

GANZFELD OR THE ONTOLOGY OF ESCAPE IN
ROBERT KROETSCH'S *THE HORNBOOKS OF RITA K*¹

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Now the Sirens have a still more fatal weapon than their song, namely their silence. And though admittedly such a thing has never happened, still it is conceivable that someone might possibly have escaped from their singing; but from their silence certainly never (Kafka 1971: 431).

What happens to the concept of identity when it vanishes from the plane of the western dialectics? What happens to love when one of the lovers is gone? What happens to the poet when her need for writing turns into ink? What happens to God when we stop looking vertically? What happens to sound when it dissipates into silence? What happens to light when it is switched off? Or, to put it bluntly, “what remains of what does not remain?” (8).² There is something common to all these wonderings: “the question is always a question of trace” (8). At least this is what Raymond, an ambiguous, tricky and fully postmodern narrator, thinks as he tries to bring back to life the memory of the vanished poet, and his lover, Rita Kleinhart. This he tries by ordering and putting together her hornbooks, “neat stacks of scrawled notes, manuscripts, partially filled notebooks” (8), left at her ranch in the Canadian prairies. As we are told, “Kleinhart was invited, during the late spring of 1992, to visit Germany and lecture briefly to the Canadianists at Trier

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2. Robert Kroetsch (2001) *The Hornbooks of Rita K*.

University. On her way back from Trier she paid a visit to the Museum of Modern Art in Frankfurt and while at the museum mailed a number of postcards to friends. She was not seen alive thereafter" (8). Her sudden and unexpected disappearance into the artist James Turrell's light installation named "*Twilight Arch*" (37) triggers Raymond's labyrinthine trip towards the mystery of art, writing, death and life itself. Her act, in other words, compels Raymond to play a role of a "sleuth" (57), an archivist of the past that looms over the present, a "half technician to her sometimes obscured intention, half lover of the plain truth" (7).

But what is our narrator going to find? Where did the poet, his alleged lover, Rita, go? Why did she choose to disappear? We can never be sure, since the text never reaches a satisfying conclusion. Yet we imagine, experiment with the possibilities and directions that the text and Rita herself offer us. We can connect, we can map. We can enter the silence. Why not? As we follow the chaotic flow of Rita's fragments, and enter the *back doors* that Rita herself has left opened, we, as readers, become, with the narrator, witnesses of the unfolding of something outrageous, something that we can interpret as a new beginning, a will of becoming. Far away from the tyranny of the language and the western system of thought based on the logic of dialectics, and in turn on its eternal displacing, Rita's traces point to new and unforeseen dimensions, to the birth of invisible architectures, spaces not yet populated, a stranger with a knife who knocks on our *back door*. Knock, knock. The discovery implies violence, the re-rooting of the plant. But still, these places remain unreachable if we rely on words, which are as Rita told once Raymond "lock, not a key" (33).

We cannot give clear answers because that which has not been experienced yet cannot be seized or defined. But have we forgotten, in these days of the advanced postmodern era, the grammar of our past, "the bones of the saints" (4) that *one* has been obliged to visit for so long? It does not seem so. We (you, me, Raymond, Kroetsch, the thirsty critic, the hungry historian, the God-like Deemer, the Kafka's man before the door of the Law) all remain imprisoned in the house of language. Yes, "there is nothing outside the text" Derrida (1976: 158) reiterates in order to embrace Descartes' cogito, in a similar way that the Cartesian subject seeks to embrace the world. But, is not love, a Christian-made and therefore western idea, another mask of Presence? Is not language, after all, "the hypotenuse that lovers dream" (54), but which separates them forever? And if language is understood as bracketing and dividing, could there be a poetics where the "fence is down" or where all objects, places and people remain undisturbed? (16). A poetics of desire instead of the one of love? A poetics of silence instead of language? And then, could it be that while we are imprisoned on the fictitious "flatbed earth" (28) of the blank page as Raymond is, Rita by her act of disappearance manages to free herself from the language of love, and thus to escape the spell of the western logic, an infinite and tireless loop of the Hegelian master play? If there is a possibility, Rita Kleinhart is certainly on her

way to asking what it is (42). Not answers, but questions. Not points but lines. Not embrace, but surround (40). The riddle of silence.

Said that, I propose this essay as a trip toward that space which renders Rita K invisible to the *eye* of Man-sleuth embodied by Raymond and his apparently common sense. Nevertheless, far from giving an account of the events that occurred at the level of the story, what really haunts me as a reader and critic are the consequences of her conduct and motivations behind such act. And if there is really something at stake here it is certainly the issue of the representation of subjectivity. As I perceive it, her wilful disappearance comes to stand not only as powerful blow against traditional modes of conceiving subjectivity but as a serious challenge to any kind of representation stemming from the binary operations of the machine we call language. Along these pages, hence, I will focus on how and in what sense Rita's self-erasure disrupts the orderly understanding of subjectivity and at the same time it attains to draw the reader's attention toward alternative ways of perceiving, employing, and experiencing language and text.

As a philosophical guideline, I find Deleuze and Guattari's work to be a highly appropriate companion for this short trip into the exciting conceptual spaces opened up by Rita. This is because of their strong emphasis on intuition, experiment and rupture as the herald of any kind of organizational principle. Furthermore, their understanding of subjectivity as a never-determined set of multiplicities, each of them in turn composed of series of flows, unpredictable movements, random velocities, surprising effects and so on, not only offers an alternative and anti-ontological model but implicitly conveys the possibility of individual, social and artistic transformation. Finally, their approach to the notion of world as a single substance where everything is about possibilities and connections, no matter of what sort they might be, leaves *doors* widely open for the dreamers of the 21st century. It is precisely this last idea that functions as the nexus between *The Hornbooks of Rita K* and the title of this essay, for *ganzzfeld* in German means literally, a total field, that is, a homogeneous space where all angles, axes, perspectives and appearances fade out into what Deleuze and Guattari would refer to as a plane of immanence. Accordingly, the ontology of escape is an attempt to map Rita's silence and to examine the relationships between such experiment and Deleuze and Guattari's conception of subjectivity. But let us begin now if there is still someone who thinks we have not already begun to flee.

