

Sites of (Post)colonial Becomings: Body, Land and Text in the Writings of

Wilson Harris, Derek Walcott, Mahmoud Darwish and

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Abstract

This thesis explores the reflexive relationship between sites of body, land and text and the potential of becoming in each one of them, in the literary works of four postcolonial writers: Wilson Harris, Derek Walcott, Mahmoud Darwish and Ghassan Kanafani. The study suggests a cross-cultural literary alliance between the Caribbean and Palestinian literatures by means of utilising theories of nomadic writing and ‘necropolitics’ in order to investigate the three physical territories of body, land, and text as ‘sites of becoming’. Engaging with a diverse range of theorists including, Gilles Deleuze, Achille Mbembe, Frantz Fanon, Emmanuel Levinas, Michel Agier, Edward Said, Zygmunt Bauman, Judith Butler and Edouard Glissant among others, this thesis investigates the possibility of representing violent pasts inscribed on lands and bodies in texts, and contends that the very impossibility of representation of bruised memory is what opens a literary space for the postcolonial writer to write on the wounds of history and give voice to the dispossessed.

In the introduction to this thesis, the rationale and theoretical framework of the study is offered. The chapter on Wilson Harris’s *Palace of the Peacock* and *Jonestown* focuses on literary postcolonies used by Harris to suggest chaos theory as an alternative to linear narratives and a formula for transcending historical traumas. The study then moves to investigate Derek Walcott’s *Omeros* and the author’s attempt at crossing the literary parallels with the Homeric literary tradition. The chapter on Mahmoud Darwish explores the poet’s threatened longings for his Beloved/Land and how he encrypts desire in his literary writing. The politicized subject as an emblem of becoming is discussed in Ghassan Kanafani’s *Men In The Sun* and *All That’s Left To You*. In the conclusion, a crystallization of the main argument is given.

Dedication

For mum, who never lost faith in me.

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Chapter One

Introduction

‘[T]he *history* of catastrophe requires such a literature to hold a broken mirror up to broken nature’.

(Brathwaite, *Ancestors* 235)

In this thesis, the concept of violent oppression and its representation is a crucial aspect of the narrative discourse I examine, and forms an integral part of the theoretical framework of this study. I have chosen writers from two different nations and cultures, namely, the Caribbean and Palestine, with the aim of examining themes common to their bio-political fiction—literature dealing with body politics and necropolitics (politics of death and dying). This study does not ignore the idea that postcoloniality is often a nationally and culturally specific experience; rather, it proposes that certain aspects of these narratives—their representation of the reflexive relation between body, land and the text—cross-historical, linguistic, and cultural boundaries. My aim is to assert the relationship between literary structure and certain aspects of lived experience, proposing that violent and traumatic experiences affect their literary representation.

The history and culture of the modern Caribbean and Palestine is inextricably linked to the landscape. The relationship between body, land and text might as well be considered reflexive since the tropes offered through the lens of one provide insight into the substance of the other. Caribbean and Palestinian memory, as a kind of national consciousness, does not exist prior to colonisation/ occupation. National consciousness

can only be created through discourse and in the Caribbean and Palestinian literature, we have ‘imagined geographies’ as these writings show a connection to regional rather than national consciousness. The possibility these literary texts promise is the concept that fiction has the power to influence political change and build a biopolitical memory. Hence, the importance of the imaginative aspect for the postcolonial writers rises out of its ability to offer a new literary understanding of (post)colonial experiences, as I intend to show in this thesis by engaging in charting how Caribbean and Palestinian writers have managed to inscribe the memory of deracination—in its various manifestations of dispossession and displacement—into the written text.

Uprootedness and dislocation, have been the legacy of the Caribbean region due to the slave trade and sugar plantation imposed by colonialism. The complexities of addressing the Caribbean historical legacy; the plant exploitation, colonisation of indigenous people, and the decolonial struggle of the descendants of slave trade had a tremendous impact on shaping the literature of that region, and on the interpretation of geo-political spatialities. The literature of Palestine is also concerned with issues of mass displacement, dispossession, memory, and history of occupation. In this study, I intend to examine these two literatures as a production of a specific juncture in history, namely, the modern slavery of plantation in the Caribbean, and settler colonialism and the Palestinian exodus that resulted from the Israeli occupation in 1948, a moment which has caused Palestine to be removed from the map of postmodern history and the Palestinian people to be alienated and turned into refugees in their own land.

In her essay, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' Gayatri Shkravorty Spivak argues that to end the marginalised position of the subaltern ethically is to hear these individuals speak (Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' 289-92). What Spivak entails here, is that the subaltern, if to eradicate their condition, should engage in the act of speech for themselves, rather than allow another to speak on their behalf (Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* 241). To allow an agent to speak for them, Spivak suggests, would only re-objectify these subjects, and thereby reinforce their muteness. Moreover, Spivak argues that 'ethics is the experience of the impossible' ('Can the Subaltern Speak?' 270). However, she later explains that her claim is not the same as stating that 'ethics is impossible', rather, it is a realisation of the need for 'collective political struggle' (Spivak 270). I argue that the very impossibility of an ethics is in fact what makes the attempt to locate these ethics within postcolonial discourse very possible. This literary practice is a kind of 'collective struggle supplemented by the impossibility of full ethical engagement' (Spivak 270). I explore the innovative structural methods used by the chosen writers to represent the irreducible realities of violent oppression, such as the experience of physical pain, and I conclude that an irreducible ethics are apparent in the postcolonial narratives examined. Moreover, these irreducible features encourage a responsive relationship with literary narratives on the part of the reader foregrounding their ethical concerns, thus forming a literary alliance amongst people from different nations and cultures.

The impossibility of ethical representation for the subaltern and traumatised subject makes meaning possible by producing a reflection of the 'presence' of the signified meaning in literary texts. It makes as Jacques Derrida tells us 'the opposition of presence and meaning possible' (Derrida, *Of Grammatology* 143), and yet 'it is neither

presence nor absence' (Derrida 154). It is something unknowable then, an impossibility and an irreducible aspect of signification which makes meaningful representation possible by allowing for that meaning. Michel Foucault calls this form of reflection, the heterotopias, where the real and unreal merge. Here the Derridean concept of absence and presence becomes a revelatory window on the self:

In the mirror, I see myself where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there.

(Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces' 24)

The space of textual representation is similar to the mirror; a space of transformation and fluidity 'capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible' (Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces' 25). The space of the mirroring text is open to endless possibilities and interpretations. From here, it is clear that what Spivak is suggesting by the impossibility of the experience of ethics, is in fact the irreducibility of violent experiences to the literary text.

Thematic affinities between Caribbean and Palestinian literature are many, however, for the purpose of this study I focus on these two modes of writings' themes of desire and becoming. The desire to narrate and to become a 'people' is encoded in mythohistoric narratives, in which the writer is more like a medium through which collective voice is channeled. The author in these mythic texts is usually decentralized and speak from within the multiplicities he attempts (but cannot) represent. The theme of becoming, in the texts chosen for this study, is carried through writing reflexive texts in which all three sites dominated and regulated by colonial powers share a reflexive relationship. The failure of representation means that the postcolonial experience is in 'medias res', the Caribbean and Palestinian memory as national consciousness does not exist prior to colonisation/ occupation. National consciousness can only be created through discourse and in the Caribbean and Palestinian literature, we have 'imagined geographies' as these writings show a connection to regional rather than national consciousness. The possibility these literary texts promise is the concept that fiction has the power to influence political change and build a biopolitical memory. The importance of the imaginative aspect for the postcolonial writers rises out of its ability to offer a new literary understanding of postcolonial experiences.

In this thesis, I will engage in charting how Caribbean and Palestinian writers have managed to inscribe the memory of deracination—in its various manifestations of dispossession and displacement—into the written text. Uprootedness and dislocation have been the legacy of the Caribbean region due to the slave trade and sugar plantation imposed by the colonial historiography. The literature of Palestine is also concerned with issues of mass displacement, dispossession, memory, and history of occupation. In this study, I intend to examine these two literatures as a production of a specific juncture

in history (the Palestinian exodus after 1948, and the modern slavery of plantation in the Caribbean).

I suggest examining both the Palestinian and Caribbean literatures as modes of minor writings in order to apply the politics of minor literatures introduced by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in their work, *Kafka: Towards A Minor Literature* (1975) to give a full picture of the two historical experiences. The phrase ‘minor literature’ is coined by Deleuze and Guattari to describe the literature: ‘which a minority constructs within a major language’, in order to invent a ‘new world and a people to come’ (Deleuze & Guattari 16). This would suggest that the minor writer’s first enquiry is the creation of this newness of being.

Before I explore the importance of the Deleuzian thought to postcolonial studies, I would like to discuss a problematic issue here and that is why I believe the Palestinian narratives should be included within the body of literature examined within the field of postcolonial studies. In spite of the fact that one of the main goals of postcolonial studies has been the creation of a discursive space that resists hegemonic colonial narratives by shifting the marginalized voices of the colonised from the peripheries to the centre of discourse, Palestine and the Palestinian literature remains largely on the peripheries of postcolonial studies. In her book *Palestinian Literature and Film* (2012), Anna Ball argues that the academic silence in the field of postcolonial studies regarding the Palestinian issue ‘is not simply a product of the suppression of the Palestinian narrative, but of the contested nature of the terms ‘colonial’ and ‘postcolonial’ when it comes to speaking of Palestine’ (Ball 4). For other critics like Joseph Massad, *naming* this location as Palestine or Israel is a process of historicization and a movement from the era

of the 'colonial' to the era of the 'postcolonial' (Massad, 'The "Post-Colonial" Colony' 311). What is problematic in the Palestinian/ Israeli situation is the synchronicities of the 'colonial' and the 'postcolonial' in one place and one time. Massad describes this space using the paradoxical term, the ' "post-colonial" colony'. I will briefly explain here these two very different vantages, and then give my own viewpoint on why I think that including the Palestinian literature within the field of postcolonial studies and why I think this goes in accordance with postcolonial field key premises.

With the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948, Zionism, the Jewish political movement that was behind the foundation of the state of Israel could be seen as a new form of colonialism that replaced the British mandate, and, for Zionist critics, as a postcolonial liberating movement given its resistance and anti-colonial stance to the British mandate. It is important to note, however, that some critics dismiss any relationship between Zionism and colonial or postcolonial discourse. However, Zionists, Joseph Massad tells us, view Israel as a postcolonial nation, and the Zionist discourse as a discourse of emancipation liberating the Jewish people from the British mandate and Zionism as an anti-colonial movement of national liberation 'established through colonization but not colonialism' (Massad, 'The "Post-Colonial" Colony' 311).

The Israeli complex type of colonialism came as the result of generations of oppressed and victimized Jews and not of another nation's desire for territorial expansion. It is clear that the initial goal of the establishment of the state of Israel was more about territorial settlements and not exploitation of other people's lands. This history of victimization to which the Jewish people had been subjected is a distinctive feature, which renders it different from other forms of colonialism. Hence, criticizing Israel or defending the Palestinians might entail anti-Semitic inclinations. Beside the

problematic ethics concerning the discussion of the Israeli Occupation of Palestine within the field of postcolonial studies, there lies the fact that the notion of a ‘mother country’—central to the postcolonial discourse—is non-present here, since the Jewish people come from many different countries united by religion and race. In addition to this, Israel as a territory is the locus of desire to which the Jewish people return. The Land here, from a Zionist perspective, *is* the centre. Nevertheless, the political reality testifies that the American government acts like a symbolic ‘mother country’ for Israel, being a constant source of strength, providing both financial and political support and overlooking the crimes committed against the Palestinians for over sixty years.

The centre of the Arab world Cana’an is the ancient name of the land that is known today as Palestine. The people of Cana’an were a Semitic people who inhabited the land prior to the Hebrew conquest around 1000 B.C. and prior to the Greek Philistines who inhabited the southern coast of the country. Since then, and according to the colonial paradigm, the land has witnessed a series of conquests: Pharaonic, Greek, Roman, Byzantines, Muslim, British and Jewish. Palestine entered the modern era under the last Muslim Ottoman rule, which persisted until 1918. The year 1916 saw the Sykes-Picot agreement between the French and English. This agreement had situated Palestine under the British Mandate in the aftermath of World War I. Hence, the modern colonial condition can be said to begin with the establishment of the British mandate for Palestine in 1922 after the fall of the Ottoman Empire to European powers. The partition of Palestine into territories administrated by Britain and France had followed. During its political and administrative control over the region, Britain resigned to Zionist pressure and established plans for a ‘Jewish national home’ within Palestine. In 1947, the UN recommended the partition of Palestine into an Israeli and an Arab state. The

recommendation accepted by Zionists and rejected by Arabs resulted in the break out of civil strife, in which the Arabs were defeated, and the withdrawal of the British 'Mandate' which lasted from 1920 until 1948.

While celebrating Zionism as a liberating discourse, the Zionist perspective ignores the reality of the large number of Palestinian refugees inside and outside their land who have suffered as a direct result of the Israeli occupation. Zionist discourse plays a part here to justify the establishment of the state of Israel using their own version of historical mythologies, which draw heavily on biblical narratives and phrases used as early as 1843 by Christian Restorationists about Palestine as an empty land. This slogan was common among Zionists at the end of the nineteenth century, and the beginning of the twentieth century (Shapira, *Land and Power* 41; Garfinkle, *Jew Centricity* 265). For example, the leading Zionist Israel Zangwill confirmed this when he said that Palestine was 'a land without a people for a people without a land', and Golda Meir's statement in the Sunday Times of 1969, in which she said 'It is as though there was a Palestinian people in Palestine considering itself a Palestinian people and we came and threw them out and took their country away from them [...] They did not exist' (qtd in Shlaim, *The Iron Wall* 311).

In his article 'Necropolitics' (2000), Achille Mbembe notes that 'the colonial state derives its fundamental claim of sovereignty and legitimacy from the authority of its own particular narrative of history and identity' and from having a 'divine right to exist' (Mbembe 27). The complexity of the situation in Palestine which makes academics reluctant to write about it within the postcolonial study field lies in the fact that in the case of Palestine/ Israel there is a struggle between two memories, and each

one of these memories has its own side of the story which excludes the other—I will discuss counter mythohistoric narratives in both postcolonial writing later in the introduction and in detail inside the chapters, but here it is important to note that these counter mythohistoric narratives are shared by both Palestinian and Caribbean literatures and that they were the initial motivation for bringing these two modes of writing together before the main topic of the thesis had become fully clear in my mind: that fiction can build a biopolitical memory and affect political change.

The Balfour Declaration issued by the British Government in 1917, proclaimed ‘the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people’. Ibrahim Muhawi says that ‘In referring to the Arab majority in negative terms as the ‘existing non-Jewish communities’, the Declaration defines them as ‘a minority consisting of disparate groupings, and not as a people’ (Muhawi, ‘Irony and the Poetics of Palestinian Exile’ 34). Israel subsequently occupied the remaining territories of Palestine that it did not seize in 1948 during the war of 1967. Though not the initiative of the Occupation of Palestine, exploiting and violating the land’s natural resources, enforced mass evictions of Palestinians and the extreme regulation of body movement through the apartheid system, all imply that the Israeli Occupation can be understood as being colonial in nature.

Israel is a settler colony embracing a colonial ideology based on genocide and dispossession of the indigene people from their lands. The Zionist establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine bore a striking resemblance to the ‘settler colonies’ founded in North and South America. Edward Said notes, ‘there is an unmistakable coincidence between the experience of Arab Palestinians at the hands of Zionism and the

experiences of those black, yellow, and brown people who were described as inferior and subhuman by nineteenth century imperialists' (*Culture and Imperialism* 68).

However, the Zionists' ideology, at that particular point in history, was not only their perception that they were returning to the land of their ancestors, it was more of a liberation of an occupied land and a displacement of the occupants—the British colonists and the Arab Palestinians. Zionists relied heavily on divine or Biblical reference, that the Jews had prior claim to Palestine, thus they were not colonists. Nevertheless, statements made by their leaders contradict this and reveals their colonialist ideology. Tom Segev, an Israeli New Historian, writes about the complexity of this position during the British Mandate: 'Zionist leaders in Palestine were furious at British administrators who classified them as *natives*, an insulting colonialist term. The Zionists maintained that the natives were the Arabs; they, the Zionists, represented European culture' (Segev, *Elvis in Jerusalem* 33). Mbembe also tells us that these competing narratives over 'the same sacred space' (Mbembe, 'Necropolitics' 27), produced a unique colonialism of evacuation referred to by some critics such as Said as a kind of 'de-liberat[ion]' of the Palestinians by a 'liberation movement [Zionism]', (Said and Barsmian, *The Pen and the Sword* 53) and the superimposition of history of one race (the Jewish) while excluding the many cultures and religions that happened to be there in the region for thousands of years. Said has commented on the role of difference in Israeli thought:

As applied to 'The Jewish People' or 'The Land of Israel' difference takes many forms. Theologically, of course, 'difference' here means 'the chosen

people' who have a different relationship to God from that enjoyed by any other group. But that sort of 'difference' is, I confess, impossible for me to understand. On a purely secular plane, however, difference means the unique bond to the land of Palestine/Israel distinguishing Jews from all other peoples [...] Inside Israel, the 'difference' that counts is between Jew and Non-Jew. (*Culture and Imperialism* 81-2)

Said here identifies three ways in which Israelis think of difference. First, there is the divine claim to Jews as the people chosen by God to return to the Holy Land. Second, there is the Zionist, claim to the land of Israel as the Bible states. Third, Said refers to the nation-state discrimination between 'Jew' and 'Non-Jew', a division which differentiates the settler or coloniser from the indigene (Stratton, 'Separation Anxiety' paragraph 39). One example encapsulates all three types of difference is the Iron Wall in Palestine which could be said to be a physical materialisation of the Zionist ideology of difference. An important reference to the Wall in Zionist thinking is Vladimir Jabotinsky's two articles, 'The Iron Wall: We and the Arabs', first published in Russian in 1923 and the follow-up 'The Ethics of the Iron Wall', also published in 1923. Seeing through Zionist ideology, Jabotinsky was clear that what was happening in Palestine was colonisation. He writes that:

Colonization itself has its own explanation, integral and inescapable, and understood by every Arab and every Jew with his wits about him. Colonization can have only one goal. For the Palestinian Arabs this goal is inadmissible.

For Jabotinsky, the Jewish colonial enterprise was morally just, not for Biblical reasons, however, but for those he explains in ‘The Ethics of the Iron Wall’:

The soil does not belong to those who possess land in excess but to those who do not possess any. It is an act of simple justice to alienate part of their land from those nations who are numbered among the great landowners of the world, in order to provide a refuge for a homeless, wandering people.

Territorial politics are biopolitics: the creation of a politicised form of life in order to exclude it from the rest of life within the nation-state. A depoliticised subject is a ‘bare life’ who is no longer considered human. Biopolitics and necropolitics function through means of exception. ‘Necropolitics’ is the ultimate expression of sovereignty, power and capacity to dictate who may live and who must die. Mbembe explains that necropolitics is concerned with figures of sovereignty whose central project is ‘the generalized instrumentalization of human existence and the material destruction of human bodies and populations’ (Mbembe, ‘Necropolitics’ 14). Mbembe argues that slave plantations and ‘the colonies are the location par excellence where the controls and guarantees of judicial order can be suspended’ (‘Necropolitics’ 24) because just war theory only applies to ‘civilized’ states. In the section titled ‘Necropower and Late Modern Colonial Occupation’ of ‘Necropolitics’, Mbembe discusses two examples of late modern colonial occupation: apartheid in South Africa, and the current occupation of Palestine, which he identifies as ‘the most accomplished form of necropower’ (27). When describing South Africa, Mbembe offers another useful interpretation of sovereignty: ‘In this case,

sovereignty means the capacity to define who matters and who does not, who is *disposable* and who is not' (27). Mbembe then offers a spatial reading of the colonial occupation of Palestine according to three major characteristics: territorial fragmentation, vertical sovereignty, and splintering occupation, which are evidence of a state of siege where 'entire populations are the target of the sovereign' (30).

From the discussion on the complexity of the Palestinian/ Israeli situation, it becomes obvious that we have both the 'colonial' and the 'postcolonial' available within the same temporal and special realms, this is what Massad defines as 'settler colonialism' ('The "Post-Colonial" Colony' 311) in which there is no transition from one stage to the next, both are here and in the *now*. This situation has led me to prefer the usage of the term (post)colonial in writing about the Palestinian (and the Caribbean) literature. In the case of the Palestinian writing, I think we are in front of a colonial reality that is taking place in the present and is dwelling in the bodies, lands and texts that are besieged, wounded, regulated and restricted by the process of occupation. On the other hand, we are presented in these texts, with postcolonial desires that take place in the future the writings are gesturing towards. This is what makes these (post)colonial writings, *sites of becoming*. These physical sites, land, body and text are in a constant process of becoming, they keep evolving. Hence, I find the term also applicable to Caribbean narratives as well.

Ball likens the restrictions writers on Palestine face within the academic departments of postcolonial studies to the 'checkpoints' regulating, besieging and limiting the movement of the Palestinians inside their own land (*Palestinian Literature and Film* 1). I find this example in itself a corporeal one that is reflexive of the relationship between lived experience of feeling the lack of freedom to respond ethically

to external events and the act of writing. I think that using the critical tools to explore the Palestinian literature as (post)colonial is an ethical response to the creative body of literary work on Palestine. It is a 'response' in the sense that neither the researcher of the research nor the reading given of the texts chosen for examination claim the position of being 'representative' of the Palestinian people.

Convinced that there are many connections between the Palestinian literature and the ethos of postcolonial literature, I believe that the postcolonial field's concern should be on studying literary productions of people subjugated by administrative powers, and taking an ethical active commitment to literary narratives on historical pain, suffering, and the representation of it as non-exclusive. Here, I would like to return to the term '(post)colonial', 'postcolonial' or 'post-colonial', to consider the problematic spatio-temporality of the term and explore how it can open a new space for writing the postcolonial. The term suggests a temporal 'gap' between the 'post' and the 'pre' colonial discourse. What has to be negotiated, then, is the relationship of difference and sameness, rupture and continuity. Exploring my topic from the point of view of the Deleuzian philosophy of desire, minor writing and becoming transcends these temporal and spatial ruptures and opens a new space of literary possibilities. This resonates with Homi Bhabha's characterization of the 'location' of the postcolonial moment as a transitory site, 'neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past' (*Location of Culture* 1). The transformative capacity of the literary imagination bears a revolutionary potential for postcolonial studies is in its rejection of a clear-cut discourse of oppositional anti-colonialism. The authors I have chosen for this study demonstrate an awareness of past traumas and present political responsibilities, but resists over-determination. This tension between the actual and the virtual extends to the literary

text's treatment of the recalled colonial past and the historical memory of colonisation and slavery, to establish a *new* continuum between past, present and future. Therefore, rather than building on a continuous relation between these three, these temporal phases maintain their continuity by ruptures: retaining the legacies of the colonial past as a disjunctive, virtual presence available for creative actualization in the present. In the chapter on Derek Walcott's *Omeros*, as I intend to show, this historical continuity that proceed by ruptures is reflected in the rope metaphor Walcott uses in talking about how he writes poetry. It is in this sense that, viewed from the perspective of a Deleuzian philosophy of time, the postcolonial present/future emerges as an undetermined potentiality, expressive of, but not specified by the colonial past from which it is drawn.

The concept of minor literature holds great significance for postcolonial literary studies. Deleuze and Guattari clarify that the term 'minor' is not minority discourse, and is never to be confused with minority writing as such. Minor writing, captured in a minor language that interrogates the majority (Deleuze, *A Thousand Plateaus* 105-106), is a theory suggestive of postcolonial readings, where the minority is an active force, facilitating crystals of becoming (new postcolonial subjects), whose value is to trigger uncontrollable movement in the masses and to deterritorialise the standards of the majority (*Plateaus* 106).

Deleuze is definitely of interest to me in this study because he relies heavily on readings of literature, thus serves my theoretical proposition that the postcolonial texts could be seen as a biopolitical fiction in which literature, history and art are intertwined with the political. Indeed, in many ways Deleuze's approach brings us back to literature as he commits himself to reading literature on its own terms, literature as theory-in-itself ; as embedded in social relations rather than reading it as a reflection of its historical or

economic contingencies. Another point that has interested me in Deleuze is that he privileges difference over identity, develops a sophisticated theory of 'writing-as-becoming', and connects it to the cultures of colonialism, yet he refuses to privilege the heavily textual terms of deconstruction and psychoanalysis. In *Anti-Oedipus* (1983), Deleuze and Guattari argue against the accepted notion that identity precedes difference, and insist that difference and multiplicity are in fact the primary categories of subjectivity. For Deleuze, repetition is a recreation with difference from itself. Bhabha also depends upon such a model of difference. For Bhabha, as for Deleuze, the minority is always in the process of becoming, however differently these two critics see that process of becoming. The minority's identity is always a negotiation and a struggle to secure authority but not to be trapped by it.

Minor literature, such as postcolonial literature, can therefore serve as a medium for building these minor identities, but it can also serve as a means for deconstructing and collapsing the standards of the majority. Speaking of the relation of the postcolonial writing to the hegemonic culture, Deleuze and Guattari explain: 'We might as well say that minor no longer designate specific literatures but the revolutionary conditions for every literature within the heart of what is called great (or established) literature' (Deleuze & Guattari, *Kafka* 18). Like Edouard Glissant, Deleuze was particularly interested in the texts that explore the opening between the minor people themselves in the process of becoming and their relation to the individual writer's social and cultural struggle combined with a sense of being part of these 'multiplicities' who form a unique instance of those not yet considered 'people'.

The colonisers, according to Deleuze, have built their colonies on the false claim that ‘the people are missing’. This conceptualization of the colonial as the mere absence of being created cramped and choked spaces where oppressed and exploited nations remained in a state of perpetual minorities, in a collective identity crisis (Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical* 133; *A Thousand Plateaus* :217; Kafka, *The Trial* 150). Articulating the colonial experience through and from within historical ruptures, does not imply that the minor ‘reconfiguration of differences’ should signify the marginality of the postcolonial subjectivity as representing the negation of being. Living on the margin should not, in Deleuze’s view, impede the process of creation. Emphasizing the collective enunciation for Deleuze and Guattari does not suspend the possibility of creating a space for writing. The writer of minor literature should be from and within the multiplicity, he is representing. The author is from the collective and his self would expand its being, blurring boundaries between the individual and the collective, to create a mutual relation between singularity and multiplicity. The postcolonial writer’s response to the claim that the ‘people is missing’ is his own literary writing, summoning those people from the recesses of memory.

Nevertheless, there is a connection between what are ordinarily referred to as ‘minorities’ and Deleuze and Guattari’s conception of the minor and becoming-minor. If becoming-minor often occurs in the context of what are usually called minority groups, then this is because, Deleuze and Guattari argue that becoming-minor is catalyzed by existence in cramped social spaces. The key point not to be missed is that becoming-minor is not related to molar identities—people who are numerically a minority—nor it is a politics that seeks representation or recognition of such identities.

Minor literature is not easily categorized; it occupies a territory of its own, which neither belongs to the tradition of the country of origin nor to the hosting or dominating country. Writing from spaces in between, and suffering from double exclusion, postcolonial writers gaze beyond the national, in hope of expanding the postcolonial experience by proposing polyphony of intertwined cultural voices.

Writers belonging to the spaces of minority, work at stretching language to its excesses to explore new possibilities and interpretations signifying silence or absence, probing language, and breaking its boundaries. These discourses can be considered revolutionary, in the sense that they are endlessly subverting and innovating new meanings and possibilities, thus, becoming a source of uneasiness to major literatures. Rather than adopting a totalitarian approach to identities, new modes of writing need to affirm and respect heterogeneity and singularity. Instead of beginning with individuated forms and contents, a pre-individual field is a field of singularities. What is real, is the becoming and not the 'supposedly fixed terms through which that which becomes passes' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus* 2138).

In spite of their local particularities, these minor writings, according to Michael Hardt and Toni Negri, create an alternative 'interconnected world' (Hardt and Negri, *Empire* 118). The importance of these writings, they explain, lies in their shared interest in 'a new form of freedom, connected to the expansive network of global exchange' (*Empire* 120). What Hardt and Negri are describing here is a horizontal linkage between these spaces of multiplicities, and an ongoing exchange between the local and the global in these writings. Exchanges that are interlinked and though ascribing the geopolitical to the poetic tradition is important, it is my aim in this study to look at the Caribbean and

Palestinian contemporary writings within this wider space which best reflect their pasts of displacement and dispersion.

Minor writing represents the collective ‘multiplicities’, and offers an alternative to the negative dialectics that has emerged as a reaction to the Manichean ‘logic of exclusion’ and manifested itself in nationalistic movements and in what Jean Paul Sartre terms as ‘antiracist racism’ (qtd. in Hardt and Negri, *Empire* 130). *Negritude* for instance, emphasized the ‘otherness’ of the postcolonial subject by ‘adopt[ing] the negative pole that they have inherited from the European dialectic and transform[ing] it into something positive, intensifying it, claiming it as a moment of self-consciousness’ (*Empire* 130). Hence, minor literature moves beyond colonial dialectics of Self/Other, Master/ Slave, Ontology/ Teleology, without perpetuating ‘counterviolence’ (*Empire* 131).

The world of the modern is a dialectical one marked by a Manichean division of binary oppositions. Whereas the world of the postmodern and post-colonial: ‘never tire of critiquing and seeking liberation from the past forms of rule and their legacies in the present’ (Hardt and Negri, *Empire* 137). Minor writing is not dialectical; it is the voice of multiplicities inhabiting what Bhabha calls an ‘unhomely world’ (in Hardt and Negri, *Empire* 145). Minor writing linkage to the post-colonial writing is that they both seek to ‘affirm the multiplicity of differences so as to subvert the power of the ruling binary structures’ (*Empire* 144).

There are persistent anxieties within postcolonial studies towards the relationship between literature and politics. This tension is likely to remain at the fore of debates in postcolonial studies. However, far from viewing literature as separate from political and

cultural resistance, my thesis explores literature's potential for imagining new possibilities of thinking as key to understanding its value for postcolonial theory.

While Hardt and Negri concede that postcolonial theory may be a useful tool for rereading history, they argue that 'it is entirely insufficient for theorizing contemporary global power [...] Empire is not a weak echo of modern imperialisms but a fundamentally new form of rule' (*Empire* 146). To continue to use postcolonial theory, they argue, is to work under the illusion that the new oppressions work in the same way as the old colonial oppressions.

Postcolonial theory, distinguished from postcolonialism, appears to have left behind the Marxist categories of much anti-colonial thought in favour of various kinds of poststructuralism, usually associated with Derrida and Foucault. That move now appears problematic to many in the field because it apparently leads to de-politicization, when its role should be, in some critics' view, to focus on the rise and fall of colonialism and the specific conditions that surrounded the colonial era and the anti-colonial literary work which has emerged as a result. For these critics, postcolonialism, must be political, hence any affiliation with literature would undermine its value and render it irresponsible (Ahmad 1992; Dirlik 1994; Lazarus 2002; Hallward 2006). Aijaz Ahmad notes that it is problematic that postcolonial theory has posited cultural hybridity 'against the categories of nation and nationalism', or that it has put 'culture and the literary/aesthetic realm' at 'a great remove from the economy' (Ahmad, *In Theory* 3).

Many critics have highlighted the complex relation between poststructuralist criticism and the writers who attempt to combine theories of hybridity or notions of in-betweenness with the ethical and political aftermath of postcoloniality. Critic Simon During, speaks of this when he claims that postcolonialism 'refuses to turn the Other

into the Same' (During, 'Postmodernism or Post-colonialism Today' 449). Hence it works against the idea of difference and heterogeneity. During stands against traditional objectification in this way, in the hope of opening a theoretical 'space' in which the Other might inscribe itself. Yet, he also reiterates Spivak's view that the 'Other can never speak for itself as the Other' (Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern speak?' 168). Thus, though some might argue that postmodern discourse foregrounds the issue of the marginalised Other, for During the poststructuralism 'intentionally wipe out post-colonial identity' (During, 'Postmodernism or Post-colonialism Today' 449). What seems problematic for critics such as During is the difficulty for them to understand how postcolonialism may represent the historical, colonial subject as an autonomous individual, and not an object, while utilising poststructuralist theory which often considered apolitical and homogenising. Linda Hutcheon talks about this tendency of postmodernism to homogenise where 'not only are fiction and history mixed [...] but class and race and nationality as well' (Hutcheon, *Poetics of the Postmodern* 5).

Nevertheless, even the postcolonial theories, and not only poststructuralism is seen as perpetuating within their lines the colonial discourse, something that makes them in a 'profound process of redefinition' (Bhabha, *Location of Culture* 5). Terms like the 'third world' for instance which embodies the biases of the first world imperialist superiority has been suggested to be replaced by the terms 'North' and 'South' by critics such as Spivak in order to map the divisions between the imperial centres and the neocolonies. (Spivak, *Critique of Postcolonial Reason* 2-3). To Spivak, the old colonialisms are still alive as they are constantly being reproduced and relived in their new formations.

Postcolonial studies are divided between a 'postcolonial theory' that utilises western theory, and a 'postcolonial criticism' that rejects the fusion between poststructural and postcolonial theory (Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Theory* 169). Therefore, any conscious choice on the part of the researcher to combine these two theories must be preceded with the awareness of the dangers inherent in its productivity in order to deconstruct its own assumptions. Hence, the fusion of concepts between poststructural and postcolonial theory in my thesis, is brought with full awareness of the need for such fusion.

Critics who oppose the application of poststructuralist reading strategies to postcolonial literature do so with the convention that poststructuralism's untiring interrogation of the validity of concepts such as history, narrative, reality, and even the basis of literary-linguistic structures themselves, cannot appreciate the postcolonial literature which is committed to the communal and the objectification and historical oppression of people both culturally and socially on an international level (Epko, 'Towards a Post-Africanism' 122). Others also argue that poststructuralism is a set of Eurocentric discourses which reinforce a hegemonic relationship between the western academy and those non-western. It's often argued that while postcolonial fiction shares many of the narrative strategies associated with postmodern fiction, the critical discourses associated with the two theories often seem widely apart from each other, specifically in their way of perceiving the political objectives. Postcolonial discourse has a committed political interest, whereas postmodernist discourses reject the totalising tendencies inherent in postcolonial politics. Nevertheless, many texts regarded as politically committed by postcolonial critics such as Wilson Harris's for example are often considered postmodern by critics outside the discipline, thus this debate keeps

generating unresolved differences in literary perspectives (Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* xii).

However, these concerns about the apolitical nature of postcolonial approaches, and their postmodern and poststructuralist tendencies, have been countered on numerous occasions, including by Hutcheon herself who writes that ‘postmodernism could be used to describe art which is itself reflexive in technique and its material yet grounded in historical actuality’ (Hutcheon, *Poetics of the Postmodern* 133). Hence, I think that reading the relation between postcolonialism and poststructuralism in a new way that is a reverse to the current view—where postcolonialism is seen as the main party in a reciprocal relationship with poststructuralism to assert in representing the postcolonial experience—would allow for a poststructuralist space of hybridity, estrangement and ambivalence without denying the political commitment of the postcolonial theory. This view is held by Robert Young, who believes that while the postcolonial theorist may utilise poststructuralist theory, this is not because postcolonialism is part of the latter discourse, but because poststructuralism, as a discourse, is part of the wider postcolonial project. It is an intellectual movement with its origins in the colonised community’s battle for independence. Young cites examples of postmodern critics who were either born in Algeria or activists, ‘Sartre, Althusser, Derrida and Lyotard [were] all either born in Algeria or personally involved with the events of the war’ (Young, *White Mythologies* 1). Foucault, as well, was involved with violent activism in Tunisia (Young, *Postcolonialism* 396). Young’s views are deconstructive of the way postcolonial theory was always perceived as secondary to the postmodern discourse. He sees the postcolonial as the trace found in the silences of the poststructuralist text, as the minor literature that has been always there but constantly over looked by the dominant

poststructuralist discourse (Young, *White Mythologies* 63). Young even shows traces of postcolonial thought in Derrida, and though he never goes to the extent of calling Derrida a postcolonialist, his comments in *Postcolonialism* make an unavoidable connection:

The surgical operation of deconstruction was always directed at the identity of the ontological violence that sustains the western metaphysical and ideological systems with the force and actual violence that has sustained the western nations in their colonial and imperial policies. (Young 416)

Full reconciliation of the highly politicised postcolonial theory with the ambivalence of poststructuralist discourse, remains unresolved. This is evident in Said's claim that contemporary literary theory's concern with textuality, and that 'there is nothing outside the text', (Derrida, *Of Grammatology* 158) has meant it has ignored the fact that texts are 'part of the social world, human life, and of course the historical moments in which they are located and interpreted (Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* 4).

However, the postcolonial/poststructuralist fusion has produced a new critical vocabulary to meticulously study discourses rather than reject them. In her book *Postcolonial Theory* (1998), Leela Gandhi claims that postcolonial theory's connection to 'poststructuralism and postmodernism' and their concepts of dislocation and decentralization is what gives it its critical mode, and in doing so it reinforces its significance to English Studies departments (Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory* 25). The relevance of this claim can be seen in the works of Said, Spivak, and Bhabha who are

considered the three most prominent and influential theorists of postcolonial literary theory. While there are attempts to maintain a division between postcolonialism and poststructuralism (Gilroy, *Black Atlantic* 31), their fusion in literary texts only asserts Paul Gilroy and Said's claim of the postcolonial relation to western philosophy that is always influenced by the cultures it has encountered and ruled. This productive fusion is evident in the work of postcolonial critics such as Spivak and Fanon (*White Mythologies* 125). Moreover, poststructuralist deconstruction of western historiography resonates with the postcolonial distrust of official history as a colonial text.

