back to his mother

and demonstrates that she is also becoming a stone in Go¹⁶² and a playing piece in a ‘chaotic machine’¹⁶³: “My mother came down from the roof with two buckets in her hand; she was stealing water from the neighbour’s reservoir” (12).

Hage demonstrates the characters’ desire to be seen. “Motorcycles are also for thugs, and for longhaired teenagers like us, with guns under our bellies, and stolen gas in our tanks, and no particular place to go” (13). Thugs, in *De Niro’s Game*, are not so much different from the domesticated dogs who now became stray.

The rich were leaving for France and letting their dogs roam loose on the streets: orphan dogs, expensive dogs, potty-trained dogs, dogs with French names and red bowties, fluffy dogs, well bred dogs, china dogs, genetically modified dogs, and incestuous dogs that clung to one another in packs, covered the street in tens, and gathered under the command a charismatic three legged mutt. The most expensive pack of wild dogs roamed

¹⁶² “Chess pieces are coded; they have an internal nature and intrinsic properties from which their movements, situations, and confrontations derive. They have qualities; a knight remains a knight, a pawn a pawn, a bishop a bishop. Each is like a subject of the statement endowed with relative power, and these relative powers combine in a subject of enunciation, that is, the chess player or the game’s form of interiority. Go pieces, in contrast, are pellets, disks, simple arithmetic units, and have only an anonymous, collective, or third-person function: “It” makes a move. “It” could be a man, a woman, a louse, an elephant. Go pieces are elements of a nonsubjectified machine assemblage with no intrinsic properties, only situational ones. Thus the relations are very different in the two cases” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 389).

¹⁶³ Karen Houle and Jim Vernon in *Hegel and Deleuze: Together Again for the First Time* argue the double lineage of events in Deleuze, wherein the virtual haunts the actual without becoming concrete—an immense chaotic machine (245). Llai Rowner also in *The Event: Literature and Theory* re-presents a transcendental philosophy without the coherence of a subjective consciousness, or with a wild empiricism without the coherent synthesis of experience: all we have are desperate elements in a chaotic machine of individuation (133-134).

Beirut and the earth, and howled to the big moon, and ate from mountains of garbage on the corner of our streets (*De Niro's Game* 31).

Thugs, war refugees, and dogs, in *De Niro's Game*, seem to have the same survival strategies and the same fate. This total dystopic animal-becoming not only unsettles the civilians but also makes them easy targets. Nabila, George's aunt, calls Abou Nahra, her lover to persuade him of doing something about the dogs. Abou Nahra notices that "she was alone in an empty house, all alone in a war, surrounded by dogs, human dogs, dogs in men's masks, dogs with guns, dogs in banker suits, dogs that pee on one's couch and pant their filthy breath on one's breast" (61). In *Beirut Hellfire Society*, Hage goes steps further: Rex, the protagonist's dog, talks to Pavlov, in a hallucinatory scene to calm him down and tells him: "that humans were beyond help. He recall[s] theriomorphism, theriophily and Diogenes, who slept in a bathtub, barked at people and tried to imitate the manner of dogs" (125). Hage questions and unsettles the concept of Humanity in his paradoxical scenes and brings up once again the old question of *essentia* and *existentia*¹⁶⁴ and asks if it is only the placement of the subject which determines his or her

¹⁶⁴ The controversy between the priority of existence before essence in Jean-Paul Sartre's lecture "L'existentialisme est un humanisme" and Heidegger's concepts of *homo humanus* vs *homo barbarus* has been widely investigated by scholars such as Kakkori & Huttunen in "The Sartre-Heidegger Controversy on Humanism and the Concept of Man in Education": "What do we mean by saying that existence precedes essence? We mean that man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world—and defines himself afterwards. If man as the existentialist sees him as not definable, it is because to begin with he is nothing. He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself. Thus, there is no human nature, because there is no God to have a conception of it". Sartre, J. P. "L'existentialisme est un humanisme", Lecture [1946]. Trans. Philip Mairet. London 1948. <<http://theoria.art-zoo.com/from-existentialism-and-humanism-jean-paul-sartre/>> Last time accessed August 9, 2019.

behaviour or action or it is some kind of malice in his essence that put him in an inferior 'moral' ground one way or another .

Hage dismantles the traditional figure of the 'thug' by questioning its essentialist representation. In Hage's Lebanon, there is no point in fighting the war machine as it re-creates itself over and over again, even in 'Molecular' (Micro) levels. Brian Massumi also criticizes the common representation of the thug. "[T]he figure of the 'thug' is extracted from the civil sphere and imported into diplomacy, producing a fusion of 'enemy' and 'third world head of state' under the sign of the generic 'criminal' (53)". Hage does not neglect the suffering of the civilian under the constant repression and the threat of militias but highlights the already blurred boundary that separates life and death, and human and animal. Massumi suggests that such blurred boundary can be extended "even between the organic and the inorganic," and "with it the distinction between war and peace, civilian and combatant" (41). The already blurred boundary has also been exploited in recent wars in the Middle East and the 'Third Balkan War.' The coinage of a more populated political category of the 'battle-age male' dismisses even the former distinction of 'combatant' and 'non-combatant' male. The 'male' body in the more naturalised category of 'non-combatant' might have a better chance under the protection of human rights or international law. The new pseudo legal category of 'battle age male' allows media and international watchdog organizations to efface male victims from the 'collateral damage' during

bombardments and drone attacks to ‘manufacture mass consent’¹⁶⁵ during war or to stigmatize male war refugees in the aftermath.