In his essay "Freed from Story: Narrative Tactics in Badlands", Lecker (1984-85: 160), in his response to Kroetsch's remark that "'falling out of cosmologies is at least an illusion of freedom, of becoming a fragment again, of opening up possibilities'", points out that "the true freedom [in Kroetsch's novels] means not telling the story". His reflection is grounded on the idea that "to be involved in

story is to be involved in temporality, and temporality, in human terms, implies death” (Lecker 1984-85: 160). The story, as we understand it, is a set of rules, codes, patterns and forms historically and culturally negotiated and therefore identifiable by all of us. It is a framework provided by language, which in itself is nothing else but a trace of other times, people and places or, as Rita puts it forward, the traces of languages we sometimes do not remember knowing (14). This idea goes hand to hand with the conception that Deleuze and Guattari have of language as *mot d'ordre*, a *story* that rather than transmitting information, allowing communication or enabling free flow of creative energies, enforces an order by commands and imperatives. The example that Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 95) provide us with is that of a teacher who “imposes on the child semiotic coordinates with all the basic dualisms of grammar (masculine-feminine, singular-plural, substantive-verb, subject of speech [*sujet d'énoncé*]-speaking subject [*sujet d'énonciation*], etc.)” to conclude that “the elementary unit of language -the statement [*énoncé*]- is the *mot d'ordre*”. After receiving these coordinates, the child’s potentially unpredictable experience with language gets reduced to already codified and experimented usage. Similarly, McCaffery (1986: 94) sees this transmission in terms of repression of biological drives. As he observes, “classical discourse is our inheritance; lodged within the bastions of grammar, it repress all manifestations of libido within rigid vessels of content, freezing energy into representation”.

In *The Hornbooks of Rita K*, for instance, that idea of code transmission appears described in a quite ironic and even comic sense: “Poetry is excrement, a discharge of the body. It is marginally useful as fertilizer. In using it as fertilizer we run the risk of transmitting a variety of venereal diseases” (44). Indeed, to accept the story as it comes from generation to generation is to acknowledge our debt to the system we have inherited within it. In turn, to employ the logic of its language is to accept the rules of the game which have clearly defined our position and possibilities much before we started to play. That is why Rita tells us that she has lived in a world where everything has happened (54). Freedom is equated then with not accepting the rules of the game, or even with not playing the game at all. But is that possible? Can the idea of freedom be found in Kroetsch’s works? According to Lecker (1984-85: 161), freedom, the concept he equates with the “anti-story”, cannot be achieved by Kroetsch because to do so would imply not writing, and writing, Lecker goes on, “is the only way he can distance himself from the kind of writing which implicitly questions the writing act that defines him”. In other words, Kroetsch –and also his characters– need language in order to defy the language that incessantly tells them who or what they are. But this certainly traps them in a double bind, a kind of Sisyphus-like game of beginnings and endings, a wobbling of the Derridean *pharmakon* from One to Two, with, I dare to say, its programmed western tendency of becoming Three. Consequently, we may say that what stops actually Kroetsch’s characters

from attaining freedom is precisely their acceptance of the paradox formulated in terms of the opposition story/anti-story.

Indeed, along these last decades, many critics have suggested that Kroetsch's previous work is deeply grounded on the postmodern stance which consists of "the refusal to pick sides, the desire to be on both sides of any border, deriving energy from the continual crossing" (Hutcheon 1988: 162). Taking, in this sense, as a point of departure the Derridean idea of "a double gesture, a double science, a double writing" as the only way of "overturning of the classical opposition, and a general displacement of the system" (Derrida 1982:195), numerous critics see in Kroetsch a picture of a world wherein the impossibility of fulfilment of his characters becomes the bedrock of their existence. Their attempts to reaffirm themselves as free and self-sufficient individuals are constantly thwarted by their own belief in the possibility of such an enterprise. Embodying the Cartesian assumption that the subject can grasp its own meaning by a systematic comprehension of the world-object, Kroetsch's characters yearn to position themselves as the only possible centre or point of departure of understanding of what surrounds them. And they seek to gain power by writing, recording or collecting. Think, for instance, of Demeter in *The Studhorse Man* (Kroetsch 1969), trying to write a biography of the chaotic life of Hazard Lepage; or, Anna Dawe in *Badlands* (Kroetsch 1975), who tries to liberate herself from the past by writing an autobiography upon the silence of her gone father; or Dorfendorf's collecting for the mysterious Deemer in *Alibi* (Kroetsch 1983), among many other examples. All these characters embark on journeys for a final completion of themselves. In order to achieve that, as Thomas (1982: 11-12) suggests, they "must deny or usurp the Other, gain freedom from relationship and connection, and by doing so wither into Narcissistic sterility or maintain an absurd and frantic dance of self". They all crave the promise of self-presence, an image of world as the mirror of their doubtful souls. But what they find is a completely different thing. Instead of embracing the glory of the self-present subject, they come to embrace its absence in the same way Narcissus' self-love embraces death. Not only do they find that the world around them is impossible to seize by the act of writing, but that they themselves are profoundly contradictable, divided and split by the same language they try to use. In other words, they realize that they always need the other to assert themselves.

In his essay "The Fear of Women in Prairie Fiction", Kroetsch (1989a: 76) comes to describe that idea in a very explicit way. He establishes "the basic grammatical pair in the story-line of prairie fiction" in terms of oppositions horse/house, masculine/feminine, on/in, motion/stasis. However, the resolution of the dialectic cannot take place mainly because "the male cannot enter into what is traditionally thought of as marriage -and possibly nor can the female". As he points out,

[h]e approaches the female. He approaches the garden. He approaches the house....And only then does he realize he has defined himself out of all entering. If he enters into this marriage -and into this place- it will be he -contrary to the tradition of the past -who must make the radical change. It will be he -already self-christened -and not the woman this time -who must give up the precious and treacherous *name* (Kroetsch 1989: 82-83).

Seen in this light, the trace -the writing- they leave behind themselves can only be fragmented and polarized. Hutcheon (1988: 162) writes that "in terms of form those contraries appear in the tensions between structure and randomness, between the closure and continuity of linear narrative and openness and discontinuity, between the conventions of realism and the play of parody". Accordingly, their quest can turn only into the acceptance of their original difference. Or, as Hutcheon (1988: 161) suggests they can only be "doubles that stay double" as their writing is. That is, Demeter recognizes that he is the object of his biography; William William Dorfendorf understands that from the very beginning he was doomed to stay double forever. This is why Lecker (1984-85:161) finally concludes that "none of Kroetsch's characters has truly embodied the drive to anti-story that Kroetsch both evokes and evades".