Putting the Deleuzian thought into dialogue with postcolonial studies, is not an indication of certain failings within the field of postcolonial theory, rather, by focusing on the shared problems that both Deleuzian and postcolonial thought attempt to solve, and the different strategies employed by both in order to overcome colonial and imperial power. Both theories are re-structured or in a Deleuzian sense deterritorialised only to be reterritorialised again by the one another. The Deleuzian philosophy finds resonance with the work of postcolonial writers and critics who have echoed and deployed its concepts and modified or departed from them at times. Works that have explored the potential of putting postcolonial studies into alignment with the Deleuzian thought include: Simone Bignall and Paul Patton's *Deleuze and the Postcolonial* (2010), Patton's *Deleuzian Concepts* (2010), and Bignall's *Postcolonial Agency* (2010), Peter Hallward's *Absolutely Postcolonial: Writing between the Singular and the Specific* (2001). The main resistance to the Deleuzian philosophy within the postcolonial field is the result of the absence of a clear political and theoretical models resisting colonialism in Deleuze's work. This resistance has led to the suggestions that his philosophy is a self-interested Eurocentric one (Bignall and Patton, *Deleuze and the Postcolonial* 1–2).

Other critics such as Hallward are sceptic about the performativity of the Deleuzian thought—and of any philosophy—to affect real political change on the ground. In *Absolutely Postcolonial: Writing between the Singular and the Specific* (2001) and *Out of this World* (2006), Hallward notes that the virtual in Deleuze hinders the applicable potentiality of the latter's philosophy to postcolonial studies. Hallward's claim that postcolonialism is irresponsible because of its affiliation with poststructural theory is also directed by him against Deleuze for privileging the virtual. What critics such as Hallward are concerned about is the transformative ability of structuralist-postcolonialism and Deleuzian philosophy in actual situations (Hallward, *Out Of This World* 7). Thus, Hallward *connects* postcolonial theory to Deleuzian philosophy and claims they both are politically irresponsible. One of the common grounds between postcolonial theory and Deleuze, according to Hallward is the concept of singularity. Hallward argues that postcolonial theory and Deleuze both operate through a singular logic which removes them from relation as such, political and otherwise. Aside from Hallward, recent years have witnessed a new post-Marxist critical approach which has emerged through the works of Neil Lazarus, Robert Young and Benita Parry who are very critical of current postcolonial involvement with cultural and literary analysis, and see that singularity of the postcolonial theory and the Deleuzian thought and the latter's commitment to the virtual realm, distances both from 'engagement with the 'properly political'' (Bongie, *Friends and Enemies* 1).

The singularity of each postcolonial writer within the field of postcolonial studies is apparent in the individual author's way of expressing a specific postcolonial experience or condition. In other words, each postcolonial writer charts his own singular perception of what it means to live in a postcolonial world. All the four authors I have

chosen for the purpose of this study speak for their own people and try to represent the specific (post)colonial experience, hence, politicize their people. Nevertheless, as I will try to show, representation is not possible and the postcolonial text resists all attempts of generalisation.

The suggestion that even postcolonial theory, and not only poststructuralism is seen as perpetuating within their lines the colonial discourse is something that makes these theories in a 'profound process of redefinition' (Bhabha, *Location of Culture* 5). Terms like the 'third world' for instance which embodies the biases of the first world imperialist superiority are criticized by critics such as Spivak who suggests terms like 'North' and 'South' as substitutes mapping the divisions between the imperial centres and the neocolonies. (Spivak, *Critique of Postcolonial Reason* 2-3). For Spivak, the old colonialisms are still alive as they are constantly being reproduced and relived in their new formations.

If postcolonialism is an 'uneasy term for a geopolitical critique', (Shohat, *Unthinking Eurocentrism* 134) then thinking of Postcolonial writing as a *site of becoming*, a space, I would suggest, may present one way to resolve this. In focusing on space, we focus inherently upon the locations of colonial violence and tension. Space as a third zone, has been central to the critique of colonial power, as I will foreground in detail in the following paragraphs. More importantly is the poststructuralist interest in examining the space of the text, how the silences and gaps are used intentionally at times to marginalise and obscure certain voices and how these textual complicities may be used to support the territorialisation of space.

Texts considering ethical criticism largely ignore the role literary representation of physical sites like body and land play on the structure and content of the text. The

misunderstanding of Derrida's statement 'there is nothing outside the text', has arisen due to the inability on the part of some critics to accept the fact that Derrida's claim is not a rejection of the actuality of the real physical world we inhabit outside the texts we read. In fact, Derrida's claim entails that everything within the world we inhabit can be *reduced* to, encapsulated, and therefore textualised within, literary-linguistic structures (*Of Grammatology* 24). This new perception of literary texts position affects metamorphosis because it enables postcolonial subjects to transform themselves from victims into postcolonial collective voice interrogating the colonial past through the act of writing. Each one of these postcolonial sites of becoming, be it body land or text, is a physical reality, a territory that is ultimately multilayered and chaotic. And as I intend to show, situating the postcolonial within colonial space is a political act. Since, as a site of territorial loss, the margin of History affords the postcolonial writer a unique view on the world and thus a unique critique of its practices. These new spaces of historical re-visioning are, in contrast to the colonial, filled with 'multiple voices'. They are postcolonial spaces where oppression has been turned into sites of resistance offering new alternatives and new worlds. Here, the revision and subversion of the status of the minority position, the margin from which the postcolonial speaks can affect a process of metamorphosis. Hence by bringing the postcolonial theory and the Deleuzian thought into dialogue, we have, as Bignall and Patton write, a '[p]roperly mutual negotiations witness[ing] the simultaneous becoming-Deleuzian of postcolonialism and the becoming-postcolonial of Deleuze' (Bignall and Patton, *Deleuze and the Postcolonial* 12).

Thus, the chaotic postcolonial space is a physical reality. However, in order to avoid repeating the colonial conceptions of space as fixed and defined, this fluid

conceptual space is described by writers such as Deleuze and Bhabha as a ‘third Space’ (Bhabha, *Location* 38), with its own sense of a marginal location which ‘overcomes the given grounds of opposition and opens up a space of translation: a place of hybridity’ (*Location* 25), where binaries are replaced with ‘a political object that is new, neither the one nor the other’ (*Location* 25). This fluid space is a site that actively interrogates through reversed gaze, rather than rejects or replaces with an equally hegemonic alternative. Thus, the colonial obsession with order, results in a space of resistance directly associated with postcolonial plurality; a new site of the marvelous real, of imagined communities; a site that is fragmented, multicultural and ‘untranslatable’ (Bhabha, *Location* 225). This hybrid space has become the foundation of Bhabha’s theory: the space that is neither a beginning nor an end and may therefore encompass infinite possibilities, a fragmented chaos rather than a unified, totalised discourse. This ‘third space’ is more like Deleuz’s definition of the short story, that is a ‘becoming’: ‘A line of becoming has neither beginning nor end, departure nor arrival, origin nor destination—it has only a middle’ (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus* 293).

The colonial power following Gramsci’s theory of imperial expansion was interested in manifesting a national state superior in culture. To achieve that, a method of ‘Othering’ was adapted in order to guarantee that no reciprocal encounter of any sort would interfere with the Hegelian dialectic of colonised/ coloniser; thus deploying this dichotomy to maintain a hierarchical position of superiority over its colonial subject, situating the empire at the centre, its literary conventions as universal and pushing its subjects to the peripheries of experience.

The invention of master narratives of (H)istory after the colonial encounter with the colonised was built upon inclusions and exclusions of historical facts. Declaring the

West as the embodiment of ‘truth’, ‘beauty’, and ‘fulfillment’, while the rest of the world as merely the ‘absence of consciousness’ (Spivak, 95). This form of opinionated hegemonic discourse has given rise to the ‘Quarrel with History’ theory. In this form of writing postcolonial writers revise the empirical (H)istory as a kind of ‘writing back’ to empire. This discourse has concentrated on the absence of consciousness of the postcolonial subject and later on portraying him as the object of historical examination.

The huge gap found between the language of the written text and the traumatic experience, has made emotional expression so limited for the postcolonial writers. Hence, the language of the disaster had to break from the fixity of the monolithic language to stretch language to its excesses and dwell in a horizontal dimension (Sacks, ‘Language Places’ 244). Kumar Rajaram calls this form of writing which resonates with territorial fragmentation ‘disruptive writing’. Rajaram defines ‘disruptive writing’ as the form of narrative, which seeks to present images that, provides different relations between space, time and identity images that seek to highlight the repressed fragments that present the logical or the necessary (Rajaram, ‘Disruptive Writing’ 202). Rajaram argues that the way something is written affects its meaning (‘Disruptive Writing’ 203).

Mytho-historic narratives are used by Palestinian and Caribbean writers in order to link the past to the present by transforming these myths to justify their ends, henceforth overcoming, albeit aesthetically, traumatic pasts of loss. Furthermore, one could argue, that myths function, in a Deleuzian sense, as exists along the ‘lines of flight’ of history, enabling new possibilities of tracing past in order to map future, and mapping the future in order to claim the lost collective sense of self.

My thesis explores the ways in which Deleuze’s work can be made to communicate with a specific example of postcolonial writing. In Palestinian and

Caribbean literatures and especially the texts I have chosen to examine, there seems to be an emphasis on the decisiveness of location and geography, which is connected to the idea of affiliation. In these postcolonial spaces, oppression has been turned into sites of resistance offering new alternatives and new worlds. Here, the revision and subversion of the status of the minority—the margin from which the postcolonial speaks—can affect a process of metamorphosis, as it transforms the postcolonial identity from victim into a voice interrogating the colonial past.

The colonial space is the postcolonial nation. For the colonised, this may mean belonging to a nation that is formed on the negation of its very existence: the negation of a space existing prior to colonisation. The sites of becoming, hence, are the colonial or occupied spaces; nations which in spite of having their territories included within the boundaries of one or more states, by and large do not identify with them. The role of nationalism in uniting colonised populations made the nation-state a significant banner under which the colonised could respond to colonial power by creating a counter space, the ‘nation’ talking back to a more powerful theoretical totality: colonialism.

The absolute space of nationalism no longer holds the sacred space it used to have, at least in the work of the four authors I have chosen for this study. There is a sense of disillusionment on the part of the postcolonial writers in the concept of the nation as an absolute space, and a tendency towards viewing the nation as *discourse*. Thus, there is a tendency to move away from national politics and a break with the concepts of the nation-state, but not a rejection of all the concepts that nationality represent. Most notable in terms of reading the nation as ‘discourse’ is Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*. For Anderson, nations are ‘cultural artifacts’ (*Imagined Communities* 4), and ‘an imagined political community –and imagined as

both inherently limited and sovereign' (*Imagined Communities* 224). Anderson's concentration on the nation as *imagined* resonates with rejection of it as an *absolute* concept.

The constantly shifting, indefinable nature of the nation may be seen to play a significant part in its relationship to postcolonial texts. It is important to note here that the texts I read in this thesis connect to 'regional consciousness', where there is no 'real' geography to which the imagined ones can be compared. Palestine as a territory not under occupation and the Caribbean unwounded geographies are non-existent, but only imagined in text. Said's concept of 'imagined geographies' that he introduced in *Orientalism* (1978) and argued that western culture had produced a view of the 'Orient' based on imagination, feminized as an open, virgin territory, lacking the ability or concept of organized rule and government. Imagined geographies are thus seen as a tool of power, of a means of controlling and subordinating areas. Power is seen as being in the hands of those who have the right to objectify those that they are imagining. Said's concept of 'imagined geographies' and Anderson's 'imagined communities' can both be deployed to critique colonial imperial powers and nationalistic political concepts of post-independence governments in the Caribbean and the Middle East including the nation-state of Israel. By so doing, the Caribbean and Palestinian writers examined within the boundaries of this thesis, go beyond both postcolonial nationalistic discourse and anti-colonial national discourse to open a third space for narrating the nation.

Colonisation is a project centred upon inscribing power over bodies as both a territory and the key to maintaining successful control over the land. This colonial control of the body forms a violent and lasting stigmata in its dehumanisation of the people under its rule; it is seizure of both territory and bodies. Both the Caribbean

Middle Passage and the expulsion of the Palestinians from Palestine is inherently a bodily experience. The Palestinian experience of dislocation is a corporeal and nomadic one, since the Palestinian is in a constant process of departure and arrival, of breaking off and starting again. Mahmoud Darwish speaks of this nomadic state of the Palestinian, when he says: 'We travel like everyone else, but we return to nothing/ [...] Ours is a country of words' (Darwish, *Unfortunately* 11). The Palestinian writing, like the Palestinian experience is rhizomorphic, and dispersed between spaces.

In this way, colonial treatment of the body echoes treatment of all space. The seizure of territory as a capture of bodies, and the maintenance of power as a mastery of these bodies as much as of physical landscape, representing the state as a corporeal process as the body of the coloniser is extended by traveling, the other's is increasingly narrowed by enslavement, torture and murder. Within this relationship, Young and Bhabha both argue that the colonised body is paradoxically a site of attraction and abjection, a location 'always simultaneously inscribed in both the economy of pleasure and desire and the economy of discourse, domination and power' (Bhabha, 'Other' 150), desired and yet feared as racially hybrid bodies associated with 'threatening forms of perversion and degeneration' (Young, *Colonial Desires* 5).

Foucault claims that 'it is always the body that is at issue [...] power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs' (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 25). Irreducibility of pain to the narrative problematises the Foucauldian view of discursive subjectivities. This raises the idea of the postcolonial body as a site of unspeakable and violent experience. The connection of body and fiction introduces the central issues that

will concern the thesis's investigation of an undeconstructible narrative ethics, the irreducibility in writing, the effects of violence on postcolonial narratives, and the radical narrative structures needed to represent the body in pain. Power is therefore a catalyst that forms subjectivity by interpolating discourse into the subject by manipulating the 'political economy' of the body through the threat of violence. It is only able to do this through its monopolisation of legitimate violence that is inscribed in law. This idea maintains that the 'machinery of production' that informs individuals and groups is a result of the various discourse formations that the 'body' is subject to. It should be emphasised that Foucault refers to this entity as the 'social body', a site that is constantly split and manipulated by discourse. The effect of these disruptive forces on the body is to inform and sustain the subjective acceptance of hegemony. This method of informing subjectivity is distinctly different from the operation of discourse in the modern era which manipulates the social body through scientific objectification and the threat of incarceration of bodies that is much more effective than the ritual anatomy of torture and execution (Foucault, *Discipline* 102).

While much research during the past two decades considered the different socio-political, cultural and even semantic roles played by the body, very little of addressed the ethical role of the body and its representation, a point I discuss in detail in Derek Walcott's *Omeros*. A similar concern is raised by Arthur and Joan Kleinman's claim that the 'trendy enterprise of socio-political and cultural 'deconstruction' of the body ignores the psychobiological effects of culture on the body i.e. the detrimental physical effects of power' (Kleinman and Kleinman, 'How Bodies Remember 710-11).

Similar to the Middle Passage, the itinerary the Palestinians walked after being dispelled from their homeland was inherently a bodily experience. It had its power

relations invested in the body as seizure of territory had always been adjacent to capture and violation of bodies and the superimposition of power as acted upon these bodies. This route was increasingly narrowed until those dispossessed population were contorted in refugee camps. Hence, the site of the journey here is paradoxically a site of desire and rejection, a location. Representation of the body as a territory seized and appropriated in a way different to the fluid mind representative of the creative and transcendent. The colonial treatment of the body echoes treatment of all space.

Colonial discourse talks about a body that is ‘both invisible and hypervisible’ (Peterson, ‘Eccentric Bodies’ xi). In chapter three on Derek Walcott’s *Omeros*, Philoctetes enforces the idea of the body as a prison, violently appropriated by the colonial power. On the other hand, in chapter two, Wilson Harris, through his character Bone in *Jonestown*, argues that if the body could be considered as a site of oppression, then metamorphosis could be affected by way of taking the body against this meaning; by taking the body to a higher level of consciousness. In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari posit a ‘body without organs’ (*Anti-Oedipus* 9), a body that moves beyond definition as ‘neither men nor women are defined personalities, but rather vibrations, flows, schizzes, and ‘knots’’ (*Anti-Oedipus* 362). This body moves beyond status as organism towards something ‘smooth, slippery, opaque’ (*Anti-Oedipus* 9). Harris encapsulates the sense of re-visioning space through the death and rebirth of the body, and introduces a figure—embodied by Bone—having the ability to ‘die again to live again’ (Harris, *The Dark Jester* 102), displaying the body’s ability to shift time frames, cross boundaries by becoming fluid and merging with other spaces, other bodies. Yet it refuses endless postmodern fluidity as it hovers close to escapist desires.

The body in postcolonial literature is often read in a way that assumes it representative of the sufferings of an entire national population. Yet to read it only in this way is to obscure the centrality of the body, in itself and for itself, to colonial operations, and to deny the importance of intimate acts of resistance. It is individual bodies choosing to resist that becomes a community of resistance, which then become a large-scale resistance to oppressive rule. The literature discussed here suggests that it would be unwise to forget this initial movement. Without the body, the process of resistance has not even begun, and it is this that makes it perhaps the most significant site of resistance. Historical memory is encapsulated in the body, representing the smallest, most personal scale, that defies appropriation or outside cultural designation. The acceptance of a chaotic, fluid conception of the body here stands against racial stereotypes and announces resistance to personal violence and assaults upon identity. Nevertheless, the postcolonial authors, as I read them here, seem to refuse a transcendental position, and instead choose to mediate fluidity with a continued claim on the body as the postcolonial subject's most vital asset. A coterminous position—a body owned, yet only by itself and in the knowledge of transformative potential—is captured in the concept of the postcolonial.

The concept that the colonial experience is ultimately encapsulated in the body which itself seen as a spatial form, is not unique to postcolonial thought. Both concepts may be traced back to phenomenology, captured in Maurice Merleau-Ponty's view that 'I am conscious of the world through the medium of my body' (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* 82) where particular attention must be paid to 'spatiality' (*Phenomenology of Perception* 98).

Theorists and critics other than Derrida, such as Emmanuel Levinas and Merleau-Ponty have also directly confronted the issue of the possibility of reducing traumatic experiences to language. This topic of (ir) reducibility is, however, not overly engaged with by literary critics, or at least has not been until recently. Said for example argues that as critics we must ‘accept the notion that although there is an irreducible subjective core to human experience, this experience is also historical and secular [...] accessible to analysis and interpretation’ (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* 35).

The idea of the irreducible as an imaginative experience of irrational and horrific excesses provides an interesting rewriting of the European Romantic sublime. As I explore in Derek Walcott’s portrayal of Helen in *Omeros*, the postcolonial sublime leads to the claim that the body can be examined as a site of postcolonial struggle. It has been always the topic of physical violence that seemed to evoke the postcolonial writing. Such a space, taken up in postcolonial contexts, moves towards the possibility of positive new identities in such a way that comes to define what may be seen as a process of growth.

The colonial body is the body defined as a mapping territory, ‘whatever has a determinable shape and a definable location’ (Gibson, ‘Humanity Shows’ 146). This colonial representation of the body, has allowed for the postcolonial representations of the body. The point of ‘becoming’ for the body lies in the move from the conceptualization of the body as a prison into viewing it as a body without organs by Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus* (*Anti-Oedipus* 9). The BWO refuses both social ordering and the Freudian familial relationship (*Anti-Oedipus* 15). This body moves beyond status as organism towards something that is ‘smooth, slippery, opaque’ (*Anti-Oedipus* 9).

A People-to-come, are created by means of intolerable choking circumstances. Deleuze and Guattari introduce the concept of multiplicity in an attempt to escape from allegiances to either subject or object. Rather than presupposing subject and object, we must try to understand their processes of emergence. We do this through developing a theory of affectivity. The concept of 'becoming people' in the Deleuzian philosophy, I think, is in alignment with the protean nature of postcolonial subjectivities that are constantly changing and thus resisting all attempts of representation. Deleuze is not concerned with speaking for or about the subaltern or the other; the Deleuzian concept of becoming is based on a rejection of both representationalist thinking and the attempt to subordinate difference to the same. Deleuze argues in *Difference and Repetition* (1994) that the thought of representation subordinates 'difference to identity or to the Same, to the Similar, to the Opposed' thus creates an illusion of 'conceptual difference, but not a concept of difference' (Deleuze, *Difference* xv).

The desire for reclamation of land and body, the two seized and appropriated territories by the colonial power is different from the imperial desire to own space. Rather, space must be reclaimed for the pre-colonial identity it holds, and for the possibilities for self-development and moving beyond the colonial experience; not a negation of the colonial past, but a subversion. Subversion through mimicry of colonial journeys, utopian cities aid in the movement away from the anti-colonial critique as a disabling power upon the lives of individuals and communities. Harris advocates this process and expresses the need to move beyond the state of the victim into healing. He attempts to retrace lost echoes that remain in the environment hidden, but never lost, 'displaced but not everywhere obliterated' (Harris, *Dark Jester* 19). An explicitly transformative function emerges, as the colonial experience is still recognised for its

horror but is consciously transformed into a valuable addition rather than a lost identity: the ‘wound into sentience’ (Harris, ‘Keynote’) which reveals ‘a capacity for renewal through and despite a compulsive character of oppression’ (Harris, ‘The Enigma of Values’ 141). I examine this postcolonial desire to repossess the past in the chapter on Wilson Harris, in which he celebrates the reclamation of a pre-Columbian Guyana and at the same time forewarns against the repetition of the colonial appropriation of physical space of land and body.

One of the narrative techniques used by all four authors in the texts I examine here, is engendering the region to make it the locus of desire. It is the desire for ‘repossession’ of the lost land. Gendered narrations of the nation, reveals competing, encrypted, threatened and unfulfilled desires and the longing for belonging. Colonial narratives are charged with sexual fantasies and the desire for domination. As a response to the gendered and sexed dynamics of the colonial discourse, national narratives produced patriarchal, sexed and gendered narratives of their own as a desire to repossess the land, depicting the land as feminine: mother, version, lover or prostitute. In spite of the negative feminine perspective on gendering the Caribbean islands or Palestine, that these sexed, very masculine narratives in fact endorse the position of inequality in national narratives, or that it is a continuation of patriarchal oppression practiced on women, I think that the motivation for gendering the land as feminine in colonial and postcolonial narratives may have different interpretations. For the coloniser engendering the land connotes violation, rape and torture whereas for the postcolonial subject it is an act of claiming their right to these subjugated already feminised territories. Hence, I think that romanticising the land in postcolonial texts should be seen as a *response* rather than mimicry of the colonial paradigm. Moreover, and though I do

not examine this from a feminine perspective, I think that the female consciousness in the (post)colonial world, and similar to the postcolonial national consciousness, is still evolving and going through constant processes of *becoming*. For this reason, I find the gendered narratives of the nation responsive to colonial narratives on the orient on one hand while mirroring the harsh realities of the communities within which the position of women is still evolving and on the making.

Despite the deeply influential psychoanalytic theory of unconscious desire, Deleuze and Guattari insist that it is not possible to think desire as something individual, and hence separate from the social field. Hardt and Negri are interested in Deleuze and Guattari's ability to theorize the social as something that is neither material nor cultural, neither individual nor collectively shared but formed and produced by the two. Hardt and Negri are interested in using Deleuze and Guattari's insights into the production of the social, what they describe as 'not only the economic or only the cultural dimension of society but rather the social bios itself' (*Empire* 25). Hardt and Negri are interested in Deleuze and Guattari's ability to theorize the social as the fusion of multiple forces, the material and cultural, the individual and the collective.

In his book *Colonial Desires* (1995), Robert Young argues that Deleuze always insists on treating literature as embedded in social relations, and so in no way attempts to write about literature as divorced from the terms of its production. Young suggests that this theorization of desire by Deleuze and Guattari might well be adapted for writing about the postcolonial desire. Racism, Young suggests, is a form of desire that is produced not by individuals, but by the collective consciousness; that is, it is a social product as well as a flow of desire that does not simply reduce down to an individual's

desires. Deleuze and Guattari, take their conceptualization of desire as social much further to the point where it collapses. Young suggests that Deleuze and Guattari may provide another way to think about desire, and so give a substitute to psychoanalytic perspectives on identity and desires. In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari foreground desire as an important factor in any social, historical or political analysis, and we can see immediately from this why Young has suggested that Deleuze and Guattari might be a useful theoretical resource for postcolonial studies. The concept of the desiring-machines is an important concept for connecting the social change to desire, without having to take any detours through ‘mediation or sublimation, any psychic operation, [or] transformation’ (Young, *Colonial Desires* 29). Desire for Deleuze and Guattari is unrepresentable, thus can never be moulded historically. Nevertheless, their refusal is not the same thing as treating desire as a transcendental factor. They acknowledge that desire, as a socio-cultural production that occurs in the real-time of the world.

Moreover, Deleuze and Guattari reject psychoanalysis’s interpretation of the prohibition of desire as being lacking in completion. For them, as evidenced by the concept of desiring machines, desire is something that is produced by and between fluid bodies, bodies without organs. They continue to argue that the source of desire is repression, and that it is something to be claimed and reclaimed by ethics, such as *Anti-Oedipus*, that enable us to look clearly at those forces that have desire in their hold. Deleuze and Guattari foreground the schizophrenic subject. The Schizophrenic is an explorer of depths, one who rejects the surface entirely and returns instead to the body. This concept of the schizophrenic subject is clear in the two chapters on Derek Walcott’s *Omeros* and Ghassan Kanafani’s *All That’s Left To You*. In *Omeros*, Philoctetes, returns to his body and explores the deepest pain before he could find the cure to ancestral

wounds. His wounds prevent him from speech and the bodily seizures accompanied by incomprehensible utterances are all signs of his attempt to release his buried wounds. For the Schizophrenic, words collapse, not into nonsense, but into the bodies that produce and hear them. This body is also described as ‘howling’, speaking a ‘language without articulation’ that has more to do with the primal act of making sound than it does with communicating specific words (Deleuze and Guattari, *The Logic of Sense* 102). In Kanafani, Hamid escapes the refugee camp to go back to the centre of his existence, his mother and move deeper to connect with his loss. To ‘make oneself a body without organs’, then, is to actively experiment with oneself to draw out and activate these virtual potentials. These potentials are mostly activated through conjunctions with other bodies that Deleuze calls ‘becomings’. Deleuze tells us that this body without organs is ‘permeated by unformed, unstable matters, by flows in all directions, by free intensities or nomadic singularities, by mad or transitory particles’ (Deleuze and Guattari *Plateaus* 40).

Where Derrida and Lacan focus their critical attention on linguistic models and textual methods, Deleuze does not limit his analysis to the text. In his early works, his perspective of difference and how it might change how we represent and understand bodies, have led to the introduction of the concept of the body-without-organs, and to a new kind of minority politics. What it means to be anti-Oedipus, according to Deleuze and Guattari is to oppose the social, political and historical formations, such as capitalism or psychoanalysis, that trap desire into fixed and monotonous forms of postcolonial studies. This view helps us deconstruct our colonial education in psychoanalysis and reassemble it for different purposes.

In *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Post-Modern Perspective* (1997), Antonio Benitez Rojo seeks to define the Caribbean region and its overarching cultural patterns by employing Chaos theory, which argues that despite the complexity of every situation, certain patterns underly large, complex processes. As Benitez-Rojo puts it, Chaos ‘includes all phenomena that depend on the passage of time’ (*The Repeating Island* 3). Benitez-Rojo targets polyrhythm as a means of describing the nature of the Caribbean without limiting it to historical binaries of colonised/ coloniser dichotomy which the west has traditionally affixed to the region. Benitez-Rojo sees this polyrhythmic performance as based on two factors: first, the diverse nature of the roots of Caribbean society, and second, an underlying desire to sublimate violence. For Rojo as for Deleuze, difference is a means of connection, not a means of separation; multiplicities are held together by differences. Reality is fundamentally connected, not disconnected. And in the concept of the ‘rhizome’ any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything else, and must be.

If subjectivity cannot appeal to a single root in history, memory, or place as a holder of the centre, then we have to think the subject without fixity. The Deleuzian concept of the ‘nomad’ denotes the mobility of this refusal of a single root and the assertion of creolization. Without a single root, yet rooted in memory of loss, the nomad moves towards the future. Edouard Glissant creatively develops the Deleuzian concept of the rhizome in his *Poetics of Relations* (1997) to render a sense of the Caribbean experience. It is this forward horizontal movement that composes Glissant’s conception of subjectivity. Further, Glissant’s appeal to the rhizome opens the question of his relation to Deleuze. The concept of the rhizome is attentive to trauma and loss, but also open to a future liberated from nostalgia. In the concept of the rhizome there is no single

root and no need for fixity and permanence. Glissant takes into account the geography of the Caribbean and responds to the abyss of the past of the 'Middle Passage'. The rhizome in Glissant emerges out of the historical experience of trauma, rather than epistemology and metaphysics. Opposing a capitalist homogenesis need not take place through a romantic myth of the local, or an appeal to a patriarchal family system. An ethics of the pre-individual thinks before and beyond the human to invent new possibilities of existence. It is through the impersonal dimensions of the human, those preindividual and transindividual dimensions, that new singularities can be liberated. For Deleuze and Guattari the social is something that is neither material nor cultural; individual nor collectively shared but rather a combination of all the forces. An ethics of the pre-individual does not mean a romantic myth of the local nor an appeal to a particular family system or a romanticizing of the past. In all four authors, the (post)colonial subjects find themselves in the end searching for something that is beyond the national, transindividual. Hence, the postcolonial author mediates fluidity with a continued claim on the body as the postcolonial subject's most vital asset—a body owned by itself, going through a chain of transformative processes of becoming. Harris's vision, for example, is that of a promise rather than that of a fully realised representation, an infinite rehearsal. In Walcott: the creolized name of Homer makes Omeros a Protean figure, an emblem of changeability characteristic of both Caribbean experience and subjectivity. Walcott anchors Omeros in the soil of the Caribbean epic by creating of him 'a noun without an echo'. In Walcott and Kanafani, the pre-individual is emblematic and iconic, sublimating the ordinary. Non-referentiality in both the Caribbean and Palestinian experiences resonates with rupture but does not eliminate all referential activity. The fact that Palestine was a mass land before the Israeli occupation

has left the Palestinians without a national consciousness to belong to. There remain traces of ancestry in them but they have become someone else; these subjects are new ones to become after 1948. The Palestinians relied on literature to form a national identity that can compensate for their geographical dispersal and political fragmentation and create a public sphere in which being a Palestinian can be given expression. Much of their poetry performs a restorative role in national terms, allowing the Palestinians in Israel to construct a positive vision of the national self and to cope with trauma of their dispossession, de-territorialization and dispersal. Though its concepts are based on ideas of solidarity and unity, nationalism, remains problematic, since it does not encourage diversity and heterogeneity. In the Middle East, the rise of Arab nationalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had a profound impact on existing cultures and their expression in literature. Thus, the diversity that once existed in the Ottoman and Mediterranean worlds, with their rich tapestries of languages and ethnicities, gave way to homogenising pressures which grew less and less tolerant of cultural expression.

Moreover, after their independence, the new Arab nation-states were mostly ruled by military dictators or by monarchies chosen by the ex-colonial forces. Poets and writers, in the Arab world, are perceived as visionaries, hence considered as a threat by the authoritative regimes. During the last few decades, many of the prominent Arab writers and poets have been imprisoned, tortured, or forced to choose exile to continue their struggle from outside the borders of their homeland.

A revolutionary change in the conception of Arabic poetry had to take place prior to the actual mass movements that have manifested today. There had been a change not only in the form of poetry and writing but also in the forms of writing as well. The

change in form and content served the function of reflecting the new status quo of dramatic and rapid developments after World War II.

The texts chosen for this study, go against the monologic narratives of the state and the history of legitimized violence practiced upon the subjugated people through writing mythohistoric narratives. These narratives attempt to represent violence and pain resulting from violation of body and land in text. These endeavours prove the impossibility of reducing historical, physical and psychological pain into text and that representation is not possible. However, this impossibility causes a new type of writing—disruptive, mythohistoric writing—to occur and occupy its own space or literary territory. This mirrors the reflexive relation between the three physical sites of becoming: Land, body and text, and the protean nature of all three in literary writing. Moreover, these texts introduce a new type of memory—a performative memory—that is different from nostalgia, by locating memory in the present (body, land and text) and through creating affinities amongst characters also in the present, these texts construct a biopolitical memory that is rooted in wounded histories of colonisation and occupation, yet moving forward to the future of becoming.

Moreover, by reinforcing their own inherent undecidability, vulnerability and besieged language, these literary texts unsettle traditional dominant discourse, leaving the way open for other readings to evolve. These are literary texts on the becoming, unfinished drafts on wounded and bruised historical memory. These minor writers felt compelled to carry out a literary excavation of lost memories, and to explore innovative and experimental modes of writing. What they needed is a new critical consciousness and a ‘permission to narrate’ (Said, ‘Permission to Narrate’ 1984).

In this thesis, I will attempt to extrapolate how the writers I select for the study reflect the colonial subject's excluded existence, and how they articulate an existence through and within these cramped and charged (post)colonial spaces of loss and dislocation. By bringing Caribbean and Palestinian literatures into dialogue, a cross-cultural alliance may be formed within the boundaries of this thesis; a form of literary alliance between the two literatures in their relation to past traumas of loss.

In this introduction, I have tried to encapsulate the essence of this thesis by outlining the three sites of postcolonial becoming: body, land and text. I argued that it is possible to build a biopolitical memory for the dispossessed people through fiction. This possibility, I contended is the result of the irreducible nature of painful experience and the impossibility of representation in the case of traumatic historical experiences. Moreover, I proposed reading these sites of becoming through the deployment of the Deleuzian thought, which responds to the protean nature of the postcolonial sites of becoming.

In chapter Two on Wilson Harris's two novels *Palace of the Peacock* (1960) and *Jonestown* (1996), I examine how Harris uses limbo writing and chaos theory to transcend historical wounds. The bodily experience of colonial subjugation has a reflexive relationship to land and text in Harris. Mariella, the woman/Land who is raped and violated by Donne, the racially mixed coloniser, is shown as being recalcitrant to subjugation as the crew are led to their second death because of the attempt to dominate her. However, Harris, in his deployment of limbo writing opens other possibilities and allows the crew to transcend their desire at the Palace of the Peacock. Bone in *Jonestown* also finds a way to heal—through love—from the wounds of history, falling

at the end against gravity and towards Christ consciousness. Harris's texts also bear a sense of critique of the nationalistic absolute space, which leads to more violence and to the repetition of the same crimes of colonial history. The alternative, Harris believes, is through what Glissant terms as the 'poetics of relation' in which all human beings are connected. By so doing, Harris offers his own vision of going beyond the national discourse and back to a pre-Columbian space.

Chapter three on Derek Walcott's *Omeros* (1990) opens up the colonial literary text to the precariousness and instabilities of this trope. The wounded body in Walcott is vulnerable and the moment the body opens about it, we witness the process of rewriting the historical wounds of memory. The seizure attacks Philoctetes suffers from are caused by his inability to communicate his pain. The impossibility of 'verbal release' and these vocalizations and non-comprehensive utterances Philoctetes produces, are the linguistic limitations of expressing the unspeakable in words. The physical breakdowns in the narrative are reflected in the broken lines of the poem, both reflecting the fragile points in history and creating what Kumar Rajaram terms as 'disruptive writing' characteristic of all four authors in this thesis and of postcolonial narratives focusing on territorial and corporeal politics. The process of 'knitting' lines of the poem, as Walcott likes to call it, is the poet's way of dealing with the tension between fluidity and rupture, and of his deployment of writing and joining as a means of motion. Walcott deploys the Homeric text to challenge colonial representation and write a self-reflexive text.

In chapter four, I examine Mahmoud Darwish's book of selected poems *Unfortunately it was Paradise* (2003) and his mixed genre narrative *Memory for Forgetfulness* (1982). Darwish writes on threatened and encrypted desires and longing to

the Land/ Beloved, and writes a reflexive narrative on war and siege in Beirut during the Israeli bombing of the city in 1982. In these two texts, the desire to narrate is encrypted, since he depicts longings to Palestine as being threatened by fears of a second loss. The experience of the war in *Memory* is corporeal and Darwish uses disruptive and cyclical narrative to write on death and displacement. In both Walcott and Darwish, there is a sublimating of the ordinary through the use of myth where the heroes are not invincible gods but vulnerable subjugated people. The fact that Darwish is committed not only to the political issue of Palestine, but also to revelation of the daily human tragedy, arising from it is what makes him a world poet.

Chapter five on Ghassan Kanafani's two novellas *Men in the Sun* (1962) and *All That's Left To You* (1966) attempts to alter the perception of the refugee camp from being perceived as a prison into a bridge. This new perception of the camp as a bridge opens literary possibilities for the politicised subject to move from death zones into the zone of 'becoming', as characters try to delimit the regulated bodies by crossing the borders of the refugee camp. The language of Kanafani's texts is reflexive of the state of territorial siege in both texts. The narrative in *All That's Left To You* leads to the point of dispersal towards the end of the novella, indicating a new promise of what Giorgio Agamben calls the 'coming community' (1993).

