

Introduction

Culture on the move: Towards a minorization of cultural difference

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*Herein, perhaps, lies the secret: to bring
into existence and not to judge.*

— Gilles Deleuze, *Critique et clinique*

It has become increasingly difficult today to define or characterize cultural belonging. This, however, is not only due to globalization and mass migrations that constitute our modern condition but also to the inherent instability of the very concepts of culture, tradition or community. This is not to suggest that culture has disappeared but rather that it has become impossible today to think of cultures as homogeneous, providing us with a sense of collective identity and totalizing expressions of community. The globalizing movement of modernity, the deterritorializing flows of its economic relations and the increasing migration that follows it show that the boundaries between traditionally perceived cultures have dissolved while the concept of culture itself is more than ever characterized by internal tensions and contradictions. It is then neither cultural identity nor its constitutive outside that is central to culture but rather the movement, a culture-in-transfer, in which it already resides. This movement brings with it the diasporization of cultures and identities that can no longer be essentialized, reterritorialized or constructed as self-consistent. Indeed, as Hardt & Negri (2000) argue: “We must cleanse ourselves of any misplaced nostalgia for the *belle époque* of that modernity.”¹

And yet, the fact that the uniform notion of culture, seen as homogenous, has finally met its demise is also what calls for its violent recrudescence. Apart from increased border controls, symbolic reterritorializations of all kinds take place. The archaic language of bloodlines and heritage is evoked, historical privilege is used to reglorify cultural destinies, renewed sentimentalized investments in symbolic rituals and ceremonials are made, forms are reconstituted everywhere to block the creative escape routes along which culture moves and breathes and overcode its

¹ Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 2001), 47.

internal ruptures in atrophied stereotypes and normative formulas. We can witness this across the Western political landscape, in particular, where vigorous resurgence of cultural nationalism, racial orthodoxy and ethnic absolutism is gaining traction, becoming a political presence that generates new claims of legitimacy for the subject. Multiplicity of cultural encounters, flows of redundancies and offbeat paths of communication that constantly open up and question the established regimes of value are giving rise to systems of identities and weaponized cultural (be)longings rather than to changes of historically determined attitudes. Old hatreds flare up, suppressed anxieties of social displacements are reanimated and the mythogenies of blood and soil, seen as cultural closures or frames of capture, are again rekindled in parched parochial landscapes of identity politics and nationalist nostalgias. The "belle époque" of modernity and its horrors seems on the verge of repeating itself. But, perhaps, cultures have never been part of that *époque*. The concepts of nation, of race and ethnic differences we have used to essentialize our destinies and determine our place in modernity, have given the impression of there being something else that preexists the dispersed realities of our present and our history that have always been characterized by the movements of multiple and partial differences. Perhaps our cultural identifications have, in fact, always been in movement, never one but constituted of a myriad of syncretic narratives, de-stratified crosscurrents of meaning and transcultural encounters that escape the regimes of identifications. The measure of a culture's health does not reside in atrophy of its self-identity but in its dispersion of atoms everywhere, its schizoid states of intensities and deterritorializations where thresholds of self-consistency are surpassed and zones of indiscernibility entered. These are transformative, unsanitary zones of established orders and limit points of systems, their underdevelopment that mobilizes ambiguities, ruptures and conjunctions of flows and that resists everything that subjugates its life.

It is to these schizoid states and zones of indistinctions that this volume in *Moderna språk* tries to contribute with a collection of essays that all focus on demythologizations and elisions of cultural sediments. The concept of culture can offer a wide range of interpretations and strategies of capture but the aspects of transformation, escape and movement are integral to this volume. What could be tentatively identified as the watershed of the contributions included is the fact that there are no homogeneous cultures and that all forms of localisms are fantasies or collective fictions of homogeneity. This is articulated differently and carried across a variety of thresholds in the contributions whose analyses of cultural production include translation, cuisine, media, water writing, punk literature, history, urban studies and protest art as well as more theoretically focused deconstructions of frames of capture that cultural imaginaries rely on. Diversity of material in relation to the elusive concept of culture and the question of its limits was significant for the volume and its overall concerns and, although only eight studies are included, they are all appropriate in terms of their geographical and imaginative focus. They all represent the general movement of elision and disarticulation of bodies and totalities that are always presupposed, not only in essentialisms and the racialized

rhetoric blowing across the volatile terrain of contemporary politics but also in the liberal discourses of cultural pluralism, tolerance and multiculturalism. It is this general disarticulating movement across a variety of cultural expressions that provides a departure point for the volume and that contributes to the integrity of its claims.