Now, does this mean that there is no way out from the postmodern paradox and indeed from language itself? Does this mean that the concept of character in Kroetsch's work has imploded, in the Baudrillardian sense of the word, on the worn-out plane of the western logic which has reached its highest point with the arrival of poststructuralism? Will there be an alternative way to approach the idea of freedom? What would it happen if one simply does not accept difference as the unique way of understanding language? Is there the possibility of a place prior to the mere formulation of freedom, a plane of immanence, as Deleuze and Guattari would have it, a field without substantial or consistent division? A space of pure becoming rather than that of being? A place where freedom, before turning into the concept of freedom and its inevitable double binds, could be possible? On the other hand, have we not come to the point of entropy where the Hegelian story of One and Two that becomes Three and its Derridean challenge have become dangerously similar, the meta-narrative of *yes* and that one of *no*, the story and the anti-story? Is not difference, after all, a will to go back to the roots? Finally, does not the postmodern era run the risk of drowning itself, as Narcissus did, in the beauty of the past which gave it birth? Too many questions perhaps. But, what is literature if not the questioning of its own limits and possibilities? As Kroetsch (1989b: 25) puts it forward, "instead of answers we have questions. Instead of resolution we have doubt". *The Hornbooks of Rita K*, probably the most complex work from Kroetsch to date, gives us a thrilling hint.

At the beginning of this paper, I have raised a question about the possibility of comprehension of that which escapes our bonds of expectation. Similarly, I have

pointed that all that which escapes our scope of understanding –Rita’s act of disappearance– immediately starts up a project of decoding –Raymond’s task of putting together her scattered poems– that would shed a light upon the possible meanings and motivations that had caused the act in question. However, and in spite of the apparent presence of a double structure, *The Hornbooks of Rita K* appoints new directions, both, thematically and structurally. Far from perpetuating the double bind that has characterized Kroetsch’s previous works, *The Hornbooks of Rita K* shows a will to open up new spaces for creative writing and thinking. And it does so precisely in terms of seeking other possibilities in language that would go beyond the bonds of deconstructive strategies (which have become somehow reductive). Rather than limiting itself to the mere inscribing and reinscribing of undecidables within the text, so that its orderly functioning could be disrupted, *The Hornbooks of Rita K* uses these concepts as the building units of parallel worlds that would allow it and us to situate language within a larger non-discursive field of differences and forces. The aim is then not so much to move between the given coordinates –“the assumed story” (Kroetsch 1989b: 21)– but to experiment with that we do not yet know about.

In that sense, the deconstructive approach could be understood as an important obstacle. Because it is conceived as an essentially linguistic activity, it limits the space of action of our understanding of the world exclusively to the inner binary operations of language or, in other words, to that which is already given. Additionally, its aim is not to invent but rather to “unhide the hidden”, as Kroetsch (1989c: 58) would have it. The problem would reside in that, in the light of deconstruction, all discourse, even the discourse of un hiding, is, after all, an attempt to hide the original difference. This implies that to be engaged with deconstructive practice conveys involvement in an interminable analysis and subversion of the binary oppositions that structure discourse and that constantly reassemble to restructure discourse. And, as Bogue (1989: 159) observes, “[i]f thought must engage in an endless struggle with metaphysical dualisms, it becomes trapped in an agonistic, oppositional, and reactive relationship that perpetuates as well as subverts the dualisms it fights”. This is probably why Rita claims that “river of no flow over us. /Nothing is new” (14).

Still, there is still another problem concerning deconstruction which I find quite significant to understand the larger implications of Rita’s “disappearance into silence” (22). The deconstructive approach, as stated above, was meant to be an effective strategy to displace the logic of the metaphysics of presence, which places the logos at the centre of western epistemology. This logic is what Lyotard (1984: xxiv) has labelled a *metanarrative*, that is, a dominant, global or totalizing cultural narrative schema which orders and explains knowledge and experience. Accordingly, he defined postmodernism as “an incredulity towards metanarratives”. Now, the great paradox lies in the fact that contemporary

western society has almost completely, if not fully, assimilated the Derridean notion of original difference, that is, the idea of unsustainability of the single meaning or truth, be that in terms of literature, politics, culture, religion, history or even traditional sciences such as medicine, biology, physics, mathematics and so on. One does not have to go far to realize that the discourse of difference has saturated most spheres of our daily life. One, thus, might even say that difference has become another metanarrative. So, how to proceed now that difference gradually usurpates the place of *logos*? Does this mean that we will soon see the deconstruction of the metanarrative of difference itself? Probably. But insofar as we rely on the deconstructive methodology, we will be trapped in an endless game of negations and rejections that somehow echoes the Hegelian doctrine with the exception that instead of going towards the glorified end, we are going nowhere but to the language itself and its system of differences.

However, it is undeniable that deconstruction has provided us with a set of effective tools and strategies for displacing the hierarchies that operate in the fields of politics, history or social and cultural studies in general. It has liberated contemporary society from the tyranny of *logos*, making, thus, possible the inscription of diversity and difference into discourse. Still, I believe that in terms of artistic explorations of those unexplored zones, it has turned into a dangerous ally: being conceived as a tool for revision and dialogue with the past, it has placed every artistic creation under a question mark. Principally, this is due to its strong disbelief in the emergence of something different outside the binary structures. And, in this sense, it is so profoundly historical and highly dependent on the metaphysics of presence that it cannot avoid conceiving difference as a mere variation of the previous meaning and the system that has launched it into circulation. The meaning does change but, according to deconstruction, it happens always inside the already given coordinates. Viewed in this light, every potentiality of total rupture is systematically knocked down beforehand without any consideration. For instance, if we pay a close attention to a good part of the postmodern art of the last two decades –mostly based on deconstructive practices– we will see that its basic premise appears to be that all forms of novelty and rebellion have already been explored, and that even if that was not so, the rejection of old models is understood as a clear handicap to the artist's creative development. Thus we could argue that postmodern art, in general lines, comes to stand as reconciliation of itself and its past. Accordingly, and due to the artist's collecting and employment of influences from all periods and schools the product which emerges under this condition frequently adopts a pastiche-like form. In a sense, the artist's acceptance of that legacy as the point of departure is, in the end, the permanent contract with the logic of the metaphysics of presence.

Now, I am not saying that there is something wrong with the deconstructive approach. As I have said earlier it is very useful for many social, political and cultural purposes. It is simply that its revision of history and its binary structures

has become so dominant in the contemporary art and literature (take a look at all those top best-sellers perfectly aligned in the superstores of our cities like big, green and shiny apples in supermarkets singing in choir: eat me, eat me!) that the innovation has turned in something almost imperceptible, if not completely invisible. That is why something must be done if we want art to keep on going and surprising us. Definitely, “the poet must move on” (31). And indeed, poetry has always escaped the dominant epistemology that pretends to shape art according to its own semblance. Still, the question remains: how to get out from the postmodern paradox? Or, to put it bluntly, how to escape the logic which always defines us in terms of binary beings, be that self-present or split being?