The conclusion is a crystallization of the main argument of the thesis, and of the potential of becoming as embodied within the concept of the 'multitude' offered by Michael Hardt and Toni Negri in their book *Multitude* (2005). I argue that in addressing one another, to compose a productive dialogue between histories of oppression that look beyond the national, transnational narratives open new and productive possibilities of

being, and form translocal alignments amongst writers of minor literatures. This dialogue may open a third space of articulation to remap new sites or positionalities of diaspora and traumatic pasts in order to allow for a transformative project of becoming. The linkage between these two histories is drawn from their shared histories of suffering. What results from this is a new postcolonial literature foregrounding the multiplicity denied by the colonial space, yet ever-present. This biopolitical literature has the potential of creating a new form of literature that is both political and literary as it disrupts the very centre of imperial structures and their postcolonial legacies.

Chapter Two

Literary Postcolonies: Wilson Harris's *Palace of the Peacock* and *Jonestown*

Imaginative sensibility is uniquely equipped by forces
of dream and paradox to mirror the inimitable activity
of subordinated psyche.

Wilson Harris, *The Womb of Space* (xvii)

In this chapter, I examine two novels written by the Guyanese writer Wilson Harris: *Palace of the Peacock* (1960) and *Jonestown* (1996). I explore the (im) possibility of repossessing the interior in *Palace* and *Jonestown* and how both body and landscape, while encapsulating colonial seizure prove recalcitrant to colonial (and postcolonial aesthetic) subjugation. I also intend to show how Harris—by suggesting that vanished cultures in the Caribbean (Amerindians, Mayan, Arawak, etc.) are still present and felt within the layers of the landscape—opens a literary gateway for bridging the voids between traumatic memories and historical potential for colonial subjects. By so doing, I argue that Harris moves from the ‘nonbeing-ness’ of vanished cultures into ‘being-ness’ as a process of ‘becoming’ where these forgotten cultures are themselves the bridge leading to conscious cultural metamorphosis. Shifting to a new awareness, as I intend to show in Harris, is a transition to new territories; it is a limbo state, with no references in mind. Harris chooses creative destruction and construction and trance writing to enter a sacred space of vulnerability in order to break the silences of memory. Both *Palace* and *Jonestown* present themselves as modes of mourning, a way of working through history,

of understanding the (post)colonial subject relation to that history in order to create a community. These two aesthetic works of mourning are thus directed towards a future to come.

The shift postcolonial narratives offer is the act of retelling a story from a different perspective, in this case from the colonised point of view, creating a form of literary witnessing. This shift is dramatic in the sense that it gives the victim the feeling of owning his/her own story; a 'shift from being the object or medium of someone else's (the Perpetrator's) speech (or other expressive behaviour) to being the subject of one's own' (Brison, 'Trauma Narratives' 39). Talking of the possibilities of breaking the cyclic repetition of trauma, Theodor Adorno believes that 'we will not have come to terms with the past until the causes of what happened then are no longer active. Only because these causes live on does the spell of the past remain, to this very day, unbroken' (*Negative Dialectics* 129). De-activating memory could break the chains which relates us to past suffering and the means to do that, according to Harris, is by transforming the psyche, which is an inner procedure that involves exploring the 'interiors' of the multilayered self to extract the hidden sources of individual and collective healing ('Psyche' 14). Uwe Schafer explains how Harris's way of writing departs from 'Western forms of narrative', as he states that, 'Harris uses a system of syncretic writing that includes a wide variety of textual strategies and epistemological concepts which foreground the possibilities of the individual imagination as a step towards a 'third space' beyond the discourse of dominance and subservience' ('Fleshing the Cannibal's Bones' 1).

Harris 'breaches' and opens channels through the limbo dance onto other cultures and histories. The limbo, Harris explains, 'was born, it is said, on the slave ships of the Middle Passage. There was so little space that the slaves contorted themselves into

human spiders' (Harris, 'History, Fable, and Myth' 157-158). Like the limbo dance, the 'limbo gateway' of the imagination, Harris tells us, works to 're-activate' the linkage between the past and present of the middle passage' (157). Bone explains how the limbo 'gateway' enables a 'new growth' to take place (159):

memory, Limbo chameleon memories upon which diminutive survivors
such as myself feed in order to clothe themselves with the terrors of
history that one may still convert into rare however flawed
consciousness, indestructible hope. Such was my Limbo initiation into
the writing of my Dream-book. (*Jonestown* 68)

The 'limbo memory', according to Harris, is expansive and cross-cultural (*Jonestown* 68). It is a 'creative and re-creative complex that springs from the depths of the human psyche' (Harris, 'Psyche' 14). Harris invokes the spider trickster Anancy-god of the New World who symbolizes expansion in the tradition of shamanism. The 'limbo gateway' of the imagination, similar to the limbo dance, 're-activate[s]' the linkage between the past and present of the middle passage' (Bundy, *Selected Essays* 151). Bone's Dream-Book blurs time planes in its '*net of associations of 'pasts' and 'presents' and 'futures' in which one could trace an immense and subtle transference of Mask'* (*Jonestown* 186). The 'limbo memory' corresponds to the fragmented traumatized psyche. This limbo memory, just like the limbo dance, allows Bones 'to break the mould of the past and release a creative/re-creative capacity to right ancient wrongs in the family of Mankind' (*Jonestown* 35), allowing a transformation of the self. In the novel's prologue, the 'Letter from Francisco Bone to W.H.', Bone explains how, through

investigating the multilayers of history and legend ‘[o]ne becomes, it seems, a vessel of composite epic, imbued with many voices, one is a multitude’ (*Jonestown* 5). This merging of ‘community and self’ makes the vessels of history ‘that multitudes in the self employ in order to bridge chasms in historical memory’ (*Jonestown* 5).

In ‘Apprenticeship to the Furies’, Harris offers a critique of Freudian psychoanalysis and its binary oppositions-though acknowledging Freud’s contributions to the field- and introduces the cross-cultural imagination as an attempt to go beyond the binaries of western psychoanalysis and to investigate alternate perspectives on trauma (in *Selected Essays of Wilson Harris* 229). Harris’s chaos theory overlaps with Said’s ‘contrapuntal theory’ he introduced in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993). My conceptualization of how these two authors inform and address each other in ideology attests to the fact that the colonial discourse holds within it a multiplicity of meanings; and that colonial histories can enrich one another in order to deconstruct master narratives. The contrapuntal method of interpretation involves comparing literary texts bearing in mind colonial histories and their effect on the written discourse. When used in literary criticism, this method will show how works are ‘shaped and perhaps determined by the specific history of colonization, resistance, and finally native nationalism’, as a result ‘alternative, or new narratives emerge’ (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* 51). Said writes:

Invention in this older rhetorical meaning of the word is the finding and elaboration of arguments, which in the musical realm means the finding of a theme and developing of it contrapuntally so that all of its possibilities are articulated, expressed, and elaborated. (*Culture and Imperialism* 128)

The goal of contrapuntal reading, in Said's view, is to enable suppressed and excluded narratives into being articulated. Thus, no voice shall dominate, only co-existing voices that might be at odds with one another, and 'not necessarily reconcilable', yet they would have 'an organized interplay' of ideas (Said, *Culture* 51). In other words, Said is suggesting that literary texts can permit a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships. These multiple voices together function as a challenge to existing political hierarchies. Counterpoint for Harris is more about dissonance, voices that irritate and do not belong, rather than the interrelationship in Said's 'Contrapuntal theory'. This new unfolding of history embraces the voice of the excluded; of cultural sounds that are cacophonous and dissonant. The reason behind Harris being 'unreadable' as C.L.R. James notes, is that his music is dissonant to major language since it's asymmetrical, revolutionary and a representative of the schizophrenic subject. Harris's lines are displaced, cyclically collapsing and (resuscitating) coming back to life again, causing the text to become a painting, a living breathing nature in its use of emblematic symbolic language.

Moreover, Harris challenges the coherent narratives of imperialism and disrupts them by these dissonant sounds he resurrects from the voids of histories, such as Bone, whose name evokes 'eclipsed' civilizations, and who keeps trying to embrace his skeleton twin who rejects him all over again (144). In *Jonestown*, both language and sensibility are parts of the flux and fluidity of things where (post)colonial voice/self cannot be limited solely to the realm of language, for they are simply located beyond the linguistic sign. Through music, Harris argues, the limbo multilayered psyche and memories are felt. Music can compensate for the fragmentation and voids in collective

memory. Harris writes, 'Music in fiction, in my estimation, reaches through and beyond poetic ornament or metaphor into a real engagement with unfathomable coherency in the body of an entire creation' ('Merlin and Parsifal' 64). Harris is searching for the harmony and wholeness in creation disrupted by the dissonance amongst cultures and histories. Cultures meet and overlap to play a dissonant music, asserting their contrapuntal relation and bringing to the ear the voice of excluded dissonant beings. Psychic twinship and schizophrenia in *Jonestown*, are reflected through musical 'counterpoint' which emphasizes the interrelation between two musical lines in which a second line is being added to a melody, forming the base for polyphony. There exists a tension between the second line and the original though they are supposed to resolve and co-exist harmoniously.

The split in the (post)colonial self is the state of 'counterpoint' between the marginalized and the new to-become pre-individual. Counterpoint is important as it provides a framework for Harris to make sense of the resonances between and amongst cultures. Harris notes, 'dissonance in music lies in depth within all harmonies to acquaint us with unwritten relationships that disturb our Sleep. Or else harmony would consolidate itself into an illusion' (*Jonestown* 21).

This music, or even '*shadow of music*', brings the remains of 'eclipsed' cultures; 'what is virtually unseen but not unhearable or unseeable, even as sheer quantity and number lose their claustrophobic tyranny or progression backwards into the nothingness of the past, forwards into multiplications of meaninglessness in the future' (Harris 'Merlin and Parsifal' 65). What remains of ancient music then are 'shadows', traces from which we can start and upon which we can build a future.

Consciousness lapses reveal themselves through the protean temporality and spatiality of Harris's narrative style. As 'the trauma began by degrees to break' and Bone's memory returns, 'uncanny correspondences began to loom between Mayan twinships of pasts and future and the Mathematics of Chaos' (5). In *Jonestown*, Harris saw the need for a dislocation of linear temporality, in order to confront 'History', and reconstitute a new psychological landscape of consciousness; to write the dispossessed into history, ungoverned by authoritarian language. The means to do so, for Harris, is by creating characters unconfined by space living in a fluid landscape.

Re-writing *Jonestown* and *Palace* from a postcolonial revisionist perspective is a form of disruptive writing. Prem Rajaram sees rhizomorphic writing, as a form of 'disruptive writing' and of 'resistance' (Rajaram 227). He explains how the radical contextualization of meaning where form and content are dislocated and displaced would offer alternative dimensions of conceptualizing the relation between time and space (Rajaram 203). Harris uses radical form and radical vision to achieve radical liberation; his 'disruptive writing' means to reflect the dislocation and displacement of the middle passage experience. The problem of 'schizophrenic' subjectivity remains as language, a marker of historical and socio-cultural meanings that cannot be transcended. Identity, as in literary expression, has fragmentary elements at its core. This makes the desire for 'wholeness' the only thing that should be transcended. Broken sentences in *Palace* and *Jonestown* are meant to convey a sense of shattered schizophrenic psyches; univocity is disrupted and dislocated through the merging of character symbology and through the mythic hybridization of people with nature, animals, and birds in order to explore subjectivity in its plurality.

Harris's emphasis on doors, rooms and windows in the novel is to open up spaces and horizons and create an alternate to hierarchical structures of power. In his seminal essay, 'Tradition and the West Indian Novel', Harris speaks of 'the epic and revolutionary novel of associations' in which characters 'are related within a personal capacity which works in a poetic and serial way so that a strange jigsaw is set in motion like a mysterious unity of animal and other substitutes within the person' (Harris in *Selected Essays* 141).

In *Diaspora Criticism* (2006), Sudesh Mishra defines schizoanalysis as a mode of writing 'describ[ing] a critical performance based on acentred modes of argumentation' (65). Mishra explains that the rhizome is an 'internal subjective split within the Caribbean cultural identity' of 'shifting boundaries of multiple compositional unities' (Mishra 65).

Using the limbo memory could help in materializing the 'immaterial' the to-become-process of becoming for (post)colonial identity and to open up the socio-cultural and historical 'holes' in the (post)colonial identity in order to fashion its own destiny. In *Jonestown*, dreams of redemption are constitutive of the work itself rather than buried within it. For Harris, the idea of redemption is not teleological because existence has no end; the rehearsal is infinite similarly to the world in its perpetual state of becoming. Harris sees art itself as an act of redemption, taking creation to point zero, and causing the movement from the material to the 'immaterial'. For Harris, this movement, is not a movement towards abstraction or non-being, rather, it forms a materialisation of a consciousness that is still in the making. This is the consciousness of loss crystallised by the postcolonial writer to be both disruptive and creative. Harris defines the 'immaterial' as 'an art of fiction where the agents of time begin to subsist upon the real reverses the

human spirit has endured, the real chasm of pain it has entered, rather than the apparent consolidation, victories and battles it has won'(Harris qtd.in Durrant, *Postcolonial Narrative* 13).

Postcolonial minor writers are 'agents of time' resurrecting the voice of (post)colonial selves from 'one of those peculiar holes in the body of history' (11); holes which are 'stigmata of the void' (Harris qtd.in Durrant, *Postcolonial Narrative* 13). In *Jonestown*, Bone engages in a similar act of materialization of the 'immaterial' consciousness of loss through his gradual awareness of psychic fractures and breaks in history. He succeeds in embracing the 'vessels'; the partialities of the self which are dissonant to one another; to extend the self into the collective.

Bone's incomplete vision at the beginning of the novel to perceive hidden counterpoints to his own experiences corresponds to Freud's analysis of trauma as an event that can only be witnessed belatedly. For Harris, this also entails that colonisation may produce a similar kind of psychic tribulation as it disrupts and dislocates the colonised historical and cultural frame of reference. This is more like a collapse of time and space where colonisation is experienced as the inability of the colonised to witness what is happening to them: '[T]he environment of the Caribbean' Harris explains, 'is steeped [...] in such broken conceptions as well as misconceptions of the meaning of conquest. No wonder in the jungles of Guyana and Brazil, for example, material structural witnesses seem to exist in a terrible void of unreality' ('Tradition' 31). Bone moves, as I said from the trauma of survival revealed in questions such as: 'WHY HAVE I SURVIVED?' (20) in which he perceives himself as a discrete individual at the beginning of the novel and learns throughout his journey, how to see and live his multitudes as partialities. Bone comes to see his journey as nomadic; one of departures

and arrivals. The Dream-Book and the limbo memory teach Bone that '[e]veryone arrives and departs in mutual body and mutual ghost' (163). He finally arrives to the conclusion that trauma has resurrected him: 'The trauma that I suffered in Jonestown may have imprisoned me absolutely in a plot of fate. But thank God! It aroused me instead to contemplate a hidden mathematics in the body of language' (6) and he comes to associate trauma with 'a new birth of consciousness' (40). By thinking of survival as a resurrection, Bone releases death from its finality and comes to perceive of it as a beginning. Bone explains to his judges at the end of the novel, 'I put myself in the shoes of the people of Jonestown on the Day of the Dead [...]. They were alive in me' (231). Bone 'resurrects' the dead of Jonestown by 'changing places', and dislocation of vision. Finally, Bone leaves his twin skeleton behind and moves forward with fluidity.

The realistic discourse cannot represent the body for it remembers the body as 'progressive realism erases the past. It consumes the present and may very well abort the future with its linear bias' (Harris 72). Although the dismembered history resists being claimed, Harris writes about traces of 'absent present' cultures that address the 'intuitive imagination', he says '*a trail of silent things*, archaeological witness, speaks to us of the groping spirit at various levels of society, settlement, expansion and dispersal' (Harris 'Books-A Long View' 21). Unable to recover the past, yet the possibility of redemption lies in seeing our relation to histories of atrocities in a different way. Harris's relation to his work resonates with his ancestors' relation to the present, he aligns himself with that which haunts 'his own landscape of history', and comes to inhabit the space occupied by the absent bodies and dismembered memories he refers to as the 'immaterial'. His own lack of cultural substance is a way of remembering through identification with the 'eclipsed' past. For Harris, narration becomes a mode of mourning that both witnesses

and redeems suffering. Harris sees himself as the medium through which the dead come to express themselves in the lives of survivors. Bearing witness becomes a sort of mediation between the past and the future, a mode of redeeming time through an offering of oneself to the future. Harris's awareness of the crisis of history is what makes him search for an art of redemption.

In *Jonestown*, Harris engages in 'visualize[ing] the Shadow of resurrection' (*Resurrection at Sorrow Hill* 9) where history transfigured by hope, faith, and ruins of the past become not a driving force of healing but seen as the source of re-creativity and transformation. Harris's vision of the coming community is that of a promise rather than a fully realised representation. This is a refusal to determine the borders of the coming community and a way of conceiving ourselves as infinite beings. In *Jonestown*, Harris, through his 'limbo memory' and '*shadows of music*', gives trauma a new lexicon, and a new tongue. Harris's *Jonestown* presents an alternative method of witnessing. By tapping into the 'unknown' resources of the imagination, the victimized can overcome past traumas and his trans-historical feelings of guilt and shame. Harris's vision of 'fulfilment' rather than the 'consolidation' of character has 'implications not only for the novel but for [...] vision of a community rising out of a broken and dislocated past and tradition' (Walmsley 240). In the closing scene of the novel, Bone, wearing Deacon's mask, is accused—with his own consent, and found guilty of the latter's crimes and sentenced to be thrown from a cliff, Bone 'leaps' yet doesn't fall, and instead is suspended 'in a net of music, the net of the huntsman Christ' (233). Bone defies imperialist gravity because 'the lives and limbs of those who perished need to be weighed as incredible matter-of-fact that defies the limits of realistic discourse' (82). Bone ended perceiving his wound as a source of life, and as Uwe Schafer describes, 'the

violence inflicted on oppressed peoples is the seed for their resurrection and the source of creativity and imagination' ('Fleshing the Cannibal's Bone' 8). The engagement in re-writing memory and dealing with it in Harris is then a 'working through', in which writing becomes a sort of a 'return to the past to try to fill in the gaps of what remains unsaid or unresolved' (Goertz 34-5). This engagement with history and its multilayers to understand one's relation to that past leads to a shift that will enable the 'working through' or healing to take place, paving the path for the (post) to arrive as the awakened consciousness at the end 'fell into a net' 'of music, the net of the huntsman Christ' (*Jonestown* 233).

Modernism is too readily dismissed by postmodernists and postcolonialists alike. Postmodernists say that modernism is too contingent upon the power of and complicit with colonialism and imperialism. Nevertheless, postcolonial writers, such as Harris, find the forms of modernism useful to critique the discourse of colonialism, in order to question and shake the roots of the fixed colonial ideology. Many colonial writers search for an alternative to Western established literary modes to represent the fluid, overlapping and entangled experiences resisting uniformity.

The impossibility of ethics, of representing the subaltern, to quote Spivak, who can physically speak but had no voice for centuries, since he signifies the absolute Other of the culturally dominant Self, is central to my thesis as I have explained in the introduction to this project. However, Harris believes that despite this 'infinite tragedy', there is 'yet hope of divergence from absolute plot, absolute doom' (Slemon, 'Wilson Harris' 66). Harris opts for new narrative forms and does not accept the fixed view of history. His fiction has been described by a number of critics as a form of 'historical witness' (Sharrad 94-109). As I will attempt to show in *Jonestown*, Harris offers the

colonial subject the chance to heal through writing. By recreating the traumatic experience and writing narratives of a bruised memory, the silenced victim is able to give his testimony to what has really happened. Harris believes that through *interpretations* of gaps and silences in colonial historiography, the colonial consciousness would finally emerge into being. Thus, for Harris this impossibility of ethics is what makes possible the radical narrative in colonial writing.

Harris is interested in deconstructing master narratives by critiquing the ideological foundations on which the categories of realism rest. He means to achieve this by emphasizing the fact that adhering to literary techniques set by major literatures cannot represent the colonial realities. Hence, in his fiction, he moves away from the structures of realism, for it is impossible to write within them to critique realism. In his essay, 'Tradition and the West Indian Novel', Harris writes that:

The consolidation of character is, to a major extent, the preoccupation of most novelists who work in the twentieth century within the framework of the nineteenth-century novel. And this is not surprising after all since the rise of the novel in its conventional and historical mould coincides in Europe with states of society which were involved in consolidating their class and other vested interests. As a result 'character' in the novel rests more or less on the self-sufficient individual-on elements of 'persuasion' [...] The novel of persuasion rests on grounds of apparent common sense: a certain 'selection' is made by the writer, the selection of items, manners, uniform conversation, historical situations, etc..all lending themselves to build and present an individual span of life

which yields self-conscious and fashionable judgments, self-conscious and fashionable moralities. (140-1)

For Harris, western realism denies associative links between cultures and favours monovision, uniformity, and self-centeredness as opposed to expansive self and collectivity, which are prerequisites for dialoguing with the postcolonial being. He rejects realism as incapable of representing the complexities of the human psyche. It is important to the creation and rediscovery of the colonial self, Harris contends, to explore the links found amongst histories, cultures, images, myths, and metaphors, in order to transform the eighteenth and nineteenth century British novel of empire, which, in Harris's view, is fixed, selective, and determinative. He tells us: 'And yet the characterization in the novel-form was all-white. I find this slightly odd—to say the least—when I reflect on the many diverse peoples under the umbrella of European empire' (qtd. in Fazzini, *Resisting Alterities* 5).

This fact of strategic exclusion; of absence for the postcolonial subject requires a third space for writing, in order to turn western realism on itself and make it 'consume its own biases' (Harris, *Guyana* 127). Harris creates his linguistic zone by placing himself in a middle space, which is the space of the silenced and invisible subjects. He writes from within that space not as a hero but as an extension to the land and nature. He wants us to hear the silent echoes in that hole. The term 'iconic landscape' Harris uses in his essay 'Interior of the Novel' has been described by Emery as a spatializing factor, as an alternative middle zone from within which memory could be dynamically activated (Emery 111). The 'hole' in the middle is the positionality of the minor writer:

[M]iddle-of-the-road's hole within my iconic landscape—middle-of-the-landscape sculpture or waterfall or river or escarpment of jungle or rock-face down which a phenomenal erosion happened, quite suddenly, precipitately, of conquered peoples.

(Harris 'Interior of the Novel' 16)

Caribbean writers like Harris, Kamau Brathwaite, and Eduard Glissant amongst others engage in imagining a contemporary Caribbean discourse within the New World, in which the Caribbean writer is seen as flowing in between spaces, in a cyclic movement of ongoing departures and arrivals, thus encouraging a parallel relationship between and across cultures. Criticizing the tree-root metaphor symbolic of hierarchical structures of power, and adopting the rhizomatic dispersal of multiplicities, writers like Brathwaite for instance, would deploy the *missile* metaphor to imply the horizontal dimensions of Caribbean self: 'We came across the Atlantic in this space capsule within the missile of the Europeans' ('History' 33). These Caribbean writers argue against rooted totality and the systematic colonial procedures of exclusion and inclusion of races and cultures, and go for the cyclic repetitive movement of the *rhizome* which is 'always in the middle', and symbolic of 'the logic of *and*' (Deleuze & Guattari, *On the Line* 57-8).

Glissant suggests that this dream of the Caribbean should be held by the people and that intellectuals should be from and within the multiplicity they represent. Similar to the rhizome in Deleuze, Glissant thinks the author of minor literature should be one of the people and his self is expansive, blurring boundaries between singularity and the collective consciousness, to create a mutual relation between 'multiplicity' and 'singularity' (Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse* 105). It seems problematic though to figure

Harris's horizontal alliances while he constantly reveals his preoccupation with 'depth' of the psyche in his allusions to the underworld; the 'interior' of the land; the dream world; 'holes;' and spiritual trances which keep recurring in his fiction. He writes critiquing post-modernity:

[T]he post-modernists have discarded depth, they have discarded the unconscious, thus all they are involved in is a game, a kind of game, whereas what I am saying is not just a game. I am convinced that there is a tradition in depth *which returns, which nourishes us even though it appears to have vanished*, and that it creates a fiction in the ways in which the creative imagination comes into dialogue with clues of revisionary moment. The spectral burden of vanishing and reappearing is at the heart of the writer's task. ('Literacy and the Imagination—A Talk' 27)

Writing a denied existence can only start from a moment in history—the 'hole' as Harris likes to term it—reflecting ruptures between past and present. Harris offers his chaos theory and quantum mechanics, where randomness relies upon details within details, to approach a contrapuntal reading of history. It is important to the creation and rediscovery of postcolonial subject to explore the links found amongst histories, cultures, images, myths, and metaphors. So far I have argued that the Caribbean writers reject the view of (H)istory as chronological and linear and attempt to re-write the colonial experience as a moment in history. In order to question and shake the roots of the fixed colonial ideology, Caribbean writers search for an alternative to Western

established literary modes to represent the fluid, overlapping and entangled experiences resisting uniformity. Harris was interested in deconstructing master narratives by critiquing the ideological foundations on which the categories of realism rest. He meant to achieve that by emphasizing the fact that adhering to literary techniques set by major literatures cannot represent the colonial realities. Hence, in his fiction, Harris moves away from the structures of realism, for it is impossible to write within them to critique realism. Caribbean writers had to move, in Benitez- Rojo's words, 'toward the creation of an ethnologically promiscuous text that might allow a reading of the varied and dense polyphony of Caribbean society's characteristic codes' (*Repeating Island* 189-90).

The national history of Guyana is very complicated. This complexity sees itself reflected in Harris's texts and the way he interacts with the territory in his fiction. Guyana defines itself as a nation, formed under the banner of 'one people, one nation, one destiny' (Williams, *Saints on My Name* 20). Nevertheless, Guyana's history is marked by repeated colonial incursion, alteration of its identity under imperialist authorities. Guyana was unified in 1831 as a result of British seizure of these territories. Through slavery and indentured labour, new populations came into Guyana with their own nationalities. This resulted in a mixture of races from Indian and black origins, in addition to the indigenous inhabitants.

Hence, complexities encountered in writing these texts stem from the middle passage, from histories marked by dislocations and ruptures. This middle passage with all its particularities in both the Caribbean experiences have placed those people in the world of the peripheral and marginalized. The crucial role of the colonial author hence, is to uncover the silenced narratives lost in the middle passage, and to signify the space of absence. Each one of these writers highlights a different facet of minor literature

when he writes from his position of estrangement and alienation. I believe that minor literature is significant in the sense that it alters and adds to our perception of colonial experiences and thus expands our knowledge to gaze beyond fixed held truths.

The colony in Guyana denied all that preceded it and was built on ‘silence, omission and absence’ (Pastor, *Silence and Writing* 123). The colonial territory was founded on a complete denial of its chaotic foundations. In *Masters of All They Survived*, Graham Burnett states that what emerges is ‘a region called terra incognita that Europeans turned into a mapped and bounded colony’ (Burnett, *Masters* 3). Yet, the instability inherited in the land continued to assert itself, for the land as a territory was ‘expansive, nomadic and boundary—transgressing technique [...] a highly ambiguous boundary [...] the tension between boundary making and boundary crossing’ (Burnett, *Masters* 16, 255).

Harris reflects this territorial instability of Guyana, and the way it defies colonial mapping in *Palace of the Peacock* through the character of Mariella, who is an Amerindian woman imprisoned by Donne, the postcolonial coloniser or the ex-colonial subject perpetuating and repeating colonial violence. Harris takes the reader in a journey of reclamation of the land only to make us realise the unattainability of such pursuit. It is worth noting that the reclamation of the land as a creation of the imagination in fiction, and re-inventing ties to the landscape is one of the recurrent themes in Caribbean writings. These landscapes are traumatic, in the sense that they have been exposed to exploitation and corruption (e.g. searching for cities of gold in Guyana and a history of terror and genocide) by the colonisers, the thing that has made of these topographies a kind of *silent witnesses* to the suffering and loss of the native peoples of these lands. Colonial writers wish to perform both historical interrogation

and reverse gaze, has led to the birth of mytho-historic narratives in order to engage in a relation with the past that would allow for the ‘working through’ of trauma. The myth of El Dorado, used by the colonialists to justify their exploitation of Guyana has been re-created in Caribbean writings, as in Wilson Harris’s *Palace of the Peacock* (1960) and Carpentier’s *The Lost Steps* (1953), in order to re-establish their connection to the landscape, and affect a transformation of both the land and its inhabitants, by inventing their ties and sense of belonging to it.

Caribbean writers use myth to reject the emphasis on negative conceptualization of the New World heritage of dispossession and exploitation. Resisting the alienating feeling, these writers resorted to mythology as a way of coming to terms with dislocation and fragmentation caused by histories of conquest. Derek Walcott writes: ‘These writers reject the idea of history as time for its original concept as myth [...] for them history is fiction, subject to a fitful muse, memory (‘The Muse of History’ 36-37). Resorting to mythology, Caribbean writers invented an alternative vision of the region as the threshold of a New World, exploring literary expression in its relation to histories of origin in the Caribbean. Mytho-historic redefines literary aesthetics as ‘a drama of consciousness which reads back through the shock of place and time for omens of capacity that were latent, unrealized, within the clash of cultures and movements of peoples into the South Americas and West Indies’ (Harris, ‘History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guiana’s’ 21). For postcolonial writers, myth is ‘historical memory [...] provoking consciousness’ (Webb 7). The ‘latent’ capacity of myth at preserving history makes it a rich reservoir of history, hence, offering a promise of metamorphosis. Through myth, post-colonial literature can resurrect the memory of the future (Glissant

Discourse 138). Web quotes Daniel-Henri Pageaux on the relatedness of history, myth and narration:

Myth is History and not just story. It is the History of a group, a community, a cultural collectivity. It is fostered by the History of the group. [...] but is always a reinterpretation of History. As such, myth always augments, because historically it only appears as compensatory History. The absence (real or perceived as such) of certain historical realities or factors explains how myth emerges, is told and is written as second History. This definition [...] permits us to see mythic (Hi)story as a compensatory factor in a situation perceived as frustrating, in a situation of suffering and absence. (qtd. in Webb 7)

Myth then can be seen as an alternate to recollection (re-membering and structuring linear memories) for histories filled with ruptures. It is a 'compensatory factor' to the inability of telling a (Hi)story. Re-imagining the myth of El Dorado, Harris revives buried legends of the region and reconstructs it from absence to move beyond it; that is beyond the meaningless cycle of repetition of the colonial past. He deconstructs the perpetuation of violence inherited in the (post)colonial desire of re-possessing memories of the past. Memory of the future, as is the case in *Palace*, emerges as the resurrection of legends. Myth, as Barbara J. Webb conceives of it in her examination of the myth of El Dorado, is 'both a place and an object of desire; it is a symbol of paradise lost and utopia, a symbol of rupture and the promise of fulfillment' (*Myth and History* 65). Webb's description implies a longing; a nostalgia to a lost past to achieve a 'new

beginning' (*Myth and History* 65). However, this desire to look back, I would argue, in spite of its promises remains threatened. Here lies a huge resemblance to Lacan's 'real' in which 'the traumatic event bears a striking similarity to the always absent signified or referent of the poststructuralist discourse, an object that can by definition only be constructed retroactively, never observed directly' (Douglass 5). And as I will attempt to show in this chapter, pain, be it physical or psychological is defies literary representation.

The desire to retell stories of the land from a new perspective, that of the subaltern, is born out of the loss to reclaim a past prior to the disaster. This is more of a recuperative task led by the colonial writer to create a similar reality prior to the horrors of experience, thus, it heals through partial transcendence and affords the survivors a chance of judging histories and recreating through retelling and repetition (LaCapra, *History and Memory* 90). Kenneth Ramchand points to this when he suggests that Harris's main concern in writing is his perpetual search for 'a reconciliation in the person and through society, of the past, of a heritage of a broken culture' (*The West Indian Novel* 3). Harris was interested in the ways by which the colonial being, the deprived and internally dispossessed would 'repossess the interior' which would allow a collective sense of identity (Benitez-Rojo, *Repeating Island* 189).

Palace of the Peacock is a re-imagination of the sixteenth and seventeenth century search for El Dorado in South America by Sir Walter Raleigh, Domingo de Vera, Antonio de Berrio and other explorers. Harris sees the Myth from a different perspective from the nationalists in Guyana, who used the myth of El Dorado to displace the native peoples, form a neo-colonial relationship to the interior of Guyana, and realise Guyana as their home. Third world nationalisms constructed themselves along the

earlier forms of American and European nationalisms. The point of diversion in Harris lies in cyclic limbo narrative—even if he mimics modern narratives—and his perception of the borders.

The novel is about seven (racially mixed) explorers in Guyana traveling to the interior settlement of Amerindian peoples called Mariella/the ‘folk’. The novel is an ongoing metamorphosis of Caribbean cultural identity taking palace during the hybrid crew’s journey to re-possess the modern dream of Guyana. Harris uses modernism in *Palace* as a means to posit an integrated subject, and to explore the possibility of recovering Amerindian heritage.

Mapping a mytho-poetic path of exile and return, the story focuses on the moment of encounter between past and present; the rupture in history that has divided the psyche to a pre and post traumatic experience of colonialism, slavery, and genocide. The quest for El Dorado in *Palace* is in fact a quest for the spiritual inner self lost and denied by the colonial conquest. In *Palace*, Harris does not occupy an oppositional/nationalistic space to write back from. He celebrates transcultural aesthetics in his novels and applies it to his fiction to realise its role as an ‘imaginative truth’ (Harris 242); as the manifestation of the politics of difference. Hence, he moves subjects from the margins of history into solidarity and kinship with other cultures. The cross-cultural discourse is a discourse of belonging which transcends the national. Thus, it functions as a bridge between fragmented cultures and nations and moves the colonial subject from the marginal state to the centre of discourse through a sense of alliance. In *Palace*, the desire to heal the past goes hand in hand with the strong desire of ‘repossessing the interior’ (24). The myth of El Dorado is seen in *Palace* as a place and an object of desire:

The map of the savannahs was a dream. The names Brazil and Guiana were colonial conventions I had known from childhood. I clung to them now as to a curious necessary stone and footing, even in my dream, the ground I knew I must not relinquish. They were an actual stage, a presence, however mythical they seemed to the universal and the spiritual eye. They were as close to me as my ribs, the rivers and the flatland, the mountains and the heartland I intimately saw. I could not help cherishing my symbolic map, and my bodily prejudice like a well-known room and house of superstition within which I dwelt. I saw this kingdom of man turned into a colony and battle ground of spirit, a priceless tempting jewel I dreamed I possessed. (*Palace* 24)

Harris frames the journey carried by Donne and his crew through the interior of Guyana with awareness of both the totalising force of colonial expeditions into the Caribbean and specific journeys into Guyana and their portrayal. In *Palace*, the evocation of the colonial movement in many ways echoes Harris's strategy in which he creates characters that move in an unconscious relationship to the oppressive narratives of a colonial past. Exploring 'the desire to govern or be governed, rule or be ruled for ever' (*Palace* 19), Harris, stresses how there is a physical legacy to colonialism—a pattern of abuse and trauma—that results not simply in travellers, whose identities reflect the colonial legacy of mapped and totalising journeys. This posits the potential for a journey that is not a simple repetition of colonial travel practices. Some critics have read the postcolonial journey as a mimicry of the colonial method of representation, evoked in order to reveal its ironies and facilitate a deconstruction, acting in a way that is 'displacing, unsettling,

or interrogating' (Needham, *Using the Master's Tools* 61). Harris, amongst other postcolonial writers seems to consciously mimic a colonial sense of the journey.

Hence, the postcolonial writing of the journey is not a rejection of the colonial travel narrative; rather, it is a subversion of it. Harris here is appropriating territories with something far more fluid, indefinable and chaotic. The colonial journey could be seen from a Deleuzian perspective, as connected to colonial appropriation of territory; as a 'twofold movement of decoding or deterritorializing flows on the one hand, and their violent and artificial reterritorialization on the other' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 34). For Bill Ashcroft 'effective resistance to the concept of the boundary is not another boundary but its opposite: what we term *horizontality*. It is in horizontality that the true force of transformation becomes realized [...]' (Ashcroft, *Postcolonial Transformation* 183). The journey here is more like a bridge; as a broader space replacing and going beyond the nation and nationalisms which are seen as a stage reflecting identity under construction; a transient stage to liberation. In *Palace*, memory, language and psychic awareness merge and connect in a dislocated manner. This dislocation manifests as psychic metamorphosis; as a literary trance which gives birth to creative consciousness where time is subjective and not framed by linear order. There is a displaced/rhizomatic movement between past, present, and future. Harris erases historical and geographical boundaries that would have existed at the time exploration of El Dorado had occurred. By so doing, Harris recreates a precolonial condition of the region.

