

**Always Becoming: (De-) (Re-)territorializing
A Social Studies Autoethnography as ‘Minor Literature’**

Wordingsprocessen, een (De-) (Re-)reterritorialisering

Een Social Studies Autoetnografie als ‘Literatuur Minor’

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For Alexander & Myrthe

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“Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd” – Gilles Deleuze
and Felix Guattari (1987, p.3)

Pursuing a PhD project and writing a book has been a long-standing wish on my path of *éducation permanente*. In my feeble scholarship of the early days I had the chance to meet great scholars, such as David M. Boje, Jack Cohen, Alphonso Lingus, Rosi Braidotti, Carolyn Ellis and Art Bochner, Martin Fuglsang, Bent Meier Sørensen, Jean Luc Moriceau, Stephen Linstead, Simon Lilley, Steve Brown, Peter Pelzer, Geoff Lightfoot, Robert van Boeschoten and Peter Case, all of whom were brought to the table by the organizational and inspirational skills of Hugo Letiche. He, together with Dian Marie Hosking, became my PhD supervisors. I got to know Hugo as a tremendously erudite person and the right person to guide me through (organizational) complexity, Deleuze, and ‘the affective turn’ in ethnography. Dian Marie I admire for her amazing intellectual wit and ability to shape a community that felt like ‘home’. During the writing of my book, I went through several transformations, and started - in theory and practice - to reflect on ‘what it is to be a person’ (Hosking, n.d.) through qualitative inquiry. Words cannot express my appreciation for both Hugo and Dian Marie, for giving a place of scholarship, sharing knowledge, support, discipline, and trust.

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A major part of my life and joy is interaction; interaction with students of all kinds, and with those academic fellows that I meet in those pockets of intense scholarship, such as the (Deleuzian) summer camps and conferences. Ian Buchanan started organizing the ‘Deleuze Summer Camps,’ which was focussed on the work of Gilles Deleuze, with instruction provided by many scholars such as Ian: May the force be with you! Through these intense networks of Deleuzian scholarship I also got to know Gregg Lambert, Jan Jagodzinski, Patricia Pisters, Peter Wolvendale, Ronald Bogue, Claire Colebrook, Piotrek

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Meanwhile, my work bought me to the Middle East. In my book, there are many vivid accounts of ‘what it meant to be there’. The author George Orwell once wrote, “Writing a book is a horrible, exhausting struggle, like a long bout of some painful illness. One would never undertake such a thing if one were not driven on by some demon whom one can neither resist nor understand” (1946). I too experienced, that it is not possible to write without demons haunting you down the road, and on such an abstract level I am grateful for the life experiences the Middle East gave me.

When I returned back to the Netherlands, it was when I met Armand Gouvernante van Raders, who became my ‘friend-psychoanalyst-philosopher’ as mentioned in my texts. Truly, I would not have known how to proceed in a fruitful, sensible way without him. Our conversations helped me shape my thoughts and texts to a level that have, in my opinion, a scholarly edge and enabled me to decentre. He truly – besides becoming a great intellectual sparring partner and friend – also initiated me once again in the arts- and happiness of life. I smile when writing this, because, wasn’t it his profession after all, driving out the ‘djinns’ of one’s life? And to find one’s, what he calls, ‘Human Mythology Development’: finding one’s ‘Original’?

Last but not least I would like to thank my husband Alexander and daughter Myrthe who have always joined me on global adventures and the path of Fernweh/Wanderlust: a desire or longing to travel (“*Fernweh*, German”). Alexander I also like to thank for his unshakable support in me and in being a soul mate in the many pleasures of mutual intellectual scholarship.

My book is made up of “emotional data, dream data, sensual data, memory data and response data – data that was not visible and that disrupted linearity, consciousness, and the mind/body dichotomy” (Adams St. Pierre, 2011, p. 621) and was constituted - like all of those whom are acknowledged – as part of an ever becoming assemblage, of life itself.