One possibility that *The Hornbook of Rita K* offers us is the silence embodied in Rita’s will to erase herself. Instead of a pen, for her birthday, she asks for an eraser (34). Instead of trying to assert her identity within the confines of the contemporary discourse just to find that she has been identified beforehand, she draws her own line of flight that breaks her organism and dissolves her inherited and regulated subjectivity into what Deleuze and Guattari call the plane of immanence or consistency or Body without Organs, a term which they borrow from Antonin Artaud.³ This is the place of pure desire, a space in which everything flows and where everything is made of uncontrollable flows which move each into the others.⁴ Herein nothing can *be* as such because everything is a pure becoming or free and random interaction of flows. In this sense, the Body without Organs comes to mean the lack of organization, or the fact that it is not divided into parts (organs) distinct from each other. In other words, it is a single substance, where all pre-eminent forms, structures or binary distinctions, such as, male/female, subject/object, exteriority/interiority, mind/body, human/non-human are collapsed. As Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 266) point, in the Body without Organs “there are no longer any forms or developments of forms; nor are

3. The term Body without Organs appears in Antonin Artaud’s radio play *To Have Done with the Judgement of God*. In the last chapter of the play, the author comes to propose the remaking of man’s anatomy as a solution to his dogmatism and mechanical behaviour. This new anatomy, however, as Artaud (1988: 570-571) writes, should be free of organs. “Man is sick because he is badly constructed./ We must make up our minds to strip him bare in order to scrape off that animalcule that itches him mortally./ god,/ and with god/ his organs./ For you can tie me up if you wish,/ but there is nothing more useless than an organ./ When you will have made him a body without organs, then you will have delivered him from all his automatic reactions/ and restored him to his true freedom”.

4. According to Deleuze and Guattari, what allows us to distinguish these flows from each other is a threshold which separates each of them. In other words, a flow can be understood as a restriction or cutting off of another flow. However, every flow tends to remain unrestricted. For Deleuze and Guattari, it is precisely this desire to flow unconstrained what characterizes Body without Organs. And since the desire is something real we may say that Body without Organs is also real.

there subjects or the formation of subjects. There is no structure, any more than there is genesis”.

In accordance with that idea, those concepts we know as world, thing or subjectivity can only be constituted on the surface of the Body without Organs. For Deleuze and Guattari, these concepts come to appear as an effect when the process of territorialization takes place, that is, when these random flows are codified, structured and rigidly segmented for some concrete purposes. This is what they call the plane of organization. One of the many examples Deleuze and Guattari provide us with is that of the State Machine which, in order to exert its power and guarantee its order and values, assures the control of those unpredictable flows by establishing laws, rules and codes of behaviour. But, although the State machine does the best it can, there are always some flows underneath that attain to escape the control apparatus of the State. These flows Deleuze and Guattari refer to as movements or lines of flight.⁵ And whenever this occurs, it is said that the process of deterritorialization takes place. It is basically its desire to flow freely and unconstrained working behind these flows of flight. Deleuze and Guattari describe this type of movement as “the line of gravity or celerity [...] with the steepest gradient” (1983: 71). It is the line of crack up that radically detaches itself from the rigid structure and launches itself toward an unknown destination, neither foreseeable nor pre-existent. Yet, though it seems to surge up afterwards, this line is opposed to destiny or to any end. It is rather a connection to that which “may be primary, with other [lines] deriving from it” (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 71). What Deleuze and Guattari actually set forth is that these movements are the herald of all organizational principles; for after every deterritorialization follows the process of reterritorialization, that is, the new

5. When Deleuze and Guattari speak of subjectivity they distinguish three types of lines. Apart from the lines of flight there are also molar and molecular lines. The molar line is a rigidly segmented line such as: family/profession; work/vacation; family/then school/then army/then factory/and then retirement or male/female, good/bad, poor/rich and so on. These bundles of segmented molar lines stem from binary machines which operate as rigid frameworks that carve up and shape the human subject according to the static image of the State or organizational principle. Each time the human subject encounters and internalizes these dominant lines the State's power set-up takes place, making in turn the human subject homogenized and therefore, easy-to-handle. The other type of lines is molecular. They are also segmented lines but much more subtle than molar ones. Rather than being rigid segmented lines, they imply subtle flows with thresholds and quanta and trace out small modifications. These lines run between the rigid segments of the one and the other constituting the asymmetrical becoming of the two, which no longer responds to the large molar oppositions. Nevertheless, this is not to be understood as a synthesis of the two, “but of a third which always comes from elsewhere and disrupts the binary nature of the two, no more inscribing itself in their opposition than in their complementarity” (Deleuze and Guattari 1983:82-83). These three lines, however, are not separated, but always immanent and caught up in each other. Thus, it is said that they constitute the subjectivity in terms of multiplicities.

decoding and stratification of the flows. As they point, “[i]n some ways, these lines, the movements of flight, are what appear first in society. Far from being a flight of social, or from being utopian or even ideological, these lines actually constitute the social field, tracing its shapes and its borders, its entire state of becoming” (1983:91). For Deleuze and Guattari, thus, the whole State is based on this flow of deterritorialization.⁶

Now, the main point of Deleuze and Guattari’s conceptualization of deterritorialization lies in the fact that it allows us to think of difference as something external to the epistemological models we have inherited from the past. In contrast to the Derridean deconstruction which operates only at the level of the rigidly and chronologically segmented plane of organization – “the overcoding machine” (Deleuze and Guattari 1983:93)–, the philosophical framework provided by Deleuze and Guattari seeks to decentre the established organizational logic by paying attention to those movements of flight which point to what is untimely, that is, the plane of immanence or consistency; “a time without rhythm, a haecceity like a wind that stirs at midnight, or at noon” (Deleuze and Guattari 1983:92). I perceive a clear parallelism between Deleuze and Guattari’s thought and *The Hornbooks of Rita K* for the book constitutes itself as an offer of alternative and non-binary modes of conceiving difference and accessing knowledge.⁷

Under that perspective, Rita’s self-erasure comes to stand as a refusal of remaining on the plane of organization. Or to put it other way around, it is Rita’s desire of becoming something else, that is, something external to the binary logic that has been defining her, what pushes her to commit such an experiment. Instead of asking for conditions of possible experience Rita looks for the conditions under which something completely different might arise. “She had an aversion to intentional space” (36), we are said. Nevertheless, in the end, it is the simple formulation of the possibility of self-erasure that envisages *The Hornbooks of Rita K*’s intention to transvaluate the concept of art, “art itself being the herald of an anticipated radical transvaluation of human values” (Sontag 1967: *screen* 39). Indeed, behind Rita’s act lies one of the major

6. Although Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the process of deterritorialization is always prior to any organization or ontology it should not be understood in a chronological sense, or as something eternal. Rather, this process points toward what is untimely and immanent in all of us.