Harris opens the novel by declaring the failure of desire as Donne falls off his horse after being shot by Mariella in a dream (*Palace* 19). Starting the narrative from the end is indicative of the reverse gaze Harris intends to deploy in the narrative. In *Palace*,

Harris explores the theme of post-colonial desire in his trance dream as his phantom narrator mingles with the etheric body of Donne, the captain of the crew, lying dead on the ground (in the dream) (*Palace* 19-20). Through his spiritual eyes Harris goes back in time and space to a place where the desire for re-possessing Mariella had awakened inside him. It is no coincidence that Donne must lose his sight at the end of the journey to be redeemed. For what he loses is that very colonial ability to appropriate, act upon land and bodies and create order through vision. Donne may be seen as a blurring of the boundaries between the coloniser and colonised, and it is not clear in the narrative the extent to which he is a true coloniser, or simply the extension of one. Some critics see him as an embodiment of the European poet John Donne (Benitez-Rojo 189-90; Lobez; Maes-Jelink 89). However, Harris tells us that Donne bears 'dark racial skin' (51). He is more likely to be the colonised dreaming of repossessing the interior with his hybrid crew. Benitez-Rojo describes Donne as a 'patriarchal and logocentric figure' (189-90). His crew and the narrator are certainly colonised, rather than representative of the colonial regime.

Donne, I think, is the colonised becoming the coloniser of his own people. I contend that Harris is in fact critiquing nationalism as it has subdued its own subjects in the aftermath of the colonial era. However, it seems to me that Harris perceives of this perpetuation of the colonial violence as a temporary, transient phase in the way to true liberation. This true liberation in the novel, as I will show in this chapter, takes place when the crew reaches the Palace of the Peacock. Harris introduces Donne as the ex-colonised embodying the colonial conquistador. His language and actions are reminders of those of the sixteenth century Spanish conquistador. He relates to Guyana's space as one who perpetuates the greed of imperialism and typifies colonial desires to map and

appropriate territory as he believes, ‘rule the land [...] And you rule the world’ (Harris, *Guyana* 23). As ‘the colonist’, Donne declares that ‘every boundary line is a myth’ (Harris, *Guyana* 22) in order to facilitate his seizure of the land, in the same way that the colonial adventurer declares empty space waiting to be discovered. Talking about the fluidity of space from the coloniser’s perspective is only a justification for making the colonial expansion legitimate. When the crew travel they consciously move within the realm of colonialism. This is indicated by Donne’s note that he had ‘conquered and crushed the region he ruled, annihilating everyone’ (Harris, *Guyana* 27). This space is not only the physical landscape Donne travels through, but also the bodies of Mariella and the workers that he has entered the interior in order to pursue. Bodies in *Palace* are territories appropriated and inscribed by colonialism. Harris tells us:

Donne could never hope to regain the affection and loyalty he
had mastered in her [Mariella] in the early time when he had first
seduced her above the doom of the river and the waterfall.

(Harris, *Guyana* 27)

Postcolonial narratives may be more than an attempt to mimic the colonial journey, or to portray it as an expansive legacy. In this sense, these colonial methods of representation are evoked in order to deconstruct them (Needham 61). The colonial narrative’s link to the journey frames is a means to expose its historical ironies, and to represent the mute multiplicities hidden in the holes of historical records in order: to ‘discover the abstract figures, the schizzes-flows that it harbors and conceals’ (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-*

Oedipus 271). The challenge confronting the colonial writers then is how to reflect these hidden traces of moments in history.

The double meaning the colonial journey incurs may be seen as the ‘Double bind’, where there is ‘simultaneous transmission of two kinds of messages, one of which contradicts the other’ (*Anti-Oedipus* 79). The colonial journey differs from the imperial one, I think, in the form of its movement. As I will show in *Jonestown*, the moving in time between past, present and future is chaotic, defies the sense of time as linear and favours a cyclic movement. From a Deleuzian sense, in the journey, we have a ‘twofold movement of decoding or deterritorializing flows on the one hand, and their violent and artificial reterritorialization on the other’ (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 34). It is hence a trickster performativity that emulates only to deconstruct. The colonial journey, hence, is a disruptive tool mirroring fragmented cultures. The postcolonial journey is a process of excavation of hidden stories of traumatised bodies and lands. For Bill Ashcroft, such a strategy emerges in terms of Bhabha’s use of mimicry as ‘the processes of imitation themselves [...] became a paradoxical feature of colonial resistance’ (‘Transformation’ 3). The space of the colonial journey is chaotic. It is a new space that opens up; into a new territory of representation that emerges in the cross-cultural space. Such chaos is a problematic, subversive, and ultimately positive renewal.

From here, Harris’s revision and reversal of cross-cultural myths without being constrained by time/space limitations could be thought of as a detour or an exit from the repetitive cycle of history. The significance of the chaos theory, then, lies in the role of the imagination; the future is never determined; and redemption through pain is possible. Thus, where historical records have failed to give meaning to the colonial subject, fiction comes to fill in the voids and make sense of the dilemmas of histories of erasure and

strategic exclusion of the dispossessed. Fiction offers stories as drafts of narratives attempting to create an authentic historical space of consciousness.

The myth of El Dorado is one of dislocation and displacement; a myth reserving the narrative of conquest and resistance; decentring and destabilizing the topographies of home opening a third space to re-imagine new subjectivities living ‘in between’ complexities of ethnical, linguistic and socio-cultural spaces. Harris’s writing is nomadic. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari explain how nomadism is likely to function by ‘more breaks, transitions, migration, and accumulation than by combining units’ (118). The nomadic process operates through the logic of the ‘and [...] and [...] and [...]’ (25) and by practicing endless ‘rehearsal’ with connecting multiplicities without containing the differences of its constituents.

The logic of the ‘And’ in Deleuze resonates with Harris’s interest in myths of dismembering and re-membering in its exploration of the possibility of re-creative destruction. Harris’s typographical use of the hyphen to separate the word ‘re-member’ is to emphasize the duality of the term, that is to re-member what has been once dismembered. Moreover, the hyphen gestures towards Harris’s notion of twinship, psychic split or schizophrenia—traumas disrupting speech and producing writing which slips itself into and out of linguistic networks resembling an excluded centre as it shatters the present moment.

Moving through the ‘straits of memory’ (*Palace* 62), the crew encounters the muse of history in the image of Mariella, the Arawak woman, who represents both the land and the Amerindians in the novel. Mariella is the locus of desire motivating both the journey and the writing of the postcolonial text. Desire is what moves Harris (the phantom narrator) and Donne to re-possess Mariella/ land again after the first loss.

Mariella is a powerful representation of the catalyst in the novel. Through her, not only the crew would manage to fulfil their desire and imagination, but Harris the writer/dreamer would as well. Mariella/ land become the locus of desire to the crew. Through desire, metamorphosis is achieved in *Palace*. The twin reality of death in life and life in death unveils itself within the language of desire:

The Arawak woman's kerchief and the wrinkles on her brow turned to incredible and fast soundless breakers of foam. Her crumpled bosom and river grew agitated with desire, bottling and shaking every fear and inhibition and outcry. The ruffles in the water were her dress rolling and rising to embrace the crew. This sudden insolence of soul rose and caught them from the powder of her eyes and the age of her smile and the dust in her hair all flowing back upon them with silent streaming majesty and abnormal youth and in a wave of freedom and strength. (*Palace* 62)

The captain of the hybrid crew, Donne, abuses and rapes Mariella as he exploits both the land and its inhabitants historically at the moment of a pre-Columbian encounter:

Donne had arrested the witch of a woman and we had aided and abetted him. A murderous rape and fury filled our hearts to an overburden, it seemed, nevertheless balanced and held in check by our voiceless impossible wrestle and struggle in the silent passage in the lava of water. (*Palace* 84)

Harris suggests that there is no decolonisation of lands without decolonisation of the body. The colonial experience is encapsulated in the body of Mariella, herself the land. Rape of female slaves was eroticised (Pile, *Body* 189). The body of Mriella in *Palace*, is not just used as a metaphor but it is a space and a territory seized by and acted upon, like the land. Rape of female slaves was, similar to land subjugation, legitimate. In *The Black Diaspora* (1995), Ronald Segal writes that the ‘sexual relations with slaves were simply rape, and rape without risk, since the law recognized no such crime against a slave’ (Segal, *The Black Diaspora* 59). Harris replaces the map with the body, so that ‘the movement of the infinite can occur only by means of affect, passion, love [...] “haptic” space’ (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus* 281,492). In *Palace* and *Jonestown*, Harris extends the postcolonial body contracted by the colonial experience, for centuries, as Mariella becomes the land, and as Bone travels back and forth in time, claiming space. The site of the colonial body has been ‘always inscribed in both the economy of pleasure and desire and the economy of discourse, domination and power’ (Bhabha, ‘Other’ 150). In *Palace*, Harris uses this very colonial desire and pleasure to prove that the opposite is also possible; that land and body are recalcitrant to domination, and that there is hope in case we change perception and interpret things anew.

The Caribbean topography in *Palace* figures as a kind of *silent witness* to the suffering and loss of the native peoples of these lands. Amerindians inhabited parts of the coast until colonial attempts to transform the land into sugar plantations forced them to retreat to the interior. Harris introduces the Arawak woman/ Mariella in the novel as a mute woman. It is Harris’s response to her pain that compelled him to write: ‘I raised my hand to cajole and stroke its ageing, soulful face [...]. The grey wet dream of dawn had restored to me Mariella’s terrible stripes and anguish of soul’ (*Palace* 46). In the dream,

Harris re-creates the traumas of history, and tries to heal the wounds encompassed by Mariella/land. The silence of Marriella can still be heard, though she is left without a translator when Schomburgh dies, 'The buck woman can't speak a word' (Palace 76). It is worth asking here if Harris deliberately means to consolidate the inaccessibility of Amerindian civilization in the novel? And is he, by doing so, unintentionally, othering the Amerindians from the future memory of the region?

Harris consciously decides to cause the Amerindians, 'the folk', to disappear by the end of the novel, however, their consciousness remains strongly present. Absence of consciousness is not annexed in the novel to the absence of presence. They remain like the ultimate power of creation, strongly felt with the senses, yet unattainable.

In the preface to *Palace of the Peacock*, Harris refers to the need to find 'a fiction that seeks to consume its own biases' (10). The 'folk' disappearance at the end of the novel corresponds with the western notion that the natives are 'the types of *non-entity*, of the *disappearance* of names and dates and memories; [...] the anti-matter to the matter of historical realism' (Sharrad 97). Harris evokes Amerindian rituals and myths, yet keeps them at the background music of the land without engaging in how the Amerindian's identification with the land differs from that which the crew comes to possess and without bringing this location of difference into language. The Amerindians are nomads and this places them out of discursive space, since 'the smooth space of the nomads is exterior to the strata: it is not found within subjective interiority, nor within linguistic signification [...] it escapes being represented' (Goodchild 172). To nationalistic discourse the Amerindians were always on the margin. However, this could also be read as a form of resistance. For as nomads, they 'come like fate, without reason, consideration, or pretext; they appear as lightning appears, too terrible, too

convincing, too sudden, too *different* even to be hated' (Deleuze & Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 191).

Mariella is 'a medium through which we participate in a theatre of consciousness' (Bundy 3). Samuel Durrant explains that for Harris, 'writing is a process of allowing one's individual personality or 'bias' to be absorbed into the imaginative 'landscape' of the work, a landscape that is itself drawn directly from the cultural history that forms the writer's 'ancestral background' (2). Mariella becomes a medium for transformation. This makes the Amerindians the catalyst for Harris's imagination that allows transformation but remains an unchangeable part of ancient pasts. They are essential for the 'alchemical process' of metamorphosis, yet not part of it (Emery, 'Limbo Rock' 145). The Amerindian trace in the novel becomes the basis for re-activating and reviving the music of other cultures. Maes Jelinek notes that 'In whatever form she appears [...] Mariella is a catalyst that stimulates N or the crew to vision and memory' (*The Labyrinth of Universality* 69).

In *Palace*, Harris suggests that reconciliation with Amerindians and acceptance of a relationship to the land through them is the only means for reconciliation for the racially mixed crew. The figure of Mariella, which Harris creates, is to re-imagine a moment of origin for a present Caribbean subjectivity with real cultural possibilities in the Caribbean society. Orpheus's gaze is a sacrifice necessary to the work of art. The desire to possess the origin and death become a possibility of coming-into-being and living-in-death. When Mariella/the Arawak woman was imprisoned by Donne, she brought with her a memory of the future. The memory of the second death of the crew:

Her race was a vanishing one overpowered by the fantasy of a Catholic

as well as a Protestant invasion [...] It was a vanishing and yet a starting race in which long eternal malice and wrinkled self-defence and the cruel pursuit of the folk were turning into universal protection and intuition and that harmonious rounded miracle of spirit which the world of appearances had never truly known. (*Palace* 61-2)

Led by the desire of repossession, the metamorphic subjects discover in their 'second death' the 'fetishes' they have 'embraced' (96) while in their journey up the river. This moment of awareness becomes the moment of reintegration with all beings as Donne discovers: 'One was what I am in the music [...] it was the dance of all fulfillment I now held and knew deeply, cancelling my forgotten fear of strangeness and catastrophe in a destitute world' (*Palace* 116). Perhaps the most powerful sense of this shifting is that we come to experience space, as do the crew, not through sight but rather by sound, 'transported beyond the memory of words' to sight formed by the 'glorious music' (Harris, *Guyana* 113). While the crew in *Palace* make one journey during the novel, it is clear they have on many levels lived the same journey before. The crew is 'reliving Donne's first innocent voyage' (Harris, *Guyana* 27) and Donne himself is retracing past wanderings. Performativity re-enacts the event, 'the thing is revising itself' (Harris, 'Interview' 39).

The crew re-integrates in the 'palace of the peacock' announcing the final resurrection of a hybrid culture from 'divine feathers' (*Palace* 146). The crew comes to learn to abandon their desire at the end of the novel causing desire to 'turn against itself to desire its own repression' (Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 215), to find

that the thing which ultimately lead to transformation ‘at molecular levels’ (Goodchild 160).

In *Colonial Desire*, Young argues that ‘intentional hybridity’ is, according to Bakhtin, ‘the ability of one voice to ironize and unmask the other within the same utterance [...] through a language that is ‘double-accented’ and ‘double-styled’ (Young 20), whereas ‘unconscious ‘organic hybridity’ ‘remains mute and opaque, never making use of conscious contrasts and oppositions’ (Bakhtin 360). Organic hybridity, on the other hand, tends towards fusion, whereas intentional hybridity tends towards contact of two or more different languages set against one another in a political context. It has a divisive nature, bringing together but maintaining separation. It is ‘the undoing of authority in language through hybridization’ (Young 22). In his fiction, Harris transforms the organic hybridity which has been imposed on the colonial people by the colonial rule, into intentional hybridity, where he uses language in a radical way to affect a metamorphosis in the colonial psyche.

Harris’s critique of nationalism is more obvious in *Jonestown*, in which the authoritarian figure of Jonah Jones may be standing for the corrupt elites ruling Guyana since independence. This adds to the possibilities of reading *Jonestown* as a national critique. Yet Harris only gestures towards the local in *Jonestown* while entering the psyche of space, and moves away from the discussion of the nation into a wider humane perspective. This implies that Harris sees Guyana ‘as only part of a larger historical and geographical reality’ (Gilkes 22).

Establishing a national sense of identity by drawing on/retrieving an indigenous cultural tradition, is not what Harris aims at. For him, it is the consciousness of the discontinuous nature of Caribbean cultural identity that motivates the Caribbean writer

to confront the ‘dilemmas of history that surround him’ (25). Only in and through this awareness the radical loss of culture engendered by the Middle Passage might be transformed into the ground of a new cross-cultural sense of community, creating a ‘phenomenal fellow-feeling,’ (71) where, as Glissant notes in his *Poetics of Relations*, ‘each and every identity is extended through a relationship with the Other’ (11).

Thus, Harris’s fiction may be seen as bio-political, as he is concerned with the representation of violated bodies and landscapes in fiction. Nevertheless, he always moves the Guyanese identity beyond the borders of the nation. Harris’s politics is distinctly non-national, moving towards a cross-cultural history of global proportions [...] beyond the limited frames of a solely national identity’ (Johnson, ‘Translations’ 124,142). Harris expands the body from an individual level into a collective one. What exists is on one level a body, on another level cross-cultural community of multiplicities never a nation. Harris’s main intent even transcends national critique, and moves from re-visioning of national identity into the cross-cultural fluid space of humanity. As I intend to show in *Jonestown*, Harris believes that all attempts to reform the concepts of the nation would always end in the emergence of totalising authoritative regimes. The transformation from apartheid to democracy does not insure its own success, and one of its risks is that other forms of oppressive government might develop. In his conference paper, Harris ultimately explores not nationalism, but the role of the individual:

With the mutilation and decline of the conquered tribe a new shaman or artist struggles to emerge who finds himself moving along the knife-edge of change a task which is profoundly personal. (‘Interior’145)

The forewarning of perpetuating colonial violence in *Palace* manifests as a reality in *Jonestown* and the utopian dream of racial integration which has taken place in the Palace of the Peacock ends in tragedy. In this novel about the infamous Jim Jones and the 1978 ‘mass suicide’ of the people’s Temple, Harris moves between ancestral Caribbean time and modern time. Time and space are interlinked as Harris links Jones to the leader Awakaipu in 1840 who ‘persuaded representatives from many Indian peoples to offer themselves as a sacrifice at the foot of Mount Roraima’ (*Jonestown* 4-5). Jim Jones—Johana Jones in the novel—was the priest of the inter-racial church in Indianapolis in 1950s. The ideals of equality in this church increased the number of its followers and the church expanded to San Francisco and Los Angeles. However, after concerns about the African Americans increased in the U.S the group left to establish a utopian community in Guyana they called Jonestown. Humane conditions worsened in the settlement as the members number kept escalating. This settlement ended up as small colony having a hierarchical authority which dictated who should live and who must die. And when the objects of control (the people of the temple) died, the authority represented by Jones, had no motivation for existing too, the desire for power and control was no longer there for him, hence he ended his life. Fanon calls this mass suicide an act of ‘death reflex’, (Fanon 54) where the ‘colonized men will first manifest this aggressiveness which has been deposited in his bones against his own people’ (Fanon 52). Harris, in *Jonestown*, wants to take the people of the Temple a step higher. As he gives voice to the dead through his protagonist Francisco Bone, the only survivor of the massacre of Jonestown, a voice rising from the grave like Lazarus and leaving his Skeleton Twin behind him, bearing witness to a trans-historical moment of loss. Bone

escapes death at the last minute because Deacon shoots Jones before the latter kills Bone.

Hena Maes-Jelinek suggests that '[i]n Harris's novel what happened in Guyana on the 'Day of the Dead' is not seen as an isolated event [...] but as part of a large-scale historical and moral context, one among similarly inspired disasters in different social and natural environments' (212). Harris investigates the recurring memories of trauma, and examines how the psychic dilemma of the protagonist, in fact, stems from the 'rememory' of past 'loss' instigated by the belated awareness of the horrors of that experience. This late awakening is caused by the repetition of trauma in the present. The novel traces the mass suicide at Jonestown back to other pre-Columbian inclinations toward destruction and presents trauma as a catalyst, spiral reminder of how the past haunts our present resulting in overconnectedness with the past, with memory itself. In *Family Frames* (1997), Marianne Hirsch suggests that the victims would confuse 'postmemory' with memory manifesting a collapse of the ego or schizophrenia creating of its victims a reservoir of collective memories.

In *Jonestown*, the text itself becomes the trauma and the healing, the event and the mode of mourning, as Harris's aesthetic witness and the dream of redemption are woven within the work itself. The work is the dream enacting the transformation of wounded history instead of yearning for it. Harris both aesthetically witnesses and works through trauma by allowing his readers to enter the traumatic memory of a survivor causing a catharsis by re-creating, re-playing and deconstructing trauma in the novel. Suppressed histories alongside all existential questions and anxieties over cultural voids motivate Francisco to commence writing the Dreambook in which he would travel rizomatically between past, present and future, and by so doing he would suggest

alternative realities. In his ‘voyage of the Imagination’, Bone becomes the ‘archetype’ of the survivor, ‘the embodiment of lost tribes, or peoples’ (131).

In *Jonestown*, Bone reconnects the ‘Day of the Dead’ mass suicide, to a larger historical context: ‘My fluctuations of memory, in my wanderings for seven years in the wake of the ‘tragedy of Jonestown,’ are rooted as well, I am sure, in the amnesiac fate that haunts the South and Central and North Americas across many generations overshadowed by implicit conquest’ (*Jonestown* 8-9). By so doing, he bears witness to the dislocation of the Middle Passage, through imaginative limbo ‘gateways’, which open up to a collective experience of loss rather than of being one of recovery. For Harris, these rituals are cathartic; they constitute ‘a profound art of compensation which seeks to replay a dis-memberment of the tribe [...] and to invoke at the same time a curious psychic reassembly of the parts of the dead muse and god’ (‘History, Fable and Myth’ 157). Harris connects Jonestown to a history of cities and, in particular, their presentation as utopian. Jonestown—the community—is linked to the memory of the Guyanese culture, to the Guyanese Indian cult under the leader Awakaipu who, in the 1840s, according to Harris, ‘persuaded representatives from many Indian peoples to offer themselves as a sacrifice at the foot of Mount Roraima’ (*Jonestown* 4-5). Moreover, it is also linked to ancient Mayan and Carib civilisations and to Augustine’s city through Harris’s invocation of ‘City of God’ (*Jonestown* 10).

Harris tells us:

I was obsessed—let me confess—by cities and settlements in the Central and South Americas that are an enigma to many scholars. I dreamt of their abandonment, their bird-masks, their animal—mask [...]. Did their inhabitants

rebel against the priests, did obscure holocausts occur, civil strife, famine, plague? Was Jonestown the latest manifestation of the breakdown of Populations within the hidden flexibilities and inflexibilities of pre-Columbian civilizations? (Harris, *Jonestown* 4)

Readers are guided towards 'hidden textualities' (Harris, *Jonestown* 9) that exist outside the immediate postcolonial frame. Francisco reflects this when he acknowledges 'I was a South American Utopian in the 1970s [creating] a wholly different architecture, a wholly different Imagination from the politics and the institutions of economic fixture and habit' (Harris, *Jonestown* 83). In *Jonestown*, Harris uses another colonial ideal which is the city as a utopia. The very ideal which gives justification to imperial seizure of territory in terms of desire for utopic cities. Harris subverts this locus of desire by showing how these ideals turn into a tragedy, thus becoming dystopic.

Francisco creates a postcolonial time, folding space and time through a process of limbo, reaching through 'untranslatable space' (Harris, *Jonestown* 105) with which the idea of space as a fluid, non-linear representation presents him with an opportunity to find a pattern within the chaos that may lead to a better future, where the characteristics of the past re-emerge. Traced through to the novel's conclusion, however, this chaos suggests more than a strategy of displacement 'Mathmatics of Chaos' (*Jonestown* 5). Chaos in the novel is a disruption of narrative to give new meaning. Jonestown is acknowledged as a space invoked, 'to explore overlapping layers and environments and theatres of legend and history' (Harris *Jonestown* 3) and it is through 'Memory theatre' (Harris, *Jonestown* 82) that Francisco attempts to make sense of the non-linear

presentation of his experience. Harris evokes the sacred past to gesture towards the future:

Models of fiction cemented in the eighteenth and the nineteenth century are sacred in the twentieth. Sacred eighteenth-century, nineteenth-century linearity. But I was attempting to rewrite the past from the funny side of sacred, imperial time, from a futuristic angle that breached linearity.

(Harris, *Jonestown* 89)

And as Cathy Caruth suggests in her book *Unclaimed Experiences* (1995), the traumatized people, 'carry an impossible history with them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess' (*Unclaimed* 5). We may ask here: What kind of testimony is the 'Dream-book'? What is the relation between Bone's survival and his narrative? In *Jonestown*, Harris, through his fictional character, Bone engages in a process of transforming the psyche, which is an inner procedure that involves exploring the 'interiors' of the multilayered self to extract the hidden sources of individual and collective healing ('Psyche' 14). He writes to W.H. 'I dreamt I had been robbed of my native roots and heritage. I suffered from a void of memory. I belonged to peoples of the void' (7). Bone asks himself if he as an 'aesthetic witness,' is capable of initiating the overcoming of trauma, of being 'Other' in his dramatization of authorial and communal experience inside his Dream-Book, he asks: 'Was I capable of converting such losses into chasms of the self that would take me beyond the split mind of my age? Was I capable of leaping into the arms of Love, Love so terrifying (in height and depth

and range) and all-inclusive it imbued me with dread? Was I capable of dying yet living in order to sustain a vessel or vessels of living time, living ghost, Memory theatre?’ (*Jonestown* 121)

In *Specters of Marx* (1994) Derrida writes: ‘To bear witness would be to bear witness to what we are in so far as we inherit, and that—here is the circle, here is the chance or the finitude—we inherit the very thing that allows us to bear witness to it’ (54). For the Caribbean writer, there is so little to remember from the Caribbean cultural experience; writers like Harris seek hope in the temple of the literary imagination to overcome loss. In his new method of healing, Harris embraces trans-historical, cross-cultural witnessing which helps the working through of trauma on a collective level. He deploys the ‘limbo memory’ and the possession trances of Haitian *voodoo*, rituals that resonate with the loss of a culture in the Middle Passage. Bone, believing in his creative imagination, gives his text the subtitle *Imagination Dead Imagine*, which refers to Samuel Beckett’s monologue of the same name. In it, Beckett wonders what would become of the world if creative imagination vanished making of our existence a white world of nothingness (46). In order to avoid this creative death after trauma, Bone—and Harris as well, seek to envision cross-culturalism as an alternative to homogeneity. He celebrates the ‘undying originality’ of creative imagination in his dream-book believing that he has to ‘break the mould if to live and grow’ (*Jonestown* 31). This utopic dream—the ideal interracial community in Jonestown—has failed since tyranny and trauma are internalised in the psyche. Harris concerns himself with the corrupting potential of authoritative positions that is enacted in the city. Jonestown has been turned from a ‘counter-culture paradise’ into a ‘slave ship’ (Mathews et. al. 15, 23), where people lived in overcrowded cottages (Mathews et al., ‘The Cult of Death’ 26). Harris evokes the city

and displays both utopia and dystopia. While, for Harris, a city without imagination is a city destined to failure, as hinted at in Jonestown's reference to Beckett's *Imagination Dead Imagine* (46). The very nature of the ideal city's failure in Jonestown for Harris still offers the potential of new post-colonial space. Thus Harris is in a way resurrecting hope for a truly democratic city to emerge. And at the centre of such possibility is again the concept of 'chaos'.

In his essay 'Imagination, Dead, Imagine,' Harris outlines how art can bridge chasms and traumas in the self, for like the 'figuration of the creator' art 'could never be grasped or realized *exactly*' ('Imagination' 187). This multi-interpretation of artistic expression allows the move from the symbolic 'whiteness' of Beckett which, in Harris's opinion emerges from being restricted by 'frames of dogmatic identity and dogmatic homogeneity' ('Imagination' 185) into the pre-Columbian artists' 'forbidden territories', which are now the territories of the (post)colonial writers themselves ('Imagination' 189). Harris explains how 'self-confessional self-knowledge' allows the entry into 'the genesis of the imagination' that can never end in 'whiteness' or 'void'. He writes:

Singularity and linearity are the stuff of escapism, which may take many postmodern patterns [...] the alert to the lapses and legacies of the past would be unbearable if it did not acquire a degree of density that steeps us in diverse personae [...] which helps us to see ourselves differently, see ourselves broken into many players within ourselves and within stranger cultures. Such diversity, such strangeness, may then take up the burden of Memory in a new light and puncture or stagger that burden, puncture or stagger ancestral Guilt. Those punctures and staggerings

create openings, corridors, into new architectures of space.

(‘Imagination’ 191-2)

The notion of the ‘open’ universe finds itself parallel in Harris's understanding of the ‘genesis of the Imagination,’ which ‘remains perpetually unfinished and open to unpredictable spheres of otherness’ (195). In *Palace*, Harris deploys life cycles of beginning and end; arrivals and departures, which keep the novel in a constant transformational processes of nature, the text grows branches and plays music and moves with the river to break at waterfalls, no space to bound it and no time to finalize it. ‘Windows’ and ‘doors’ function as exits and entrances as a means by which characters can examine their inner and outer realities. Similarly in *Jonestown*, the universe remains ‘perpetually unfinished’, avoiding the bias of ‘closure’ he associates in the novel with realist discourse and the ‘death of the Imagination’. Bone writes of this ‘intuitive’ approach to the ‘holes in the body of history’ (‘Interior of the Novel’ 11), in his opening letter to W.H., in which he suggests that ‘Chaos [...] can be construed as portraying a genuinely open universe’ (5-6). In *Jonestown*, Harris aims at liberating the ‘unconscious’ through entering the ‘psyche of space’, where one encounters a ‘renascence of memory’ that helps ‘the heterogeneity of the Americas [...] begin to be perceived differently in a train, or release, of buried resources in the traumas that have afflicted the entire American cosmos’ (‘Psyche’ 15). This new vision helps us move on from our wounded history and break the cyclic repetition of the past through breaking the way we view the world around us. *Jonestown* becomes a quest for a ‘topography or map of the imagination that breaches the human centred cosmos’ (*Jonestown* 6).

Chapter Three

Crossing to the Other Side of Text and Memory: Derek Walcott's *Omeros*

In his epic narrative poem *Omeros* (1990), Derek Walcott evokes 'a wounded race' (*Omeros* 249) and 'the tribal / sorrow that Philoctetes could not drown in alcohol' (*Omeros* 129). Walcott laments renewed enslavement of the present postcolonial subjects and how 'they laughed at simplicities, the laugh of a wounded race' (*Omeros* 298-99). In the 1960s and 1970s, Walcott declared his hostility to African Caribbean literature depicting 'the suffering of the victim' ('The Muse of History' 3). Walcott, as many critics write, was against 'self-pity', 'rage' and 'masochistic recollection' and called instead for 'a celebration of the Adamic potential of the New World African and upheld perpetual exile as the condition for a new creativity' (Ramazani, 'The Wound of History' 406). Walcott writes: 'In the New World, servitude to the muse of history has produced a literature of revenge written by the descendants of slaves or a literature of remorse written by the descendents of masters' ('Muse' 37). Walcott once poised in hell 'those [writers] who peel, from their own leprous flesh, their names' (*Collected Poems* 269). Walcott is against complicity between subject and object. He did not want to stay inside the prison of victimhood and curve his name as a poet from doing so. He wanted to free himself ethically from complicity; his aim is not to gain good stature as a poet but to do something good for his people.

Ramazani explains in his article 'The Wound of History' that Walcott has tackled the theme of mourning in earlier poems. He was 'aware' of the predicament of the postcolonial subject and sought to explore the 'bodily figurations' of past suffering ('The Wound of History' 54). What I think is Walcott's point of departure in *Omeros* is

his realization that the Adamic role of naming is in no way possible prior to working through the wound. Walcott's response to this systematic historical exclusion in poetry, is seen in his desire for return, as he moves from 'wip[ing] the cultural slate clean' as in 'The Muse of History', into the suggestion of 'a coming to terms with Caribbean history' (Thieme, *Derek Walcott* 81) in order to capture the shades of the past, and alter the perception of it in the present.

In *Omeros*, language, landscape and body, are all acted upon and bear witness to trauma; since 'every cove was a wound' (*Omeros* 249), the volcano whose 'wound closed in smoke' (*Omeros* 59), and 'the bay closing behind [...] like a wound' (*Omeros* 238). The relationship between body and psyche/self is reflexive, here, since each one of them offers insight to the other. *Omeros* involves a relation to pain and to bodies; to *this* body of the present (Philoctete's) carrying the scars of the past and besieging him inside his body. The *here*, in a sense, is the cutting wound to which Walcott bears witness.

A literal or figurative wound appears in almost all of the characters of *Omeros*. Walcott bears witness to a wound, and he mimes that wound. This 'hurt' Philoctete had, 'swell[ed]' over time and the swelling, as Walcott tells us, 'came from the chained/ Ankles of his grandfathers' (*Omeros* 15), an infected wound with 'no cure' still. *Omeros* could be read, I think, as a response to a wound. A wound opening as its layers keeps unfolding, to expose an isolated 'we' stretching all along the infinite imprisonment of the sea. Walcott's *Omeros*, is an attempt to territorialize memory as a right that postcolonial subjects could claim. He does so in *Omeros*, by carrying a painful quest across the Middle Passage to plant seeds for healing and produce the alchemy of change.

In this chapter, I consider the possibility (or impossibility) of crossing the literary parallels with the Homeric tradition in *Omeros* and of delimiting body and text through

the act of writing. I contend that Walcott carries a literary attempt to represent the Caribbean experience and write the voice of the dispossessed through the writing of a self-reflexive, graphic text. This literary and cultural crossing is shown in *Omeros*, I argue, through the collapse of time and space to probe the historical wound and chart a story of survival. I conclude by trying to give reasons why tensions inherent in the Caribbean experience remain unresolved in *Omeros*.

Telling several individual stories of ordinary people, *Omeros* in a Deleuzian sense composes 'lines of flight' of fragmented stories cut upon the text. Walcott's *Omeros* could be seen as a subversion of the epic (Hamner, *Critical Perspectives* 34) and as a self-reflexive narrative (Hamner, *Critical Perspective* 35) where all the characters overlap and events revolve around St. Lucia. The title of *Omeros* is derived from the blind poet Homer. The epic verse-form is Christian and Italian borrowed from Dante's *Divina Commedia*. In the book, Walcott traces the horrors of the Middle Passage in the dream voyage of Achille to meet his ancestor Afolabe in Africa and he witnesses the slave transportation from Africa to the New World. The character Omeros is a blind outcast of many incarnations (Hamner, *Critical Perspectives* 34). Walcott introduces his characters in book one and two. In books three, four and five, he retraces the Middle Passage in Africa, North America and Europe before returning to St. Lucia. Books six and seven round off the events back in St. Lucia without closure. Thus, in *Omeros*, we have ongoing creative acts of becoming reflected by the open endedness of the poem (Collier et al. *Crabtracks* 2002; Mara Sanlon, *Bkhtin and the Nation* 2000).

Walcott's refusal to succumb to 'a collective memory of negation' (Durrant 16) is apparent in the text. And he elsewhere reflects on V.S. Naipaul's statement that: 'History is built around achievement and creation and nothing was created in the West

Indies' (Naipaul *The Middle Passage* 29) and with a painter's brush, he charts a story of survival that is in itself is a great achievement of his people. John Thieme notes that for Walcott 'passage and slavery has been transformed into a history of endurance and cultural pride' (Thiem, *Derek Walcott* 81). Views of critics vary as some consider *Omeros* an epic (knox, 1991: 3-4; Lefkowitz, 1990: 34-35; Steiner, 1993: 13-16) while others see it as a national narrative (Hamner, 1993 10-12; Burriss, 1991: 559; Figueroa, 1991: 211). Some writers consider *Omeros* a lyric (Ismond, 1991: 10-11) while others like Davis and Farrell find in *Omeros* a postcolonial subversion of the Homeric epic, where Walcott is not 'renouncing' epic. *Omeros* for critics like Davis is not shadowed by Homer; it has '[n]o Homeric Shadow' (Davis in Michael Mitchell *Hidden Mutalities* 252).

Subjectivity is constituted through a primary relationship of responsibility for the other, a relationship of proximity in which the 'face', in Levinas words, 'summons me, calls for me, begs for me, and in doing so recalls my responsibility, and calls me into question' (Levinas 82-3). In such a context the 'face' itself becomes the embodiment of subjectivity and the ethical responsibility entailed when encountering the other. Bodies and faces are always culturally constructed, as in the case of the colonial appropriation of the body. Yet in here, Levinas is more likely talking about the vulnerable body, the scarred and bruised body.

Drawing on Emmanuel Levinas, Butler argues for a fundamental dependency between others, and ourselves which reveals itself in the moment of loss and vulnerability as in the case of the US experience in 2001. In her collection of five essays, entitled *Precairous Life* Judith Butler offers a thoughtful analysis of US discourses in response to the events of 9/11. She examines the indefinite detention at Guantanamo

Bay, censorship of public debates, the nation-building politics of mourning, and the demonization of the Middle East in the media. The central theme of this book is how norms are established to define who counts as human and who is excluded from humanity. The objective of *Precarious Life* is to develop ethics and politics to resist these tendencies. Butler asks, ‘what forms of political reflection and deliberation ought [we] to take if we take injurability and aggression as two points of departure for political life?’ (Butler xii) Since the de-centring experience of 9/11, the US has been engaged in an effort to re-centre itself through a first-person narrative about its supremacy and leadership, which has a profound impact on future hopes and possibilities for global cooperation. In order to resist this tendency, according to Butler, if we conceive ourselves as global actors within a historically conditioned environment, it is imperative to move away from this first-person narrative perspective of US unilateralism and reflect on the impact our lives have upon the lives of others. Loss and vulnerability are ultimately linked to being socially constituted bodies since it is the attachment and therefore exposure to another that puts us at risk of violence (*Precarious* 20). In her own words, ‘[i]f my fate is not originally or finally separable from yours, then the "we" is traversed by a relationality that we cannot easily argue against; or, rather, we can argue against, but we would be denying something fundamental about the social conditions of our very foundation’ (*Precarious* 22). Consequently, the moment of grief might encourage us to challenge our understanding of ourselves as autonomous and sovereign entities. It is a moment when we are outside of ourselves and outside of our control. Butler argues that the moral obligation towards the nameless precarious subjects call on us or address us as humane issues that are ‘morally binding’ and demanding an ethical response (*Precarious* 130). Butler suggests that our lives are interconnected, and she

explores the possibility of turning grief into a resource for political act. Her search is motivated by an ethical responsibility that emerges in the juncture between acting and being acted upon.