For Hage, “sympathy is irrelevant in Literature”¹⁶⁶ (Hage “Interview”). Hage seeks freedom more than a “pedagogical, moralistic contribution to literature” (ibid). Hage, as Mark Libin suggests, moves away from passive and inarticulate victimized subject, forfeiting the hope for the reconstruction of his subject’s shattered identity. By that, Hage troubles his “Western reader’s sense of an analytic empathy, a superiority bred in safety and luxury” (76). As Syrine Hout suggests his displaced subjects “neither idealise the country of origin nor shed their past to embrace unquestioningly a Western mode of living” (*Post-War Anglophone Lebanese Fiction* 9). Hage’s subjects can be found in the most de-romanticized manners, time, and places. Hage prefers to delve into descriptive ethics rather than prescriptive ones. Colm Toibin notes in his Introduction for *De Niro’s Game*: “Language in *De Niro’s Game* is not a plea for help or a way of asking the world to pity those caught in a war, but it is a bravura performance, a set of grand and sweeping gestures, closer to jazz than journalism” (*De Niro’s Game* “Introduction”). In “Making Territory: Rawi Hage’s Novels and the Challenge to Postcolonial Ethics,” Mark Libin also engages critically with the ideas of hospitality and the victimized other and celebrates the ambiguity in Hage’s writing. Libin suggests that Hage’s subjects not only do not find “a home in the West” but that they unsettle “the West and [render] the Westerner, in terms of identity” (77).

¹⁶⁵ Herman, Edward and Noam Chomsky. *Manufacturing Consent*. Pantheon Books, 1988. See also Jones, Adam. “Gender, Misrepresentation, and exclusion in the Kosovo War. *The Journal of Men’s Perspectives*, 21:1-3 (2001).

¹⁶⁶ McGillis, Ian. “‘Abundance of death’ in Rawi Hage’s *Beirut Hellfire Society*”, *Montreal Gazette*. Aug 24, 2018.

In his most recent novel, *Beirut Hellfire Society*, Hage demonstrates the transformation of a boy who used to help his mechanic father, and how a military uniform wipes away ‘the grease’:

Perhaps the kid had joined the militia to remove the stain of his shame. War had provided him with a clean slate, a new beginning full of respect and order, opportunities. War had turned screws into bullets, snot into a moustache, stained sneakers into high boots, the evocative dirty calendar in his father’s garage into real-life conquests. The car jack in the kid’s hand had turned into an AK-47—it was still a mechanical object after all, and both cars and guns were complicit in modern-day death (83).

The image of the thug, in *De Niro’s game*, evokes an ambivalent *assemblage* of disgust, shame, rebellion, nihilism, coolness, and power. Hage emphasizes the reciprocal relation of his characters with their stereotypical images in media and the way they anchor and borrow their identity from images they see in the movies. The most dramatic moment of the story is a Russian Roulette, a becoming De Niro from Michael Cimino’s *The Deer Hunter*. George is supposed to kill Bassam as he seems to be a culprit in the assassination of *Al-Rayess*. Before telling Bassam about his intentions, George gives a detailed account of his participation in the massacre of the Sabra and Shatila but shows no remorse: “it was like being in a Hollywood movie. And I am De Niro in a movie” (175). George’s delirious and horrific story of cold blood executions and raping follows by episodes of hallucination about killing his own mother, all the same, he cannot kill his childhood friend or hands him over to the torturers and suggests playing Russian roulette instead. George appears detached from the *reality* of the present moment, and he forces Bassam to listen to details of the massacre as if it was “all like a movie” (176). Hage brings the story to the point that Silverman might call a Lacanian moment of unconscious fantasy. Deleuze and Guattari depict the moment in the ‘Nomadology’ as being “Trapped between the two poles of political

sovereignty” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 355). The man of war seems outmoded, condemned, without a future, reduced to his fury, which he turns against himself (355). George refuses to drive Bassam to “the torture chambers” and claims that “the torture chambers are inside us” (*De Niro’s Game* 179). He then shoots himself before Bassam who declined to shoot the first bullet in what seems to be a competition about who is man enough, claiming “you are not a man” (179).