Amsterdam, 2014

J.B.M. (Maaike) de Jong

Multiple Connections, and Assemblages [Introduction]

My Journey

My project is almost over, and I sit in my Amsterdam apartment listening to the birds. I rewrite my introduction for the last time and feel proud of my work. This project has involved me in a world of wonders, and I still wonder. Since my book consists of text, including this introduction, it is a text. It is my last text, sitting here, overlooking a street in a city where, as DeLanda (2006) puts it, capitalism was born. This early form of capitalism has been drawn into a romanticized tourist asset of ‘Amsterdam’ and includes the warehouses, Rembrandt, old harbours and canals. Capitalism as a force has many faces and continuously creates new faces. In this work, I take you on a trip to explore one such face.

This book has been written in the first person singular ‘I’ form, and it is important to keep in mind that this ‘I’ is not intended to be a narcissistic, ego-centric narrator, but, rather, a becoming in which self is always in movement in different relations. This is directly related to the challenge that I take up in this book. I do things that the Deleuze and Guattari’s book *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1983) failed to do in their attempt to move outside of purely ‘conceptual philosophy’. The ‘game’ that they, and Deleuze in particular, played, is to do things with concepts that are so startling that it takes your breath away and makes your jaw drop. It is a very conceptual form of art, and Deleuze does it brilliantly. In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari make an effort to stop doing purely philosophical conceptual art and attempt to look at the world from the point of view of social studies. Nevertheless, I would argue that *Anti-Oedipus* ends up as a rather narcissistic text. In a way, what I am trying to do is to return to their challenge, and, in recognition of Deleuze’s cognitive art, to make a move towards affective social studies. Methodologically my book is an effort to move from the conceptual art of Deleuze and Guattari to an exploration of a way of studying social relatedness through a form of autoethnography that is relational and descriptive¹.

¹ I am very grateful to Hugo Letiche and Dian Marie Hosking for illuminating these aspects further to me at the supervision session in Utrecht in May 2014.

Before going to Qatar, I dreamed of going to a society immersed in a certain velocity, of speed, of transformative energies. During my stay in Qatar, I experienced its dynamics and intensities. However, its embodiment for me was rather unplanned and rather unforeseen. Excitement, of the kind I was looking for, intensively unfolded in the interactions between me and my reading of the books by Gilles Deleuze and (sometimes in conjunction with) Felix Guattari; texts that were invented, so to speak, during the mid-20th-century in France and whose ideas continued to develop throughout the 1960s, '70s and '80s; texts about life, energies, process forces, facilitating interrelations, and becoming; becomings which I have powerfully re-lived. I recall sitting in my white Eames James's chair and ottoman (talk about time pieces!) on the 16th floor of a large apartment building—‘the ZigZag towers,’—reading *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987). From here, I overlooked the Arabian Gulf and the enormous building sites just below my window that were reinventing Venice here in Qatar, constructing canals, piazzas and even city palaces that perfectly mimicked the city in Europe. Passages about lines of flight, capitalism and creative becomings, captivated me. I have been inspired and motivated by the concepts of Deleuze and Guattari, firstly, to develop my own style as presented in this work; and secondly, to be inspired to the creative production of concepts. In the plateau “1987: Amidst Deleuze,” I work out processes of inspiration. Important and relevant Deleuzian and Guattarian concepts for my project, those that address movement, are: machinic thinking, deterritorialization and reterritorialization. I experienced machines at work, not simply machines found at construction sites, which I saw and heard outside my window; but on an abstract level, different sorts of machines, inspired by the machines of the Deleuzian and Guattarian kind, initially described as: “a system of interruptions or breaks (*coupures*)” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, p. 38), later on further developed by them as a process of bodies, of actions and passions “reacting to one another” (1987, p. 88). I felt them, the machines, do their work creating, connecting, reconnecting and breaking. These machinic movements deterritorialize and reterritorialize ‘life worlds’. While deterritorializations are movements that disrupt ‘life worlds’, reterritorializations are movements that somehow establish ‘life worlds’. It was this type of breakage that kept me awake at night and sometimes almost drove me to madness. And it was the flow, these intensities of joy from activities like visiting museums, listening to great lectures by people like Thomas Friedman, or buying a jeep from a friend leaving the Gulf, that kept me going. The machines were feeding on the very stuff of which I was constituted; but, nevertheless, also had a life of their own: the

mini machines (Deleuze and Guattari call them desiring machines) in me, and the social machines; together constitute an assemblage. The breakages function as deterritorializations and the flows function as reterritorializations; together they constituted the lived, intensities and madness of living in the Arabian Gulf. During my stay in Qatar, I went to Prague and studied Deleuze's and Guattari's book *Kafka: Toward a Theory Minor Literature* (1986) during a summer break. I learned about Kafka who can be seen as a deterritorialized stranger, searching for mechanisms of power and authority; and about machines and 'minor' literature. Deleuze and Guattari talk vividly about a whole array of machines they find at work in Kafka's writing. They give names to these machines such as: 'castle machines' and 'trial machines'.