Throughout history, colonial subjectivities have suffered from what Judith Butler terms ‘radical effacement’ (*Precarious Life* 147), in which exclusion, she tells us, ‘work[s] precisely through providing no image, no name, no narrative, so that there never was a life, and there never was a death’ (*Precarious* 146). The European narrative of exploration used the written word to ground authoritative voice and privilege European perspective and legitimate conquest. Logocentricity, which prefers the written over the oral historical records maintain a complicity with empire and imperial expansion that gives it its universal value and allows imperial agencies to endorse the idea that people without writing are people without history and that people without history are inferior human beings (D’Haen, *(Un)writing Empire* 55; Mignolo *The Darker Side of the Renaissance* 127).

Postcolonial histories have been ‘lost in the representation of otherness’ (D’Haen, *(Un)writing Empire* 55). Hence, we have complicity between historiography and empire, where exploration narratives work to normalise slavery; legitimise dispossession and assert superiority (Barker et al. 1994; Cheyfitz 1991; D’Hean 1998; Knap 1992; Pratt 1992; Said 1993; Wikrise 1999). In his treatise on Caribbean history, culture and language, Edoard Glissant writes that ‘history is a highly functional fantasy of the west, originating precisely at the time when it alone ‘made’ the history of the world’ (Glissant, *Caribbean History* 64). Glissant argues that Caribbean history must find a daring new methodology’ that does not limit the writing of history to historians, who are in endless

patronage of the discipline, with its inherent Euro-western bias (*Caribbean History* 64).

Glissant writes:

Literature attains a metaexistence, the all-powerfulness of a sacred sign, which will allow people with writing to think it justified to dominate and rule peoples with an oral civilization [...] It is again this double hegemony of a History with a capital H and a Literature consecrated by the absolute power of the written sign that the people who until now inhabited the hidden side of the earth fought, at the same time they were fighting for food and freedom. (Glissant qtd. in Mignolo 127)

Translating lost echoes, and becoming a literary witness is an act of contempt to a history that had prohibited the colonial subject from painting the true image of collective mourning. This ‘prohibition on grieving’ that is in a way a ‘continuation of the violence itself’ (Butler 148). In *Precarious* Butler is situating ethics within a critical and political frame. She talks about ethical imperatives and she borrows the term ‘face’ from Levinas, where she contends that the face is not exclusively human (Butler, *Precarious* xviii). Butler argues that the pressure practiced against writers condemning violence should be met with dissent; should be challenged lest we identify with the accusations of immaturity, postmodernism or sympathising with the ‘other’ (*Precarious* xix). Butler tells us that ‘without the capacity to mourn, we lose that human sense of life we need in order to oppose violence’ (*Precarious* xix). The work of collective mourning is thus an act against the ‘derealization of loss’, which ‘takes place neither inside nor outside the image, but through the very framing by which the image is contained’ (Butler 148). Butler explains how putting human beings in a frame could evacuate them from their

human dimension and reduce them into *a* life. Butler uses the war on Iraq as an example of how dehumanisation of the other can reduce human beings into figures and as a result make people become more and more insensitive to the suffering and vulnerability of others (Butler 128-153).

Walcott was defacing the face of the subject 'evacuated by their European enslavers and showing the failure of representation'. The scream of Achilles in *Omeros*, was that of 'a warrior losing his only soul to the click of a Cyclops' (*Omeros* 299). The camera could not capture his true essence. Achilles was enraged 'at being misunderstood by a camera' (*Omeros* 298). Judith Butler tells us in *Precarious Life* that 'personification does not always humanize. [...] it may as well evacuate the face that does humanize' (Butler 141). Walcott has remained faithful to those stolen spirits by the cameras of the 'assassins of culture' (Walcott, *Poems* 6), ceaselessly attempting—in writing—to retrieve their long unrepresentable faces. The cultural traces of postcolonial ancestors work as openings erupt in medias res; traces which we are asked to be responsible for. The actual responsibility here is present in the historicised discursive act. What it exposes is vulnerability itself, and the degree to which this affects discourse both inside and outside literature. The challenge to representation in *Omeros* lies in the disruption of the picture of the Caribbean as a tourist site through Philoctetes. Philoctetes is the character Walcott chooses to embody the state of fragility of the postcolonial subject. In *Omeros*, the move from Caliban to Philoctetes, the persona reflecting the condition of the landscape he is bounded by, is Walcott's attempt to display the relatedness of literature and the connectedness of the vulnerability of human experience. In his article 'The Wound of History', Jahan Ramazani tells us that Philoctete is a:

symbol of postcolonial agony, deindigenizing Caliban and fusing him with a still-more-wizened prototype. Exemplifying the twists and turns of intercultural inheritance, this manoeuvre belies the narrative of postcolonial literary development as a progression from alien metropolitan influence to complete incorporation within the native cultural body. (Ramazani 409)

Glissant more than any other postcolonial theorist, reinforces this approach; his development of the term 'chaos-monde' signifies a chaos that is 'not 'chaotic'. But its hidden order does not presuppose hierarchies' (*Poetics of Relation* 94), a power of transformation situated in an 'intermixing of cultures' (*Poetics of Relation* 138) that directly 'confronts the absolute space of colonialism as it rejects linearity's potent grip' (*Poetics of Relation* 137).

Walcott does not open the poem with an invocation to the Muse, but by exposing the vulnerability of Philoctetes as he shows his wounded leg to tourists. The opening scene is a clear indication of what the poem is going to talk about, mainly the wound of history in order to challenge the visual images of the Caribbean as a pleasant place for tourists. This exposure of the wound to tourists and reliving the pain of memory comes before finding the cure. Walcott is broadening his transcultural scope by interrogating the image through what Roland Barthes calls the 'punctum', the unintended element which escapes the 'studium' (that is, the code of the author), the person who sees the image becomes a producer of meaning as well, taking a line of flight beyond the photograph itself, to the 'third meaning' (Barthes, 1985).

The tension in the narrative manifests itself in the 'anchor' motif as a fixating tool and its counter force; the sea swift, standing for fluidity and movement in the text.

We see Saint Lucia's wounds reflected in Philoctete's body injured by a rusty anchor: 'He believed the swelling came from the chained/ Ankles of his grandfathers. Or else why was there no cure? / That the cross he carried was not only the anchor's' (*Omeros* 19).

Forgetfulness is constantly challenged by the memory of the wound inscribed on the body. These wounds are historical but as they make themselves seen on the body they are also present. The water of the sea is a strong reminder of loss as they keep pouring salt on open wounds. The 'foul smell' of Philoctetes' wound offended everyone. Philoctetes never leaves St. Lucia for he is bound by his historical memory. Philoctetes's fellows abandon his double, the Homeric Philoctetes of the *Iliad*, because of his wound.

The body, for the colonial regime is seen as a site that could be reterritorialised by the colonial gaze. Such basic form meant the body could be defined in an absolute manner. Yet, from a 'double bind' perspective, the body of the colonial subject is without a national consciousness or agency, thus it could also be redefined, reshaped and rewritten, to become both at once an 'other' and yet entirely knowable and visible' (Bhabha 'Other' 156). Colonial discourse of the body relies upon this contradiction, a body that is 'both invisible and hypervisible' (Peterson xi).

Furthermore, the idea of the body as a prison, culturally stigmatised and violently appropriated, undoubtedly has its own problems of limiting and narrowing the postcolonial body to the wounds of history. Yet even if the body makes the ultimate site of oppression, internalising historical traumas, as in Philoctetes, then any reconsideration of the body against this limiting meaning will also represent the greatest transformation. What emerges is a complex process; the solid body is not entirely rejected in a way that would deny its significance for individual identity, yet increasingly ambiguous, magical

and metamorphic bodies are also represented. In *Omeros*, Walcott is taking the body to a higher level of consciousness.

Through talking about memory, Walcott opens up the text to the precariousness and instabilities of this trope. The wounded body is vulnerable and here we have a re-witnessing of the wounds of memory the moment they open up about it (all the pain re-entered Philoctetes). This process of reliving the pain is a necessary process in the journey to healing. So how to forget when memory is still inscribed on the body of the present? In the 'torn tongue' and violated body and landscape? And how would Walcott represent this in his poem? Loss, Walcott suggests, is not absent, it is present but hidden: 'No one loses his shadow', Walcott claims. The knowing of a past characterised by loss is in itself an act of remembrance. As the poet Chamoiseou writes 'it's memory/ beyond memory' (qtd. in Walcott, *School Days* 112).

Ramazani suggests that the seizures attacking Philoctetes are due to his inability to communicate his pain through verbal expression. Bodies are reservoirs of unexpressed physical pain. This pain stands for the impossible 'verbal release' which was transmitted to the descendants of slaves (Ramazani, *The Hybrid Muse* 53). Walcott describes the seizure attack:

His knee was radiant iron,
his chest was a sack of ice, and behind the bars
of his rusted, like a mongoose in a cage,
a scream was mad to come out; his tongue tickled its claws
on the roof of his mouth, rattling its bars in rage. (*Omeros* 21)

In *Omeros*, the representation of the postcolonial body in pain not only affects the structure of the narrative, but also plays a vital role in the radical ethics of that fiction. Elaine Scarry claims that ‘pain itself remains utterly resistant to language’ (Elaine Scarry *The Body in Pain* 4). In *Omeros*, Philoctetes’s wounds were trapped inside him, the thing that led to seizures, but never linguistic utterance. Philoctetes is unable to share his pain. Through its unsharability, pain enforces the irreducibility of representing the wounded body through its resistance to language.

The fragility of the physical body is reflected in the poetic word which lies in the exposed present of Philoctetes’s wound. The present is the ‘here’ from which there is no exit. Even the infinity of the sea in *Omeros*, holds into its pages memories of slavery and bondage. Butler describes the incomprehensible utterances of the body in pain as an ‘agonized vocalization’ (133), ‘wordless vocalization’ which is ‘the soul of language evacuating its sense’. These vocalisations, I think, are the linguistic limitations of expressing the unspeakable in words.

The physical breakdowns in the narrative are reflected in the broken lines of the poem and they both represent the fragile points of history; ‘It is the place at which “we” take place, bound to one another in a knot that binds and also marks a distance, the binding isolation between the one and the other’ (Sacks 266). The ‘here’ displaces the poem and serves as a marker undercutting the poem causing a rupture between past and present. However, these fragile joints of history are the poet’s ‘impulse’ (*Omeros* 270) and they are what make Walcott’s poetry, as one critic writes, ‘historically versatile, for all its contempt for history’ (Gray 142). In the *Schooner* flight, Walcott describes the way he writes as a knitting process where language, voice and body are all acted upon. It is the poet’s way for dealing with the tension between fluidity and rupture. Wounds, in

one place, are being stitched together, and in another, are laid open, fragile and exposed to infection:

Well, when I write
this poem, each phrase go be soaked in salt;
I go draw and knit every line as tight
As ropes in this rigging. (The Schooner *Flight* 347)

In *Omeros*, the connection between fragility and ruptured history is delivered by collapsing time and space in the text, and stretching the space of events to probe the wound and affect collective mourning. This intertextuality of literary time is a continuation of literary rupture. Walcott presents the Caribbean present as a continuation for the Greeks past: ‘The sore on his shin [Philoctete]/ still unhealed, like a radiant anemone. /[...]/ [...] This sunrise the same/ [...] was happening. He felt the sore twitch/ its wires up to his groin’ (*Omeros* 9-10). Paula Burnett says that ‘[t]he great texts of the world are those that speak to readers or audiences across space and time—they are those which travel’ (Burnett 320).

Trying to write a history of the future, Walcott encrypts this history and writes past traumas into the text. In bricolage (discourse where one is building his text upon shattered fragments of ruined cultures (Pratt 6) characterises schizophrenic literary production. Bricolage offers double vision through inserting paradoxical images into the text to give life to new meanings. There is a literary crossing taking the form of continuation which manifests itself through proteus artists who are besieged and

alienated by memory and, simultaneously, are wanderers in it. The tightly knitted poem is a means of textual motion connecting the ‘I-an-I-an-I’ community of ‘anonymous linked figures’ (Burnett 69). The poetic process of knitting connects multiplicities across time and space to forge an alignment and literary solidarity among people belonging to different cultural backgrounds. Achilles’ sea swift is a force of movement across space and time, as she ‘circled epochs with her outstretched span, / [...] and her speed out darted Memory’ (131). Reading *Omeros*, one feels the endeavours of carrying a textual motion as if ‘[t]he text itself moves through a sea of discourses’ (Thieme, *Derek Walcott* 158).

For Walcott, the ‘incurable/wound of time’ (*Omeros* 319) is an ‘impulse’, having a paradoxical function ‘[i]nducing yet disabling speech’ (Ramazani, ‘The Wound of History’ 413). In *Omeros*, Walcott decides to go back and lay bare his wounds in order to find a poetic place for generations bounded by and bonded to the scars of slavery and violence by memory. *Omeros* is a poetic attempt to find and write a collective voice, as centuries have only deepened the wounds as the layers of the landscape had accumulated. The voice in *Omeros* converges with visual images and each image penetrates the other to give a lively landscape to be seen and heard. Conveying the voices of the dispossessed is, I think, Walcott’s point of creativity in *Omeros*. He offers what *he* believes is true to the reader, creating a new reality that is ‘not conveyed by what is represented within the image, but through the challenge to representation that reality delivers’ (Butler 146). The pictures Walcott draws are a challenge to representation; these are ‘pictures we were not supposed to see’ for they ‘disrupted the visual field and the entire sense of public identity that was built upon that field’ (Butler

150). In *Critical Perspectives*, Robert Bensen writes about the experience of writing as a painter in Walcott:

The painter works in areas of paint, and the line is defined by their misalignment, becoming a record of their disjuncture. Walcott's poetic line is similarly shaped as a record of the disjointedness of his experience in the world. The true artist is the maker –poet or painter—whose line is the seam joining the world together, composing it as fast as our collective despair keeps letting it fall from our grasp. (Bensen 'The Painter as Poet' 346)

Painting topography becomes chaotic. Walcott is not only seeing 'misalignment' but also hearing his pages of the landscape as they speak to us through these visual images he paints. Walcott's paintings convey 'graphic affectivity' as they point 'somewhere beyond themselves, to a life and to precariousness that they could not show' (Butler 150). These textual paintings point to shadows of names and lost echoes in his text '[I]like the canvas, since painting cannot capture thought' (Walcott, *Midsummer* XVIII). Walcott paints the psychological landscape of the text as it emanates from shadows of memory of a culture and of a divided self living in vacuum: '[w]hiteness is everywhere' (*Omeros* 217). The epic's horizon in *Omeros* is visual. He 'speaks of *Omeros* primarily in visual terms' (Bruckner, 'A Poem in Homage' 398).

In *The Repeating Island*, Antonio Benitez-Rojo, describes the Caribbean as a 'meta- archipelago' having 'neither a boundary nor a center' (Benitez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island* 4). It is an acknowledgment that has travelled throughout the field of Caribbean studies: Antonio Benitez-Rojo's resonant comments on the meaning that may

be found within layers of the island, the existence of ‘dynamic regularities within the dis (order)’ (*The Repeating Island* 36). Rhizomorphic narratives correspond to the nature of the Caribbean topography and expand itself horizontally, creating a space of its own that goes in parallels with other cultures and literatures. Paul Gilroy describes the black identity as rhizomatic one, in a constant movement like ‘ships in motion’ (*Black Atlantic* 4).

In her book, *In the Shadows of Divine Perception*, Lance Callahan sheds the light on the dilemma of the Caribbean writer. She states that the Caribbean artist is not allowed ‘to confront, continue or ignore’ the colonial tradition (Callahan 111). This applies to postcolonial writers in general who find that anti-colonial discourse is criticised for its perpetuation of the same violent values the writer is opposing (Hutcheon *A Poetics of Postmodernism* 223), and original poetic attempts calling for radical change by some writers like Wilson Harris who believes that all colonial literary and cultural traditions should be challenged and rejected (Clarke, *Being There* 178) in order to create a literature from point zero is described as ‘a childlike optimism’ (Khan 157) and building on colonial tradition is perceived as both mimetic and lacking in originality. Hence, postcolonial writers are in a Deleuzian sense the minority trapped by the literary colonial tradition and their traumatic histories. Walcott describes this dividing feeling between the past and the present; the ‘here’ and the ‘elsewhere’ and wonders: ‘Where shall I/ turn divided to the/ vein?’ (Walcott in Hamner, *Critical Perspectives* 149) This state of in-betweenness makes Walcott’s poems hard to place chronologically. *Omeros* is more about writing motionless mental journeys reflecting the instability of subjectivity itself; a disruptive writing ‘as a migrant predicament perennially poised between restless journeying and a longing for home’ (Thieme, *Derek Walcott* 151).

Nevertheless, Walcott describes the third world writer's dilemma of 'creative madness' as some critics would put it, a source of creativity, for 'schizoids, in a perverse way, have more personality than the normal person, and it is this conflict of our racial psyche that by irritation and a sense of loss continues to create artists' (Walcott qtd. in Wyke, 'Divided to the Veins' 209). Although the very position of being in the middle is entrapment, Walcott notes that 'the noblest are those who are trapped, who have accepted the twilight' (Walcott, 'What the Twilight Says' 5). Walcott goes further to suggest that this dilemma of expression could be transformed into legends of the present, 'yours is here and alive' (*Omeros* 313).

In *The Black Atlantic* Paul Gilroy remarks: 'The history of the black Atlantic yields a course of lessons as to the instability of identities which are always unfinished, always being remade' (Gilroy xi). The postcolonial subject as depicted Walcott begins life in *medias res* 'like the pause/ between dusk and darkness, between fury and peace' (Walcott, *The Fortunate Traveller* 99). Walcott moves towards creolisation of literary and cultural traditions in an attempt to decentre and destabilise colonial narratives through a process of re-articulation.

Sidney Burris predicts that 'commentators on *Omeros* [...] will understandably busy themselves in tracking down the Homeric parallels in Walcott's poem'. He goes on to explain that this is an 'ill-fated approach because part of the poem's task, its attempt to recreate the original authenticity of Walcott's Caribbean culture, lies in its deliberate deflation of analogy' (Burris qtd. in Farrell, 'Walcott's *Omeros*' 272). While I agree with Burris's view that *Omeros* is more than a parallel to Homer, I find Figueroa's thoughts on *Omeros* very interesting. Figueroa (1991) contends that 'Walcott's poem is not an imitation of either the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* [...]. The point of use of Homer lies

elsewhere' (Figueroa, 'Omeros' 87). It lies in the metaphorical and allegorical significance of Homer 'as the great creator' of poetic language and 'as the Blind Seer' himself a wanderer, even as a kind of 'poetic savior' who rescues Walcott's poet/narrator, himself a 'veiled portrait' of Walcott (Stewart, *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses* 315), from 'the sins that have beset other poets' (273).

My point here is to argue that in *Omeros*, Walcott is interested in the figure of Homer and of the besieged Troy more than challenging the epic of Homer. Walcott states when asked about *Omeros*: 'I was thinking of Homer the poet of the seven seas' (272). Thus, Walcott is not challenging the Homeric text; rather, he is challenging colonial representation, through Homer. Furthermore, I think that Walcott's choice of writing a narrative epic is in accordance with his search for meaning and finding an essence of the colonial experience, since the epic, Walcott states, 'is about wandering in search of something and finding it (or not finding it)' (Walcott qtd. in Farrier 27). Walcott admires in Homer the fact he is a '[p]rotean figure, infinitely unknowledgeable but elusive' (Lefkowitz, 'Bringing Him Back Alive' 400). *Homeros* in Greek means 'hostage', and the life of Homer the poet, is a great indicator of how fragile and 'precarious' lives tend to bind. In her article, 'Bringing Him Back Alive', Mary Lefkowitz tells us that:

According to ancient legend, Homer came from a humble background and had a hard and lonely life. Born the bastard son of a Greek girl living in Smyrna (modern Izmir), when he was young he travelled around the Mediterranean. But then he became blind and had to make a living as a beggar, by reciting his verse. Occasionally he was treated kindly, but more

often he was driven away from the towns he visited; because he was an outsider and a hanger on he acquired the name Homeros, “hostage.” After much wandering, Homer finally died on the Aegean island of Ios, friendless and alone [...]. (Lefkowitz 400)

Furthermore, Homeros, though a European literary master, is a non-colonial poet (Mara Scanlon *Bakhtin and the Nation* 14). And the poet/narrator in *Omeros* does not see his reflection in Van Gogh, but in Homeros: ‘And I’m homing with him, Homeros, my nigger’ (*Omeros* 159). Walcott, here, connects linguistic and poetic dislocation to the dislocation of the self. This disarticulation of the ‘I’ in *Omeros*, is Walcott’s wish to exceed metaphor and to live the poetic word outside of siege; beyond it. This shows itself in the paradoxical unity which comes apart; the binding that parts; and the distance that binds. Walcott uses the very image (skin colour) that has been used to legitimate exclusion, to deactivate its effect. Butler explains:

[I]dentification always relies upon a difference that it seeks to overcome and that its aim is accomplished only by introducing the difference it claims to have vanquished. The one with whom I identify is not me, and that “not being me” is the condition of the identification. (Butler, *Prekarious* 145)

Walcott deterritorialises even his own self by the end of the book when he declares that ‘every “I” is a fiction/ finally’ (*Omeros* 28). These feelings of psychic division and estrangement are not opposed to the poet’s commitment to the collective self. As

Hutcheon points out, the term ‘post-modern’ could [...] be used [...] to describe art which is paradoxically both self-reflexive (about its technique and its material) and yet grounded in historical and political actuality’ (Hutcheon, *Poetics of the Postmodern* 168). Walcott is not independent from his people; Walcott clearly conveys these divisive feelings of displacement when he states: ‘Either I’m no body, or I’m a nation’. This image of excluded multiplicities is, like the colonial predicament, complex; and what for the first instant seems paradoxical (‘nobody’/ ‘nation’) ends up having strong ties connecting the ‘nobody’ to a ‘nation’ of fragile multiplicities. Paul Breslin says the ‘nobody’ is a ‘Protean hero’ moving with fluidity (Breslin, *Nobody’s Nation* 2). As the poet/narrator in *Omeros* moves fluidly in space and time and streams of consciousness of different characters, he celebrates the survival of fragile lives; of vulnerable lives having the ability to endure. The poet declares that there will be ‘[n]o more Plunketts’ (*Omeros* 88) as Plunkett—the white master in the text—was searching for a son who does not exist.

Walcott remodels the experience of suffering to create from it a positive motivating force through art, as he undoes the song of grief by celebrating people’s survival. Walcott is ‘modelling a different kind of subjectivity from that familiar to western psychological theories’ (Burnett Preface xi). He sees beauty in imperfection; he seeks the perfection of the imperfect, fragmented lives of his people. Walcott is trying to make apparent the sublime dimension of the ordinary.

The blindness inherited from the colonial experience of the Middle Passage; ‘the disease [which] had obliterated vision’ (*Omeros* 12) could be overcome, according to Walcott, slowly and ‘by reductions’, using ‘emotions’ and the poet’s ‘sixth sense’. Blindness and compensatory insight is a recurring theme in Walcott’s work, one special

to the figure of the poet. Even the patron saint of the island was a blind seer (Figueroa, 'Omeros' 203-305). Adriana Cavarero writes that the Greeks 'held the sphere of vision in the highest esteem' (Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice* 36), since it was a vehicle for reaching the Divine. She goes further to suggest that 'Philosophy, as a metaphysics of presence [...] owes its origins to the realm of the eye' (Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice* 36). I find this very useful here in my reading of Walcott who leads his readers from historical blindness of perception to the insight of beauty in imperfection. Walcott sublimates ordinary people in the text, connects the invisibility of the face of the subject to the face of the Caribbean landscape. He writes to alter our perception of the present reality through the sensuous.

Loss of memory for Walcott is the true history of the Caribbean: 'In time the slave surrendered to amnesia. That amnesia is the true history of the New World. That is our inheritance'. Paul Breslin writes in *Nobody's Nation*: 'Walcott's way of dealing with the past [...] encourages a necessary forgetting. In *Omeros*, this forgetting extends to the Homeric texts themselves' (Breslin 241). Walcott says 'Forget the gods [...] and read the rest' (*Omeros* 283). The gods are masters of slavery and art as well. Walcott wants to cross colonial and literary masters and the nation-state off his memory to be able to reach to the other side of memory and text; to memory of survival and the Caribbean epic. In 'Disavowal of the Epic', Harold Bloom tells us that Walcott wants to free himself from the 'burden of echoes' ('Disavowal of the Epic' 144). This is described by Robert Hamner as literary assimilation, rather than imitation; creating something new in the search for 'a noun without an echo'. He calls *Omeros* an 'establishment epic' (*Epic of the Dispossessed* 29).

Walcott writes:

All that Greek manure under the green bananas [...]

glazed by the transparent page of what I had read.

What I had read and rewritten till literature

was guilty as History. When would the sails drop

from my eyes [...]

[...]

When would my head shake off its echoes like a horse

Shaking off a wreath of flies? [...]

[...]

But it was mine to make what I wanted of it, or

What I thought was wanted.

(*Omeros* 271-2)

I would like to comment here that despite Walcott's conviction that the amnesia of the Caribbean is the true history of their subjects, he, however, writes to *make sense* of that amnesiac state of the Caribbean history, in order to 'begin again, / from what we have always known nothing' (Walcott, *Another Life* 145). Thus embracing amnesia is different from encouraging it; it is a mechanism Walcott adapts to turn loss into a heroic story of endurance.

Walcott's refusal to accept the idea of historical negation, however, does not entail situating himself in defiance to the amnesiac history of the Caribbean. He draws our attention to the fact that 'by openly fighting tradition we perpetuate it' (Walcott qtd. in Burnett 65). So he chooses what Burnett describes as 'a double strategy of narrating

history' (Burnett 65); that is, I believe, embracing the amnesiac state of the Caribbean to remember the survival of his people through historical exclusion. By so doing, Walcott is transforming the shades of memories into the promise of becoming, since 'in landscapes with no tenses, views that know, that now, as always, light is all we have' (Walcott, *Tiepolo's Hound* 161). Walcott shows here the difference between involuntary repetition of trauma and an active process of working through trauma. He 'plays energetically on the instabilities of the trope' (Ramazani, 'The Wound of History' 411). He, as a third world writer, displays the willingness to confront and transform the wound into a 'story', as fragile wounds endure. It is an artistic remembrance of that amnesiac state in order to call his and his people's absented self into being.

In Walcott's *Omeros*, we have a 'Protean mutation' of the epic (*Epic of the Dispossessed* 9); it is the epic becoming a song for survival. Walcott wants to enter that light beyond metaphor; the light beyond shadows of the unattainable essence, and memory beyond memory. Walcott writes on the Homeric texts:

The body that I had thrown down at my foot

was not really a body but a great book

[...]

scattering Hector's and Achilles' rages

to white, diminishing scraps [...]

[...]

I held air without language in my hands. (Walcott, "Greece" 36)

The epic aim becomes to cross the linguistic formula of Homer to reach ‘unmediated art’ and to re-invent and name as ‘there is too much nothing here’ (Walcott, ‘Air’). And once that literary parallel is crossed, Walcott could exceed the scars of the past in the present and write his work of collective mourning. The blind sea in *Omeros* could stand for what Jacques Ranciere calls the ‘blind point’ of history; of ‘silence’ and ‘illegibility that separates the body of the poem from the body of its ‘subject’’ (Ranciere, *The Flesh of Words* 44), keeping them ‘apart as knitting does’; besieging and isolating multiplicities of colonial subjects. The ‘unawakened blind’ sea may become ‘the true “enigma” of the poem, the look that is missing from the harmonious agreement of the text and the vision’ (Ranciere, *The Flesh of Words* 44). *Seven Seas* is a Caribbean incarnation of *Omeros*, and could stand, I think, for the post-colonial predicament. *Seven Seas* is blind, but he sees ‘with his ears’ (*Omeros* 4), and moves ‘by a sixth sense’ (*Omeros* 12) for ‘his blindness was not the end’ (*Omeros* 12). The blind sea is a fluid bondage; an archive of history of slavery and cultural deracination. *Omeros*’s journey, guided by the sea swift (deity guide) is then a response to grandfathers’ life wasted in and overlooked by the blind sea through the Middle Passage.

In *Omeros*, both the poem and the blind sea unsettle and disrupt one another to add fragility to the situation. In his article, ‘Charting the “Amnesiac Atlantic”’, David Farrier suggests that the Caribbean epic is one ‘conditioned by movement; the image of a ‘black fisherman’ scanning ‘the opening line/ of our epic horizon’ situates the Caribbean epic at a point in the middle of the sea [...] as existing in flux’ (Farrier 27). Being ‘conditioned by movement’ implies limitation of fluidity in the text. This tension is very clear in *Omeros* in the repeated motifs of the ‘anchor’ of memory and the ‘sea swift’ of movement. Walcott realises that one cannot seek continuity and coherence in a

world of discontinuity and rupture. Representing more than one character, and journeying forever, makes of Omeros ‘a fluid identity in the text’ (Farrier 29). This creolized name of Homer makes of Omeros a Protean figure; an emblem of the changeability characteristic of both Caribbean experience and subjectivity. Walcott was anchoring Omeros in the soil of the Caribbean epic by creating of him ‘a noun without an echo’, as he himself describes in an interview with Stuart Hall for the BBC (qtd. in Farrier 25).

Caribbean subjectivities as Walcott shows us are ‘nonreferential’ subjectivities. However, their nonreferentiality is *not* in the sense of ‘eliminating all referential activity’ (Scarry qtd. in Ramazani), but rather, in resonating with rupture. Achilles is an emblem in the poem; Philoctetes too, Achilles says: ‘Why waste a line on Achilles, a shade on the sea floor’ (*Omeros* 296). These multiplicities of the ‘I’ in Walcott’s writings are archetypes, emblems, and mythopoetics are means for portraying these ‘iconic figures’ (Burnett 97). Burnett writes about Walcott’s ‘quest for Jungian archetypes as personae to regenerate his society’, and Walcott comments: ‘One of the things we have to grit our teeth and endure is the arrogance of transforming your own people into emblems –that it is your business to make emblems, or archetypes, out of [them]’ (qtd. in Burnett 95). There are traces of soul ancestry in those emblematic characters who survived that brutal past only to become something else.

Figurative language denies the true essence of the subject/ land leaving it both open and beyond reach. In *Omeros* new tropes are offered, as Walcott ties himself to the physical topos of the land through writing, and maps his self by excavating his connectivity to the layers of the landscape. Walcott says: ‘Where have cultures originated? By the force of natural surroundings. You build according to the topography

of where you live [...] [Y]ou create what you need spiritually, a god for each need' (Walcott, 'The Caribbean: Culture or Mimicry' 56). Walcott writes:

[...] a shade on the sea floor?

[...] a quiet culture

Is breaching from the white ribs of each ancestor,

Deeper then it seems on the surface; slowly but sure,

it will change us with the fluent sculpture of Tim. (*Omeros* 296)

This does not entail contradiction in the poet's approach to history, but rather the tension and psychic division prior to awareness and becoming. The deeper the search for the essence of human experience, the darker the unknowable gets. The attempt of capturing shadows is also an indication of its precedence and in a sense of the delayed arrival of self awareness.

Trying to paint the true image of the Caribbean experience becomes an obsession; a matter of life and death for Walcott; it is 'every true artist's obsessional pursuit' (Rosa de lima, 'Walcott' 176). Walcott wants to move beyond the invisibility of the face to capture its essence and deactivate colonial prejudices, 'the face is not something seen, observed, registered, deciphered or understood, but rather somebody responded to' (Levinas qtd. in Waldenfels 69). The face, then, evokes response, yet, here, it is not the face of the other (as in Levinas) but the for long 'othered' face of the dispossessed. The poet embodies the postcolonial subject's anxiety of painting his true image for the fear that prohibition would be the 'first word'. Thus, in 'attempting to remain/ first, he must

disappear'. The poet states that his divided self 'will arrive by reductions', gradually moving towards its 'essence'.

Omeros, as some critics agree, marks a detour in Walcott's writing; an 'opening line of our epic horizon' (*Omeros* 13). Walcott affords the remedy to Philoctetes' wounds as being derived from a herb transported from Africa: 'Along with the wound comes the cure and *Omeros* represents a departure from much of Walcott's writing, in that the source of the cure is to be found in the African heritage of the Caribbean (Thieme 85). We have, here, an imaginative recovery from wounds; a break from the amnesiac state. Nevertheless, *Omeros* suggests that the Adamic potential (to name) for the postcolonial subject only comes after healing from past scars. Historical wounds, the poet tells us, cannot heal without 'reproducing their pain' first (*Omeros* 413). Thus, to bridge that gap between healing and naming: 'All the pain re-entered Philoctetes' (*Omeros* 277). Philoctetes and the 'phantom narrator' heal by the end of the imaginative journey. However, the tension between amnesia as a historical wound and the healing from this amnesiac scar is not resolved still. The wounds of collective memory, as implied in the poem, surely persist and will still be affected by the ongoing discontinuity of the action of the tides:

He scraped dry scales off his hands. He liked the odours

of the sea in him. Night was fanning its coal pot

[...]

A full moon shone like a slice of raw onion.

When he left the beach the sea was still going on.

(*Omeros* 325)

Writing records of Islands that are ‘like words [...] Erased with the surf’s pages’ (Walcott, *In A Green Night* 77) and admitting being constantly ‘mocked’ by images he would like to capture and by ‘erased’ voices from the pages of history, Walcott remains a ‘faithful’ witness to forgetfulness and the remembrance of amnesia; the siege of the postcolonial subject. Robert Hamner writes: ‘Despite its fundamental unity, *Omeros* challenges the terms of its own existence’ (Hamner 6). However, this same critique is the book’s point of strength, I believe, as it approaches the colonial predicament in its embodiment of historical and linguistic tensions. In *Omeros*, the security of communicability is shaken; ‘since road and sun were English words, both of them endowed in their silence the dividing wind’ (Walcott, *The Bounty* 32). This gap between sign and meaning is the poet’s wound that he is besieged by language or simply outside of it and cannot relate to it. Poetic limitation and the wish to exceed metaphor; to reach ‘the mulato of style’ in order to reach what Ranciere describes as the ‘language-to-come of language’ (Ranciere, *The Flesh of Words* 43) is hence the poet’s aspiration. Walcott is searching for a language to embody the Caribbean story. Walcott has argued in an interview with Shaun McCarthy in 1990 that the reason he wishes to write beyond metaphor lies in his desire for freeing oneself from constantly being evaluated in the light of previous poets and writers. He explains: ‘[S]een from the perspective of Europe [...] The critic will say you see we did it before and now you are learning how to do it’ (Walcott qtd.in Greenwood, ‘Still Going On’ 134).

In *Omeros*, Walcott reads Homer, as he implies, ‘without the rulings of metaphor’, for he ‘sees metaphor and simile as introducing hierarchical relationships that recall the imperialist’s claim to precedence and priority’ (Greenwood, ‘Still Going

On' 134). Walcott rejects 'judg[ing] poetry chronologically' (Greenwood, 'Still Going On' 134) and aims at a writing that could represent the Caribbean experience; and allow amnesia to seep through, creating a state of literary rupture. Walcott notes, 'the amnesia of the slave is an obliteration of the old linear idea of progress'. He states that 'If there was nothing, there was everything to be made' (Walcott qtd. in Breslin 2). Walcott wishes to exceed metaphor and bear a literary resemblance to the blind sea that 'never altered its metre/ To suit the age, a wide page without metaphors' (*Omeros* 296). Metaphor is seen as a trope. The sea never altered its page 'Sea Grape' (1976). Walcott seeks 'unmediated art where there is no 'history of the noun' between the poet and the object' (Breslin 243). Walcott writes:

The happiness I feel about this book is that I didn't force classical reverberations or stretch to make associations with the classics. It is a book for people, not a conundrum for scholars it was as if I was learning to read Homer when I was writing it. (Walcott qtd. in Bruckner 399)

Thieme tells us that Walcott 'attempts to produce a Caribbean equivalent of the Greek poet's epics while trying to resist the complicity implicit in entering into a discursive relationship with them, an endeavour to arrest a parallel spacial collocation rather than a linear temporal debt' (Thieme 154). Moving rhizomatically across the text with the anchor as stopping points. At the end writing as knitting serves as a continuum of historical moments. Walcott depicts art as eternal and open ended in the sense that Walcott is taking the epic beyond the 'frame of the poem' (Greenwood, 'Still Going On' 132) and inscribing a sound of continuity as the sea goes on. Greenwood writes on

Walcott's usage of temporal adverbs and past continuous tense. Through the use of 'unmarked spaces' such as the sea/ 'landscapes with no tenses' (Walcott, *Tiepolo's Hound* 161) in his poetry to affect a feeling of continuity. By so doing, Walcott 'launches the poem's afterlife' by projecting the odyssey 'beyond the frame of the poem' (Greenwood, 'Still Going On' 132). The poem does not end with Hector's funeral, though, but with people learning to endure their memories. In *Omeros*, we have a literary crossing, a 'meta-language' by absenting it and by impressing upon it the 'attributes of another origin' (Latour qtd. in Tymieniecka 98). This imaginary literary proximity is a constructive act of deterritorialisation of memory. The spacialisation of memory making it horizontal. Deleuze rejects metaphor as representation and favours metamorphosis as becoming (Tymieniecka 103). Similarly, Walcott wants to move beyond metaphor, when towards the end of *Omeros*, he declares releasing Helen from all attempts of representation as he fails to capture her essence. The colonial subjectivity undergoes an endless cycle of becoming within which closure becomes impossible. Deleuze explains this process of becoming; he writes:

Metamorphosis is the contrary of metaphor. There is no longer any proper sense or figurative sense, but only a distribution of states that is part of the range of the word. The thing and other things are no longer anything but intensities overrun by deterritorialized sounds or words that are following their line of escape. [...] it is now a question of becoming that includes the maximum of difference of intensity, the crossing of a barrier, a rising or falling, a bending or an erecting, an accent on the word. (Deleuze qtd. in Tymieniecka 103)

The reorganisation of language as rhizomatic lines of flight thus affects a spacialisation of the linearity inherent in metaphor. It is horizontal, and prefers the surface, in the same way that Walcott's Achilles ascends from the depths to the surface after taking a glimpse of the encrypted memories in the underworld. These depths fascinate him and haunt him, but he prefers moving on as the surface opens him up to the legends of the present rather than getting caught in echoes of the past. The present is the 'third zone' that Walcott creates and enters by the imaginative voyage of Achilles to Europe, Africa and North America. The rhizome undergoes a non-stop transformational process of 'becoming'. Becoming is the opposite of 'being' since it has no essence and no name (Deleuze, *A Thousand Plateaus* 238). Walcott's characters, landscape and memory are a series of becoming. Memory in *Omeros* is performative since it works to relocate memory in the present and create affinities amongst characters in the present. In *Omeros*, Walcott interacts with Homeros in the present. He identifies with that which he is not; that is the colonial label of the slave: 'Nigger'. By so doing, Walcott de-frames the slave from the derogatory term imposed upon him by historical masters.