Silverman in *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* draws attention to the relation of fantasy and the ego and the symbolic *placement* of the subject within the fantasy (Kaja Silverman 318). While Silverman’s Lacanian interpretation seems to be more focused on the unconscious fantasy as the fundamental framework of desire (as lack), Deleuzian becomings require not only the multiplicities of desire (as an active and positive reality), but also ‘points of rupture’ and rhizomatic growth, connection and heterogeneity. “*There is a rupture in the rhizome whenever segmentary lines explode into a line of flight, but the line of flight is part of the rhizome.*” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 7). Deleuze might view George’s and Bassam’s decision to escape or die more as a conscious decision “either to be nothing more than the disciplined, military organ of the State apparatus, *or to turn against itself* and become a double suicide machine for a solitary man [...]” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 356). Bassam finds no point in fighting for or against the war machine and finds his agency in refusing to be subordinate to any nationalist/religious affiliation. Bassam locates himself in a no-win situation. Pursuing any ideological goal puts him in the coffin or behind bars. Therefore, he decides instead *not to be there*.

War-ravaged Lebanon, in Hage’s world, is not in an adversary position with the ‘global order’ but it is the product of a more complicated and historical conflict. Bassam sees that every neighboring states’ endeavors to appropriate Lebanon and concludes: “I am fleeing and leaving this land to its devils” (78). Beirut as a war machine serves another purpose for Hage. It creates a

‘plain of immanence’ that explains *the world as what it is*. Hage does not view Beirut as a self-sufficient organism/machine but locates it as part of a more complicated and larger organism. Lebanon suffers from its geopolitical location and its historically conflictual juxtaposition of the three Abrahamic religions, at the intersection of the flows of money, oil, weapon, and whiskey. “Every machine is in relation with a continuous material flow,” (*Anti-Oedipus* 43) and in the case of Lebanon, the war machine interrupts several flows. There is a secular undercurrent that can be seen in all of his novels. In the case of the smuggling of cheap whiskey from Romania in imitation Johnny Walker bottles to the ‘Muslim side’ of the town, the manufacturer tells Bassam: “No religion, no war; this is only business. Muslim, Christian – it does not matter” (108). Hage is also concerned with the flows that maintain the war and marks those cargoes of weapon, and whiskey in the port and the flow of money from gambling machines. Hage points out that these ‘deviant men’ are nothing but subjects of the global capitalist machinery. “The weapons were stamped with Hebrew, English, and Arabic serial numbers” (19). Bassam finally realizes the cycle of violence and how his kind always have served someone else’s purposes. He remembers “the story of [her] grandmother – who in her youth was enslaved by the Turks, who in her womanhood ironed French soldiers’ shirts for a few tin coins—and the story of her brother, who during the second World War joined the six thousand Lebanese who formed the Kanasa troop,” and his “heroic fight in the Bir Hakim battle” and the moment he perished, “in the desert, thirsty for his home up in the high mountains, for the chain of trees, the tolling bells, and the munching goats” (216). In Paris, Bassam imagines “the Gestapo and the Vichy men rounding up thousands of people who looked like [him], with the same nose and the same skin” (216). That is when he turns and “enters the sewers” and becomes invisible in fear of “being captured” and “being

stripped away” of his belongings and thinks about the the price he “would pay one way or another” (216).

In *Cockroach*, the narrator’s dialogues with his psychologist in Montreal uncovers a very similar background with *De Niro’s Game*. This time, Hage revisits the literary image of the desperate male immigrant. *Cockroach* begins with the image of a failed suicide attempt. The narrator’s suicide communicates this image to the social body as inhospitable and that can be interrupted and become decoded or over-coded. A hanged body in a public park conveys along a different message from a hanged body in a private place. The narrator explains his suicide as his way of escaping “the permanence of the sun” (4) and of “defying the oppressive power in the world that [he] can neither participate in nor control” (5). Not being able to find any sense of belonging, a place to call home or something to hold on to; the narrator illustrates the event: “I am good with ropes. It was finding a structure to support the rope and my own weight that failed me that day in the park” (175). His attempt for a public suicide can also be considered an artistic performance as he can ascribe some aesthetic affects to it:

I would have made a nice sight against the white landscape. I wore my red jacket that day. Just picture, a large red fruit swinging from high up in the tree. Just imagine how it would have looked from afar. No one could have missed it. And from afar the rope wouldn’t have been visible at all. All that anyone would have seen was a red dot against the white horizon, suspended above the earth. Maybe that is all that is supposed to be left of our lives: a glimpse of beauty, an offering for those who are still trapped, a last offering to console them in their mundane existence. (175)

For the narrator of *Cockroach*, or Otto, in *Carnival*, it seems to be worth of losing it all for a moment of visibility and recognition. The narrator’s failed public suicide promotes the