You don't have to tell me about castle machines and trial machines; I experienced them and got to know them well in Qatar. The abstract machines in question are of the transformative kind, they guide developments, create, capture, and break.

Recording Experiences

In this text, I will work out a particular view of becoming, inspired by Deleuze and Guattari, in which self is always in movement in different relations and which is focused on processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, which are later worked out in different intertextualities. I have forced myself to record my experiences. This included looking at news paper clippings, and through 'self-introspection'. I used the writing of texts as a way of inquiry in order to generate an understanding and as a process of making sense of my disorienting experience, living and working in Qatar.

By focusing on the self and the potentialities of its identifications, I enter the process of articulating multiplicity, which needs to be seen, as 'not reducing the complexity beforehand'. I have captured my experiences in initial notes and texts. These texts have evolved, content- and style-wise, through an explorative and open process into a particular style, through dialogue with Dian Marie and Hugo, Alexander my husband and Armand my 'friend-psychoanalyst-philosopher'. Over the course of my research, I was, so to speak, in a process of experimentation. The research methodology is motivated a by number of authors such as Stewart (1996 and 2007) and worked out, intertextually, in different plateaus.

My work is related to the actions of Michel de Certeau who, in the story ‘Walking in the City’ (1998), both walks around New York City at the street level, and observes the city from the top of a skyscraper. De Certeau indicates that when standing at the top of a skyscraper, “one’s body is no longer clasped by the streets that turn and return it according to an anonymous law: nor is it possessed whether as player or played by the rumble” (p. 157). During my stay in Qatar, I merged into everyday life and was ‘clasped by the streets,’ in the roles of an educational professional, mother, friend, scholar and spouse. From this participative perspective, I wrote texts.

Prequel

In this book, I follow the lines of an experimentation and invite my readers to join me in this project. All of these lines form a network - or rhizome in Deleuzian, Guattarian terms (1987, p.7) - without origin or endpoint and in which any point can be connected to any other. While my entire book can be seen as forming a sort of ‘rhizome’ with the world (p. 11), my texts, like *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), are organized into what they refer to as plateaus. These plateaus are more or less temporary and are manifestations of lived intensities. They emerge from out of the experiences and movements that are continuously being co-constructed with references to my multiple selves: expat, student, mother, dog-lover, wife, friend, Deleuzian scholar and many others, all in multiple relationships with one another, like a rhizome.

The plateaus of this book are heterogeneous in nature and their writing is fuelled by narratives, ideas, rules and bodies, as well as the interactions of self with other(s). They evoke affects produced on a plateau. I understand ‘affect’ in terms of capacity—one’s capacity to do, act and relate. Affects therefore make possible a multiplicity of interconnections. In evoking these affects, my texts are constituted by and describe the complexity of ‘what it means to have been there’. They are assemblages of non-linear time, lived experiences and reflections of what a body can do in any given situation. They express ‘street level’ interactions in the sense of Michel de Certeau’s phrase ‘clasped by the streets’ (1998).

Through this, the plateaus of my book facilitate and are a part of relational processes that co-construct particular people and worlds. They are interactional spaces where selves are made and remade. Since the organization of a plateau is in movement, it

can move towards a process of deterritorialization, or disintegration whereby it is undone, or it can move towards a process of reterritorialization, or organization, whereby it becomes more articulated. Plateaus simultaneously move towards disintegration and integration. Plateaus are therefore always in becoming, and through them I am always in becoming.