Walcott declares in 'What the Twilight Says': 'There is no history, only the history of emotion' (5) and in *Omeros*, he applies his thoughts by engendering history to reflect emotional ties with a past he longs for: 'I thought of Helen/ as my island lost in the haze, and I was sure//I'd never see her again' (*Omeros* 222). Walcott uses the senses to make the impermanent essence aesthetically tangible, visible and audible. He uses visual-audible images just to go beyond them by the end of the poem, when he releases Helen, declaring that he himself is fiction.

Achilles' search for coins in the depths of the sea stirs 'the wreath of flies' in his mind; he returns to the surface safely but that vision of the unseen depths haunts him.

The landscape, encrypting within its creases traces of lost voices intertwines with the poet's soul. There is resonance between the mental and psychical torments of postcolonial subjects and the wounded body in *Omeros*, as each emanates from the wounded landscape of the Caribbean. Walcott is charting ambivalence on the face of the Caribbean landscape, for he feels mocked by it; 'mocked by the very landscape he would capture' (Rosa de Lima, 'Walcott' 176). The poet/narrator, who partakes in the journeys with Omeros, is wandering in search for a name; a vowel; for that 'mystical essence [...] close by but always just out of reach'. Walcott names that 'shadow of name that he denies a body: Helen' (*Omeros* 17). The shadows in *Omeros* signal the sought reunion with the Self/essence; it is a sort of homecoming. Past shadows of the self are never lost, the poet tells us: 'No man loses his shadow', even at night 'shadow is hidden, not lost' (*Omeros* 138). Those memories are encrypted within the landscape of the Caribbean. Helen is an emblem of the unattainable essence of the Self and the landscape in the book, waiting to be discovered after being violated, for so long, that her true essence escaped its presence. Achilles sees a falling star arc over the island and reflects how 'her light [Helen] remained unknown in this backward place,/ falling unobserved [...] then fade, forgotten, as sunrise forgets a star' (*Omeros* 112).

Painting Saint Lucia/ Helen as a shadow, and the sea as a blank canvas of history, *Omeros* is touched by the siege of history to which it addresses itself. The book turns against itself or from that which it tries to escape or break. Walcott finally releases Helen for the inability of describing her face/ topos of the land. Here we have a

dislocated usage of the face as it stands for the land and for essence. Helen's essence is unrepresentable in *Omeros* as Gray writes:

[A] flight toward an expression unencumbered by the demand to witness [...] Fortunately, it is incomplete. The very movement toward surfaces which Walcott's poems both perform and thematize constitutes a form of witness—not raw, not transparent, not a *testimonio*—but a faithful witness to misrepresentation, to the troubled, inevitable gap between life and the poem. (Gray 126)

The poet is 'a restless wanderer' (Thieme 152) searching for an existential question: 'When will I enter that light beyond metaphor?' (*Omeros* 270) However, *Omeros* never reaches an Ithaca: 'Island after island passing. Still we ain't home' (*Omeros* 203). His last note on survival: 'They crossed, they survived. There is the epical splendour' (*Omeros* 149) marks a physical and textual crossing; a collective 'continua', across the borders of *Omeros*.

Chapter Four

Encrypted Desires: Mahmoud Darwish's *Unfortunately It Was Paradise and*

Memory for Forgetfulness

I broke the myth and was broken
I circled around the well until I flew from myself to
what is not of it
[...]
Our country
so close to God's speech
has a ceiling of clouds
so distant from the name's attributes
Our country
Has the map of absence
[...]
The lemon seed glistens
Like a lamp in the migrant's night
Geography shines
In Holy Scriptures
The hills become an ascent higher and higher.

Mahmoud Darwish, 'If you were to return alone'

If you had let me rest with the dead,
I had forgot you

And the past

H. D., 'Eurydice.'

The Adamic role of *naming* in Derek Walcott's *Omeros* was the result of the amnesiac state of the Caribbean experience, *loss of memory*. In the Palestinian experience, the Adamic myth is indicative of the *memory of loss* of a paradisiacal site, pre-occupied Palestine. In the Palestinian narratives, talking about Palestine as a Paradise is more of a selective memory rather than an Adamic role of the Caribbean subject. However, in both the Caribbean and Palestinian literatures 'naming' is an adaptive technique to cope with the wound. In Palestine, it is a way of living with *memory of the loss* whereas in the Caribbean, it is living with the *loss of memory*.

Mahmoud Darwish has experienced an array of displacements throughout his life. First, he escaped the village of al-Birwa in the upper Galilee with his family and head to Lebanon. They went back to the village, few months later, to find it completely demolished. Imprisonments and house arrest that followed throughout Darwish's youth made him choose voluntarily exile to Egypt in 1970 and later to Beirut, only to be expelled from it in the aftermath of the Israeli invasion of 1982. Darwish returned to Ramallah in 1996 to live for the first time in the occupied Palestinian territories where he witnessed the siege in Ramallah for years. Similar to his biopolitical experience, the poetry of Darwish is preoccupied with siege and displacement—both literal and metaphorical displacement.

Critical writing in Arabic on Darwish, who has long been designated 'poet of the homeland' and 'poet of resistance', tends to focus on his earlier writing and on themes

that reinforce nationalist readings of his work. Studies that have addressed his work since the early 1980s are few, even though the poems of this period constitute a significant portion of his oeuvre. Even as his later poetry consciously marks a move away from his earlier constructions of identity, of home, and of poetry, many of his critics have not taken sufficient notice of this shift, perhaps due to the force of the poet's identification as a 'national poet. Mahmoud Darwish's later work expresses an unfolding desire to forge new poetic forms and to establish poetry as a space of both survival and possibility' (Nassar and Rahman, *Exile Poet* 3). Unlike his early writing, the word Palestine or 'homeland' hardly occurs in his later work (Nassar and Rahman, *Exile Poet* 4). The deliberate absenting of Palestine in Darwish's later writing serves a function of problematising the work of representation. Hala Nassar and Najat Rahman explain that '[a]bsence is echoed more significantly in a language that is primarily rhythmic; that is, in a language in which time is spatially conceived between figures of home and poem. It is a language invoked from the limits of an Arabic mystic literary heritage where, once, poetic writing *was* home' (Nassar & Rahman, *Exile's Poet* 4).

In this chapter, I examine two literary works (translated from Arabic) by Darwish, *Unfortunately It was Paradise* (2003) and *Memory for Forgetfulness* (1995). The dialectic embracing the two literary works is, in one way or the other, the purging of repressed contents in a new way that addresses the impossibility of giving a structure to the traumatic experience. Hence, Darwish carries the collective role of the minor writer within his society. A role which involves undergoing an Orphean task of descending into the spiral memory of his own and that of his people to bring to the light buried voices of excluded selves, and use this intermingling of voices to recreate a future of

consciousness and reclaim new territories of memory within the world of the dispossessed.

Palestine has an aura of ‘universality’ attached to it due to its ‘fantastic referential power’ and its ‘existential and imaginative status’ (Said and Barsmain, *The Pen and the Sword* 61). However, in the post-*Auschwitz era* the name ‘Palestine’ has become a rather political one and Said explains is ‘a highly provocative one in the minds of a lot of people even in the minds of Palestinians themselves, it has caused many of us a slight tremor in our awareness whenever we pronounce the name because it seems to be a rather threatening and challenging name’ (Said & Barsamian, *The Pen and the Sword* 23). Darwish expresses how choked existence sometimes creates new sensibilities, as is the case for the Palestinian people when he states in an interview that the Israeli repression has transformed him into an Arab, and that disappointment with the Arabs has transformed him into a Palestinian. The year 1982 marked the second exodus from Lebanon, after the Israeli invasion to retaliate for an assassination attempt on its ambassador in London. The main goal was to destroy the Palestinian resistance and viable existence, in a nine-week siege of Beirut, Israeli forces killed nearly 19,000 persons and wounded around 30,000. The PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) had been evacuated by sea across the Mediterranean to Tunisia. After their departure, forces from the Maronite Phalangists and from Israeli army of Southern Lebanon entered Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, and killed the remaining 2000 refugee, many of whom were women and children. Among those killed in the refugee camp massacre were undoubtedly some who had fled the massacres of 1948 (Said et al, 1986: 47; Khalidi, 1997: 198; Chomsky, 1983: 369).

Disillusionment with nationalism after the ‘persecution of Hashemite rule in Jordan’, the genocide of Tal el Zaatar in Syria, and ‘the exclusion from the mainstream of spontaneous activities in most of the Arab world’ (Turki ‘To Be a Palestinian’ 4) has left the Palestinian subject in a double bound state of existence, looking for proper answers to comments such as: ‘‘You’re alien here’, they say to them *there*. ‘You’re alien here’, they say to them *here*. And between *here* and *there* they stretched their bodies like a vibrating bow until death celebrated itself through them’ (Darwish, *Memory* 13).

Prior to 1948, there was no conscious ‘Palestinian’ identity, since Palestine—though known by the same name then—was not a territorialized, but a mass land, and part of a larger Arab nation. This has left the Palestinian people without a land and without a national consciousness to belong to, and made of them an embodiment of the atomic split of the monad whereby the past and present experiences of consciousness do not have a direct relationship governing them, causing a disruption that had shattered their ‘original leap to a maturing consciousness’ (Turki, ‘The Future of a Past’ 66). Their inhuman state of life and the disillusionment with the Arab nationalism may be thought of as a precondition to minor writing. These post-national narratives write about the double bound state of a people who keep reaching out without an exit, promise a first step in the direction of a new Palestinian consciousness. Echoing the split within the writer himself and in his *relation* to the past and present, the lines in these texts aim at answering questions such as those posed by Said:

Do we exist? What proof do we have? The further we get from the
Palestine

of our past, the more precarious our status, the more disrupted our being, the more intermittent our presence. When did we become a people? When did we stop being one? Or are we in the process of becoming one? What do those big questions have to do with our intimate relationship with each other and with others? (Said, *Politics of Dispossession* 108)

Fawaz Turki explains this existential calamity and how the memory of home becomes more graphic in exile when he paints a picture of his childhood in a refugee camp in Lebanon. Describing how he was exempted from a school trip to Cyprus because he didn't have a passport, and the lack of empathy in the head of school's voice as he informs him and three of his friends only one day prior to their flight, they couldn't leave. He writes: 'The principal talks to us, like the rest of the world does, as if it were our fault that we are stateless. So the four of us stay behind, The [sic] other kids go. We return to Palestine. I am from Haifa' (Turki, 'To Be A Palestinian' 8). The 'passion for the return' for the Palestinian writer becomes a kind of 'internal balancing mechanism [...] to dignify our mutilated world and to experience it and ourselves as total beings' (Turki, 'The Future of A Past' 68).

The narrative of the nation-state is generally monologic as its discursive formations try not to offer any space in which a real dialogue between parties can be formed. 'Othering' everything that sounds dissonant, including fantasy and memory, both being key elements in oral literatures and storytelling, and thus important for producing new subjectivities of dissent to the dominant political and cultural structures. Giorgio Agamben writes that the important thing is not:

to ask how crimes of such atrocity could be committed against human beings. It would be more honest, and above all, more useful carefully to investigate the juridical procedures and deployments of power by which human beings could be so completely deprived of their rights and prerogatives that no act committed against them could appear any longer a crime. (At this point, in fact, everything had truly become possible). (Agamben, 'The Camp as Nomos' 110)

For the Palestinian writers, the Communist Party (Rakah) was the only political party available to them. Nevertheless, this party remained a minority rather than a revolutionist party, one that abides fully to the regulations of the state (Zureik, *The Palestinians in Israel* 167). Ian Lustick admits that 'the separation of Rakah from the rest of the society is so complete and its illegitimacy so widely accepted that its existence serves basically to reinforce the institutional isolation of Arabs from the Jewish sector' (Lustick qtd. in Zureik, *The Palestinians in Israel* 172).

The first half of the twentieth century witnessed a renaissance in literary Arabic modes as it underwent a radical change of poetic perspective. Poetry would become an 'aesthetic witness' to the sacrifices the collective struggle demands. Palestinian literature was and is still committed to the colonial circumstances under which the Palestinians are living daily. This literary transformation included the fusion between preislamic Arab tradition and a more innovative experimentation in form and content. Palestinian writers in their adoption of the free verse were inspired by Eliot's 'The Waste Land'. Eliot's revolutionary mode, view of history; his ability to transcend the personal into the universal appealed to them. 'The Waste Land' resonated with the political situation

perfectly ‘the theme of the sterile ‘cracked earth’ thirsty for rain seemed the most insistent of all’ (Jabra qtd. in *Anthology* 18). Since the 1960s, many poets have opted for the language of simple and ordinary people to draw a realistic picture of Palestinian lives and desires under Israeli rule. The shift from lyrical to prosaic poetic forms was parallel to and coincided with social, moral, and political transformations that took place after 1948. There was an escalating rebellion against the old poetic structures and against dominant Romantic trends in Arabic poetry that developed between the European world wars. Poetry had undergone many changes with regards to themes and choice of diction. Palestinian writers have been living and dwelling in poems, invoking myths woven into Biblical and Judeo-Christian themes of death and resurrection. The ‘free’ verse emerged and was conceived as a ‘creative’ action that would affect radical social change and later political action. The third form is the ‘prose’ poetry, which abandoned poetic metre and rhyme completely. The ‘prose’ poem became widespread after the 1982 exodus from Lebanon. The poetic effect of the traditional lyrical form is that of a ‘song’, the ‘free’ verse that of a ‘painting’, the prosaic form is that of a ‘dream’, whereas ‘prose’ poetry reflects the incoherent and shattered socio-political reality and resists discipline, uniformity and harmony because these are already absent in modern Palestinian history. One might ask though if abandoning traditional metre is a sign of rebellion against the present reality of the modern, or is in a sense a symptom of surrendering to it. What are the ambiguities implicit in adapting modern literary modes? It is important to note that there was no success of one group of poetry over the other. The traditional and the modern; the classical and the innovative poetry continued to be produced in parallel.

Poetry for Mahmoud Darwish became a response to a pre-existing writing that is inscribed on the land serving to assert the legitimacy of the dominance of the others, that

is, the Zionist reading of the Hebrew Bible. His reading could be viewed as a counter-text to the original one to challenge the notion of the 'other' by inventing his own and looking beyond the 'exclusiveness of the biblical tradition'. The topos of Darwish's Poetry is a paradisiacal past, a past petrified and idealized to recover memories of a (pre)colonial space. Memories free from images of mass displacement and tents scattered on the peripheries of evacuated dwellings. Neutral memories that have not yet been charged nor disfigured by the political situation in the region. The Land became a 'structuring principle' (Neuwirth, 'The Hebrew Bible' 172) for the poet's 'dispersed' being.

Mytho-historic writings usually decentralize the author's presence in the literary text and present him as the medium through which certain messages are channelled. Linking the historical to the mythical dimension is in fact a process of politicizing the neutrality of myths which remain in a state of inactivity until motivated by context. And as is the case for 'diasporic' writers in general, and for the Palestinian writer in this case, myths are always activated by political context. In his article 'Contextualizing Myth in Postcolonial Novels', Eriks Uskalis states that:

myth acts as a symbolic space through which desire for change can be encoded. Myth also acts as a symbolic space through which dissent can be communicated. Its intersubjective qualities provide forms through which communication is transmitted. For this reason myth seems particularly useful in postcolonial societies dominated by repressive regimes. The unavailability of discourses of resistance at times leads these to be encoded through myth. Its importance is therefore precisely the fact that it is a form,

through which communication and the desire for alternatives is channelled.

(Uskalis, 'Contextualising Myth' para 1)

Myth then can be seen as an alternative to 'recollection' for histories filled with ruptures. Uskalis writes that by 'displaying an alternative method of societal organisation and narrative construction', myth could become a motivating 'desire for change' and a dissenting paradigm that 'cuts across the syntagmatic narrative of the state' (Uskalis, 'Contextualizing Myth' para 6).

Arab poets have deployed myths and archetypal images of Christ consciousness as the saviour and the redeemer. Other myths were employed such as that of Ishtar, Tammuz, Ulysses, the Phoenix and a variation on them. The Palestinian poets employed the crucifixion of Jesus as a myth of death and resurrection and gave it a national dimension. The poet is the carrier of his people's suffering, stretching out his body as a bridge between home and exile, the individual and the collective. The myth of the phoenix, a legendary Arabian bird, which consumes itself in fire when faced with inevitable doom and rises from the ashes again to begin a new and eternal life.

Similar to the Caribbean writers in their recreation of the land in fiction, the Palestinian writers found themselves carrying the notion of home to exodus in the aftermath of the Catastrophe (the literal translation to *an-nakba* in Arabic) of 1948 with the declaration of Israel as a national home for the Jewish people and the defacing of Palestine from the map. *The Memory of Loss* has led the Palestinians into adapting a sort of disciplined or selective forgetfulness in which Palestine is romanticized and thought of as pure, innocent and unmarked by occupation. Palestine lost and regained can only

take place in the space of the imagination of the poet. In 'Poem of the Land' Darwish says:

I am the land

And the land is you

[...]

The Galilee air wants to speak on my behalf

The Galilee gazelle want to break my prison today

[...] The smell of the land

in early morning

awakens me, my iron chain

awakens the land in the early

evening

[...]

I am the awakened land

[...]

Plough my body

(qtd. in Khamis & Rahman, *Exile Poet* 60)

The land buries the untold mournings of the nomads in their itinerary to exodus. This dialogue with the land leads him to the painful theme of witnessing. The Palestinian identity is paradoxical in the sense that it has been tied to the land. Which is the base upon and from which the Palestinian derives his sense of being. Paradoxically, the absence of the land urged the definition of the Palestinian identity. In diaspora the

Palestinians' sense of dispossession is heightened by the neglect and lack of empathy in the way their cause is perceived.

In his poem, 'The Phases of Anat', Darwish writes about the land as heterogeneous and overlapping with other histories and cultures (Celik, 'Alternative History' 280). By so doing, Darwish is challenging the occupiers' 'superimposition of history' and exclusion of the natives from the past of the land (Celik 284). Darwish represents the rupture in memory between past and present, in the poem, as he deals with the dual self that reaches to a past of no return by invocation of Anat, the goddess of the moon. In *Adam of Two Edens*:

[...] two women never to be reconciled
one bringing water to fountains.
the other driving fire to forests
[...]
Anat, I want you both together
[...]
Anat kills herself within herself
then recreates that distance inside herself
so that before her image far away
all creatures pass
over Mesopotamia and Syria
[...]
Come back, and bring
[...]

the first land of Canaan,
where there is neither life nor death,
[...]
where no future arrives and no past returns.

(‘The Phases of Anat’ 99-102)

Anat or Astarte in Hebrew; Ishtar in Assyrian and Babylonian; Inanna in Sumerian is the goddess of heterogenealogies and the embodiment of the oppositional roles of the virgin, mother, whore, and warrior. She has an elusive being composed of irreconcilable duals, as she mirrors the heterogeneity of the past. The poet moves here from the obsession with the discourse of ‘beginnings’ and genealogy to a rhizomorphic discourse of dislocation and infinite displacement. For without a land and without a national consciousness to belong to, the Palestinian becomes the embodiment of the ‘atomic’ split of the ‘monad’. The split between past and present is ruptured, and in this stanza is irreconcilable. A recollection of the shattered traumatized psyche is rendered impossible since *recollection* implies a kind of genealogical continuum between past and present, when histories of the catastrophe suffer from ruptures and voids that are irretrievable.

However, writing is more complicated for the Palestinian poet because even this desire is threatened. In the introductory quote, Darwish alludes to the nocturnal journey to Jerusalem by Prophet Mohammed in order to intensify the desire for the Return by relating it in the readers’ mind with mythical ascent. If only in the subconscious—the return here is a dream, this desire for the unattainable will eventually lead the poet to express a desire to walk in a never ending route gesturing towards the locus of desire.

The poet’s relation to the locus of desire in the early stages of his writings was problematic, since the name Palestine was politically abolished with the foundation of

the state of Israel and defaced from the map. Even in the West Bank the name was a taboo after it was annexed to Jordan. Darwish has to reclaim his right to re-name the object of desire, and he likens himself to the biblical Adam, who was entitled to give names to creation. Similar to Eve who emerged out of his ribs, the poet creates his divine beloved and names her Palestine. By so doing, the poet ‘acquires a mythical dimension, that of the biblical Adam’ (Neuwirth, ‘The Hebrew Bible’ 176). The transit from this early phase of writing to the one I engage within these lines—the realization of the unattainability of the desired—marks a new attained mental vision for the poet.

In *Unfortunately It Was Paradise* (2003), Darwish plays more than the role of the ancient *qasida* ‘poem-song’ poet typically assigned to him by critics who acted as the reservoir of collective memory and the representative of his tribe. Like Walcott, Darwish defines poetry as ‘a quest for what has not yet been said’ (in Rahman, *Exile’s Poet* 45). [Nashid] as a noun means ‘poem-song’ and as a verb ‘the search for a lost object’ this musicality of poetry, to borrow Rahman’s expression, is distinctive of Darwish later poems in which poetry becomes a ‘perpetual search’, a ‘movement’ and ‘an act’. Rahman explains that in the poem-song ‘where absence and loss seem intrinsic [...], poetry seems to have a fragile force for those silenced. It is this possibility in poetry—that those who have experienced loss might be able to draw force from it—that is its lure’ (Rahman, ‘Threatened Longing’ 45).

This ‘desire to narrate’ an alternative story than that which dispossess became the more alluring to the poet that he could hear his ‘footsteps on the stairs going down’ (Darwish, ‘The Sleeping Garden’ 6) descending to the literary space of the unrepresented, the voiceless, the unspoken for. The poet turns himself into a vowel; a displaced Orpheus: ‘just a mouth and throat from which vocalization emerge that do not

settle into words' (Butler, *Precarious* 133). Struggling to translate lost echoes, he becomes a floating Orpheus; he displaces his body, ending with 'a figure for what cannot be named, an utterance that is not, strictly speaking, linguistic' (Butler, *Precarious* 133).

In the pursuit of the beloved and later the divine beloved, longing to his homeland is both concealed and unfolded. Encoding desire to emphasize the inaccessibility of the desired object forms also an attempt by the intellectual to come to terms with his hyphenated absented being in order to be able to represent his people. The addressee of the Sufi gaze or mystical ghazal was in early Islam the individual beloved and later became the divine Beloved or the unattainable in the postcolonial era, standing for the lost or the unattainable homeland. Rita or 'Shulamit' or 'the strange woman' keeps emerging throughout Darwish's work. In *Memory for Forgetfulness*, her memory takes the shape of daydreams taking the poet away from the mist of the bombardment of Beirut (3). Rita's recurrent memory conveys a mutual yet 'impossible to live' relation, located in uninhabited and mythical spaces. In *A Bed for the Stranger* (1999) he says:

[...] Soon we shall have another present.

If you look behind you, there is only exile

[...]

Soon the birds will fly from one epoch to another.

A path of dust took the form of meaning.

and led us on a brief journey between myths.

It was inevitable as we are inevitable.

Does the stranger see himself in the mirror of another stranger?

[...]

No, this is not the path to my body.

[...]

All the snows of December were not enough.

Smile, then, so that the snow may be like cotton on the prayers of the Christian.

In a while we'll return to our tomorrow, left behind,

[...]

the spirits of a swift peace, giving us two stars,

but killing us in the struggle over a name

between two windows

Let us go, then, and be kind.

[...]

Our wind is of the north, and our songs of the south.

[...]

There are no "collective solutions" for personal matters.

[...]

We were without a present to see where we were [...]

(‘We Were without a Present’, *Unfortunately* 101-104)

The tension in the poet's relation to the Jewish beloved/ Israeli soldier is the tension between desire and fulfilment. As in the biblical *Song of Songs* which Darwish alludes to in his poem ‘Rita's long winter’, the poet is denied the right to fulfil his desire. Yet unlike the *Song of Songs*, the tension here is not between female desire and patriarchal constraints, but between mutual love and political constraints. The poet's desire, and

their relation was constantly threatened by the different ideology of the two finally 'killing [them] in the struggle over a name'. The way Rita's memory keeps retreating and re-emerging in Darwish's poetry encrypts his desire in a sense of repetitive discontinuity, where the lovers 'wounded meeting' keeps repeating itself not as a continuity but as a rupture or caesura of recurring desire, echoing a discontinuous state that is dissecting the present. Darwish's Rita is more or less a translation of the Palestinian everyday reality where the tension in their relation to repressive regimes is the result of political and ideological restraints.

Realizing the fact that he and the Beloved 'were without a present' and that '[they] only meet at the crossroads of speech' (Darwish qtd in Sacks, 'Language Places', 260), hopes and expectations abandon the poet's heart. The pursuit of the Beloved, finally, leads Darwish through a path of constant exile, leading him 'to the harbor locus of involuntary emigration' (Neuwirth, 'The Hebrew Bible' 175).

Here, the poet is starting to problematise his identity by the movement from the self-assertive language in his early poems into questioning existential meanings. He wonders in 'The Sleeping Garden' 'Why do I say farewell?/ From now on I am a stranger to my memories and my home' and he enters a transient moment '[f]rom her arms towards a desire to travel'. After being wounded by his beloved who 'laid [her pistol] on the manuscript of his poem' (qtd in Neuwirth, 'Hebrew Bible' 185), the poet has no choice but to exile himself from Sodom heading to Babylon the land of exile, where only the loneliness of silent freedom remains towards the end of the poem.

Despite the tension between the two, Darwish harbours desire rather than loss to protect his and his people's threatened longing to their home and to their voice. Yet he expresses his fear of becoming locked in and captivated by his own desire, and moves

from attachment to detachment where the desire for return turns into a perpetual journey of prolonged roads having no teleology or closure, keeping ends at bay by postponing the returns. These punctuated ends, however, cover the poet's desire for bridging gaps and for coming to terms with his hyphenated being:

God is more beautiful than the path to God.

But those who travel to nowhere have no chance of return,
to become lost again in loss

They know that the real path leads to the beginning of the impossible path.

[...]

It's an eternal journey in search of an attribute
who is nothing like Him, and who is beyond
our description and even beyond His own.

Soar with me! Nothing is left of me save our journey to Him.

[...]

So, if you would, take us to You, guide us to the ungraspable land.

Take us before we whirl into deep nothingness.

(‘The Hoopoe’, *Unfortunately* 36-37)

Darwish collapses the notion of road for the poet's ‘roads do not lead to her door’ and ‘the real path leads to the beginning of the impossible path’. The Return becomes a perpetual journey of dispersal around the locus of desire, and the fulfilling of desire is postponed to avoid loss. The postcolonial poet represents the possibility of a transnational alternative to national politics, where resistance centres upon accepting the

chaos of movement as a welcome relief from colonial attempts to order space through the acquisition of territory, and re-visioning the chaos of the postcolonial state as a space of opportunity. This may mean rejecting any concept of arrival, and of making movement itself the location where identity is forged, preferring the endless route ‘While the political theme of return can be expressed in the voice of a lover yearning for his beloved’, the terms of this return appear to require the dismissal of the feminine beloved herself’ (Zalman, *Nation* 49). As we have seen in previous chapters, the journey offers a sense of literary alignment, the opportunity of a new cross-cultural community that aims to re-write humanism within the context of postcolonial difference. In ‘The Aesthetic Revolution’, Ranciere writes: ‘Ultimately the alternative to politics turns out to be aestheticization, viewed as the constitution of a new collective ethos’ (Ranciere 137).

While it seems at the first glance that the poet’s voice is disseminating towards absence and silence, yet, Darwish is in fact celebrating multiplicity and expanding the poem’s horizon by bridging the gap between notions of home and belonging. He approaches home as absence, and encrypts it inside the abodes of poetry—the literal translation for the lines of poetry in Arabic *abyat men al she’r*—to protect his longing ‘before we whirl into deep nothingness’. Detaching his poetic voice to a new literary space is thus an act of protection rather than dwelling in despair and loss. Similar to the Sufi mysticism in Islam which ‘considers the entire existence on earth to be an ‘exile of the soul’ [*ghurba*]’ (Neuwirth ‘Hebrew Bible and Arabic Poetry’ 183), the poet chooses to dwell in his poems and to postpone tomorrow to avoid the inevitable loss: ‘I have no harbor/ to say I have a home’ (Darwish qtd in Rahman, ‘Threatened Longings’ 48).

Failing attempts to re-possess the land for the Palestinian poet, makes the space of writing an Orphic space. In his reflections on the work of art and death's space, Maurice Blanchot's *The Writing of the Disaster* notes that in writing, the author should 'seek nothing but the point of departure', that he should 'Write to be able to die— Die to be able to write' (Blanchot 94). Memory, death, and resurrection are inseparable. Death precedes the re-birth of collective consciousness. In *Unfortunately*, Darwish has 'the determination to establish with death a relation of freedom' (Blanchot 95). Death is seen here as the infinite possibility of radical reversal allowing the impossibility of dying in life again for colonial subjects. The song 'continues inside death to make possible the movement of transformation which must not cease [...] where one has in nonbeing eternally to return to being' (Blanchot 157). For 'Orpheus is the act of metamorphosis' and 'the infinite trace of absence' (Blanchot 142-3). His dismembering and dispersal, like that of the dismembered slave in the phantom limb metaphor, is what allowed for the song of metamorphosis. Blanchot writes that 'When Orpheus descends towards Eurydice, art is the power by which night opens [...] Eurydice is the furthest that art can reach' (Blanchot 171). By turning towards her again, Eurydice returns among the shades and descends to the underworld. Through death, the poet is able to see the land as it was once prior to exploitation 'he touched her intact, in her shadowy absence, in that veiled presence which did not hide her absence, which was the presence of her infinite absence' (Blanchot 172).

The Beloved/ land of the colonial subject resists literary representation. Mariella in Harris, Helen in Walcott, the desert as I will show in Kanafani is like Eurydice who inhabits the narrative context, without, however, belonging to it—she's 'only there for the poet' (Cavarero, *Relating Narratives* 105). The divine Beloved/homeland is always

'beyond' the poet's 'gaze'. Like the wind, he goes in all directions scattered around the centre—his homeland. And it is the desire that had moved Orpheus to possess Eurydice to be destined to only sing for her the song of metamorphosis. *Now* the poet is beyond desire and beyond finitude, for 'only in the song does Orpheus have power over Eurydice' yet in the song 'Eurydice is already lost [...] but this desire, and Eurydice lost, and Orpheus dispersed are necessary to the song, just as the ordeal of eternal inertia is necessary to the work' (Blanchot 173).

By awakening the desire to narrate, Darwish resurrects Palestine in exile to comment on the story from the viewpoint of the dispossessed although they will be still unable to change it, they are at least able to rewrite the plot of their story to come. This desire to construct new collective form keeps unfolding in Darwish's poetry. He states:

I am what I have spoken to the words:

Be the place where

my body joins the eternity of the desert.

Be, so that I may become my words

[...]

The sky opened a window for me. I looked and found nothing

save myself outside itself, as it has always been,/ and my desert-haunted visions.

My steps are wind and sand, my world is my body

and what I can hold onto.

[...]

We don't linger upon what is to come.

There is no tomorrow in this desert, save what we saw yesterday,

so let me brandish my ode to break the cycle of time,

[...]

Let my language overcome my hostile fate, my time of descendants.

[...]

This is my language, my miracle, my magic wand

(‘A Rhyme for the Odes’, *Unfortunately* 91-93).

Darwish here turns the journey from the passion for Return to a perpetual search, to roads having no specific itinerary but the open horizon for the future, through invocation of the desert travel of pre-Islamic poetry. Openness of horizon goes hand in hand with Deleuzian vision on literature as a process of becoming, of inscribing unfinished experiences and living in in-between-spaces and writing from there. In ‘Literature and Life’, Deleuze argues: ‘To write is certainly not to impose a form (of expression) on the matter of lived experience. Literature rather moves in the direction of the ill-formed or the incomplete [...] writing is a question of becoming’ (‘Literature and Life’ 225). Home becomes a metaphor extending the link between belonging and dwelling. Darwish inhabits the Arabic tradition of poetry and expands it and takes it into new horizons. In the poem-song, the journey to the unattainable land reflected in the Beloved and later the Divine Beloved overlaps. This overlapping and entanglement shows at the end of poems where the end is always a postponement or delay of confronting that same end. In going against the linear teleology or closure and promoting a circular journey of arrivals and departures, there lies a similarity to the structure of the traditional poem-song with repetitive phrases serving, as Rahman has suggested, as a disruptive tool encrypting desire within its folds serving only to protect it: ‘Poetic language, despite its

limitations—mainly that it absents again that which it seeks to represent—becomes a way of guarding against disappearance’ (Rahman, ‘Threatened Longings’ 42).

The mirage of loss and desire results in a second loss, yet ‘not as nostalgia or regret but as a horizon’, similar to the Orpheus myth, in which Orpheus’s desire to bring Eurydice into presence after her death makes him lose her again because of the ‘excessive desire of his gaze’ yet this loss is what ‘allows for the song’ (Rahman, ‘Threatened Longings’ 47). Darwish suggests that these paradisiacal pasts shall remain floating in the ‘voids of absence’, forever beyond language and beyond reach; only signified upon but never fully represented. The musicality of the poem-song holds the echo of the voice serving as an extension of the poetic self to forge a sense of connectedness and bond between the exilic self and the desired object. Darwish writes ‘Here is the obsession with a song/ through which I convey a repeated tragedy’ (‘Ivory Combs’, *Unfortunately* 80).

In *Unfortunately*, Darwish deploys the Land and the Holy Scriptures to construct his narrative and to connect the fragments of past and present together or put together all these mosaic memories that relate to one another with a sense of ‘non-belongingness’ and articulate these formations to produce new ‘positionalities’ for absented subjects. Darwish uses the present to move to a new state of awareness. For ‘There is, here, a present not embraced by the past. /[...] / There is, here, a transient present’ of sharing with his people their torn tongue and their silenced state of being. In ‘The formation of a diasporic intellectual’, an interview with Stuart Hall, Hall explains that the intellectual actually *learns* to occupy the ‘third space’ of literature. It is a literary space the writer gradually moves into. The final stage of Darwish’s writings was the occupation of that middle space of writing which Hall describes as the ‘always-postponed ‘arrival’ of

crossing border lines as a hyphenated being and as the ‘familiar stranger,’ living ‘inside and outside’ home and self and finally announcing his detachment in *Mural* (2000), by abandoning his name—the only site of identity left for him—he announces: ‘My name is not mine’, and declare a diasporic relationship to identity. Darwish bridges the gap in national awareness with mythology but as he becomes the more disenchanted by his mythical figure, he abandons his name:

As for me, I say to my name:

Leave me and go away!

[...]

I carried you when we were able

To cross the river as one ‘You are me’

[...]

Where am I and where is my little story and tiny

Pains?

[...]

A reader looks at my name

And gives his opinion:

I love his barefoot Jesus,

But not his subjective poetry describing the fog

[...]

I say to my name: Give me all the freedom I lost!

(Darwish, ‘As for me, I say to my name’, *Mural* 28)

Irresolvable tensions between the loss of a name and the desire to rename become an infinite source of creativity for the ‘diasporic intellectual’. The space-in-between, within which the poet eventually learns to dwell, is marked by a distance. It is the ‘distance between the immediate practical consciousness or common sense of ordinary people, and what it is possible for them to become’ (Hall and Grossberg 141).

The questions I would like to investigate through my reading of Mahmoud Darwish prose poetry *Memory for Forgetfulness*, in which he tells the story of a day encapsulating the length of history, during the Israeli bombing of Beirut in 1982, are the following: How and by what means could the writers of minor literatures address the presences and absences of history in their attempt to write about the traumatic experiences of dispossession and loss? Is it possible through writing and imagination to articulate the absences and ruptures in excluded histories? To chart a new *being* in the present that suits the inherent instability of the Palestinian experience? Could these memories be reclaimed? And can the fragments of the past be recollected in minor literatures?