possibility of an escape; however, the line of escape is interrupted by two officers of the Montreal Mounted Police. The narrator is instead “handcuffed and taken for, as they put it, assessment” (*Cockroach* 5). The message that a dead body on the shore or a hanged body on a tree convey over society, over its social body is a vague one, and it appears to be un-codable. As Deleuze puts it: “It is Something which would flow and which would carry away this society to a kind of deterritorialization and [...] crisis” (Capitalism and Schizophrenia lecture). The flow of dead bodies is not unique to Hage’s fictional world. The flow of suicides among activists and poets in the Soviet Union during the late 1920’s such as Esenin or Mayakovski and the wave of copycat suicides that came after is just one of the examples. Another contemporary decodable violent flow is the one of the images of the washed-up bodies of refugees on different Mediterranean shores. The images can be overcoded as symbolic, like the image of the drowned Syrian toddler (Aylan Kurdi) on the shore which disturbed the political arguments of all sides of the war. The image was used and exploited in radically opposed political arguments of war and peace, from the self-congratulatory immigrant policies during electoral campaigns in Canada to the interventionist, and anti-immigrant political arguments in the United States. The image was satirized once, in a cartoon, by Charli Hebdo which depicted the toddler who would have grown up to be a sexual molester (Mead np). The horror and the assemblage of affects caused by the image of washed-up refugees have already become commodified and have been used as simulacra in science fiction thrillers series such as *The Crossing*¹⁶⁷.

The flows of immigrants often share certain elements, but it promotes a very superficial discourse if one represents it as a pure or homogeneous flow. The flows of immigrants come in all sort of multiplicities, and not all elements in such flows are codable. In Hage’s world, there

¹⁶⁷ Beattie, Jay and Dan Dworkin, Creators. *The Crossing*. ABC, 2018.

are places for these un-codable bodies. The Artista Café is a space full of people that the narrator labels as welfare recipients. However, even these codable immigrants do not necessarily live a better life: He describes Iranian exiles “runaway artists, displaced poets, leftist hash-rollers and ex-revolutionaries turned taxi-drivers” (*Cockroach* 13). The cockroach, however, suggests a way out, by accepting and internalizing the pain and the misery of the underclass social position and starting a revolutionary idealistic project against the oppressors. The issue raised by Hage, in *Cockroach*, and *Carnival*, however, is that the oppressors are not any longer in sight and can hardly be located. Revolutionary projects, for Hage, soon become matters of personal vengeance, irrelevant to the daily struggles of his exiles.

Creatureliness and Planetary Decadence

In migrant literary contexts, planetary thinking investigates innovative epistemic forms derived from new enunciative positions and suggests critical reflections on the future possibilities of human subjectivity and actions. In this sense, Rawi Hage’s *Carnival* does not give a new definition to humanity. Hage’s third novel is a reflection on the possibility of living without or beyond such notions when being human — as a distinct form of existence, as a pure form of being — is no longer a possible or preferable option. In the context of Anthropocene, as Neimanis, Asberg, and Hedren claim “we no longer have the luxury of imagining humanness and culture as distinctly separate from nature, matter, and worldliness” (“Toward Critical Posthumanities for the Anthropocene” 67). Hage’s investments in the antinomy of human and animal, civilization and barbarism promise a fusion and re-birth that are also present in Modern

Decadence.¹⁶⁸ Planetary Decadence, in such sense, indexes ironically to the in-between location of the Other in urbanized cosmopolitan spaces – only does it not react to such marginalization and instead awaits and prepares for a symbolic inversion to come.

The Circus, in *Carnival*, the protagonist's place of birth and upbringing, can no longer afford to feed the animals and its people. As a result, the strongman of the circus declares: "The world has gone mad and our way of life was bound to change" (156). The idea of change in the way of life starts with Hage's revisiting human-animal relation. Agamben's reading of Heidegger and his notion of 'creatureliness' or creaturely life focuses on "the peculiar proximity of the human to the animal at the very point of their radical difference" (Santner *On Creaturely Life: Rilke, Benjamin, Sebald* 12). Santner comments such decadence into creaturely life not only as "man's thrownness into the (enigmatic) 'openness of being' but as an "exposure to a traumatic dimension of political power and social bonds whose structures have undergone radical transformations in modernity" (12). The Circus, for Hage, represents a place of refuge for the rejected and its breaking out suggests a creaturely descent into an underprivileged life.

Rawi Hage's *Carnival* is an excellent literary example of how the idea of the human/animal binary can be put into question. *Carnival* involves marginal sites in an *imaginary* metropolis where individuals are depleted or bored from a political existence that distinguishes their humanly existence from animality. Hage uses anthropomorphism to metaphorize human relations, e.g. he categorizes taxi drivers into spiders and flies, who wait for their prey and flies, who are aimless wanderers in search of a passenger. Hage is not the only writer or artist who is

¹⁶⁸ See for instance Renato Poggioli, "Modernism and Decadence", *The Poets of Russia 1890-1930* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1980), p.46-88 for the theoretical frame of reference on the avant-garde and Decadence and the connections between Decadence and modernism.

uncertain about the frontiers between animals and humans.¹⁶⁹ Creativity can be born from the anxiety of artists when it is no longer possible to distinguish humanity from animality. Artists become the occupants of a magical forest, imaginary animals in dystopic ‘animal farms’ or get lost in dark urban spaces like dogs, cats, and cockroaches.