In my writing, I begin to construct my plateaus from the premise that identity is relational, by which I mean that I view processes of identity formation not as the fixed result of a subject acting upon an inert object, but rather as interactional and negotiated amongst those involved. My research is most immediately inspired by the work of Deleuze and Guattari, although it is not, therefore, Deleuzian. Instead, my own style unfolds throughout the writing of this book, a style that builds upon not only the work of Deleuze and Guattari, but also the Comaroffs' point of view in which the world develops as much from the 'Global South' as from the 'Global North'; and Sampson's postmodern understanding of humankind as decentred and multiplicitous. I do not simply 'report' on what happened - Rather, I attempt to articulate and develop what was felt in a certain moment, the possibilities that moment opened up, what came into being or went out of being in this space and time. Through my research, I map the development of interrelationships at and between multiple layers of social and political reality by applying an autobiographical approach to my reporting. This study is situated against the backdrop of globalization and, more specifically, globalization in the co-constructive relations of the Arabian Gulf.

Following from this premise, my texts explore what it would mean to function in multiplicity as a process of self-(mis)construction. Living and moving in an increasingly fragmented and mobile world, I like to focus on what it means to live in diversity. More specifically, I would like to give you an account of the affective dimensions that comprise the embodiment of living in a global world. The 'everyday' in my texts, the descriptions of what it felt like in a certain moment and in a certain place, vividly evoke my bodily experience while negotiating the local and the global. While not offering an analysis in the traditional sense, I leave 'affective modulation' to do its work, accepting Geertz's (1973) claim that 'thick description' can reveal (crucial aspects of) the experiential life-world. The central problematic of this book can now be summarized as follows:

“What does an autoethnography that addresses the processes of de- and reterritorialization look like”?

I take up and address this question within the framework of three different academic traditions. Each provides useful concepts with which I develop such an autoethnography. While none of these traditions are free from critique, as a trio they serve as a scaffolding for the limits for the project (book) and complement one another in order to provide the grounds for an autoethnography.

The first tradition is the work of Deleuze and Guattari, more specifically their concept of de- and reterritorialization, introduced in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987). With this concept they advocate thinking through processes of becoming. I am inspired by the way Deleuze and Guattari organized *A Thousand Plateaus* and the concepts with which they do so: ‘rhizome’ and ‘plateau’ (1987). The entirety of my book relates to the concept of a rhizome, which, according Deleuze and Guattari, “operates by variation, expansion, conquest, capture, and offshoots” (1987, p. 21), Deleuze and Guattari’s capture the concept of rhizome so vividly and in conjunction with the movement of deterritorialization: “Unlike a structure, which is defined by a set of points and positions, with binary relations between the points and biunivocal relationships between the 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” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 21). A rhizome is constituted of plateaus (p. 21). I experienced living in Qatar and moving about the world, as a rhizomic experience. While in Qatar, but also after I moved back to Europe, I felt like I was in a dreamlike state in which realities, texts, movies, and fiction often became intertwined. I experienced my life on different plateaus, never knowing where the plateaus would start or where they would end. My texts could be understood as a rhizome, as could my ways of ‘becoming’ (After Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 21); and to the multiple self-other relations in which I found myself entwined; relations with the world, Qatar, the university, labour relations, politics, animals; natural things—like my dog—and artificial things—like the shopping mall are vibrations of lived intensities. Then, as if moving in a perpendicular direction, they move or fall apart. For the reader of my text, this may be a disorienting experience. When the assemblage falls apart, this can leave one with the feeling of ‘falling off the plateau’ and my texts are intended to do just that, in order to evoke the lived intensities, the breakages and the ruptures.

The second tradition is the work of the Comaroffs on the ‘Global South’ (2012). They too take up this notion of becoming by stressing that the production of knowledge must occur at the location where such processes take place. In other words, in their study of the relationship between the ‘West’ and ‘Global South’ they find that the conditions are ever evolving, or in becoming. Moreover, they view the ‘Global South’ as a place that produces global futures. The Comaroffs “posit that, in the present moment, it is the global south that affords privileged insight into the workings of the world at large” (p. 1). Following this way of thinking, Qatar, located in the so-called ‘Global South’, is one such place. Thus, if one is to say something about the relationship between the ‘West’ and the ‘Global South’, one cannot, in the traditional sense, approach the ‘South’ as an object of an authoritative ethnographic study, for this denies the interactions, negotiations, and interrelationships that make up one’s notion of the ‘South’.