7. The very first lines of *The Hornbooks of Rita K* warn us that what we are going to find has little to do with the traditional way of perceiving things: “To see is not/ to see ahead./ We cannot see/ beyond the bed” (3). What these opening lines suggest is that our perception of the world leaves many things aside. Moreover, it could be understood in the sense that we cannot perceive the world behind the binary structure for the word “bed”, in a traditional reading, conveys the idea of the love-game between opposites.

concerns of the western art, that is, art as the *back door* to life itself, to randomness, to the stream of blood and beat of the heart.⁸ As Susan Sontag (1967: *screen* 39) writes:

Behind the appeals for silence lies the wish for a perceptual and cultural clean slate. And, in its most hortatory and ambitious version, the advocacy of silence expresses a mythic project of total liberation. What's envisaged is nothing less than the liberation of the artist from himself, of art from the particular art work, of art from history, of spirit from matter, of the mind from its perceptual and intellectual limitations./ What a few people know now is that there are ways of thinking that we don't yet know about. Nothing could be more important or precious than that knowledge, however unborn. The sense of urgency, the spiritual restlessness it engenders cannot be appeased. Surely, it's some of that energy which has spilled over into the radical art of this century. Through its advocacy of silence, reduction, etc., art commits an act of violence upon itself, turning art into a species of auto-manipulation, of conjuring — trying to help bring these new ways of thinking to birth.

Thus, silence can be understood as a continuation and exploration of thought. The renouncement of the epistemological models at the moment the silence is produced comes to stand then not as a revision of that what is known, but as the foreshadowing of that which is *unborn*. It is, as Rita tells Raymond, “a way of using everything toward originality rather than a way of working from originality toward everything” (60). In other words, it is the shift from exploring existence, its principles and its interrelations, to opening up new spaces of inquiry where things may simply go off in unforeseeable directions. In this sense, Rita, by her disappearing act, enters the space of non-organization, non-significance, non-subjectivity that does not recognize any differences or hierarchies and upon which everything is a pure becoming. Accordingly, she also proves to be a remarkably strong character, a dreamer, who, moved by her intuition that “somewhere out there, the fence is down” (56), frees herself from the postmodern stance that has determined her

8. This has a reference to John Cage's musical research on the issue of silence. His famous work 4'33" conceived as a totally silent musical piece achieves the breaking of all limits of the physicality of sound. That is, by being silent, it fuses itself with the environment where it is performed, hence, escaping organizational principles of the melody. Consequently, by being imperceptible, its duration becomes timeless. However, there is still another implication of this piece: silence does not exist. In this sense, the piece comes to suggest that one should simply listen and open one's ears. When this occurs, one realizes that everything that surrounds her/him is actually music. Even in a soundless chamber, as John Cage himself had experimented, one cannot stop hearing sounds of at least two things: the heartbeat and the coursing of the blood in the veins.

predecessors.⁹ She cuts the Gordian knot by rendering herself invisible. “A Scene changes to an empty room” (Sontag 1967: screen 28).

It is not coincidental, then, that Rita’s disappearance takes place in the experimental artist James Turrel’s installation, which deals precisely with the questioning of our models of perception and understanding of the world. James Turrel puts in practice what is known as *ganzfeld*. As I have pointed at the beginning, *ganzfeld* means a total field. It refers to a visual phenomenon where depth, surface, colour and brightness all register as a homogeneous whole. In other words, the effect implies the blurring of all perceptual frontiers, producing in the viewer a complete and instantaneous disorientation and looseness which might lead even to vertigo. In James Turrel’s light installation named “*Twilight Arch*”, the viewer enters what appears to be a completely dark room. After a few minutes of total darkness, the viewer’s eyes begin to adjust and s/he barely starts to perceive a faint blue glow on the opposite wall. As s/he approaches the blue glow in order to see what it is, the viewer suddenly realizes that what was supposed to be a thin luminous rectangular surface is actually an opening into another room filled with a dense blue light, an apparently infinite space receding further than s/he has imagined and which cannot be described. Because there is only light, no structure can be devised. Finally, the viewer becomes aware of the fallibility of her/his own way of perceiving. In turn, this recognition becomes the main subject of James Turrel’s installation. What James Turrel’s art comes to suggest is that there are other dimensions, other ways of perceiving the world which are thwarted by the faith in human judgement, its senses and indeed, by language itself.¹⁰ As Turrel (Whittaker/Interview with James Turrel: screen 4) points, “learning is one path, one way, and we have learned one way, but this also creates a prejudiced perception that we are not totally aware of”. After all, as Rita ironically suggests, if the knowledge we have were sufficient, “[w]hy else would I throw sand in your eyes?” (73)

The same happens to our approach to *The Hornbooks of Rita K*. Far from offering us a defined structure, it opens for us a door to the *ganzfeld*. That is,

9. What Deleuze and Guattari suggest is that the plane of consistency has no easy access. Though it is certainly always there it is not visible for everybody. Consequently, not everybody can trace the line of flight. As they state, “there are people who do not have this line, who have only the other two, or who have only the one, who live along it” (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 71). We can argue that unlike other Kroetsch’s characters that remain double Rita, by tracing her own line of flight, proves to have a strong potential for rupture and change.