Whether they are discussed as global, local, multi-, trans- or sub-, cultural articulations are nomadic and unstable contingencies that move, and their flight constantly contributes to new clusters of proximity and systems of resonance that problematize and deconstruct our naïve reductions of cultural difference. Cultural difference cannot be seen as a historical privilege of martyrdom that produces transgenerational traumas nor can it be seen as a constant production of jealous territorialities, fossilized integrities or atomic enunciations that overcode its movement to establish organized sediments and binarisms of power relations. Cultural difference is rather a permanent disjunction of territoriality, body or code, that which escapes capture to disrupt the forces of denomination, a counter-pressure of synchrony in diachrony, a black body within the white imaginary, producing syncretic lesions in airtight regimes of definition and narrative ruptures in every narrative of constitution. Cultural difference is always a double enunciation or a splitting point of ambivalence at the very moment of constitutive enunciation. It is the oppressive, exclusionary structure of every We. Perhaps the best way to think of cultural difference is in Deleuzian terms of *delirium* and *minorization*.

In *Essays: Critical and clinical*, Deleuze (1997) considers literary and, by extension, cultural practice as "a displacement of races and continents,"² a delirium where totalities pass towards their limits and towards surpassing of their own significations, liberating excluded materials of expression, deterritorializing other totalities and continents of meaning while themselves being dispossessed of their own core identifications. In a delirium, thresholds constitute centers of intensities, forming clusters of proximities between continents and core territorialities, resembling a desire with continuously shifting limits. Deleuze considers delirium as consisting of "two poles" that can situate cultural production on one paranoid pole, "pushing [it] towards a larval fascism, the disease against which it fights." On this pole, cultural practice is invested with national imperatives and is seen as "a disease" that "erects a race it claims is pure and dominant" (4). The other healthy pole of delirium is the schizoid pole, where "lines of flight" or possibilities of life are pursued, invoking always a "bastard race that ceaselessly stirs beneath dominations, resisting everything that crushes and imprisons [it]" (4). Healthy culture is a culture "seized by delirium, which forces it out of its usual furrows" (5). This is culture on the move, nomadic culture, capable, as Deleuze (1986) argues, "of disorganizing its own forms" and whose expression "break[s] forms, encourage[s] ruptures and new sproutings."³ Its body is traversed by multiple trajectories seen as open paths that constitute its outside.

² Gilles Deleuze, *Critique et clinique* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 4.

³ Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a minor literature* (University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 28.

Another analogous concept, related to "delirious formations" of expressive content that for Deleuze (1997) are "the kernels of art" (54), is his notion of minorization or the fact that the majority is not articulated by its number⁴ but by a determination of a law of constancy that embodies its normative demands. In *A thousand plateaus* (1987), such a constancy or measure, at one instance, is the face of Christ or "your average ordinary White Man" (178) that produces and references normalities.⁵ All departure from the law of constancy is non-normative and can be considered as minoritarian. However, all departures are not the same and are reterritorialized in degrees, according to their consistency with the majoritarian scripts of legitimacy, sometimes tolerated "at given places under given conditions, in a given ghetto, sometimes eras[ed]" (178). What is significant in terms of minorization, however, is that even if minorities that depart or take flight from the constancy can be defined by their own territorialities, their own constancies and affects—which may, indeed, be necessary to mobilize them collectively in expressions of rights, formal autonomies and demands for recognition—they *are themselves cut across by minorization*. Differences and intensities multiply and cluster at the thresholds of atoms for new becomings to emerge. Minorized formations that have no regimes of reference cut new lines of flight, always preventing totalities to close in upon themselves.

These disruptive energies of becoming or *energies of life* that exist in all social and cultural formations, since all of them are always in the process of *becoming minor*, are capable of differential discharge within the constancies of the majority that produces new conditions of legitimacy and identification, open to further minorization. This is why, for Deleuze (1997), minorities are always incomplete, "a bastard people, inferior, dominated, always in becoming, always incomplete" (4). In minorities *the people* are always missing. Minorization can thus be seen as the movement of deterritorialization and becoming that prevents the self-valorizing constancies of identity politics and its territorial fictions, acting as colonizing

⁴ "When we say majority, we are referring not to a greater relative quantity but to the *determination of a state or standard* in relation to which larger quantities, as well as the smallest, can be said to minoritarian: whit-man, adult males, etc. Majority implies a state of domination, not the reverse." Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 291.