The third tradition is the work of Sampson, who, building on the postmodern idea of the individual, promotes a decentred and multiplicitous view on humankind. He writes: “postmodernism has portrayed a person’s identity less as a thing than as an ongoing process, less as something located inside the individual than as an emergence of dialogues between and among various people” (2009, p. 53). A person is viewed as inclusive property; an ‘enssembled’ individualism. The multiple self-other relations emerge out of the social and political processes in which the person is engaged (Sampson, 1988). According to this account, processes of identity formation are ongoing and are subject to processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. Sampson ties back to Deleuze and Guattari to make more clear that processes of identity formation take place on multiple layers of reality, and are thus to be seen as rhizomic and multi-dimensional. By focusing on affects, potentialities and actualities become manifested.

In the book, I go on to critique Deleuze and Guattari’s attempt to take up this type of decentred approach. Erickson suggests that writers like Deleuze, as well as Derrida and Lyotard, attempt to question the authoritativeness of texts and early modernist enlightenment discourses that “attempted to construct ‘master narratives’” (2011, p. 52) and to challenge “the fundamental authoritativeness of texts *per se*” (p. 52). *A Thousand Plateaus* is an exemplary case of two postmodern scholar’s posing such a challenge. I show that although they advocate such a decentred approach, their work shows little indication that they gave up their ‘ego-centred’ white male position as academics in Paris

and they, as authors, remain at a distance from their beautifully deconstructed and playful texts.

I also critique the work of the Comaroffs. Although they write from the position of the ‘South’ in order to capture its becoming in relationship to and with the West, they, in the end, offer new grand narratives, that abstract from the negotiations and interrelationships that construct the situation of which they speak. This leads them to disregard the very ‘becoming’ they attempt to articulate. By positioning myself in Qatar, I attempt to create texts that “include the author (and the author’s ‘standpoint’ perspectives) as an explicit presence in the fieldwork” (Erickson, 2011, p. 52). Finally, while I value the work of Sampson for its decentred account of the human as well as its philosophical grounding in a relational approach, I find that it lacks the ‘language’ necessary to address processes of becoming adequately.

By means of both these three traditions as well as my critiques of them, my project is grounded in a theoretical/philosophical approach that takes up the critique of traditional accounts of a static subject/object identity formation spoken by all three traditions. Unlike these three traditions, however, my project aims to do so in such a way that it is able to maintain the ‘becoming’ of its subject matter. At a methodological level my project is centred around the three concepts/ideas of affect, processes of experimentation and an autobiographical approach to reporting, also “called *autoethnography*²” (Erickson, 2011, p.

² There could be different approaches to my work that crystallize in an autobiographical way of writing and research process such as ‘narrative inquiry’, ‘self-narratives’, ‘autobiography’ or maybe ‘ethnobiography’ as a postmodernist co-construction. However, these are not the literatures that I have used. For this book, I draw largely on the discourse called ‘autoethnography’, which takes an autobiographical approach to presenting text (Erickson, 2011). In this, I find Spry’s description of autoethnography most informative: “Autoethnographic texts reveal the fractures, sutures, and seams of self-interacting with others in the context of researching lived experience” (2001, p. 712). In the chapter ‘Plateau 2014, Self, Affect and Text’, I will address the way in which I conduct my autoethnography further.

52). In the affective text I attempt to posit relational processes of becoming via the narrative voice that I take up and develop.

Thinking these two levels together, that is, the interrelation between the theoretical/philosophical and the methodological, I create autoethnographic intertextualities inspired by ‘minor literature’ as developed by Deleuze and Guattari (1986): “‘Major’ and ‘minor’ do not qualify two different languages but rather two usages or functions of language” (1987, p. 104). According to Deleuze and Guattari, Kafka’s work is the quintessential example of a ‘minor literature.’ As a Czechoslovakian Jew writing in German, he writes in the language of the ‘major literature’ but from a site of becoming other than this majority. Kafka therefore creates a language within a language. This sub-language is a “potential, creative and created, becoming” (p. 105 – 106). It is related to the major language, which is a “constant and homogeneous system” (p. 105), but in such a way that it is able to play with this system and challenge it, giving voice to voices that would otherwise not be heard. Kafka uses German to invent the kind of texts that gives voice to new perspectives. These new perspectives challenge the ways of being upheld by the major forces in society; a minor literature therefore makes possible new selves and interrelations between selves producing collectivities that, in their very becoming, stand in complex relationships to this dominate system.