In *Carnival*, the cynical first-person narration, illustrates urban life from the ironic and reflective distance of an anti-hero, Fly. He is a taxi driver who drives ‘the poor, drunk, and unwashables’ as well as the drug dealers, and the deviants (9). He makes his “own laws to encourage people to flee their confinements and chains” (64). Such an enunciative position draws upon a framework that moves beyond epistemological monoculture and critically engages with ‘cosmopolitanism’. *Carnival* deals with the philosophical question of being and the ethics of survival. George Buchner, in *Lenz*, depicts such an epistemic shift as a descent “into the life of the humblest person” toward the reproduction of “all the twitches [Zuckungen], all the winks [Andeutungen], all the subtle, barely noticed play of facial features”. It is also having “the eyes and ears” to capture “the pulse of feeling running through nearly everyone” (8). This narrative does not proceed through a neo-platonic transcendence between humans and gods or an Abrahamic portrait of the human in the ‘image of God’, a creation ready to consume lesser creatures. Becoming-animal is a form of planetary alliance not only as an aesthetic touch but as a

¹⁶⁹ It is the remeniscent of Bêttes Off, the exhibition of the strange animals created by various artists in the Paris Conciergerie on March 2011. The Artists reflect upon the possibility of a harmonious coexistent of the animals and humans, or the troubling mixture of animal, human, and machine or their biological proximity. Some artists capture animalesque affects, or become animals or meet them half way.

fall from heaven to earth, from Heidegger to Aristotle,¹⁷⁰ human to animal and from Language to the affective mapping of the body that acknowledges planetary “contradictions, variances, and necessary open-endedness” (Neimenias 68).

Fly describes another scene in “the Dungeon of love”: “It was dark inside, but at the entrance there was a large cage with a few men, half-naked, with collars around their necks. They were all behaving like dogs” (69). Fly meets another taxi driver, who introduces himself as an Arab and describes the people *inside*: “Il sont pourris, mon ami. Une société de chiens. Comme des chiens” (71). Fly, on the contrary, sees beyond the surface of the scenes of debauchery and writes a letter wherein he thanks the establishment for the moving experience, “for the opportunity to witness it through this communal tunnel of the senses” and he mentions “the necessity of the symbolic and if one so chooses, the experiential as well in the enactment of this lesser existence, the degeneration of all that is tangible, the howl of dogs, the chain of entrapment, the need to personify the fate of men in this inferior world” (72). Hage brings his readers to where Agamben calls “a zone of irreducible indistinction” where “borders begin to be blurred” (*Homo Sacer* 9). For Hage, the carnival as an event creates the moment when the bare lives, or creatures that dwelt in the city, free themselves and “[become] both subject and object of the conflicts of the political order, the one place for both the organization of state power and emancipation from it” (*Homo Sacer* 9). *Carnival*’s open-endedness bears similarities of

¹⁷⁰ Agamben refers the Aristotelian definition of the polis as the opposition between life (*Zem*) and good life (*eu zen*). Foucault reads Aristotle’s definition of man as a “living animal with the additional capacity for political existence (*La volonté 188*)” (*Homo Sacer* 10).

Kristeva's apocalyptic seeingness and the literature of abjection.¹⁷¹ For Hage, *Becoming animal* also has a Bakhtinian side, and the Carnavalesque affect is sometimes a revolutionary one.¹⁷²

Carnival makes visible the ideologies and the state biopolitics and “where power penetrates subject's very bodies and forms of life” (Agamben 6). Hage illustrates the fluctuation of his characters between polarized sensations that accumulate their sense of self in the form of *Jouissance* between pleasure and pain, between liberty and loss, and between the fact that they either consume or will be consumed.¹⁷³ Fly reflects on the meaning of pain and admits that he “take[s] pleasure in beating men with big inflated muscles” (67). Even if one does not confront the pain directly, Fly acknowledges the idea that “the suffering of others is enjoyable to watch” particularly when “the winner gets to see the loser suffer” (67). He is also concerned that “there must be some convictions and pleasures involved” when a man “willingly consents to pain” (68). Fly observes us as “products and the victims of our upbringing, until we reflect, refuse, and rebel (68). Hage suggests a move beyond self-hood entrapped in such simultaneous sensations as “pain

¹⁷¹ In ‘Beneath Lowry's Carnival: The Abject in *Under the Volcano*’ Andrew McLeod differentiates Bakhtin from Kristeva ‘by understanding Bakhtin's Carnavalesque to be anchored in the paternal-symbolic, whereas Kristeva's abject is more concerned with the maternal-semiotic. Andrew McLeod, ‘Beneath Lowry's The Abject in *Under Volcano*’ *COLLOQUY text theory critique*, 28 (Monash University 2014) p.66

¹⁷² In *Rabelais and His World*, Bakhtin reflects on carnival as ‘a kind of safety valve for passions the common people might otherwise direct to revolution’. Mikhail Bakhtin. *Rabelais and His World*. Trans. by Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana UP 1984). (Holquist ‘Prologue’ p. xviii)

¹⁷³ Braunstein in ‘Desire and Jouissance in the Teachings of Lacan’ explains that ‘[I]f desire is fundamentally lack, lack in being, jouissance is positivity, it is ‘something’ lived by a body when pleasures stops being pleasure. It is a plus, a sensation that is beyond pleasure’. Néstor A. Braunstein. ‘Desire and Jouissance in Teachings of Lacan’. *The Cambridge Companion to Lacan*. Edited by Jean-Michel Rabaté (Cambridge: Cambridge UP 2003), 102- 115 (p.104).

and ecstasy” (69). In this sense, the city for Fly is a theatre of *Jouissance* where nothing is “personal,” and everyone seeks a moment of transcendence.