10. “No object can be seen, no shadow. The picture’s optical framework, made by light, has no foreground, middle and background. Everything is light -even the room. Here a process of perception begins that is hardly describable or nameable. The gaze is now at rest. The constant and fruitless attempts to fix one’s eye on something have been given at last”. Alex Muller, *James Turrel, “Twilight Arch, 1991”* (Cited at the beginning of *The Hornbooks of Rita K*).

to the silence embodied by Rita herself, mapped by Raymond who, moved by her painful absence (30) and intrigued by her attitude, turns her “investigative poems” (14) into the book we are reading. This book, however, proves to be a completely disorderly mixture of Rita’s incomplete poems, Raymond’s own personal comments –“a footnote, a scrap of data [...] at most a word”–, and the “slightest anecdote[s]” (7) that had apparently taken place between them. Her desired silence, thus, gives rise to a chaotic flow of information distributed along a huge number of hornbooks that follow no logic order or direction. Because there is nothing given and organized beforehand, the whole text turns into the plane of consistency. It becomes the echo of what has been and what is yet to come. Therefore, there is no story but the genesis itself. There is no gender or identity contained within it but only a movement of positive forces and singularities chaotically scattered across the space with no limits. The concept of Rita’s identity, on the contrary, comes to depend exclusively on the reader and his/her own approach to the book, which is always uncertain and unpredictable. In turn, the reader’s incursion into the text becomes the questioning of her/his own entering, perceiving, ordering and interpreting the vast amount of formless information, which as Rita suggests, is nothing else but “a changing of the light” (84), “a risking business” (68). In the same way the silence of the actress in Ingmar Bergman’s *Persona* (1966) incites her nurse Alma to uncover her most hidden passions, Rita’s silence reveals –for the lack of a given narrative bears the seduction of the unknown and the possible– the way we usurp the poet (61) in terms of binary operations, “a whole police force” (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 102). Rita, in this sense, comes to resemble, to use John Cage’s (1979: 11) words, “the maker of a camera who allows someone else to take the picture”.

The Hornbooks of Rita K becomes “a hand-held mirror” (100), or even a primer, as the word *hornbook* itself suggests.¹¹ It becomes the absence that turns us into poets, but not into the poets of love for what we see in the mirror; we become the poets of desire for what we do not see. We “become, all of us, poets” (53) of becoming. In other words, we all become part of Rita, and Rita in turn becomes our own becoming. The idea goes hand in hand with the theory of chaos, in which fractals are understood as recursively constructed or self-similar shapes that appear similar at all scales of magnification, thus being infinitely complex. By turning invisible, or being literally “a ghost” (45), Rita becomes every single character and word –“the unavoidable accident” (86)– that appears on her surface. Her silence affects

11. *The Hornbooks of Rita K* gives us two definitions of hornbook, both, taken from *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary* (1998): “HORNBOOK... a leaf of paper containing the alphabet, The Lord’s Prayer, etc., mounted on a wooden tablet with a handle, and protected by a thin plate of horn. / HORNBOOK... a treatise on the rudiments of a subject: a primer”.

everything and in turn it is affected by every single entrance of the reader into the book, which is the *ganzfeld* itself or “an empty house” (68). This is known as the butterfly effect.¹²

In this sense, all identities within the text remain undetermined and open to all unforeseeable variations and interactions of meanings that are to come. There are no more stable or unstable identities, as in previous Kroetsch's works, neither are there distinctions between sexes and genders identified in terms of opposite forces. The reader witnesses rather a complete dissolution of the principles these concepts are grounded on. There are only positive forces which are neither dialectical nor antagonistic but united in an amorphous state which constantly changes its shape when it connects with new forces which are not necessarily human. In case of *The Hornbooks of Rita K*, those forces or flows appear in form of hornbooks where “each line [...] is a provisional exactness” (3). Every single force here resembles the whole, and the other way around. Every hornbook resembles the whole work and vice versa. Thus, Rita turns often to the slippage between the words “I” and “it” but also “he” and “she”. It is “the unpredictable that makes [...] the poem” (55) move. The self, here equated with the poem, hence, can never be concluded or double, but is forever lost in a “floating world” of Rita's illegible signs (61) and “waving red lines [of Japanese calligraphy] that avoid meeting” (58). There is neither love nor hate between Rita and Raymond, but a new spirituality based on complete interconnectedness which not only links them together but link every reader that draws his/her line of flight into this plane of consistency, that is, *The Hornbooks of Rita K*. There are only fractals. And it is precisely a fictionalized Kroetsch, who appears in the middle section of *The Hornbooks of Rita K* –spending some time in Japan with Rita and enjoying the night life in “a sushi bar” with “a bottle of beer and a glass of sake” (57)– who “realizes that a poem is a fractal” (60). As a response, Raymond tells Rita that he “preferred [Robert] way back when he argued, in a fit of blinding lucidity, that a poem is a poem [and when he] claimed that you cannot say what you mean, you can only say what you say” (60). However, Kroetsch –the author himself– seems to affirm his “growing interest in a chaos theory”, when he declares “that society is just too complex for us to understand in certain ways, and yet there are structures operating, even in what we could call chaos” (Müller 2005: 333). Indeed, the randomness of positive forces is something that we cannot grasp by systematic reasoning and the consequent faith in human judgement, for it escapes all scopes of our understanding. Nevertheless, it is this flow of positive forces *The Hornbooks of Rita K* seeks to channel:

12. According to the theory of chaos, small variations of the initial condition of a dynamical system may produce large variations in the long term behavior of the system.

anchor	bottle	crazy	
doodle	entrance	fondle	gargoyle
handle	imprint	jester	
kibitz	laggard	mustard	
	number		
		ogle	
potter	query		rusted
sorrow		tunnel	ulcer
	vector	whittle	
x-rated	yodel		ziggurat

(74)

As I have been suggesting all along, Rita, unlike the characters of previous works by Kroetsch, does not intend to reaffirm herself through writing or to impose order upon what she is not, but rather to produce the *ganzfeld* effect which would make us aware of our own systematic reasoning, and by the same token, trigger that single process of production where everything resembles everything. Because the language is “not a departure at all but rather a kind of invasion” (55), she opens every meaning and launches it not into that eternal reinscription or wobbling between given poles, but to the space of radical indetermination, where the result is always something different than the expected. As she ironically writes to Raymond, “If you can’t find me you know where I am./ We are always, and never ever, and even then, the same./ Our lives choose other genres./ Why do I feel such sorrow when I feel joy?” (61).

This idea appears to be even more reinforced when she claims that she is attempting to write an autobiography in which she does not appear (29). By stating this, Rita proposes a rather different kind of approach to writing, which, as I perceive it, announces her immersion into the pantheist spirituality of Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophical enterprise. Based on her conviction “that she might so write her poems that she would leave each object or place or person that fell under her attention undisturbed” (16), she decides to abandon the common use of language and follow “the deceptive randomness of wind and sky [and] the violence and the blinding inevitability of prairie sun” (36), that is, she follows the flow of life. As she goes on, “[a] patch of scarlet mallow appears each spring in the/ grasses on the edge of the coulee directly in front of my/ house. That little patch of orange-red blossoms, emerging/on a dry, south-facing slope, is one of my reasons for living” (36). Indeed, what really comes to captivate Rita is that mysterious power and positive force that make “that little patch of orange-red blossoms” emerge on a dry slope. It is her fascination with the power of life and her ability to overcome the difficulties that keeps Rita alive. Similarly, in the same

hornbook she tells us that she had “discovered that negligence is a gifted gardener” (36). For nature, once released from human models of thought and organization, escapes all bonds of expectation. It always moves by surprise.