In the process of researching, in the process of writing, I created an autoethnography as a ‘minor’ language. A language of ‘Maaike,’ writing about her (co-constructed) daily life practices in a foreign country located in the ‘Global South’, in an English language that is not her own. We could almost call it a ‘minor literature’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986), but yet, the narratives are not intended to be literature; they are intended to be a scholarly work contributing to social studies. And then, somewhere from in between, somewhere, there evolved what I would like to call a ‘minor literature autoethnography’ or MLA. It has distinctive qualities that distinguish it from more ‘realist’ or ‘major’ ethnographic approaches. The latter have a literary quality that creates the effect of the author as reporter, “in which the narrator presents description as if it were plain fact, and *general* because it attempted a comprehensive description of a whole way of life in the particular setting that was being described” (Erickson, 2011, p. 47). The ‘minor literature autoethnographic’ approach, however, follows a non-authoritative perspective, whereby I take up a position other than as a “knowing subject”. Its main focus is on the co-constructed multiplicity and the ‘minor’ voices that are often not heard. My ‘minor’ style of

writing is different from a more ‘major’ approach because it is not a search for ‘one single interpretation,’ but rather the attempt to address the becomings that emerge from these interrelations in a language that gives voice to new perspectives.

In the following seven plateaus, I present texts that illuminate affects produced by deterritorial and reterritorial movements. The series of texts that function on the first six plateaus are my exploration into the potentialities and struggles of self to become engaged in these type of interrelationships. The seventh plateau, my conclusion, is a text in which interrelationships between the plateaus are brought into focus.

Plateau 1

Going into the Future

People to Come

I never dreamt of being solely a stay-at-home mum and a wife. Or of becoming ‘a preaching teaching machine,’ in a branch of a provincial Dutch College in the Middle East. My dreams were of being a warrior, a sailor, a mystic and a healer; of being Ficino, ‘Lawrence of Arabia’ or Thesiger. My books were those of adventurers, heroes, cowboys and Indians. While in Qatar, in the involuntary process of becoming an expat wife and a ‘teaching machine’ at a campus site in the Middle East, I re-read Thesiger’s *Arabian Sands* (Thesiger, 2007) and T.E. Lawrence’s *7 Pillars of Wisdom* (1997). I thought that as a Western white male adult, educated at Oxford, Lawrence had the opportunity to engage in a process of becoming ‘other’ and envied him for it:

I was sent to these Arabs as a stranger, unable to think their thoughts or subscribe their beliefs, but charged by duty to lead them forward and to develop to the highest any movement of theirs profitable to England in her war. If I could not assume their character, I could at least conceal my own, and pass among them without evident friction, neither a discord nor a critic but an unnoticed influence. Since I was their fellow, I will not be their apologist or advocate. To-day in my old garments, I could play the bystander, obedient to the sensibilities of our theatre... but it is more honest to record that these ideas and actions then passed naturally. (1997, p. 30)

Maybe, in my adolescent’s dreams of faraway coasts, continents and deserts, I should have paid some more attention. What Lawrence describes was a hard life, unkind, full of suffering and terrors:

Bedouin ways were hard even for those brought up to them, and for strangers terrible: a death in life. When the march or labour ended I had no energy to record sensation, nor while it lasted any leisure to see the spiritual loveliness which sometimes came upon us by the way. In my notes, the cruel rather than the beautiful found place. We no doubt enjoyed more the rare moments of peace and forgetfulness; but I remember more the agony, the terrors, and the mistakes. Our life is not summed up in what I have written (there are things not to be repeated in

cold blood for very shame); but what I have written was in and of our life.
(Lawrence, 1997 p. 31)