Here, there is nothing personal. But let me assure you, many of the ruling elites of our time can be found here. There is nothing like seeing a judge asking for forgiveness, an evangelist screaming Oh Mercy, or a doctor opening wide. Everyone loves a comedy, my dear. It is divine. (71)

Carnival addresses urban life in the context of global environmental issues and re-frames it as social and human challenges that include the bare life. Agamben in *Homo Sacer* locates “at the margins of the political order” (9). The creaturliness in *Carnival* is not merely an attribute of the underclass, the rich also experience another form of transgression, this time through boredom. Kari Løvaas in “The Ambiguities of Creatureliness” investigates the Heideggerian *mood* that comes closest to this muted lamenting of the creature, as profound boredom. In Agamben’s words, “the man who becomes bored finds himself in the ‘closest proximity’—even if it is only apparent—to animal captivity” (*The Open* 65). A client responds to Fly’s excitement and surprise when he finds a pinball machine in an underground sado-masochistic sex club: “that is for the bored, the rejected, those who have become immune to life’s joys” (70). Hage implies that ‘the bored’, ‘the rejected’, and the marginalized subjects and rebels akin the Arab and Fly fail to take the signifier in its liberating function. They move beyond human existence, and therefore find their way beyond the symbolic.

Humans in *Carnival* are world-forming but only in malicious ways. Fly encounters the CEO of a large mining company, a man who pillages the world and pollutes villages and rivers with poisonous liquids. Fly is not successful in negotiating a deal for his fellow taxi driver. The man is suing another taxi driver (a spider) for reckless driving and endangering his spoiled kids.

One of his guards (gorillas) escorts fly out of the building. Fly then sees behind “the ruthless gates”, “those glass citadels and towering dungeons” corrupt rulers of this world and “meek creatures, hunchbacked servants, and diabolic yes-men” who are conspiring against the planet and “carrying out orders to steal the sugar cane from the land and the water from the underground, a murderous waltz that will never stop until they dig out the last meal from the bellies of the poor” (197). Although Fly locates himself in the opposition to the capitalist machinery, his reactions are isolated movements and ‘minor gestures’.¹⁷⁴ He is not the impulsive revolutionary akin to Otto, another rebellious character in the novel, as if he is preparing himself for a larger, symbolic deterritorialization.

Hage uses the liminality of a professional clown dressed as a giraffe as an enunciative point to express the ‘sadness of being’. The clown acknowledges that “it doesn’t fit into low-ceilinged houses or basements. Always bowing its head, always feeling big and small” (*Carnival* 143-144). The metaphoric ‘unfitting’ existence of the marginalized precarious subject in giraffe’s costume illustrates its ambivalent relation with consumption and biopolitics. What follows is a kind of bestialization of man achieved through symbolic metamorphosis during the city’s carnival. Hage does not divide society into categories of life; he depicts his dystopia as a jungle where the metaphorical consumption of the weaker animals by the strong ones will end up in actual cannibalism. It is also a moment of rebirth with an open-endedness metaphorized in the protagonist’s flying carpet and moments of unchaining and liberation.

¹⁷⁴ A minor gesture ‘activates the collectivity at the heart of thought effects change. It affects not only what the text can become: it alters to the core what thinking can do. It gives value to the processual uncertainty of thoughts as yet unformed and gives that thought the space to develop collectively’. Erin Manning, *The Minor Gesture* (London: Duke UP 2016), p. x.

The acts of cannibalism, for Hage, are not necessarily the end of civilization as we know it — “[a]ll empires are hungry cannibals” (*Carnival* 208)— and he maintains that “cannibalism was an undeniable part of our past” (276). Hage creates moments of primal fear and invests in his reader’s bodily affect toward moments of escape, moments of refusal, and perhaps moments of rebellion. In Kristeva’s terms, he is assuming a double stance between the affects of disgust and laughter, and apocalypse and carnival. However, the rebellious act of Otto, as a line of escape, is just futile violence. Otto is just an angry animal who is not in control and kills a French journalist accidentally over a minor dispute regarding Camus and Algeria while forcing him to repeat: “My country is not civilized, my country is not civilized, I am not civilized, I am not civilized, Camus was not civilized” (213). *Carnival* takes an ironic turn and constructs an uncanny enunciative position in a repetition of the cold blooded murder in Camus’ *The Stranger*. The Two extremes of ‘primitivism’ and modernism create a line of escape from the ruin of capitalism. Hage also follows “the task of Decadence” firstly in its “denial of culture” and secondly, in what Zurburgg calls “a kind of re-cultivation – or from – such ruins” (“Beyond Decadence” 212). The ‘new’ emerges from both minoritarian and cosmopolitan limits.