Thus, somehow inspired by these positive forces of nature and the comprehension of the limitations of human thought, Rita embarks on the project of writing an autobiography of the free flows, of surprise and indetermination. She writes “river of no flow over us/ Nothing is new” for the second time. But this time, and though Raymond tells us that it does not appear in the body of the text, she writes the word “surprise” over “no”, however leaving the word “no” unscratched. This narrative of surprise will be what Raymond labels as a “collective biography” (10). But far from what he imagines, this act will lead Rita to her final deterritorialization. As we are said, the collective narrative “could not be located in a system of beliefs or a narrative of origins” (10), nor in “religious or political or transcendental or the Platonic ideal or apparently, the narrative of love” (12); indeed, “it could only be located, literally and momentarily, in back doors” (10), which are the doors to the garden and life itself, or, as Rita proposes in her hornbooks, “the escape from transcendence,” the “so called good neighbors and possibly from language itself” (10). As Muller (2005: 262) observes:

Symptomatically blurring the lines of their individual thoughts, this passage undermines the tradition of a self (re)affirming identity through writing and, by equating the literal house and the edifice of poetry, points to alternative, non-metaphysical ways of both accessing and dispersing knowledge. Using back doors which would connect with the notion of the maze, as an escape from transcendence, *The Hornbooks of Rita K* draws its characters and readers into a genealogical labyrinth which is operated by the laws of chaos.

Indeed, Raymond himself seems to reinforce this orientation of Rita’s narrative when he states that “Rita questioned and even rejected ideas of evolutionary development in art. She had other fish to fry” (9). Since every autobiography implies a movement towards self-reflection, even if that means the recognition of one’s divided or multiple self, it always “make[s] [according to Rita] for a false narrative of what it is to be a poet or person” (17). The act of writing, thus, becomes a highly problematic task in the sense that it always leads to the establishing of meaning in terms of exclusions. Or, as she says elsewhere, the writing is as “love, that fatal pharmacy/ A choice of remedies: the (fatal) poem” (62). Certainly, there is a clear echo of Heideggerian and Derridean thought in Rita’s conception of writing. For Heidegger (1962: 56-57) the final truth *-aletheia-* is forever suspended. This happens mainly because whenever one meaning is opened up, others are necessarily closed off. Similarly, for Derrida, who follows in many ways the paths of Heideggerian philosophy, writing, though being originally undecidable, always tends to show itself as a

coherent system capable of, on the one hand, providing the clarity of the meaning and, on the other, imposing certain ideology. Therefore, for Rita, every attempt to write turns into a criminal act (29). Affirmation through writing is a gesture which seeks to reduce the original contradiction to a coherent outcome, and whose main drive appears to be nothing else than the poet's rapacious need to claim the multitude by the small ordering of a signature (29). In this light, by understanding that the "words are lock, not a key" (33) and seeing that she cannot write her poems so "that she would leave each object or place or person that fell under her attention undisturbed" (16), she decides to "deny her own signature" (30) and disappear into art (40). With her disappearance into the silence of James Turrel's *ganzfeld*, she finally achieves what she was always negated by language, freedom.

As I have been suggesting, the idea of freedom embodied by Rita is of a different nature than that formulated by Lecker. Lecker observes, as we have seen, that true freedom cannot be achieved because that would imply not writing at all. And indeed, Rita decides not to write anymore. She leaves Raymond to "organize her papers and have them deposited in the vaults of the University of Calgary Special Collections Library" (45). But instead of a blank page as the logical result of not writing, we *do* have a story, albeit of a different kind. Unlike Kroetsch's earlier works, *The Hornbooks of Rita K* simply goes off in countless directions simultaneously. The story-line does not move in a straight or even fragmented course toward the end. There is "no longing for an end" (62), nor is there longing for a beginning. It is neither coming from, nor going in any specific direction. There is no double structure or double gesture that would displace the centre, because precisely there is no centre to displace. Instead, the story is "the text as empty as a temple" (62), "the hole in the middle of things" (101), and I would even say, in the middle of words:

We
 Are Were
 Always Never
 Never Always
 Lonesome

As seen above in the "*Hollow Hornbook*" (101), language is not as much the centre of the poem as it is its absence. And it is "the unspeakable" (101) of that blank space what pushes the words in all directions. The words appear here only as "a trace of what is fundamental and now is forgotten" (101). In other words, it tells us that there is something beyond our understanding, obscured by the language, some kind of "myth of undone" (86), which rather than appointing a hermetic disposition of binary structures, unveils the creative drives that flow underneath the text. In *The Hornbooks of Rita K*, as I see it,

the question is not anymore about embracing one of the poles or maintaining its balance “for their sliding centre to survive” (Lecker 1984-85:160), it is not even a matter of analysing, explaining and deconstructing; it is the question of opening up new possibilities whatever that might mean. Thus, “one must attempt the impossible poem” (101), not by writing what is possible, because this would “concede victory to the unspeakable” (101), but by giving ‘the unspeakable’ a surface that lets eye hear” (101).

It is in this sense that I perceive *The Hornbooks of Rita K*'s moving away from that strategy of “seeing double”, as Hutcheon (1988: 160) would have it, to enter the more complex arena of the theory of chaos and, indeed, the philosophical enterprise of Deleuze and Guattari. Though both chaos theory and deconstruction share many tenets and ample ground, specially in their vision of thought and language as a system of differences, Deleuze and Guattari, unlike Derrida, “do not treat philosophy primarily as a form of exegesis, nor do they believe that thought must remain within traditional philosophical discourse and forever do battle with metaphysics” (Bogues 1989:159). The argument that language and metaphysics are the unavoidable problems of philosophy is itself a fiction, and it is a fiction that often serves a disciplinary function. On the contrary, Deleuze and Guattari propose imaginary or alternative spaces made up not of given notions but of notions in the becoming. Thus, as Rajchman (2001: 17) foregrounds, their philosophy “cease to be correction of error, and turn to what in experience, or in life, is prior to subjects and the objects to which they refer”. Where deconstructive theory attempts to correct and neutralize territorialized couplings in a text, deterritorialization seeks precisely to decentre them or, in other words, to trace a line of flight, as Rita does. However, this does not imply judgement, negation, and the consequent construction of another dichotomy, but a desire to illuminate those spaces between and around binary structures. That is, instead of replacing that critical disjunction either/or, they, on the contrary, prefer to pay attention to those *and/and/ands* which appear between the couplings, and make them function as a general system. Deleuze and Guattari (1983: 57) call these conjunctions *rhizomes*. According to them, “[a] rhizome doesn't begin and doesn't end, but is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo”. Unlike a tree, a root or *radicels*, which always fix a point and centre of departure and thus an order, the rhizome, on the contrary,

connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even non-sign states. The rhizome is reducible to neither the One nor the multiple. It is not the One that becomes Two or even directly three, four, five etc. It is not a multiple derived from the one, or to which one is added (n+1). It is comprised not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion. It has neither beginning nor end, but always middle