In *Memory*, Darwish reflects the repetition of trauma; ‘the continuous line of dispossession’ of the Palestinian people (Said and Barsmian, *The Pen and the Sword* 51) in his cyclical literary style. In this text, narration begins before dawn and ends after the fall of night. The same phrases repeat themselves all through the narrative through recurrent dreams of being still alive in the midst of the shelling of the city of Beirut. Darwish works at dislocating even his dreams: ‘Out of one dream, another dream is born’. He writes:

Out of one dream, another dream is born. *Are you well?*
I mean are you alive? [...] a dream that came, born from another dream.
Are you still alive? When did it happen? I am awakened from one dream
by another, itself the interpretation of the dream? That's what's
happening now. Are you alive? (Darwish qtd.in Jayyusi, *Anthology* 642)

Darwish's cyclic style embodies symptoms of belated awareness, which is, according to Caruth, 'a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from the event [...] the historical and personal truth that [trauma] transmits—is intricately bound up with its refusal of historical boundaries' (Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* 4-8). Nietzsche argues that '[o]ne burns something in so that it remains in one's memory: only what does not cease to give pain remains in one's memory' (*On the Genealogy of Morality* 37). This entails that de-activating memory could break the chains relating us to past suffering. However, when trauma keeps repeating itself, de-activation or forgetting becomes impossible.

In *Memory*, dreams serve a double function, in order to cope with the complexity of the Palestinian reality, functioning both as an escapist mechanism from the living nightmare of reality and as a disruptive tool signalling the repetitive nature of trauma. Dreams as the desire for love and life in *Memory*, are the outer shell of a nightmare that is the reality of war. The poet, being 'affected by gradual fatigue and the silence of approaching sleep' (Reigeluth, 'The Art of Repetition' 317), desires dwelling in this middle region between life and death for in the middle of this waking terror sleep is peace. Derrida's insights on the nature of memory and forgetfulness are very useful to

mention here. In his *Memoires: For Paul de Man*, Derrida dismisses the second division of memory by Hegel as *Erinnerung* ‘interiorizing memory’, in which he sees the ‘recollective as the inner gathering and preserving of experience’ (Derrida, *Memoires* 51). *Erinnerung* is long-term memory where memory is preserved in a way similar to genealogical, centred and hierarchical structures of power (Derrida, *Memoires* 51). *Gedachtnis*, on the other hand, is ‘both the memory that thinks [...] and voluntary memory, specifically the mechanical faculty of memorization’ (Derrida 51). And since it contains ‘voluntary memory’, *Gedachtnis* is accompanied by forgetfulness, where forgetfulness would mean moving beyond the traumatic memory in a form of spiritual ascent. Henceforth, ‘remembrance’ and ‘forgetfulness’, as Derrida suggests, are two sides of a never-ending palimpsest. To remember is to bring back something from the ruins of ‘forgetfulness’ to life again and to ‘retrieve truth from the voids of forgetfulness’ (Gray, ‘Heidegger’s ‘Being’’ 418). What we have here then is a paradoxical pairing of ‘forgetfulness’ and ‘remembrance’ (van der Kolk & van der Hart, ‘The Intrusive Past’ 425-454). The writing of memory is rhizomorphic and dislocated, it is: ‘an antigenealogy’ and a ‘short-term memory or anti-memory’. Short time memory, according to Deleuze and Guattari, ‘is in no way subject to a law of contiguity or immediacy to its object, it can act at a distance, come or return a long time after, but always under the condition of discontinuity, rupture and multiplicity’ (Deleuze & Guattari, *Plateaus* 17). The rhizome is short memory, is ruptured, decentred and ever flowing in infinite displacement and like the ‘fan of memory’ (Benjamin qtd in. Wolin, *Walter Benjamin* 3) these fragments of the past pile on top of one another, yet never in a linear order.

In his attempt to depict survival within the state of recurrent suffering, Darwish deploys disciplined forgetfulness or selective memory in writing *Memory*. Darwish uses selective memory to fragment traumatic memories and make of this text a mixed genre, as a wish to move beyond the loss in a form of spiritual ascent, arriving at something close to wisdom. In *Memory*, writing as an ‘act of speech’ (Felman 53) that presents a multivocal text that resembles, as Ibrahim Muhawi tells us in his introduction to *Memory For Forgetfulness*, a broken mirror, becomes the dominant metaphor (Muhawi xxvi).

Wandering in the streets of Beirut and measuring time by the interval ‘between two shells’ (Darwish, *Memory* 6), Darwish becomes a literary *flâneur* as his movement unfolds the creases of the ‘fan of memory’, recalling to mind memories of loss. The city in *Memory*, acts like a metaphysical passage of existence through time and space where ‘the mind meandering between the broken buildings of Beirut portrays the sinuous passage of time through traumatic memories [...]. The city acts as a microcosm for the plurality of succession in the general recurrence of history’ (Reigeluth 293). By storytelling, Darwish becomes an ‘aesthetic witness’ on history. He writes:

The street Seven o’clock. The horizon is a huge steel egg. Who shall I offer my innocence to? The street has become wider. I walk slowly, slowly. I walk so slowly a plane couldn’t miss me. The void opens its jaws, but doesn’t swallow me. I move aimlessly as if I were seeing these streets for the first time, as if I were walking on them for the last time. A one-sided farewell. I am the one walking in the funeral procession and the one whose funeral procession it is [...] No beginning. No end.

[...] No memory. No dream. No past. No tomorrow. No sound. No silence. No war. No peace. No life. No death. [...] I didn’t know who I was. I didn’t

know my name, or the name of this place. I didn't know if I'd be able to unsheathe one of mine to find a dialogue for this absolute silence.

(Darwish qtd. in Jayyusi, *Anthology* 645-46)

Searching for words to describe the trauma of war and death, Darwish declares that he has 'abandoned' his 'quest for metaphor' and 'hidden meaning, because the essence of wars is to debase symbols and to bring human relations, space, time, and the elements back to a state of nature'; to their raw state (*Memory* 9). The metaphors Darwish evokes throughout the narrative serves to create a bond to space. Thus, abandoning metaphor may function as a type of resistance to the images the tragedies of war keep creating. The state of siege in this state goes beyond the physical siege of war and death to include linguistic and existential ones. The text here deconstructs itself by reinforcing its own inherent undecidability. By so doing, it unsettles traditional and dominant discourse, leaving the way open for other readings to evolve.

The poetic space is the space of the unconscious (death, dream, and sleep) that allows the poet to escape the borders of the besieged city. Cathy Caruth explains that in the case of trauma, and in this case collective trauma; 'it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available' (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 4). In *Memory*, the 'territorial fragmentation' in Palestine (Mbembe, 'Necropolitics' 28) is relived again and traumatically remembered as 'a break in the mind's experience of time' (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 61). Moreover, this 'splintering occupation' (Mbembe 28), I think, has a reflexive relation with the psychic split from which its victims suffer. Henceforth, much insight into the substance of psychic tribulation could be offered through the lens of physical termination (death or

exile or both) and geographical territorialization; two schemas built, according to Mbembe upon '[t]he perception of the existence of the Other as an attempt on my life, as a mortal threat or absolute danger whose biophysical elimination would strengthen my potential to life and security' (Mbembe, 'Necropolitics' 17). This perception of the body as a *site* of war has turned the Palestinians into a 'problem people', for whether being the dispossessed nomads of the interior or living in exile on the margins of time and space, their mere existence is a cause in itself. In *Memory*, Darwish writes of this existential calamity of the 'absent-present aliens' when he notes: 'You ask the Ministry of the Interior, 'Am I here, or am I absent? [...] you realize that philosophically you exist but legally you do not' (*Memory* 1).

War as written on the body as it is on the psyche has been a recurrent theme in Darwish. The limb metaphor, for example, is connected to fragmented memories and fractured souls and is also used to emphasise the writer's personal relationship to collective trauma. He writes on the 2006 bombing of Beirut:

Smoke rises from me, I stretch my severed hand to grasp my scattered
Limbs from so many bodies [...] I am besieged from land, sky, sea, and
language [...] As for the heart, I see it roll, like a pine cone from a Lebanese
mountain to Gaza. ('More than Empathy' 6)

This traumatic event awakens memories which keep repeating themselves, reminding the poet of his exiled self. By storytelling and de-scribing, these texts become an 'aesthetic witness', and help in healing the wounds of the catastrophe through denying empathy. By so doing, the trauma is re-lived again as the feelings of pain, anxiety, fear,

bitter loss and repetition of the trauma are being awakened. Survivors, such as the poet watching this through the media can only watch as other parts of their lives shatter and disintegrate. Here the victims of the catastrophe are signified upon, yet never fully represented. The language of the disaster reaches beyond language to signify silence and dwells in the space between the two unwriting itself and de-scribing the disaster (Blanchot, *Writing of the Disaster* 7). The language of the disaster is a descriptive language, borne out of the traumatic event to de-scribe it by undermining itself through abandoning its metaphorical realm. By so doing, it reaches beyond language to signify silence and dwell in the space between the two, thus, unwriting itself and de-scribing the event to lessen its traumatic influence. (Blanchot 7) Hoping that, through writing, he would become a ‘witness who can give evidence, for a gravestone over a corpse’ (Muhawi, *Memory* xvi). The space of writing Darwish dwells in, is one that is beyond metaphor, since no image could encapsulate the violent experience into text. The poet’s awareness of the impossibility of reducing the pain into discursive narrative makes him renounce metaphor as a realization of the impossibility of ethics. Thus, Darwish’s image-heavy style is his constant trial to represent the pain in text. In the end, the poet opens up about the need to go beyond metaphor since no text is able to encapsulate the pain.

The minor writer searches for ways by which he could fill in the gaps in the creases of that ‘fan of memory’, through hearing and writing the silences ‘testifying [...] to the very secret of survival [...] The historians could not hear’ (Laub, *Testimony* 62). Here, I think, lies the significance of enticing the imagination to memory after excavating memories in order to recreate a new vision of history. Minor literature, in this way, resurrects past memories from the ruins of the disaster to gesture towards the

future, and aim at inscribing memories of the future rather than ‘interiorizing’ them, to use Derrida, or to engage in a process of recollecting.

Writing is always in *medias res*; a ‘becoming’: ‘A line of becoming has neither beginning nor end, departure nor arrival, origin nor destination—it has only a middle’ (Deleuze & Guattari 293). This writing encompasses the experience in the process of retelling it to ‘create the chain of tradition which passes a happening on from generation to generation’ (Benjamin, *Illuminations* 102). These memories or ‘postmemories’ as Marian Hirsch terms them, are transmitted from one generation to the other. This transmission passes with it the deep mourning causing the younger generation to feel deeply affected by memories of trauma they still have not experienced constantly live in its shadows (*Family Frames* 9).

Concerning the possibilities given to minor writers (as subjects writing from within the multiplicities) in using the reality of war and death as a literary horizon, Achille Mbembe notes that ‘contemporary experiences of human destruction suggest that it is possible to develop a reading of politics, sovereignty, and the subject different from the one we inherited from the philosophical discourse of modernity’, and to establish other ‘foundational categories’ based upon arguing ‘life and death’ instead of ‘reason’ (‘Necropolitics’ Mbembe 14). For the minor writer, death gives him authority: ‘Death is the sanction of everything that the storyteller can tell. He has borrowed his authority from death’ (Benjamin, *Illuminations* 94). Death and collective enunciation make nomad writing a collective annunciation of the deterritorialized people where inside writing, the poet becomes ‘a refugee from the psychic terrors of [his] identity and condition’ (Turki, ‘The Future of a Past’ 66). Darwish expresses this ‘choked’ existence and the attempt to find a ‘place’ and to break through when he states: ‘Earth is pressing

against us, trapping us in the final passage. /To pass through, we pull off our limbs./ Earth is squeezing us' (*Unfortunately* 9). Nevertheless, even in their 'present-absent' status, the deterritorialized nomads living on the peripheries are in themselves a kind of resistance to forgetfulness and to the territorialized 'state of exception'. Deleuze and Guattari note that the '[n]omad existence necessarily effectuates the conditions of the war machine in space' (*Plateaus* 380). The nomads reterritorialize their lives through their 'creative line of flight', (Deleuze, *Plateaus* 423) where their 'very existence brings meaning back to the words. Here there is a tent for wandering meanings, for words gone astray, and for the orphaned light banished from the heart of things' (*Memory* xxv).

The *act* of writing is an ongoing process of deterritorializing and reterritorializing; of destruction and creation which encapsulate the discontinuity and fracture of the collective Palestinian present experience. Darwish's style opens the door for the rhizomatic theory and imaginative expressions defying teleological ends in his search for the moment 'when literature can celebrate its great wedding, when the private voice and the public voice become one' (*Memory* xxvi) and for the 'people's epic' to recuperate the tangible land.

'Necropolitics', could mean not only the 'right to put to death' physically but also existentially as well through processes of exclusion and marginalization. To re-write collective memory, to quote Said, is a 'permission to narrate' alternative histories of silenced and excluded narratives, and an activation of 'a new critical consciousness'. It is the attempt to be the voice to the mute, carried by writers from within the collective multiplicities, since 'the enemy of the Palestinians, in the end, is not to be forgotten or marginalized, but that 'it is silence: to be aware and to turn away' (Said qtd in Barsmian 102). Hence, since the Palestinian people were excluded from history and unspoken for,

this new space of writing becomes the vision of ‘multiplicity’, in their search for ‘linguistic Third World Zones’ (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka* 27). Writers belonging to these spaces work at stretching language to its excesses to explore new possibilities and interpretations; signifying silence or absence; probing language and breaking its boundaries. These discourses may be described as revolutionary, in the sense that they are endlessly innovating new meanings and new possibilities.

In *Memory*, Darwish, by temporally distancing himself from the event like the ‘birds [that] clear up their own space in the smoke of the burning city’ (*Memory* 9), and through his use of selective memory, moves from writing a testimonial narrative into writing a literary text of trauma. By probing the wound historically, he depicts the recurrent trauma of dispossession of the Palestinian people. The language of the disaster he writes in is the ‘wreckage of language’ and ‘the remains of something other than itself’ (Sacks 241). His fragmentary, nomadic and polyphonic style of writing in its moves back and forth in time and brings to the fore the unspoken for history of 1948 and the cyclic trauma of violence the Palestinians have been trapped in since that date.

However, even if the ‘body of these writings is always departing, within the immanence of a movement, a fall, a gap, a dislocation,’ (Nassar and Rahman, *Exile’s Poet* 257) leaving the minor writer wandering in a perpetual search for the sites of healing on the ‘geography of [his] soul’ (Turki, ‘The Future of A Past’ 66), the nomadic or post-national writings do not promote the state of homelessness, but they themselves come as a reality created by the war machine to recuperate for the loss by affording the marginalized people drafts of literary witnesses to their suffering.

For Said, Palestinian narratives converge on negotiating the Palestinian broken existence through ‘crossing-over’ stations as ‘relays along a trajectory’ (Deleuze and

Guattari, *Plateaus* 380). Their sensibilities locate them; hence, they are in a constant process of departure and arrival, of breaking off and starting again. The Palestinians ‘travel like everyone else, but we return to nothing / [...] Ours is a country of words’ (*Unfortunately* 11). This is something, according to Said, that ‘do[es] not lessen the alienation, discontinuity, and dispossession, but that dramatize and clarify them instead’ (*After the Last Sky* 41). Yet the question of the nomad still stands unheard signalling both the paradoxical state of being doubly bound and the perpetual search for moving on after the last horizon: ‘Where should we go after the last border? Where should birds fly after the last sky?’ (Darwish, *Unfortunately* 9)

Chapter Five

From breakdowns to breakthroughs: Ghassan Kanafani's *Men In The Sun* and *All*

That's Left To You

Politics consists in reconfiguring the distribution of the sensible that defines the common of a community, in introducing new subjects and new objects to this community, to render visible that which was not, and to allow the voice of those who were only perceived as noisy animals to be heard. This work of creating dissensus constitutes an aesthetics of politics.

Jacques Rancière, *The Flesh of Word* (38-39)

After being dispersed by the Catastrophe, Palestinians have resided in three main places: those who remained in what is now Israel and lived under its military Emergency Regulations extended from the time of British rule until 1966; those who comprise the largest group of nearly 600,000 Palestinians became refugees in the part of Palestine that remained unoccupied until 1967, that is Gaza and the West Bank. The Gaza Strip fell under Egyptian control/ the east central part of Palestine was annexed shortly after 1948 by King Abdullah of Jordan and since then has been known as the 'West Bank'. The last group of Palestinian existence emerged in other Arab countries, to Lebanon, Syria and Egypt, and to a lesser extent the Gulf region.

In those countries, Jordan included, Palestinian refugees numbering initially around 300,000 emerged over the next two decades as a force the Arab regimes felt they

had either to dominate or destroy. This depended on these masses willingness to abide by the rules of these regimes who benefited in various ways from the fall of Palestine and the controlled mobilization of the refugees in their midst (Khalidi, 1997: 192). The conditions of the refugee camps set up by the UNRWA were dehumanizing. In 1955, a Jewish Rabbi compared the refugee camps with Nazi concentration camps (qtd in Gilmore, *Dispossessed* 80).

Arab host countries have problematized the legal identification of Palestinians. The right of having I.D. cards, passports or travel documents is still a source of anxiety to Palestinians, for in most cases, they either have inappropriate documents crippling their mobilization or their passports mark them as Palestinians. Those who live in Gaza and Lebanon are ‘unidentified’ content with a *laissez-passer* for traveling. Palestinians who remained in Israel, not all of them were granted citizenship. Those in Jordan became Jordanian citizens after the annexation of the West Bank to Transjordan in 1950, which became the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, yet their passports were marked by a special notation distinguishing them as Palestinians. Those who fled to Syria were given Syrian citizenship (Khalidi, 1997).

Politics imposes strains on the Palestinian writers who either live as exiles in other people’s countries or as second class citizens in their own homeland or lacking any form of identity as in the west bank or Gaza. There is no escape or a chance for the writer to separate political life from writing. They have become the prototype of the strangers of all times. Until very recently, the Arab world remained stagnant for decades and many poets and writers have fallen into despair and some even ended their life as a kind of passive resistance to the frustrating political reality. All of these restraints on

freedom of thought in the Arab world has both delayed and paved the way for the social and political change that is taking place now all around the Arab world by the forces of the masses, which from an outside glance appears to have no clear ideological or provocative forces, yet it certainly is the result of the subtle influence of literary fiction for decades.

Palestinian writers have addressed themselves to the cause of their own people, writing of a reality wishing they could pass Palestine as the centre of polarity in their text, and the structuring foundation of their literary work. Their work reveals a dynamic relation between art and politics; that art can inspire and challenge new political realities. The relationship between the aesthetic and the political in Kanafani's fiction is similarly intimate. Even his death in 1972 could be considered as a political one, uniting him to his people's cause. In his article 'Arabic Novels and Social Transformation', Halim Barakat talks of literature and the geopolitical reality in Kanafani as he [Kanafani] 'saw his fate as inseparable from that of his people. His short stories record the voice of the stateless and uprooted Palestinians, especially the deprived masses who paid most dearly for the successive defeats' (Barakat 136). Kanafani writes about a reality that proved that this exilic status of the Palestinian refugee appears to be a permanent one. Kanafani writes: 'The camps. Those stains on the forehead of our weary morning, lacerations, brandished like flags of defeat, billowing by chance above the plains of mud and dust and compassion [...]' (Kanafani *Palestine Children* 10). The question of how to deal with the reality of limitation in the life of the Palestinian refugee in literature is vital for Kanafani. In their introduction to Kanafani's *Palestine's Children*, Riley and Harlow contend that: 'The tension between the political and

historical events and their literary transformation distinguishes the writing of Ghassan Kanafani. Through narrative, historical necessities lose their implacableness as *fait accomplis* and become rich with possibility' (15). The political environment of the Palestinian people, as I shall argue, gave rise to certain types of literature (the (bio)political literature) , that fuses the aesthetic and the political to produce new literary phenomena. This chapter will focus on the refugee camp and the isolation of victims who witnessed trauma of dislocation or siege in Ghassan Kanafani's writings. The main focus will be on Kanafani's novella *All That's Left To You* (1966) which contrasts with his *Men In The Sun* (1962). I argue that the theme of transformation of politics into biopolitics and the totalitarian attitude of the nation-state towards undesirable human beings (refugees), and how all of this could be situated within the horizon of necropolitics is central to much of Kanafani's fiction. I will attempt to explore how Kanafani situates the refugee within the space of necropolitics and how he endeavours to move beyond zones of death into zones of 'becoming' by politicising death and rebirth in his work. I also attempt to show how Kanafani's work can be seen as a literary formula for crossing from death zones to becoming.

I want to think through these thoughts in relation to the notion of 'necro-politics,' and the 'state of exception', which I am drawing respectively from the philosophical works of Achille Mbembe (2000), Giorgio Agamben (1995; 2000; 2005) and Michel Agier (2008). In my argument I will also use the works of Frantz Fanon (1961), Zygmunt Bauman (2004) and Jacques Ranciere (2004).

In *Men in the Sun*, Kanafani tells the story of three Palestinian refugees: Abu Qais, Asad and Marwan, who represent, as Roger Allen tells us in his introduction to *All*

That's Left To You, three 'generations which are united in their loss of roots in place' (Allen xi), trying illegally to cross the Iraqi-Kuwaiti borders to Kuwait in search for a better life. Dispossessed from Jaffa to Ramleh, to a refugee camp in Jordan, to Basra, the three men who have no official documents (and who do not exist legally) finally find a way to smuggle the three men over the borders to Kuwait. So close to their destination, and after having to wait for their smuggler to finish the official passing procedures, they die from suffocation inside the empty water tank at the crossing border and are taken with their smuggler and thrown in a dumpster—in order to be found and buried properly—as he explains later. The novella closes by the smuggler wondering 'why didn't you knock on the sides of the tank? Why didn't you bang the sides of the tank? Why?' (Kanafani 56)

In the novel, Kanafani uses an indirect, experimental approach and symbolic language to demonstrate the predicament of the Palestinian subject and view the relation between the imaginary narratives in reference to the geopolitical reality. When the novella opens, Abu Qais, one of the three men, is bending his ears to the ground listening to the echoes of his own heart beat resonating from the deep earth, Kanafani implies from the very beginning that the story's horizon is death. Their life painted in greys; being refugees dwelling in in-between-spaces and having no legal status, the three men's life is overcome by the vacuum in that 'endless white glow' (Kanafani 15).

Echoing the question at the end of the novella about the three men's wordless death, one wonders why they chose to suffocate in silence. Was it for fear of drawing the attention of the outside world to their existence? In *After Lives*, Barbara Harlow speaks of the ambiguity of the question asked by the smuggler at the end of the novel. She believes the question itself is an ignorant one. She quotes Fadl al-Naqib's reading of it,

as saying that the question ‘ignores the historical possibilities immanent in the writer’s own narrative at the same time that it serves finally to justify or legitimize the fate of the three men and exculpate others of any complicity in, or responsibility for, that fate’. Al-Naqib goes on to explain that: ‘The three [men] finally suffocated, not because they didn’t bang on the walls of the tank, but because there was no one there to hear them’ (qtd. in Harlow 53). The water tank in the novella symbolizes the isolation of the witnesses in the refugee camp, where we have a deliberate segregation held against the generations of Palestinians; against communities of testimony. The function of testimony, hence, is constantly aborted since the world does not want to hear, and the witness is left in the tank to die. In his article, ‘Humanitarianism and Representations of the Refugee’ (2002), Prem K. Rajaram demonstrates why a ‘particular bureaucratized knowledge about refugees and the methodology for ‘listening’ to them do not properly allow refugees voice to emerge’ (248). Fund raising, Rajaram argues, remains the priority of humanitarian agencies, and listening to the refugees’ testimonies on the horrors of war is not given its due recognition (249-250). This reality has endorsed, Rajaram believes, the perception of a ‘depoliticised, dehistoricized and universalised figuration of the refugee as mute victim’ (248). Refugees are, thus, seen merely in terms of their ‘biological corporeality’, isolated not only from their home, but from their hopes and dreams as human beings as well (252-253). In his book *On the Margins of the World*, Michel Agier writes: ‘The refugee camps of today are the most advanced form of a global treatment of stigmatized identities and undesirable groups’ (Agier 61). The camp is a sort of social quarantine signifying bodily trauma. The camp ‘establishes the ultimate and essential form of a ‘politics of living beings’ constituting a ‘bio-political paradigm’ (Agier 63). The contradictory recognition of the refugee as ‘a bare life’ with

‘minimal biological’ needs while denying them the right to social and political life results, Agier tells us, in a doubly bound ‘gated identities’ (Agier 40). These are identities bound from both the inside and the outside the nation-state.

Within this ‘intense solitary exile, the sky split open’ (Kanafani 24) and the three men escape their choked existence. Asad, Marwan and abu Qais leave in hope for a better life in the Gulf area, with pictures of family and home in their minds. The barriers in the route to Kuwait and the mistreatment they receive in Basra enhance the status of in-betweenness which characterizes the life of the refugees in general. Being excluded from life all together, their journey is an attempt to explore how far can too far go for the dispossessed. Asad, Marwan and abu Qais have not even envisaged their destination (they were inside the empty water tank) at the borders, an indication by Kanafani of the endless displacement of the refugee. Asad, Marwan and abu Qais *lived* by breaking the siege of the camp, only *to die* inside the tank. With memories of loss following them, the three men portray ‘a beginning which was always and already in decline’ (Pile and Thrift, *Mapping the Subject* 208). The potential for development and for a new beginning was there but was constantly aborted.

The transition between ‘bare life’ and existence, for the three men in *Men in the Sun*, remains suspended between ‘bare life’ and existence. Their hopes for a better future do not exceed being a potential that never materialises, a foetus dying inside the womb of space, as the three men now face the dilemma of their negated existence; they have no identity cards or passports to enable them the freedom of movement across borders, their bodies are ‘gated,’ to use Agier’s word, both inside and outside the fences of the refugee camp, through other ways of regulating the body, as Foucault tells us in *Discipline* (1977a) that bodies could as well be controlled by means of subtle modes of discipline,

that ‘make use neither of weapons nor terror and yet remain of a physical order’ (26). The route of the three Palestinian generations since 1948, represented in the figures of the three men is in constant flux. The inability of the three refugees to arrive at their destination corresponds with the undefined nature of Palestinian national identity, which is still under construction till this very day. In his essay, ‘Thinking the postcolonial as political’, Mark Devenney argues that ‘those who become refugees are stripped of their status as bearers of rights which have any content—these rights become almost impossible to lay claim to in the case of bodies where the link between nation and natality no longer holds’ (Devenney paragraph 25). It is worth noting that the movement of the multitudes, in general, across the borders of the nation-state is restricted by means of formal documents needed to identify each and everyone crossing state borders. Refugees’ movement is thus regarded as a threat to the sovereignty of the state; as a challenge to its authoritative biopolitical role in regulating the bodies of its population. Borders are meant to restrict the deterritorialized movement of the dispossessed by placing the refugees in social ‘ghettos’, chaining their lives from within and without. The ‘tank’ in *Men in the Sun*, does not only represent the ‘mute’ death of the refugee inside the camp, but also the ‘ghettoized’ life of the refugee.

Israel was declared by Balfour in 1917 a nation-state that would be a homeland for the Jewish nation. For Joseph Massad, this means ‘Israel was declared the state of Jews worldwide and not of its citizens’ (318); an exclusive nation in which the Palestinians suffer from exclusive inclusion, meaning they are absent in spite of their presence. In his essay, ‘Irony and the Poetics of Palestinian Exile’, Ibrahim Muhawi writes that ‘an exile by definition lives in a state of existential irony, where the lived present is characterized by a longing for an absent meaning’ (Muhawi 32). This ‘absent-

present-alien' state means that the Palestinians are not a 'people' but a 'minority'. Writing on his ambiguous status in the country, Darwish describes this state of affairs: 'Here, I'm not a citizen, and I'm not a resident. Then where, and who am I?' Later in the same passage, he asks, 'Am I here, or am I absent? Give me an expert in philosophy so that I can prove to him I exist' (*Diaries* 94).

In his study on refugee camps: *Homo Sacer* (1998), Giorgio Agamben argues that refugees are legally excluded by the hands of law: '*The originary relation of law to life is not application but Abandonment. The matchless potentiality of the nomos, its originary 'force of law', is that it holds life in its ban by abandoning it*' (Agamben 29). The barbed wires of the camp, or recently, the concrete Wall and their potential negative impact on the lives of the Palestinians inside their own country has been extended to include all the borders of nation-states, thereby rendering the 'state of exception' in the life of the dispossessed both an internal and external experience. 'Both walls and fences divide and distinguish. They mark a binary distinction. What all terms for the Wall have in common is the acceptance and entrenchment of difference. This fundamental structure of Othering is basic to European modernity and, within that, to the modern political organisation of the state' (Jon Straton 'Separation Anxiety: Zionism, Colonialism, Messianism' paragraph 11). Exclusive inclusion as Attridge puts it, the silencing of the imperialist's other 'is not just silencing by exclusion, it is a silencing by inclusion as well: any voice we hear is by that very fact purged of its uniqueness and identity' (181). The last scene articulates a reaction to the memory of pain that cannot be explained by modern reason, nor categorised as rational or irrational.

The figure of the stateless refugee in relation to necropolitics is central to much of Kanafani's fiction. In 'Death of Bed Number 12', Kanafani speculates on the

individual's life worth within a larger context. The narrator is a patient in a hospital witnessing the death of a young man. The story unfolds as we read letters from the unnamed narrator to his friend Ahmad. In his letters, the narrator creates a fantasy background about the twenty five year old man who the nurses identify as 'bed number 12'. The facts about the young man are fragmented, but the narrator sketches his life from the bits and pieces of information known about him from the hospital records and creates an imaginary life, a memory.

Mainly, two things interest the narrator about this young man, that he clings to a small black box he keeps by his side, and that he insists he is summoned by his full name, Mohammed Ali Akbar. The true story of the patient is revealed to the reader towards the end of the story, once the nurses declare that 'bed number 12 has died'. (Kanafani 30) The black box of Mohammed Ali Akbar is finally opened, and his true story known; that he is not stateless, he has a family and a home, and that he is in Kuwait for a job. The symbolic meaning of the story revolves around bare life and nameless death, how a human being is reduced to a figure whence his true identity is sealed in that box (camp). The stateless, living as a 'bare life' and dying as a figure is a constituent of the politicized subject, in Agamben words, a 'bare life, which dwells in the no-man's land between the home and the city—is, from the point of view of sovereignty, the originary political element' (*Homo Sacer* 90). The refugee is the embodiment of incomplete humanity 'neither completely dead as subject, nor completely alive' (Agier 65), 'living an indefinite life' (Agier 62) in 'worldless spaces'. However, in their attempt to break the existential siege imposed upon them, the three men in *Men in the Sun* represented the will to resist all attempts of reducing them to a

human crisis; of containing them in political quarantines (camps) and isolating them from the rest of humanity. Their passive, wordless death was a sign of resistance.

While states dwell on the margins of the refugee camp, keeping themselves ‘at a distance and voluntarily ‘ghettoizing’ themselves’ (as the concrete Wall could ironically be seen) (Agier 40-41), creating their own ‘bio-segregation anterior to any thought of the other’ (Agier 60), the three men in *Men in the Sun* are thrown in the dumpster for hope they be found and buried properly. The complicity of the world in the suffering of the refugee, make nation-states, in Devenney’s words, ‘willing participants in social murder’ (paragraph 7). Likewise, state humanitarians, being outside the borders of besieged camps, carry the mission of ‘exclusion on a planetary scale’ (Agier 60). States hurry to help by handing the witness a shovel to bury both the witness’s story and their shame. Preferring paralysis, as Agier puts it, to extracting the splinters from the veins of wounded humanity—lest the bleeding flow uncontrollably. From outside the barbed wires of the refugee camp, we (non-refugees) are all in the tank still. It is all that’s left to us. Meanwhile, refugees are left to live ‘the bulk of [their] death heaped there. Pounding. Pounding. Pounding’ (50).

While *Men in the Sun* reflects a state of dispersal in which the story horizon is death and concludes with an open-ended history that ‘allows for the critical question “Why didn’t they knock?” and solicit self-critical answers to it’ (Harlow 57), *All That’s Left to You* represents ‘hope that emanates from death which is in itself a part of life’ (Harb 66). Everything in all that’s left to you is getting ready for a rebirth; everything is throbbing. Hamid and Maryam live in a refugee camp in Gaza. Their mother was left behind in Jaffa because there was no room for her on the boat after the events of 1948. She fled from there to Jordan where she now lives few hours away from her family. The

state of passiveness and inactivity in *Men in the Sun*, has been transformed into fertility and union between bodies and landscape.

In *All That's Left To You*, we have an internal structure of death and rebirth and an external political one. In the introduction to the novel, Roger Allen writes that 'the emotional power of Ghassan Kanafani', lies in his 'encapsulating the continuing misery of his people' (Allen xxv). In *All That's Left To You*, Kanafani narrates the story 'in a single burst' (Kanafani xxi). Actions occur simultaneously, having no distinction between time and place and times between speaking subjects. Kanafani arranges the events of the novel by 'internal association rather than by chronology' (Harb 69), using 'emotional relations' (Zalman *Nation* 50) between the characters in the novel to explore their political connotations. Kanafani as Zalman explains articulates the theme of Return by engendering emotional relations that flow carrying 'an intensified political meaning' (Zalman *Nation* 50). Similar to the memory of his mother, Palestine, for Hamid, 'exists in exile as a signifier whose signified does not match its shape or magnitude' (Muhawi 31); as a dream that 'seems to be endlessly postponed' (Muhawi 31). In *All That's Left To You*, Kanafani politicizes the myth of death and rebirth in Hamid's search for his mother to arrive at a new consciousness of becoming (Harb 77).

In *All That's Left To You*, Kanafani describes the camp as a worldless alleyway, a space between worlds: 'Your long journey will end, finally, in that total banality. An alleyway! Everything you'd always hoped [...] be yours will pass you by without leaving so much as a trace' (Kanafani *All* 33). Similar to the 'unmarked spaces' in Walcott, the camp is another extension of the desert, in the sense that it is impossible to inscribe or leave a trace on its surface. Agier writes on this:

[T]he refugee camp is constructed, in its very principle, as an authentic ‘desert’, [...] The common space between refugees, their ‘world’, is not desired or foreseen. In its place there is just an empty space, and so it remains, despite the recommencement of life that is attempted within it. [...] Nothing can ever be totally achieved in such contexts, [...] quarantine being their very horizon. (Agier 39-40)

Palestinian refugee camps are inhabited by ‘subcommunities’ who are united by familial ties which at times go back to before 1948. These communities have their social codes and norms, which could be both helping and restricting the life of the refugees. Refugees need this sense of belonging to the collective, yet any attempt at breaking through the confining social codes could result in an isolation imposed on them by the community of the camp (Lamis Abu Nahleh 151). Hence we can see that, although the life of the refugee is governed by displacement and movement, it also has characteristics of the sedentary. In his essay ‘The Camp as Nomos of the Modern’ (1997), Agamben tells us: ‘The camp is the space which is opened when the state of exception becomes the rule. In the camp, the state of exception [...] is now given a permanent spatial arrangement, which as such nevertheless remains outside the normal order’ (Agamben 108), thus the camp can be thought of, Agamben continues, as a ‘dislocating localization’ (Agamben 113-4). By living in a kind of community, refugees affect a transformation of space in the camp. However, the life in the camp keeps moving between the transitory and the sedentary and the psyche of the refugee remains in a state of displacement regardless of the camp being turned into what Agier sees as ‘a kind of town [...]’ (Agier 57).

The social confinement in the camp mirrors the choking existence of the refugee, whose life's plan are endlessly deferred. Thus the camp, designed to protect the refugees, turns into a prison where there is no space for initiating new beginnings. Time is measured by the events and experiences in the life of refugees. In this worldless space, extracted from the context of the outer world, the refugees are 'separated from its context, and which having as it were survived death, has become incompatible with the human world' (Agamben qtd. in Agier 62). Hamid has no intimate relation with women. He is in the camp *waiting*. Time is frozen both in the camp and in the life of refugees. In the camp, all desires should remain encrypted for as Hamid recalls, his father had always said 'there will be no licit expressions of desire until national cause is decided' (Kanafani 35). The life in this 'dislocating localization' makes the refugee live in a state of waiting having unthinkable duration, it is 'bitter wait, and there'll be no end to it' (Kanafani 20). Hamid's sexual immaturity also indicates that his subjectivity is still on the making. Hamid—similar to a child desiring his mother—his subjectivity is undefined still and waiting to be fulfilled in the pursuit of the mother and the reunion with the landscape.