⁵ Deleuze refers to this as "the faciality machine" that "computes" references of legitimacy for the subject. "If the face is in fact Christ," he writes, or "in other words, your average ordinary White Man, then the first deviances, the first divergence-types, are racial: yellow man, black man, men in the second or third category... They must be Christianized, in other words, facialized. European racism as the white man's claim has never operated by exclusion, or by the designation of someone as Other... Racism operates by the determination of degrees of deviance in relation to the White-Man face, which endeavors to integrate nonconforming traits into increasingly eccentric and backward waves, sometimes tolerating them at given places under given conditions, in a given ghetto, sometimes erasing them... From the viewpoint of racism, there is no exterior, there are no people on the outside. There are only people who should be like us and whose crime it is not to be. The dividing line is not between inside and outside... Racism never detects the particles of the other; it propagates waves of sameness until those who resist identification have been wiped out..." Cf. *ibid.*, 178.

frames of capture from within. Minorization makes re-essentialization of non-normative identities impossible. It cuts across all continents and differentiates all constitutive myths.

In addition to minorizing aspects of cultural formations, the volume also considers the impact of cultural movements on literary writing. Features such as mimicry, hybridity, diasporization of bodies in general, aesthetic innovation and recycling of traditions are implicit in the literary representations the authors focus on and could be seen as delirious effects of fluid cultural appropriations and cultural hemorrhage but also as symptomatic of a certain impossibility of escaping our history that both determines and transforms our relation to the present. The fact that they are symptoms, however, does not mean that they entail an aetiology with causes that would legislate for the delusions and pathologies of our present. Symptoms, as Deleuze (1997) explains, using Guattari's suggestive metaphor, are "like birds that strike their beaks against the window" (63). In other words, analytic ransacking of history for its traumas does not produce open paths and creative lines of flight but frames of capture for affective blockages of martyrdom that subtend collective memories, leading towards the mythogenic, paranoid pole of nationalism and "larval fascism" mentioned above. It is "a question instead of identifying... [historical] trajectories to see if they can serve as indicators of *new universes of reference* capable of acquiring a consistency sufficient for turning a situation upside down" (63-64, emphasis added). In this respect, as Deleuze suggests, "it is not a matter of searching for an origin, but of evaluating displacements" (63). Contributions in this volume should thus not be seen as producing orders of historical reference that would account for the intensities and blockages of our present but rather as synchronic connectors of minorized zones where references and certainties come apart.

Different concerns of cultural dissonance and disidentification that distinguish transcultural writing in general and can be observed thematically in fictional works, emphasizing bi- or multicultural thresholds that resist historical regimes of reference, can also occur in the delirious zones between reality and its literary representations that focus on memory and history, as well as in the genres of witness literature and autobiography. All *transwriting*, irrespective of genre or codification, is schizoid writing that attempts to emancipate difference. The transformative features of its inconsistent universes will always challenge and renegotiate the established regimes articulated in territorialities of race, gender and class or in the binaries of periphery/center, inclusion/exclusion, tradition/modernity, and other frames of capture that dictate our social existence. One of the overall concerns of this volume is to consider the possibilities for an inquiry into the thresholds of delirious states, the movement between territorialities, in order to avoid static schemas and closures used to determine our place in a world that openly resists the tenacity of our continual reductions.

Minorizing Cultural Difference

The first essay that opens up the collection by mapping out its theoretical limits, in a sense, and setting the terms for further inquiry is Edgar Platen's "Hermeneutical understanding and the transcultural challenge: Reflections on the theoretical development and its literary relevance." The essay focuses on transculturalism, its allegiances with postcolonial emancipations of difference and its further implications for literary studies. Although considering the context of German writing in particular, the essay also traces broader theoretical affinities that could be identified between transculturalism and globalization seen as "a process of a world-wide homogenization" (19). Following Ette, Platen argues, however, for a transculturalism based on a "poetics of mobility" instead that does not arrive at "one space or the other" but is rather constituted by a "movement and criss-crossing between them" (20). The essay also disarticulates the notion of what Said (2001) would call "possessive exclusivism,"⁶ where, by virtue of experience, transcultural writing could only be territorialized by unhomely subjects whose victimization legitimates the claim. "All of us," as Platen suggests, including

those who regard themselves as sedentary, can be said to have a nomadic background of wanderings and migrations. Therefore, it would be problematic from a methodological, but also a societal and political point of view to regard transculturality as a concept only suitable for describing phenomena and problems related to "special groups," such as refugees, exiles or other migrants. A reduction of this kind would mean that only authors with a multicultural background could write transcultural literature. It would also further confirm the status of the mentioned groups as "special groups." (23)