(milieu) from which it grows and which it overflows. It constitutes linear multiplicities with n dimensions having neither subject nor object, which can be laid out on a plane of consistency, and from which the one is always subtracted ($n-1$). When a multiplicity of this kind changes dimension, it necessarily changes in nature as well, undergoes a metamorphosis. Unlike a structure, which is defined by a set of points and positions, the rhizome is made only of lines; lines of segmentarity and stratification as its dimensions, and the line of flight or deterritorialization as the maximum dimension after which the multiplicity undergoes metamorphosis, changes in nature.

In this sense, the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari does not align itself with the determinism of the metaphysics of presence; nor with the linguistic idealism/nihilism of poststructuralism. For them, both philosophical stances, due to their strong dependence on the subject/object opposition, depart from a single point or root. In sharp contrast to it, Deleuze and Guattari seek to occupy the dimension between and around this dichotomy, hence creating a holistic logic rather than a closed system based on opposition. They believe that theoretical models which confine themselves to the binary of self/other are insufficient and anti-productive due to their obsession with what has already been given. After all, life and nature prove to be always something different from what it is thought. Thus, Deleuze and Guattari ground their thought on the experiment, which as they see, implies an experience prior to the formulation of any ontology. One simply must connect with other possibilities in order to keep on moving. According to Rajchman (2001: 7), "to make connections one needs not knowledge, certainty, or even ontology, but rather a trust that something may come out, though one is not yet completely sure what".

Seen in this light, the idea of rhizome provides an adequate model for the understanding of subjectivity, and indeed, for understanding Rita and her decision to deterritorialize herself from the limitations imposed by language. By rendering herself invisible she becomes the network of stems which is hidden underground, in-between the trees *and* plants, identities *and* genders, art *and* life, writer *and* reader, the hornbook as a hand-held mirror *and* the outside, *and* all concepts that appear on the surface of *The Hornbooks of Rita K*, but also those that are still to come. And when these new concepts arrive and territorialize themselves she will keep on searching and connecting. "Things happen, she writes, and then things happen. And there is sweet fuck else to it" (17). Rita and her hornbooks have no limits anymore precisely because they act like the rhizome. The hornbooks have no more secrets (she has given all three masks [her, Raymond's and Kroetsch's?] to a beggar in Japan [62]). They have become fractals just like everyone else, or more exactly, they have "made of everyone else a *becoming*. [They] have become clandestine, imperceptible, the

Pink Panther [who] has painted the world in his own colour" (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 75); they are a blur, "a recluse, but also a snoop and a thief, a voyeur, a strange bird and, as some of her [good] neighbors put it, a nut case" (11). They do not proceed anymore by linking the symmetrical opposites, but by linking that which is asymmetrical, thus, carrying away the one *and* the other, the male *and* the female, *and* bringing at the same time the changing light *and* "the poem's weather" (100). Unlike the filiations of the tree or the root or the gender identity structured in terms of symmetrical opposites, Rita and her hornbooks form "alliance, exclusively alliance" (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 57). They are not a fixed point like the tree or root incapable of movement, but a line of flight that never ceases to connect heterogeneous points across the space that is a plane of single process of production or consistency. They, like the rhizome, reach a point only in order to leave it behind for the "every point is a relay and exists only as a relay. A path is always between two points, but the in-between has taken on all the consistency and enjoys both autonomy and a direction of its own" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 380). Unlike the tree which imposes the verb to be and the consequent formation of identities, "the rhizome is woven together with conjunctions: 'and... and... and...'. In this conjunction there is enough force to shake up and uproot the verb 'to be.' Where are you going to? Where are you coming from? What are you driving at? All useless questions" (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 57-58). Well, I think there is not much else to say on the matter but that "[i]n the end, we are [all] defeated by gardens. They know too much" (36). So, what remains of what does not remain "now [that] she has taken flight?" (28)

In the movie *Space Is the Place* (1974), Sun Ra argues that every-body is music.¹³ In other words, every-body is a musical instrument supposed to play its own part in the tune of the universe. The problem lies, however, in that not every-body is aware of this potentiality. As it is suggested in his musical piece *There Are Other Worlds (they have not told you of)* (Sun Ra 1978), this potentiality appears rather concealed. Indeed, albeit contemporary music and literature, and all art in general, are full of examples of channelling these hidden flows, in real life nobody tells us how to escape, that is, how to trace our own line of flight. Perhaps it is simply because no one else but us can play our own

13. Sun Ra was an innovative free jazz musician and composer widely known for his cosmic philosophy. In his performances, as in all free jazz, the composition departs from a chaotic flow of sounds. Each musician plays her/his part in her/his own manner, that is, with own intensity, rhythm, velocity or choice or even rejection of music scales. Once the harmony or general synchrony between these positive forces is reached, each of them starts to push toward the disintegration as a necessary condition for new harmonies to emerge. Thus, every single force plays a crucial part in developing and determining the harmony or the plane of organization in Deleuze and Guattari's sense.

part. Perhaps not. But the fact is that if one wants to go beyond the limits of what has already been experimented one must go for it. Or, as Rita puts it, “[i]f you want to be a poet/ you have to be a poet” (100). What I am actually trying to suggest is that there is a need for detecting these creative forces for they might give rise to something new; a difference outside of the system of differences that would trigger that process of reterritorialization and thus allows us to create a new picture of the world and its more and more increasing complexity. And certainly, there is no better example to look at than the art at the threshold of the 21st century, for it best portrays artistic, cultural and socio-politic concerns of our time. We should be all puzzled by Rita’s silence.

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