The metaphor of the desert is used by Kanafani to shift the focalisation and radical temporal features in the life of the refugees and as an archaic symbol of temporality affecting the structure and content throughout the novella. Kanafani attempts to show the refugees' consciousness of time as Hamid takes off his watch in the desert, and leaves it behind, Kanafani writes: '*It wasn't long before the watch went crazy. Abandoned in its exile, it went on ticking to itself, building up that impenetrable barrier that madmen erect between themselves and the world*' (Kanafani 21). Through a reconfiguration of the experience of the refugee, a new political moment emerges. In *All*

That's Left To You, Kanafani is retelling and re-establishing chronology 'to confute the sense of time and temporality' and allow literature to become an active participant in the process of writing history, 'so that people would say [...] it happened a month after the day of the massacre' (Kanafani 16). The story in *All That's Left To You* keeps moving between the transitory and sedentary, the sedentary being one of empty waiting as 'the ticking of the clock relentlessly receded' (21). The camp represents, David Farrier tells us, a 'permanent space dedicated to the impermanence of its inhabitants [...]' (Farrier 411). The space of the camp remains one of spatial emptiness, in spite of the subcommunities recommencing life within it. There is nothing left for the refugee, but a 'motionless voyaging in place', both 'nomadic and rhizomatic without anchorage' (Pile and Thrift, 235).

In *All That's Left To You*, Maryam and Hamid's desires remain inside the circle of the family for years. This could be read as experiencing desire within the roof of a safe zone (family), but also as a mere reflection of the camp as enacting a form of social seige in the life of the dispossessed. Kanafani draws Maryam's body as a reflection of the camp life. Losing her sense of the whole, Maryam is a beauty in distress. Vulnerable; yet enduring:

It was then that my wayward breasts would erupt and my hands, unaware, would slide down to my thighs. There wasn't a single large mirror in the house in which I could look at all my body at once. All I could see was my face. When I moved the mirror, the images of my breasts, my belly, my thighs, would appear as a series of disconnected parts belonging to the disembodied figures of a girl. (*All* 11)

The vocalization of desire in *All That's Left To You*, through Hamid's for his mother, and Maryam's towards Hamid (her brother) have their apolitical implications. Against the siege; against the nation state; against the social norm: 'I stripped away thirty five years of my life piece by piece and year by year' (Kanafani, *All* 12). Yet on the part of Maryam, even when she breaks social codes (her affair with Zakaria), she has sex with him inside her brother's bed, an indication perhaps of her partial separation from the restrictions inflicted upon her by these social codes. Maryam can neither fully exceed the physical boundaries of the camp, nor the social boundaries of the community in the camp.

When Hamid finally leaves in search for his mother, Maryam stays in the camp, 'listening behind the door with the child growing all the while in her womb' (Kanafani, *All* 4) to that mysterious pounding mounting from inside the earth informing her of Hamid's steps, as 'all traces of him wiped out, except for the incessant monotony of metallic strokes beating on the wall' (Kanafani, *All* 8). Nevertheless, desire remains a productive force in *All That's Left To You*, and sexual fertility symbolized by Maryam and the desert, is emphasized throughout the novel. The concept of fertility in *All That's Left To You* opposes the sterility in *Men in the Sun* in the union with the earth and the descent to the unconscious. It is '[p]utting the human body in direct relationship with the politics of space' (Agier 32). Hamid plants his fingers in the earth's flesh and presses himself against the ground as hard as he can:

He flung himself to the ground and felt it like a virgin quiver beneath him
[...] Instinctively, he flattened himself into the sand and felt its soft warmth

rise to meet him[...] it seemed to him that the earth was breathing directly into his face, its excited breath burning his cheek. He pressed his mouth and nose against it and the mysterious pounding mounted [...] He turned and brushed his lips against the warm sand. (Kanafani, *All* 6)

In both *Men in the Sun* and *All That's Left To You*, intimacy with the landscape is a wounding proximity. It is the coming together that draws a part, marking a traumatised existence. The violent landscape inscribes itself upon the bodies of those who come into contact with it, making it impossible for Hamid to leave a trace on the face of the desert. Hamid says:

There isn't a steel blade in the world which wouldn't be shattered if it were to graze your naked yellow breast [...] mine and theirs [...] All the steel blades of the world could never hack down one roof of your surface, but would shatter, one after the other, in the face of your firm harvest which grows bigger and bigger as a man strides farther and farther into your depth, step-by-step until he himself turns into a nameless, deep-rooted stem that thrives erect on your juices. (Kanafani, *All* 14)

Love of the land has become one of the major motivations of *sumud* (persistence/endurance) for the Palestinians both within the occupied territories and in Diaspora. Turki says: 'Land-landhood [...] had both stylized and given the Palestinians their graphic, acoustic, and tactile, as well as symbolic, linguistic, cultural, and social

mechanisms of communication with the universe. The memory of it would take as many generations to dispel as it had taken to create' ('Meaning in Palestinian History' 377).

The infinity of the desert inside and outside the self and the camp is still a limitation. Moving from the desert of the camp to the amnesiac one; the faceless landscape, not in the sense of loss of memory but as an expansive memory of loss, waiting to be written on the face of sand. Hamid, similar to 'the child pressing against the walls of [Maryam's] womb' (Kanafani 2), delimits his body, yet, traumatising memories are constantly chasing his desire for forgetfulness, resembling, as Kanafani depicts it, shadows which become taller and taller the farther we distance ourselves from the centre. In *All That's Left To You*, the camp is a transit, a bridge to lost sites, a throb of silence, a foetus beating in the uterus: 'Beating, beating insistently, inside that wooden bier opposite the bed' (6) Is the new life inside of Maryam a fertilization of memory? A continuity of the violation of the land? A promise of remembrance?

In what follows, I shall try to explore a central issue of the Palestinian experience in general and the Palestinian refugee specifically—identity defined by deferral—by attempting to examine how Kanafani, through Hamid, suggests a movement from the permanent siege of the camp to the fluidity of the desert as an attempt to alter the perception of the camp from a prison into a bridge. Of interest to me here is to explore answers to the following questions: How *to bridge* and cross the distance between memory and self? How to bridge the gap between subjectivity and existence? How to stitch the wounds of hyphenated subjectivities (absent-present; excluded-included) that are the consequences of segregation? Is it possible to achieve subjectivity prior to existence? And how to overcome the fragility of locality?

The landscape, the camp and the subject, all, are catastrophe sites, as Farrier, in his article 'The other is the neighbour' explains: 'The camp is not a location or a concept confined to its historical referents; rather, it is the ultimate expression of biopolitical space' and 'the materialisation of bare life' (Farrier 405-406). In *All That's Left To You*, Kanafani depicts the lives of Hamid and Maryam as a repetitive cycle of 'parenthesised trauma' (Zalman 68). All that's left for them in the camp are human leftovers, which are, as I discussed briefly in *Men in the Sun*, the only right, given to the refugees that enjoys a universal consensus. I would like, here, to discuss this in the light of Zygmunt Bauman's book *Wasted Lives* (2004), in which Bauman argues that refugees are perceived as 'waste humanity' of the postmodern world, and are therefore treated much like domestic waste and rezoned in the current dumpster of humanity (camps). In the same way the three men in *Men in the Sun* ended in the dumpster at the borders dead, Hamid and Maryam both feel, while still alive both excluded and included inside their country, living in the twilight zone between life and death. These forms of necropolitical power, as Achille Mbembe sees it in the Palestinian situation, creates 'death worlds, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of the *living dead*' (Mbembe 40).

The nation-state defines refugees as disposable human beings, 'sealed off in tightly closed containers' (Bauman 85); in 'new ghettos' (Bauman 81). Bauman explains how this state of exclusion and inclusion of the refugees causes them to 'embody- visibly, tangibly, in the flesh- the inarticulate yet hurtful and painful presentiment of their own disposability' (56). This feeling of 'disposability' on the side of the refugee, results in a feeling of insecurity, the same feeling that leads Maryam to succumb to Zakariah's seduction, who would still treat her as a human waste and marry her only to

hide their 'dark and shameful secret of all production' (Bauman 27). Even Zakariah's constant effort to convince Maryam of aborting her baby, could be seen in the light of Bauman's views, as the baby is also considered to be disposable in such miserable human circumstances. The treatment of the refugees as human waste has left its shadows on the state of the camp, where everything is characterized by disorder and chaos.

Indeed, the colonial achievement has been judged in terms of the magnitude of space acquired, and, as secondary concerns, the subsequent productivity and political stability of this space. The territory's status as a mapped and finite locale is integral to the definition of a colony not only a community of settlers, but also 'the territory' occupied by that community. Settler town means that the imperial population exists within a highly specific spatialised locale. Space boundaries are fixed. The colonialists' right to territory is stressed in the authority they give to their territorialisation of space. Homi Bhabha argues that the colonial discourse's 'predominant strategic function is the creation of a space for a 'subject peoples' through the production of knowledges in terms of which surveillance is exercised' (Bhabha, 'Other' 154).

In *Returning to Haifa* (1968), we have a married couple returning to Haifa after June 1967 for a one day visit to their house in order to search for their son whom they have lost amidst the chaos of the defeat of 1948, when the British authorities, in collaboration with the Jewish terrorist organization the Haganah cleared civilians out of Haifa into other shores. Returning to confront their loss, they find that Haifa remains as topography placed on the map, but the memory of it is obliterated by the expulsion of its people and the remapping of the city. Said tells his wife: 'I know it, this is Haifa, but it doesn't know me' (100). The couple turn to find their city claimed by people from all around the globe and their son adopted by a Jewish Polish family that took over their

house. Their son, Dov, who now serves in the Israeli army, refuses to accept his natural parents. Even the memory of the one place left (their house and their son) is taken away; nothing is left to Said and his wife but a feeling of bitter loss. Said's first impression of Haifa is that the city has not changed much, as the dialogue between him and his wife shows: 'We could have made it better'. Said goes on in his state of denial: 'Why do you think the Israelis let us now visit Haifa?' Because they are humane? No. This is part of the war. They want to tell us: Please come in and see for yourselves how we are more civilized than you are. You must accept to become our servants, to admire us. But you saw for yourself. Nothing had changed in Haifa. We could have made it much better' (Kanafani 344). Yet, in a moment of bitter awareness Said tells his wife: 'I am searching for the true Palestine which is more than a memory, more than a child. I am searching beneath the rubble. But look what I found, nothing but more rubble'. (Kanafani 411-12)

Territory, in *Returning To Haifa*, is read by the occupation as text, it is erased and rewritten anew. Nevertheless, traces of the original text, the city of Haifa prior to the occupation, remain a witness to the process of new order that has taken place. This could also be seen as a transition of text into another language, where the new text could never be the original except and only holds a trace of it. Deconstructive theory is helpful in the postcolonial reading of territory. Here we have a deterritorialisation of the city of Haifa and a reterritorialization of it which still bears witness to the new reality layered over the old. The silences in the site of place bears resemblance to the silences and gaps in the text, it is a trace of the unrepresented but which reality is undeniable.

The notion that these two zones (settler and colonial) 'follow the principle of reciprocal exclusivity' (Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* 39), is very applicable to the situation in the Gaza strip. For even after the Israeli settlers' evacuation from Gaza,

colonial rule remains and the strip is further ‘ghettoized’ till this very day, to become a real manifestation of the human container. As Lorenzo Veracini, in his essay ‘Settler Colonialism and Decolonisation’ explains:

[I]n the Gaza Strip (evacuated of Israeli settlers, but not yet of colonial control), the decolonisation of territory is not matched, even symbolically, by an attempt to build decolonised relationships. Indeed, settler departure conceptually mirrors and reinforces settler colonialism's inherent exclusivism, and confirms a ‘winner takes all’ settler colonial frame of mind that demands that settler sovereignties entirely replace Indigenous ones (or vice versa). (Paragraph 12)

Veracini concludes his essay by stating that ‘decolonising territory’ is easier than ‘decolonizing relationships’ (Veracini paragraph 30). These choking circumstances in the colonial town or the refugee camp are burdened not only by envisaged waste, but essentially by the accumulated waste of bruised memory, the main reason behind the state of chaos and violence rampant in refugee camps and colonial towns. We have seen in the chapter on Harris how colonial memory—this cluttering of past traumas—leads to genocide in Harris’ *Jonestown*, and how the colonial subject internalizes his pain and relives it in various manifestations of violence, rape or suicide. For this reason, I find it unjust to put ‘settler’ and ‘colonial’ towns into comparison, which is in itself a perpetuation of colonial prejudice. To compare to the *presumed* ideal of handling ‘space’. For how could a comparison be made between settlements of desire and

pleasure (the settler's) and those settlements of obligatory or even voluntary dispossession (as is the case in *Jonestown*) in refugee camps and colonial towns?

In his short story *Garbage* (1999), Mohammed al-Irani, a Palestinian writer, tells the story of a garbage collector. The story is narrated by one of the neighbours, who observes the behaviour of the garbage collector as he comes every day to take the bin, only to start his meticulous search for leftovers. The whole story revolves around the act of collecting. The narrator is irritated by the piercing eyes of the garbage collector, which seems to penetrate his soul, evoking inexplicable feelings of guilt. As the story unfolds, we learn the narrator's unrest towards the scavenger is linked to buried memories he (the scavenger) has awakened inside of him by his consistent search in the clutter of waste. The garbage collector thus instigates memory through his eyes, which, I believe, is symbolic of geopolitical gaze.

In her book, *Purity and Exile*, (1995a) Malkki tells us that there is a certain process the refugee goes through in order to attain a certain authenticity of 'refugeeness'. By this, Malkki means the image the refugee should attain in order to be defined as a refugee; a helpless, speechless victim (223). This imposes a certain amount of vulnerability on the refugee who is now expected to submit to his reality in the camp; 'living in a dead zone.' Kanafani resists this stereotypical perception of the refugee through his characters in *Men in the Sun* and *All That's Left To You*.

The vulnerability of the refugees in *Men in the Sun*—and in spite of their attempted resistance to their destiny—leads to their destruction. However, in *All That's Left To You*, Kanafani suggests that this same vulnerability of the dispossessed is throbbing and enduring, as he works to transform the image of the refugee from the mute victim in *Men in the Sun* to that of historical actor. In *All That's Left To You*, the

exterior of the novel; the limitation of 'bare life', is not brought to the interior of the text. Everything is throbbing. Something new is on its way to the height. And inside the suffocating tank of *Men in the Sun* there, in *All That's Left To You*, is a silent promise growing:

suddenly, it began throbbing in my womb: a slight movement that flowed through my body for the first time in some recess, unknown and infinite. That small stirring was like the tremor of a bird imprisoned within hands serenely closed'. (30)

Hamid and Maryam, both in their own way, resist the attempts at homogenizing the image of the refugee as either the speechless victim or as the manipulative and threatening individuals—to the nation-state—whose movement must be strictly monitored. Both are also resistant to the negligence of their human potential. Hamid does not accept labels, he breaks the siege of the camp regardless of the danger he throws himself into by changing the image of 'refugeeness'.

In *All That's Left To You*, the moment of breaking the siege of circular time in the camp, for Hamid, was the moment of opening up to possibilities. Unlike the three men in *Men in the Sun*, Hamid's journey is not a move away from the centre; it is not an escape from it; rather, it is a going back to the site of loss. For '*It wasn't time that he really raced against, but his own loss*' (Kanafani 12). The men in *Men in the Sun*, were trying to escape the memory of loss, but it had followed them; Hamid, to the contrary is now heading towards memory embodied by the mother. Hamid's mother is 'a distance no one in sixteen years had succeeded in crossing' (Kanafani 3). The consciousness of

exile in *All That's Left To You*, is this intense awareness of absence; the existential irony for the refugee, 'where the lived present is characterized by a longing for an absent meaning' (Zalman *Nation* 31). Here, the political theme of return is expressed in the voice of a lover yearning for his beloved. The passion for return to the mother in *All*, comes as a result of a moment of intense awareness, through which a sense of being long hindered by deracination is finally recuperated as Hamid is 'anchored to his home in Gaza by a ball of thread. For sixteen years they'd enveloped him with these constricting strands and now he was unravelling the ball, letting himself roll into the night' (2). The thread connecting Hamid to Gaza is an expansion of consciousness as opposed to the contraction of the body in the camp. Yet at the same time, Hamid's journey, as Zalman tells us, is 'far from being a step outside of this cycle, it is a step into it' (Zalman 70).

Hamid was heading towards memory of loss and deracination. By distancing himself to only come closer to his being, Hamid was deterritorializing himself by renouncing, by going elsewhere. Thirsty for a freedom defined by its opposite, that is its lack, Hamid breaks the siege of the camp and its frozen time and de-limits his body. Pile and Thrift quote Massumi explaining how de-limiting choked bodies are inevitable for the process of becoming:

Molarity is a mode of desire, as is any move away from it [...] It is a matter of force: it is a categorical overlay, an overpowering imposition of regularized effect. Because it constricts actions into a limited dynamic range, it is inevitable that it will be experienced by the overcoded body as a physical constraint. Becoming begins as a desire to escape bodily limitation. (qtd. in Pile and Thrift 212)

Massumi's view on molarity is similar to Deleuze's as the latter believes that the process of becoming is in its essence a transitory experience (*A Thousand Plateaus* 238). Hamid's distancing from Gaza is a separation binding him to memory. He pursues his extension as a human being going against the limitation of 'bare life', through 'a new imagination of dismemberment; a dream of being *everywhere*' (Pile and Thrift 212), to reunite with the landscape. Writing of place involves a relation to bodies, for '[b]odies are the places of existence' (Jean-Luc qtd. in Sacks 16). A distance opens up between the text and limited bodies, reaching across the distance; one is left in the impossible place or out-of-place that remains. 'The force of separation'. of de-limiting the body, is 'a separation that binds' (Sacks, 'Language Places' 241). The night journey to the mother is a displacement that is inscribed through intimacy 'into the fragmented pieces which bind and cut to form' (Sacks 257). Deleuze writes: 'The body is no longer the obstacle that separates thought from itself that which it has to overcome to reach thinking. It is on the contrary that which it plunges into, in order to reach the unthought, that is life' (Deleuze 189). By inscribing the wound upon the body of the text, Kanafani is presenting the story as a 'formula' (Ranciere, *The Flesh of Words* 155); as performance. Hamid is in a Deleuzian sense, is an 'emblem of becoming', within which the writer condenses 'as in a coat of arms, all the qualities of the work' (Ranciere 156).

It is important here to draw a distinction between Hamid and Philoctete in *Omeros*. It seems to me that Walcott has meant to make of Philoctete a representative of the suffering of the postcolonial subject. Philoctetes's wound encapsulates centuries of colonial oppression. In Kanafani, however, Hamid is an emblem of becoming, he is the

individual fluid body *choosing* to delimit itself and resist the seige. Hamid is connected to his nation, yet he represents a promise of a new subject.

Hamid, as a stateless human being, represents what Agamben calls the ‘whatever-being’, the figure of the politicized subject, who will be the first figure of the ‘Coming Community’ (Agamben, *The Coming Community* 107). And in a Deleuzian sense, he is the differentiated subject, who embodies difference not *from* the state, but *by* the codes and norms inflicted upon him by the state. Agamben defines the politicized subject as a ‘state of exception’, where ‘an exception is what cannot be included in the whole of which it is a member and cannot be a member of the whole in which it is always already excluded’ (Agamben, *Homo Sacer* 25). This state of existential deferral causes the emergence of a new subject naming this difference. In his journey towards his mother, Hamid is the ‘monadic nomad’, the BWO (body without organs); a ‘full body *to come*; it endures without even existing *as such*’ (Pile and Thrift 212). The political subject is deterritorialized without limitations, a being that is always on the lines of flight. (Deleuze, 1994; 1992) For Agamben, such a being is demonstrated most eloquently in the figure of the refugee, who is ‘perhaps the only thinkable figure for the people of our time [...] in which one may see [...] the forms and limits of a coming political community’ (*Means without End* 16). Agamben explains:

the constitution of the human species into a body politic comes into being through a fundamental split and that in the concept of *people* we can easily recognize the conceptual pair identified earlier as the defining category of the original political structure: naked life (*people*) and political existence (*People*), exclusion and inclusion, *zoe* and *bios*. Hence the contradictions

and aporias that such a concept creates every time that it is invoked and brought into play on the political stage. It is what always already is, as well as what has yet to be realized; it is the pure source of identity and yet it has to redefine and purify itself continuously according to exclusion, language, blood, and territory. (32)

In his novelty, the 'whatever being' is an orphan subject, nothing comes before it. The same can be said of the 'coming community' of 'whatever beings' of orphans. Perhaps this is the reason Hamid and Maryam are orphans. They both are ruptured from the past. The text itself could be seen as an orphan text, as its language holds the promise of the emergence of a new political (or biopolitical?) literary text and its rupture from its precedent. The orphan text holds 'the promise of a people to come. This political stake is inscribed in the very project of literature' (Ranciere 157). Connected by a ball of thread to his homeland, Hamid is not only tracing memory, he is also mapping a promise of a new awareness. Deleuze and Guittari write about mapping:

What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented towards experimentation in contact with the real. The map does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself; it constructs the unconscious [...] The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. (*A Thousand Plateaus* 12)

For Harris, the mapping and naming of space is an act of colonial ordering. He states that while ‘it is inevitable to submit to one name or frame [...] in doing so cultures begin to imprison themselves’ (Harris, *Jonestown* 9), unaware of the previous obscured names and languages that remain as powerful traces. Similarly, for Joseph Massad, ‘the very naming of this space is, in fact, a process of historicizing it [...] as temporalizing and, ultimately, as asserting power as colonial domination or anticolonial resistance’ (‘The “Post-Colonial” Colony’ 312).

Similar to the men in *Men in the Sun*, Hamid never reaches his destination; the route is diverted as Hamid ‘once again took a false path, heading in a straight line towards the South’ (Kanafani 12). This new direction brings Hamid face to face with an Israeli soldier who has lost his way in the desert. In the final act in *All That’s Left To You* Kanafani is setting the compass right for the refugees to confront their loss. Hamid, after a long struggle with his fears, succeeds in finally confronting and disarming the soldier. The collective voice is heard towards the end of the novel as Hamid decides to head back home. Kanafani seems to suggest, I think, that the individualism, which has killed the three men in *Men in the Sun*, dissolves into a more progressive collective consciousness in *All That’s Left To You*.

Fanon writes that ‘in certain emotional conditions the presence of an obstacle accentuates the tendency toward motion’ (Fanon 53). The word *Jaffa*, is the only word Hamid could understand in the soldier’s identity card, the city Hamid and his family were dispossessed from in 1948 (Kanafani 46). Thus, Jaffa instigates an emotional response. Other than this word (Jaffa), there is nothing but silence between Hamid and the Israeli soldier. In *The Flesh of Words*, Jacques Ranciere writes that the new language of literature is characterized by its rupture from all hierarchical representations, he says

that 'where there is no longer an external law, there is an inner law [...] it is the pure power of language, when it turns away from its representational and communicative use, to turn towards its own being' (Ranciere 148). Ranciere contends that this new language works by 'creating another language within language [...] carrying language to the limits of silence and music' (Ranciere 156). Silence is a new language Kanafani deploys in the final scene of *All That's Left To You*. It is the language of the camp, of confined lives and torn tongues, it is the language of siege and of 'bio-segregation' rendering any kind of human communication, impossible. This is the language of the new literature, born from within the state of siege.

Because colonialists inflict oppression, exploitation, and terror, while at the same time 'ghettoizing' the native, settler colonialism, is its own destruction, in the sense that it keeps accumulating a counter inner force inside the natives, a force that will sooner or later turn back on its source. Fanon tells us: 'His [the colonizer] preoccupation with security makes him remind the native out loud that there he alone is master. The settler keeps alive in the native an anger which he deprives of outlet; the native is trapped in the tight links of the chains of colonialism' (Fanon 53-54). When confrontation takes place between Hamid and the soldier, it eliminates psychological fear. To wreck the colonial world is henceforward a mental picture of action. Decolonisation takes place, Fanon argues, suddenly '[w]ithout any period of transition, there is a total, complete, and absolute substitution' of the old (Fanon 35).

Here, decolonisation is both internal and external. It takes place inside Hamid as he decides to confront his loss, and externally as he handcuffs the soldier after disarming him. Fanon adds that this radical transformation 'which characterizes at the outset all decolonization' results 'in a whole social structure being changed from the bottom up'.

This radical transformation is, according to Fanon, 'willed, called for, demanded. The need for this change exists in its crude state, impetuous and compelling, in the consciousness and in the lives of the men and women who are colonized' (Fanon 36). Simultaneously, Maryam decides to keep her child (Hamid), and she kills Zakariah. Hence, the moment Hamid announces the death of his father is the moment when new life is given to the child in Maryam's womb. Maryam and Hamid enforce their will to survive by the end of the novel.

Confrontation breaks out of geography of entrapment, metamorphosing bodies, diminishing the distance between here and there, self and other. The movement from helplessness to enforcing will, this is the act of crossing in Kanafani; the formula of confrontation. Thus, time in the life of the refugee moves from 'death zone' to a new dimension of active movement. Decolonisation, Fanon tells us 'cannot come as a result of magical practices, or of a natural shock, or of a friendly understanding' (Fanon 36). The reason for this, Fanon adds, is that decolonisation 'which sets out to change the order of the world, is, obviously, a program of complete disorder' (Fanon 36). In *All That's Left To You* internal structure reinforces an external political one. Internal collapses resonate with the besieged testimonies of 'bruised populations'. Linking the two structures and breaking the linearity of telling by means of repetition of symbolic images, results in 'cumulative thematic implications' (Harb 77), leading to the rebirth of new consciousness in 'a single burst'. This, in a Deleuzian sense, is 'the power of deliaison that is itself united' (Ranciere 156). Kanafani's narrative, according to Harlow, offers 'a critical reintegration of the past at the same time as opening up interpretive possibilities affecting the historical determinations of the future' (54).

Possibilities in *All That's Left To You*, are not drawn from the infinity of the desert; not from the external, for even the external is chained by memories of loss; but rather from the internal constant collapses, from fragility itself, from the imperfections in the life of the dispossessed and from points along the way that are limited in their very fluidity. Ranciere argues that '[t]he new power of literature takes hold, [...], just where the mind becomes disorganized, where its world splits, where thought bursts into atoms that are in unity with atoms of matter' (Ranciere 149). Interchanging the implicit and the explicit in a conscious design, and shifting between location and voices, Kanafani's stories in both *Men in the Sun* and *All That's Left To You*, grow from one another to draft a literary palimpsest of unspeakable Palestinian stories.

In writing about refugee camps, texts are touched by the siege to which it addresses itself and words are under the pressure of limitation. Writing becomes a measurement of the distance between the text and the camp. It becomes both an act of resistance to the existential siege and a literary resistance of a text besieged by its borders. This is Kanafani's attempt at carrying on the literary 'formula'; the literary 'task of translating practice into the realm of written theory' (Darraj qtd. in Harlow 67). Kanafani declares this rupture of literature from the hierarchical system of representation and 'leads the casual world of representation, to its catastrophe' (Ranciere 147). Writing *as* the foetus in the womb of shame; *as* subject out of ruins, creates another language within language tying the internal and the external, the refugee and the exiled through the distance and across the border of the novel by a separation that binds.

In both *Men and the Sun* and *All That's Left To You*, body and land are 'the flesh of words', as they all echo one another and constantly intermingle throughout the novella in a reflexive way. Kanafani sheds the light on collective and interdependent

relations between body and space. But beyond this he also foresees a separate effect of narrative which occurs through the act, or performance, of story-telling itself, and how voice and space fuse and converge in the creation of a new collective awareness.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

Art, as we have said, is labour, living labour, and therefore invention of singularity, of singular figures and objects, linguistic expression, invention of signs. There, in this first movement are lodged *potenza* of the subject in action, the subject's capacity to deepen knowledge to the point of reinventing the world. But this expressive act only achieves beauty and the absolute when the signs and the language through which it expresses itself transform themselves into community, when they are embraced and contained within a common project. The beautiful in an invention of singularity which circulates and reveals itself as common in a multiplicity of subjects who participate in the construction of the world. The beautiful is not the act of imagining, but an imagination that has become action. Art, in this sense, is multitude'. (Negri, *Art & Multitude* xii)

The conclusion to my thesis remains an open process, since the topic of this project resists absolute definition, for all the three sites I have discussed, body, land and text are in a constant process of transformation. All I have done in this conclusion is an attempt to crystallize the argument in this thesis without giving a definitive concluding remarks of what the outcome of these three sites of becoming may be. The selection of literary narratives in my thesis has clearly shown that the preindividual or the politicized subject to become prefers the route to the destination and the journey to the fixed boundaries of

the nation-state. Moreover, these literary texts carry a strategic process of literary nomadism in which they deterritorialise the space of land and body only to reterritorialise it again by excluding the idea of borders and embodying the concept of the journey as a site of perpetual movement, of constant arrivals and departures that defy the idea of final destination.

The biopolitical literary text may be seen as a territory having its own borders and conventions. The writers I have examined engage in constant literary endeavours to cross the borders of the text as a site and to affect a 'becoming', which stems from the impossibility of representation and the unattainability of ethics. Hence, these texts could be thought of as 'sites of becoming' paving the way for the emergence of biopolitical fiction where fiction and body politics converge. The literary text as a site of becoming has been present throughout this thesis. I have argued that the space of the text is unable to represent physical violence acted upon the subjugated population, and that this very impossibility is what makes biopolitical fiction a possibility. Moreover, the reflexive relation between the site of the text and reality could entail that body and land may be read, inscribed, written and overwritten similar to a text.

In Wilson Harris, I have attempted to show how his cross-cultural, limbo writing helps him in transcending the linearity of the realist novel and the fixed boundaries of the nation-state. In Derek Walcott, I have examined the author's attempt at crossing the parallels with the Homeric text to launch the Caribbean epic of survival. In Mahmoud Darwish, I have tried to show how the poet encrypts desire and loss in his poetry and carries the image of home as words. In Ghassan Kanafani, I have explored the biopolitical text and its role in introducing the politicized subject.

As I have explained in detail in the introduction to this thesis, the fusion between postcolonial and poststructural theory is re-examined and re-read by many critics who see in it a helpful alliance and a natural outcome to the hybridity resulting from the cultural encounters between the former colonies and the colonial subjects. This fusion, I think, has introduced bio-political fiction, which I see as a *site of becoming* encapsulating the text as a territory and a body mirroring violent realities, though unable to fully represent it.

This conception of the book as body has been brought to attention by many critics. In *The Body Emblazoned* (1995), Jonathan Sawday sees the influence of the modern debate on the discursive order as mainly affected by the perspective that '[b]ooks were composed of parts that could be read and interpreted in the same way that bodies were made up of parts' (Sawday 136). Barthes argues that 'writing's truth is neither in its messages nor in the system of transmission which it constitutes for current meaning [...] but in the hand which presses down and traces a line i. e. in the body which throbs' (Barthes, *The Responsibility of Forms* 154). Merleau-Ponty believes that reading is an 'inter-human event', in which we interact intimately with the text while reading. He conceives of books as physical bodies; for him novels are physical beings 'in which the expression is indistinguishable from the thing expressed, their meaning, accessible only through direct contact, being radiated with no change of their temporal and spatial situation' (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* 151).

The text as body may be used in a way to evoke ethical response from the reader who interacts sensibly with the text as a physical site. From a Levinasian perspective, the text in its physical vulnerability could be viewed as the other that the reader is responsible for. Seen as body, the text activates the reader's creative imagination and

compels him to answer the call of the other. The authors in this study engage self consciously with the idea of violent pasts of dispossession and genocide in order to give voice to their people and rewrite history from the viewpoint of the subjugated people.

This Levinisian concept of answerability or ethical response is shown in my thesis as the authors evoke response from their readers, each in a different way. Harris embodies the colonizers' ideals in *Palace* to repossess the interior of Guyana and the body of Mariella the woman/land. Harris does so self consciously to provoke his readers and awaken them to the horror of colonisation. In Walcott's *Omeros*, Philoctete exposes his historical wound to the tourists to take pictures of him. Doing so subverts the idea the tourists have in mind about Saint Helen as a paradisiacal site and directs the readers' attention to the wounds of history. Mahmoud Darwish walks through the streets of Beirut and uses the limb metaphor to connect to the dead in war, to get response from his readers. Ghassan Kanafani engages the readers ethically through his question towards the end of the novel as why the three men in *Men In The Sun* died silently inside the tank instead of knocking on the walls of the tank?

This study investigates the possibility for literary expression in the case of extreme experience—in this case the Caribbean and Palestinian subjects—by exploring its layers of memory, exilic feelings of estrangement, identity and being. By putting these histories 'in conversation with one another' I hope to have, in Gilroy's words, strengthened 'our understanding of what modern racism is', as well as of its 'constitutive power as a factor of social division in the modern world' (Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic* 213). In his *Poetics of Relation*, Glissant explains how 'each and every identity is extended through a relationship with the Other' (11), he explains how by probing the pain to access other cultural experiences of trauma, the wound of past trauma caeses to

be exclusive, for ‘people do not live on exception. Relation is not made up of things that are foreign but of shared knowledge’ (8). Ethics in narratives enhance the feelings of responsibility towards the other. Hence, tragic events in history like the apartheid and genocides in Africa, the Holocaust, the Middle Passage and the brutal uprooting of millions from their ancestral homes, the British Mandate and later the settler colonies in Palestine become shared responsibility. The reader of these narratives ends up asking if this historical issue of the memory of slavery the matter of the black people only and if the Palestinian Question is the matter of the Palestinians and the Middle East only. Moreover, the reader would start wondering what link does the Western civilization have to these traumatic histories and how and who made these histories the ‘special property’ and concern of the people who suffered it ‘rather than a part of the ethical and intellectual heritage of the West as a whole’ (Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic* 49).

Art functions as a liberating force since it goes beyond and transcends trauma by allowing us to feel it in a different way. There is no alienating feeling from nature in the way art passes through and beyond time and space to re-explore the infinite. Palestinian and Caribbean literatures demand a re-construction and a re-creation of history, to be retold by a new consciousness. These two minor literatures are a clear response to traumatic memories, each in their distinct way, in hope of healing and redemption from the horrors of histories. Hence, mytho-historic narratives function, in a Deleuzian sense, as *exists* along the ‘lines of flight’ of history, offering new possibilities for *tracing* past in order to *map* future, and *map* the future in order to *claim* dispossessed collective identities.

Throughout this thesis, I argue that fiction and politics are interlinked and that any change in perception regarding the meaning of ‘nation’ will certainly reflect itself in recent texts. The new way of seeing the nation actually means that its relationship to the postcolonial authors is not built on anti-colonial values. In fact, it perceives of the form of the nation-state as a space that mimics the colonial in its ordering of territory and homogenization of difference. The reflexive relation between literature and the nation has been discussed in several works by Benedict Anderson where he states that any change in the meaning of nationalism must be mirrored in literary writings (2006). From this point, I contend that the absence of nationalistic discourse in post colonialist fiction is strongly indicative of a shift in the meaning of nation that it is no longer the locus of political attention. Moreover, Anderson’s perception may be helpful in appreciating the crucial role literature plays in the making of nations.

Postcolonial writers speak of the need for the construction of beings that reaches beyond the national by criticizing the current national and ethnic identities in colonial discourse and by attempting to go beyond this logic to investigate new ways for re-imagining being in its relation to memory. This allows these writers to move away from the national defensive discourse which attests the insecurities of the postcolonial subject, into a more cross-cultural and transnational comprehension of colonial histories. From here stems the urgent need to challenge the discourse of centrality and marginality which continues to be the dominant structure of the current postcolonial discourse in Western academia. The binary terms used in postcolonial theory such as: coloniser/colonised, First World/ Third World, centre and peripheries are implicitly stating that ‘the nation-state as the unit of political organization globally was taken for granted’ (Dirlik, *The Postcolonial Aura* 502). These endeavours to re-write the collective memory is a

‘permission to narrate’ alternative histories of silenced and excluded narratives. These writings can be a form of collective ‘power of expression that can be shared’ (Hardt 243).

While Hardt and Negri concede that postcolonial theory may be a useful tool for rereading history, they firmly believe that ‘it is entirely insufficient for theorizing contemporary global power [...] Empire is not a weak echo of modern imperialisms but a fundamentally new form of rule’ (146). To continue to use postcolonial theory, they argue, is to work under the illusion that the new oppressions work in the same way as the old, colonial oppressions. It is in this sense that they speak of postcolonial theory as a symptom of passage, from the old colonial regimes to the new regimes of Empire.

Hardt and Negri’s concept of the power of the ‘multitude’, in this case through writing, to form ‘strategic alliances’ between nations, and suggest ‘interdependency’ as an alternative to the dominating ‘dependency’ theory also in literature, where, in my opinion, minor literatures should be introduced into the postcolonial field. The concept of the multitude may be a very disruptive functioning to dislocate the discourses tending to keep or preserve the cultural hegemony of eclipsed empires, mainly those focused on talking back to the centre or looking at minor literature through a comparative/contrastive study with major ones.

This should offer minor writings a new ‘constituent power of the multitude’ (410). The ‘multitude’, are the people from diverse and various background living in ‘perpetual motion’, living in a ‘perpetual nomadism’ (260-1). Colonial writers attempt to reconstruct a lost history from fragmentary sources in order to give an alternate historical discourse. The new constituent power, the power of the ‘multitude’ cannot be

unified or totalized in Hardt and Negri's opinion. They rather form a 'paradoxical unity composed only of differences,' creating a tapestry or arabesque of cultural forms.

The postcolonial writer has long been invoking Joyce's quotation that history is nothing but 'the nightmare from which I am trying to awake' (James Joyce, *Ulysses* Episode 2). Only through writing their wounds of history, can these writers take the postcolonial experience steps further to create from it the first draft of the story of a people-to-come and declare the emergence of a new postcolonial consciousness.

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