Although emancipating transculturalism from subjective departures of vulnerability and situated knowledges, it is, however, difficult to disregard the fact that there is a certain violence in this universalizing gesture to see exile as the staging of the human condition in general. The experiences of migration often imply traumas and shattering discontinuities that can become appropriated as fetishized metaphors for the general displacement of the modern subject.⁷ Not all movements are the same. What happens when one "is forced to move," as Sara Ahmed (1999) suggests when arguing against conflation of journeys: "Does one ever move freely? What movements are possible and, moreover, what movements are impossible? Who has a passport and can move? Who does not have a passport, and *yet* moves?"⁸ Migration is always an embodied experience of extreme closeness, mobilizing a

⁶ "[T]he sense of being an excluding insider by virtue of experience (only women can write for and about women, and only literature that treats women or Orientals well is good literature)..." Cf. Edward W. Said, *Reflections on exile and other essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 215. This exclusivism, however, is also jealously kept in order to maintain legitimacy of minorized discourses.

⁷ For a more extensive discussion on vulnerabilities of diasporic writing and the problems of its idealization outside the attachments that situate it, cf. Zlatan Filipovic, "The roots of my shame: Place in diasporic imaginary," *Angelaki* 25.4 (2020, forthcoming).

⁸ Sara Ahmed, "Home and away: Narratives of migration and estrangement," *International journal of cultural studies* 2.3 (1999): 332, emphasis added.

thousand affects and attachments against its ritualization in objective forms, and its *lived* experience does suggest qualitative differences between a refugee and a privileged modern subject whose existential displacements may reflect a disparate set of concerns. However, this does not detract from the legitimacy of Platen's argument that identifies genuine epistemological concerns within transculturalism endemic to all discourses on cultural representation and political agency but only points to certain colonizing unease within it.

Linda K. Hammarfelt's "River writing and 'the tyranny of beginnings: Autobiographies along rivers'" is the second essay in the collection that continues with elision of territorialities but forays into a different set of concerns, finding new possibilities for expressions of subjectivity whose stem integrity is metaphorically embedded in confluences of waterscapes and diasporized along the flows and torrents of its tributaries. The essay takes its departure point in disarticulation of autobiographies used as frames of capture for the integrated subject, the "striated space," in Deleuzian (1987) terminology, that "always has a logos," that organizes disparate threads into narratives, "produces an order and succession of distinct forms" and subordinates "lines or trajectories... to points" (478). Hammarfelt relies instead on a "functionalized" use of rivers (28) as metaphors for a destratified subjectivity or "smooth space" to use Deleuze (1987), as "an amorphous collection of juxtaposed pieces that can be joined together in an infinite number of ways..." (476). It is a "non-formal space" (477) with no center or standard to provide a pivot for "diabolical powers of *organization*" (480) and allocations of value that establish majorities.⁹

Focusing on two biographical accounts, in particular, *Flodernas bok* (*The book of rivers*, 2012) by Nina Burton and the autofictional novel *Am fluß* (2014) by Esther Kinsky, that make use of waterscapes to articulate the amorphous narratives of subjectivity, Hammarfelt considers the cultural significance of water in relation to transcultural subjects. The striated space and assumed linearity of rivers, metaphorically related to the formation of integrated autobiographic subjects, is placed in question here by deterritorialization of integrities, "continuously touching different shores, memories, stories, rivers, and lives, suggesting that human lives are interconnected with one another and embedded in the global circuit of waters" (39). Analogous to water's ability to overflow and reimpart smooth space over the forms and partitions that determine its limits, the subject itself is overdetermined and open to delirious flows of deterritorialization where it surpasses itself in intensities, "in webs of complex interaction, negotiation, and transformation with and through other entities" (40), as Hammarfelt, following Braidotti, suggests.

⁹ Although for Deleuze, the two cannot be strictly separated as discrete points of formation, since there is always "a recapitulation of one in the other, a furtherance of one through the other," smooth space "always possesses a greater power of deterritorialization than the striated." And yet, as he continues a few pages later: "Nothing is ever done with: smooth space allows itself to be striated, and striated space reimparts a smooth space, with potentially very different values, scope and signs." Cf. Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 478, 480, 486. The striated can be seen as form, the smooth, on the other hand, as its development through continuous variation and becoming.

What the essay reveals through its careful consideration of autobiographical writing and waterscapes is an embedded and always "permeable self on the move, interwoven in complex transnational networks of interaction" (40).

The tension set up in Burton's writing between "the individual quest for roots and understanding of a hybrid self on the move" (32) that could be seen as a binary that defines and tears the subject by motivating a melancholy state of dispossession or nostalgia for origins, what Derrida refers to as "the metaphysics of presence,"¹⁰ is maintained as a gravitational pivot of her writing, Hammarfelt claims. And yet, the non-center of waterscapes that disrupt any restrictive notions of origins or tyrannies of identity is also "repeatedly accentuate[d]," the fact "that man has not only one origin, but numerous ones, and is consequently not formed by only one watercourse," but precisely by its countless tributaries, "a plurality of runnels" (33).