Conclusion

One cannot avoid referring to Hage’s metaphorical use of the term *planemo*¹⁷⁵. He introduces not an *imaginary* planet but a rogue and wandering one. He foresees dark biopolitics

¹⁷⁵ Contraction of *planetary-mass object*. Coined by Gibor Basri, Professor of Astronomy at the University of California, Berkeley, (UCB) at the 2003 IAU conference. an astronomical object with enough mass to achieve hydrostatic equilibrium, but not enough to initiate core fusion at any time in its existence. That is, it is rounded in shape and is smaller than a star. Planemos include planets, dwarf

in every *imaginary* utopian picture. The professor Alberto Manuel, one of the Fly's mentors in *Carnival*, describes the idea of wandering planets. Such planets are known as planemos. They are exiled bundles of matter that wander the universe aimlessly. These objects have no orbits and no host stars to orbit around. They are aimless, wandering and lost. The planemo is perhaps the vision of a decadent planet, confusing and chaotic. Hage also keeps an eye on freedom as the planet's most essential feature (223). Fly believes that he is here now, and that one day he will leave "just like the butterfly leaves, never demanding anything more than the air it has touched with its own wings" (175). *Carnival* is also the re-embodiment of the transcendental ego into an other-than-human self. Hage puts in question the generic figure of human and highlights the crisis of the universal mode of man. In *Nomadic Theory*, Rosi Braidotti claims that the idea of universal man is based on the urbanized, heterosexual, European male body who is still the center of the Humanities, and, therefore, the racialized, sexualized, and naturalized others were never fully human in the eyes of the state.¹⁷⁶ The unchaining from the universal mode of 'man'¹⁷⁷, for Hage, happens not in the search of an hyperindividual subject but in connecting with forms of vulnerability.

The revived interest in rhizomatic forms of self representation and visibilities with regard to *littérature migrante* and *autofiction* or even the *Bildungsroman* reflects on progressive forms

planets, and the larger moons of the Solar System (satellite planets), but also sub-brown dwarfs and rogue planets between the stars.

¹⁷⁶ Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti* (New York: Columbia UP 2011), p. 133.

¹⁷⁷ Brian Massumi makes a very similar argument regarding the Deleuzian 'Molar man'. Brian, Massumi. *A Users Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviation from Deleuze and Guattari* (Cambridge: The MIT Press 1992), p.121,122.

of self-realization. Nevertheless, such representation moves toward the lived experience of the subject through constant ‘stuttering’ and by avoiding distortion and calcification. Rawi Hage’s novels do not have a prescribed wholesale ideology and do not follow the policy of emancipation through positive image, yet the characters seem real and open to question. The rhizomatic movements, in this narrative, enable new mapping models with multiple and non-hierarchical entry and exit points. Hage’s story-telling preserves the agency of his marginalized subjects and evaluate their modes of existence. The resistance to power and its marginalizing forces in the novels does not come from representation or re-presentation of the subject; the resistance comes from the characters’ self-recognition and not from forms of visibility that internalize shame and illegality.

Judith Butler also addresses the crossing out of the subject’s experience in the traditional forms of knowledge production and the (im)possibility of living with the notion that one’s love is not considered love, and one’s loss is not considered loss, or living an unrecognizable life: “If what and how you love is already a kind of nothing or nonexistence, how can you possibly explain the loss of this non-thing, and how would it ever become publicly grievable?” (Butler 13). The subject’s decision to negotiate and to reconcile with the ‘mourning’ experience is a clear territorial attempt to recapture sovereignty over his/her own meaning. The attempt might be accompanied by acquiring a new language, new concepts to communicate or to express an impossible and simultaneous double-loss of the loved-object, and the loving subject/self. Such a narrative does not nullify the reality and the actuality of a lived experience even if it might seem morally short handed or delirious. The inherent and sometimes paradoxical heterogeneity of characters might not always resolve into a moral, purified collective, or ideal. Hence, listening

can be considered the first attempt at decolonizing the subject from its transcending form into a collective body.

Conclusion

Conclusions normally mark endings, or attempts to link a beginning with a particular end. This project, however, has been an attempt to prepare for a beginning and a coming-together. This dissertation is an opening up to the Other and, in each chapter, an attempt to produce new stems and filaments for new inquiries. It has moved toward such new attachments by providing an inclusive framework for further studies. The migrant literary and cultural texts examined in this study offer the political and aesthetic potential for transformation, creativity, reform, and negotiation. In this regard, each chapter corresponds to a particular form of deterritorialization and is engaged in a political knowledge-practice with an inclusive, nonjudgmental approach towards non-western epistemologies and movements: “Ethics is a tending of coming-together, a caring for belonging as such” (Massumi *Parables for the Virtual* 255).