Gema Ortega's essay, "Where is home? Diaspora and hybridity in contemporary dialogue," is a theoretical foray into questions of diasporic consciousness and hybrid identity formation that have engaged postcolonial thought with exigency and persistence and their significance today is even more pronounced in the wake of increasing global displacements and forced migration. The essay problematizes the question of diaspora as only affirmative enunciation of new, disruptive continents of meaning that question majoritarian scripts of legitimacy and renegotiate cultural identities. Instead, Ortega considers diaspora as mythogenic in its reactive attachments to "home" that "stops being a mere geographical point" but becomes an "imaginary signifier" (46) of desire. Undergirded by the imperatives of the past, diasporic consciousness tends to essentialize cultural difference and reify nationalities. "Living here but desiring there," Ortega argues, diaspora "becomes a production of identity dependent on an 'act of imaginary reunification'" (46). Desire, indeed, makes all the difference. Home, even if lost is still present as a palimpsest of desire and cathectic energies of affective investment. It remains intrusive, rearticulating its limits and assuming new regimes of meaning in new assemblages, powered by the nostalgia of beginnings and our inability to reconstitute them.¹¹ This "reconstruction" of home, Ortega explains

¹⁰ All questions of origin imply a metaphysics that would establish an essentialist and foundationalist limit on discursive practice, legislating for a fixed and determinate reading of our social reality. However, as Derrida, in his life-long project of deconstruction of metaphysics of presence suggests, the origin is always deferred in and differing from its manifestation, it is never simple, never the origin but always yet another signifier that defers it: "Where and how does it begin . . . ? A question of origin. But a meditation upon the trace should undoubtedly teach us that there is no origin, that is to say simple origin; that the questions of origin carry with them a metaphysics of presence. Cf. Jacques Derrida, *Of grammatology*, Corrected edition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 74. Cf. also his opening essay "Différance" in *Margins of philosophy*, which I regard as the foundational text of deconstruction and Derrida's entire *oeuvre*. Jacques Derrida, *Margins of philosophy*, Reprint edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 1–29.

¹¹ For the significance of attachment and affect in relation to diasporic articulations of home, cf. Filipovic, "The roots of my shame: Place in diasporic imaginary."

becomes collective knowledge, helping unify and homogenize the diasporic experience of people who otherwise would be considered radically different in terms of class, education, gender, origin, histories, and locality in their previous places of residence. Therefore, collective identities within a foreign nation are "imagined," with "home" as the metaphoric center that allows the creation and recreation of a cultural identity in *différance*. (46)

This, however, means that cultural identity is never stable or essentially determined outside its significations but is always deferred in and by the constructions that articulate its imperatives. *Différance*, in fact, reveals both the possibility of identity formation and the impossibility of its foundation.

For Ortega, however, diasporic consciousness rests on "a nativist conception of identity that essentializes the individual around a narrative of uprooting and desire for return..." (47) and "should not be conflated with discursive constructions of hybridity" (45). Hybridity, instead, is emancipating, broaching new paths of becoming between territorialities, lines of escape from historically determined significations that she finds in a Bakhtinian shift away from "monologic narratives of identification" (57). This signals a change in thinking about cultural identity that can never be accounted for in the present without reductions but, "[I]like a novel in a Bakhtinian sense, the narrative of one's displaced identity is always yet-to-be-fulfilled. That is, it is oriented towards the future" (57), deterritorialized by the possibilities of dialogic relations yet to come. Although all hybrid narratives are irremissibly constrained by the conditions that constitute the possibility of their enunciation, their freedom consists in their "aesthetic" capacity to surpass the limits of their definitions "in a dialogic battle against cultural nationalism and fixed narratives of race, gender, and ethnicity produced and reproduced by modern nation states" (58).

As hybrid narratives of subject formation overlap and disarticulate core memories, fossilized value aggregates and territorial experiences, they are also inevitably tied with passages to the limit of delirious states that question and transform official discourses of legitimacy and identification. One such passage, where limits overlap to surpass and deterritorialize each other is the site of translation. Anette Svensson's, "Food as function and food as figure: Cultural translation and cultural hybridity in *A change of skies*, *Love and vertigo* and *Nina's heavenly delights*" explores this site, using food both as a cipher of cultural identity and an emancipatory agent of heterology and disidentification. "In addition to representing the source and target cultures," Svensson argues,

food [also] illustrates the immigrant's position *in-between* these cultures... For migrants, who move from one cultural setting... to another... food functions as a representative of the migrant's source and target cultures... While the wish to cook traditional dishes from the source culture denotes non-adaptation and a resistance to translation, the desire for the target food culture illustrates a wish to be "translated beings..." (62)