The deterritorialization of self and other bears similarities to Deleuze and Guattari’s famous example of wasp and orchid.¹⁷⁸ This project has studied deterritorialization of self and other, in migrant writings. The deterritorialization of language empowers migrant writing, often painfully, to reach the preindividual¹⁷⁹ between movement and language. Here, the deterritorialization of language is, in the words of Massumi and Manning about “how language opens itself to movement and how movement cocomposes with this opening” (*Thought in Act*

¹⁷⁸ “the red clover and the bumble bee; or the orchid and the male wasp that it attracts and intercepts by carrying on its flower the image and the odor of the female wasp” (*Anti-Oedipus* 285).

¹⁷⁹ “The preindividual is the germ of potential in every activity. It can be thought as the force of becoming akin to the pull of the Deleuzo-Guattarian virtual where it combines with the actual” (Manning *Always More Than One* 16).

31). Here, we are confronted with “writing that ceaselessly composes and decomposes the chains into signs that have nothing that impels them to become signifying” (*Anti-Oedipus* 39). Such language accompanies the march of Lawrence and the Bedouins in the desert¹⁸⁰ in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, the magic carpet’s flight above the metropolis in *Carnival*, and the revolution of cockroaches who shall survive to rule the fried Earth (*Cockroach* 7). These movements of deterritorialization give migrant writing its transformative elements. As we have also tried to demonstrate, such elements are not limited to migrant literature, but can also be traced in Indigenous literatures. Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Ceremony* involves similar movements, as do works by Thomas King. Such Indigenous narratives move the reader to another place. The movement of reterritorialization is a particular form of movement in Indigenous literatures that can be traced through style, oral tradition and land-based ceremonies.

Deterritorialization then becomes a mode of thought. ‘Nomad thought’, as Deleuze calls it, is a strategy for thinking; schizophrenia as a process and not as a pathological disease (Pisters 103). Perceiving deterritorialized male subjectivity thus involves recognizing the creative ways that a subject survives and becomes. In Hage, for example, schizophrenia as a process moves from breakthrough to breakdown. Deleuze and Guattari locate such breakdown “in the constrained arrest of the process, or its continuation in the void, or the way in which it is forced to take itself as a goal (*Anti-Oedipus* 362). Following Deleuze and Guattari, we can say that for Hage, “[m]adness breaks through, beneath the reformist investments, or his reactionary and fascist investments” (*Anti-Oedipus* 364). In *Cockroach* and *Carnival*, such reactionary movements are embedded in untimely vengeful murders somewhere else for someone else, for

¹⁸⁰ See for instance, Bryden, Mary. “Travelling by camel: T. E. Lawrence and the Portability of Shame.” *Gilles Deleuze: Travels in Literature*. 2007.

example when Otto kills the journalist or when the protagonist in *Cockroach* commits revengeful manslaughter. Hage, however, also finds his breakthrough in madness, and the freedom to move through an aesthetics of existence without moral constraints.

The breakdown as structural collapse is also prominent in Abani's *GraceLand*. Here, the collapse is a particular form of movement that not only produces a chaotic time frame that connects past, present, and future through an unruly rhizome; it also involves ritual movements of initiation, descent into the darkness and subliminal horror (torture, rape, death and melancholia) and crossing thresholds. The abundance of corpses in *GraceLand*, and also in Hage's *Beirut Hell Fire Society* implies a liminal symbol between life and death. For Abani and Hage, the corpse also exists as symbolic liminality. It threatens the very boundaries of self and other, of the knowable and meaninglessness.

In concluding, I would also like to revisit Massumi's notion of affect, and the forms of writing and language that can amplify affect and movements at the threshold of consciousness. For me, to write about deterritorialized male subjectivity was "thought in the act."¹⁸¹ This project—if I use Massumi and Manning's analogy— involves the dropping of five stones in a pond, with each chapter having its own logic and pattern. The project has dedicated itself to highlighting the emergent, but also the ephemeral patterns that are related to masculinity: those liminal moments when things fall apart or begin to take shape, the in-between moment when things speed up, the moments of becoming, or the bodily intensities that cannot be named but can

¹⁸¹ Massumi and Manning refer to their writing as follows: "[a] stone dropped into a pond produces a ripple pattern. Two stones dropped into the same pond produce two ripple patterns. Where the ripples intersect, a new and complex pattern emerges, reducible to neither one nor the other" (*Thought in the Act* viii)

only be felt. In *Parables for the Virtual*, Massumi also highlights the “intrinsic connection between movement and sensation” (1). The displacement in migrant literature also calls forth qualitative differences, and signals feelings, that resonate, yet interfere with each other in a formation that Manning characterizes as ‘always more than one.’ The various forms of masculinity in this project “unfold from each other to stand out for themselves, then fold back together to express their belonging to the same body, or to the same field of thought”.¹⁸²

Deterritorialized male subjectivity thus generates waves of thought, waves of writing that invite reading and decoding that resist dominant cultural hegemonies. The resistance to power and its marginalizing forces in these novels appear as a uniquely preindividual investment that rises up and embraces a full body for itself.

¹⁸² Massumi, Brian. “Prelude.” *Always More Than One: Individuation’s Dance*. by Erin Manning. p.xiii.

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