Although the use of "source" and "target" cultures in relation to food practices presupposes binaries, totalities and subsequent cultural disavowals leading to affective aporias in diasporic subject formation, food also places these very

presuppositions in question, testifying to prostituted origins and adulterated totalities, to the fact that culture, in all its articulations, is heterogenous and nomadic from the beginning. Through her close reading of food practices in Gooneratne's and Teo's novels and Parmar's acclaimed work, Svensson shows that "domestication" and "foreigniz[ation]" (65), as assimilative translation procedures that accommodate or resist the other, also imply reterritorializations of cultural difference and can be considered as "strategies that demonstrate power hierarchies" (65) inherent in ritualization of food practices. While through domestication, the other is eaten and successfully consumed or subjectivized through digestion, the resistance in foreignization, although seemingly counterhegemonic in its untranslatability, is also integrated and exoticized as a resource in the globalized economy of difference and cultural exchange. Using hybridity, however, as an operative concept in her analysis, Svensson also renders the strategies of translation incomplete, revealing an ambivalence or a "double translation process" (74) that keeps cultural identities defy closure. Neither departures nor arrivals are ever certain but open up ridge lines and "multiple non-linear pathways" (63) that split and combine with parts of other ridge lines. Translated beings can never be translated enough, which constitutes their unfinished condition, characterized by open trajectories that always exceed the limit points of their definition.

"A minor literature doesn't come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language" (Deleuze & Guatarri 1986: 16). For Deleuze (1997), as he explains in his later work, this implies a "minor use of the major language, within which they [the authors] express themselves entirely" (109), without the formal constraints of majoritarian linguistic sobriety. Instead, they "make the language take flight, they send it racing along a witch's line, ceaselessly placing it in a state of disequilibrium" (ibid.). Ylva Lindberg's essay focuses on two 'minor' authors who escape the dominant systems of organization within a major language, Fatou Diome and Alain Mabanckou. However, Lindberg's structuralist foray into the ambivalence and minor modes of expression zeros in on their identity formation as transnational authors in the French media, itself a delirious context of displacements that carries integrities off across limits and produces uncapturable zones of indiscernibility. As Lindberg suggests, "the impact of audio-visual media," in particular, "in processes of categorization and legitimization" of authorship today is as significant as it is unavoidable (77-78). It is in the mediatized contexts of subject formation that authors today "claim a part of the literary space and participate in the shaping of their literary identity" (ibid.).

Using audio-visual media samples as its point of departure, "The uncapturable contours of an author: Ambiguous postures in French media of transnational Francophone writers Fatou Diome and Alain Mabanckou," explores the ambiguities and modulations of author postures that not only affirms the impossibility of static representation of transnationalities but also questions the binary regimes that dictate the narratives of multiplicity within which representation takes place. The regimes of capture articulated as "a range of dichotomies, such as *national-transnational*, *exotic-authentic*, *local-global*" (80), that, according to Lindberg, constitute "the

core of interpretative endeavors regarding transnational literature" are both closely developed and rigorously problematized in relation to author postures and their semiotic aspects in media samples. What is significant, in particular, is the emerging critique of "the Western publishing system," and its "tendency to establish practices that absorb minor cultures into an Occidental mainstream culture" (83) that reconsolidates the global strategies of assimilation and cultural homogenization.

Author posture, however, seems to presuppose a private/public binary that runs like a secret narrative making the concept possible in the first place; yet, it is through the analysis of "the public sphere of literature," as a "stage for role-playing," (86), that the ambiguities and "uncapturable contours" of minor literary identities become legible. Even the "uses of clothes," and "jewelry" in the media samples, are seen by Lindberg as "strategies to underscore both authenticity – the authors' origins and 'true' person, and exoticism – the authors' strangeness and foreignness" (104). For the white gaze, however, authenticity is intimately related to strangeness and exoticism in this context and, for Lindberg, this suggests still deeper complicities or representation:

[T]he core of French cultural institutions is double, since they both guarantee a relative visibility to marginalized literature from France and render the large majority of Francophone literature imperceptible. The choice of the 'happy few' simply reduces possibilities to understand the multitude of creations produced in the margins of the central French national literature production. In addition, Mabanckou puts afore his scholarly and literary merits, while critique and media focus on his origins. (99)

As Deleuze & Guattari (1987) suggest in the opening sections of their seminal work, *A thousand plateaus*, "there are lines of articulation, or segmentarity, strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification" (3). What the author postures in the end affirm are open destratified trajectories and ridge lines that escape representational frames of capture, the "freedom of belonging, and a grounding in various locations in the world, through continuous encounters and addition of cultures and languages" (106). Indeed, the overcoded notion of territory itself is deterritorialized as the author postures locate points of origin in flows outside the generative limit points identities and territories presuppose. Instead, they "defy categorizations and promote a consciousness made up of movement and uncertainties, travel and encounters, where identity is fluid, and the contours of an author meant to be vanishing, so that renewal always can be let in" (107).

The deconstruction of national identity as a paranoid construct of political and historical forces is perhaps most perceptibly articulated in Antoni Raja-i-Vich's essay, "Modernity and the transformation of the spanish national(ist) speech." The historical unfolding of the nationalist narrative in Spain and its consolidation of destratified cultural multiplicities into systems of legitimacy and abjection is revealed in the essay as a majoritarian fantasy that, like all national fantasies, produces a reality of cruelty and oppression of difference. Apart from being an act of stratification or capture, every form of nationalism can also be considered as a

"black hole" in Deleuzian terms. Stratification, as Deleuze & Guattari (1987) explain, "consist[s] of giving form to matters, of imprisoning intensities... into systems of resonance and redundancy, of producing upon the body of the earth molecules large and small and organizing them into molar aggregates... they are like 'black holes' or occlusions striving to seize whatever comes within their reach. They operate by coding and territorialisation" (40) and they attract "consciousness and passion... [with]in which they resonate" (133). The consolidation of Spanish national identity seems to stand on the historical shoulders of anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim hysteria, religious sanitation and fascism, fixing its whole historical weight on the second, paranoid pole of delirium that passionately overcodes and reterritorializes all difference. In the late 15th century, as Raja-i-Vich argues, the "[l]egislative and linguistic diversity were still a solid reality – the existence of Catalonia, Valencia or Mallorca with their own specific narrative histories testify to this – but also, within Castile, the idea of a unique, ontological and conclusive Spanish identity was a chimera. The only element that unified people of these two kingdoms was religion" (117).

However, in the wake of modernity's challenges and the emergence of new majoritarian scripts for national legitimacy, religion as a black hole of "the Spanish problem" (121) was replaced by fascism and its totalizing "process of *castellanización*" (124). And, yet, the homogenizing cultural signifiers introduced at the time testify to irrepressible lines of flight, as "the Spanish national dance became Flamenco, which was not Castilian but Andalusian" and "the National dish became *la Paella*, which is Valencian" (124). Discursive forays and separatist incursions on the newly reterritorialized Spanish identity continued to an extent even under the fascist regimes of severely restricted flows and, as Raja-i-Vich suggests, have intensified recently in new demands for redefinitions "of the supposed Spanish *being*" (127). However, what the essay explicitly demystifies is any sense of organic emergence of national identity in metaphysics or its possibility outside the contested site of history and the political terrain of articulating regimes of power. This terrain is never complete or total and every triumph remains fragile, as new lines of flight are always drawn and cut under it.

Maria Van Liew's critical consideration of Kiko Amat's semi-autobiographical novel *Rompepistas* (2009) focuses on minorization of Catalan difference and its nationalist imaginary within the Spanish majoritarian regimes of cultural identity. As suggested previously, minorization does not stop with the emancipation of constituents within larger aggregates of territoriality but rather continues to cut lines of escape in all organizing power blocs, preventing also the self-valorization of minority cultures that recoup their power in establishing new territorialities as structures of internal domination. In this case, Catalan nationalism, in its resistance to Spanish majoritarian scripts of legitimacy, negates the very multiplicity of the community in whose name it arrogates independence. In "Resisting nationalism in *Rompepistas* (2009): Pan-national punk attitude in the working-class fiction of Kiko Amat," Van Liew targets the lines of escape that are reflected in "un-official versions of life" in late 1980s Barcelona (132), as they "collide with official

versions of the Catalan democratic experience" (131). Lines of flight in "the Catalan nationalist status quo" (132) that dictates legitimate narratives of identity formation are cut open by "working-class frustration" in the neglected peripheries of the city and the "punk and pop solidarity with other disenfranchised youth abroad" (134). The peripheries, or the "*extrarradio*" of the city that zones unsanitary narratives of fragmented and abject realities, act as the limit points of established orders and, thus, as centers of intensities in the novel. "Ironically," as Van Liew argues,

centrist notions of 'Catalan-ness' in Barcelona produced an internal suburban periphery – the *extrarradio* – surrounding the city, most notably since waves of Spanish migration occurred in the 1950s and 1960s in search of work. Younger members of this peripheral realm have relied on imported aesthetics to uphold their difference from the Catalan nationalist center working to distinguish itself from Spain as one of a more nativist position. (134)

The "*extrarradio*" in the novel could be seen as a passage to the limit, both inside and outside the city organized by majoritarian scripts of masculinity and Catalan totality. It is traversed by intensities of both "violence and desperation that had no outlet in the narratives of mainstream Barcelonan culture" (136). However, it is in these delirious zones that "centrist notions" of Catalan constancies and core integrities surpass themselves by taking hold of and letting themselves be seized by other forces producing parascripts for new enunciations of power. Indeed, as Van Liew argues, "[t]he commodification of Catalan identity by conservative national forces prompted its rejection by punk-oriented youth of the *extrarradio* who adopted a predominantly 'foreign' soundtrack to express their subaltern experience" (136). Writing against "judgment," that for Deleuze (1997) blocks any new modes of life—or, rather, just *life*—to emerge, "[f]or the latter creates itself through its own forces, that is, through the forces it is able to harness, and is valid in and of itself inasmuch as *it brings the new combination into existence*" (135, emphasis added), he lets us on a secret. "Herein, perhaps, lies the secret: to bring into existence and not to judge" (ibid.). What inspires is always *other*, and, in terms of the novel, it was the vagrant aesthetic of "punk, glam and rock, which inspired them [the Catalan youth] to reach beyond their national boundaries for new codes of conduct" (136), creating inclusive disjunctions in the violence of exclusion all majorities perpetuate.

Immersed in the politics of tourism and its local and global prerogatives, Monica Cantero-Exojo's essay, "Semiotic landscapes and discourses of protest in Barcelona: *Tourism Kills*," provides an insight in the contemporary context of urban development. Barcelona's aggressive development in recent years to accommodate the burgeoning demands of global tourism has triggered a public outcry to limit its arrogation of local economy and horizontal urban space. The dominant narratives of social and economic benefits associated with tourism that have dictated "the collective strategies of city development" (146), have now lost traction, leading, instead, to adverse effects on local growth and, ultimately, to active "mobilization and popular organization against the *turistification* of Barcelona" (145). These metonymic or contiguous movements of "[s]ocial activism and neighborhood

associations" (146), dispersing through the city streets, could be seen as deterritorializing horizontal forces and cutting edges of democratic frustration no longer able to support vertical schemas imposed on them. Reinvested with new vigours, this immanence of urban space was recoding its milieu and, as Cantero-Exojo's explains, "taking central agency by reclaiming public spaces" (ibid.).

The destratification of urban space, connecting it on a horizontal axis, was made visible in street art and graffiti "strategically placed all over the city" and "positioned at eye's level," changing not only "the semiotic landscape" (147) of urban space but also focalizing the conjunctive flows of local discontent with overall "lack of governmental response, pervading economic crisis and elision of promised trickle-down benefits from the industry [deeply felt] in the local social fabric" (153). "Tourism kills" seen all over the city was a semiotic needle point of suppressed energies, producing real mutations in the social coding and institutionalization of desire:

... the painting of street graffiti, geolinguistically occupying the city... literally jumped from the building walls, neighborhood balconies or banners, to become action-performances in what are considered criminal acts by the law... [S]ome of the actions consisted [also] of puncturing the wheels of city bicycles or vandalizing the iconic double-deck red "tourist bus/el bus turistic." These actions metaphorically aimed to *kill* the icons most commonly used by and identified with the idea of tourism in the urban landscape. (154)

Deterritorialization is the point at which desire escapes, cutting a new line of divergence in the assemblages that have constructed its passage. It is a passage to the limit and a becoming that surpasses it in the emergence of something new that resets the reterritorializing objectives of vertical organizing structures. Its destabilization of official discourses in Barcelona "was received as a call for social justice" (171), exteriorizing "the destructive consequences of using the city as a wealth-machine" (167) and producing new crossing points and horizontal relays that slow down power imperatives and communize local policies.

Although the present volume does not intend to account for a comprehensive deterritorialization of static cultural formations, through its variety of discursive regimes and integrated thematic conjunctions, it consistently points towards a system of leakage or outflow that escapes from the cultural codes and hard drawn lines that would stabilize it. It introduces degrees of deterritorialization in the binary systems of organization that overcode *life*, and, hopefully, moves a little towards emancipating its energies from underneath the line that plugs its passage of escape. As Deleuze & Guattari (1987) insist, however, "[t]he rigid system does not bring the other system to a halt: the flow continues beneath the line, forever mutant, while the line totalizes" (221). If there ever was a task for cultural production, it is to break the line and multiply escape routes.

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