I asked Claudette, my female anthropologist friend, who had spent considerable time among the Gulf Bedu, about the historical value of Lawrence and Thesiger. She said: "Lawrence to me was historically more accurate". She smiles and has this 'mischiefous' look in her eyes, and says: "but I wanted to be Thesiger". She takes another drag from the shisha, the water pipe. I knew I had found a buddy and it made me happy for a moment; another woman who dreamt of wandering the great deserts of this world and living the dream of the East. Lawrence had had the opportunity to engage in a process of becoming an Arab. Looking at it in hindsight, his free-willed becoming was not a happy one and should have served as a warning for me: "Pray God that men reading the story will not, for love of the glamour of strangeness, go out to prostitute themselves and their talents in serving another race" (2007, p. 31). I felt estranged twice, one for not being a man, secondly for not being able to become one of the Arabs. Even if I had wanted to be in the custody of strangers, it would have had to be in going behind the *Nicab* (Veil) and joining the female conversations at indigenous tribal weddings at five star hotels. Not a thing that interested me greatly. In the end, it comforted me that Lawrence, too, even in his voluntarily becoming Bedouin, wasn't happy at all, and we can wonder to what extent he became like a 'schizophrenic' lost in space and time: neither here, nor there.

In my case, the effort for these years to live in the dress of Arabs, and to imitate their mental foundation, quitted me of my English self, and let me look at the West and its conventions with new eyes: they destroyed it all for me. At the same time I could not sincerely take on the Arab skin: it was an affectation only. Easily was a man made an infidel, but hardly might he be converted to another faith. I had dropped one form and not taken on the other, and was become like Mohammed's coffin in our legend, with a resultant feeling of intense loneliness in life, and a contempt, not for other men, but for all they do. Such detachment came at times to a man exhausted by prolonged physical effort and isolation. His body plodded on mechanically, while his reasonable mind left him, and from without looked down critically on him, wondering what that futile lumber did and why. Sometimes these selves would converse in the void; and then madness was very near, as I believe it would be near the man who could see things through the veils at once of two customs, two educations, two environments. (Lawrence, 2007, pp. 31-32)

To me, the reality of living a Qatari life in “tribal modernity” (Cooke, 2014), away from Lawrence’s 20th century account, produced a diversity of things, places, organizations and communities. In Qatar, everything is associated with Money – Capitalism (?!)- and the Law; and my Moroccan and South African ‘bosses’, who viewed women in quite a different way than what I was used to. The ‘bounded’ colleagues and students; the taxi drivers, labourers and the expat mums; the bank, the local internet and telephone provider, I always expected that they were listening in on my conversations, an association of fear. I soon learned what it meant to be judged by being ‘merely’ someone’s wife: not able to sign, speak, nor testify for herself. I soon learned what it meant to be an educational, ‘knowledge reproducing’ machine. To me, every place in Qatar became a courtroom of judgement, what was right or wrong was not clearly described, but it was functioning and disturbing nevertheless. As in Kafka’s tale of *The Trial* (2007): “The Law machine’s final purpose is not to judge right and wrong or assign guilt and innocence, but simply to function: to generate, shape situate and regulate its own components in perpetually moving circuits” (Bogue, 2005, p. 115). I didn’t need to be judged, I felt guilty already and life itself had become the daily prison in which I needed to endure, somehow to live on to tell the tale. Bogue says “this Law machine is a kind of caricature of the power mechanisms Kafka saw at work in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but also a prescient blue-print of disciplinary regimes to come” (p.115). He was referring to Fascism, Marxism and Capitalism. I think of the so-called ‘soft authoritarian’ Capitalistic regimes; the “Evil Paradises” (Davis, 2007) of the Gulf, which have nothing soft to them.

Reflecting upon my thoughts, I realize that for a long time I thought Lawrence was freer, being a white male. I thought the Qatars were freer, having monetary resources, living in their desire reproducing ‘virtualities’. In the end, Lawrence was, as well as the Qatars are, caught in something they cannot be and will never belong to. We are all actors and victims being part of a modernity-reproducing machine. Lawrence, being part of a devastating Colonial system... The Qatars falling prey to advanced Capitalism and a lifestyle of excessive luxury... Surrounded by Nepali labourers committing suicide out of desperation... Filipino maids being raped and left for dead in the desert... Me, living an exotic dream of the impossible male adventurer and Arab becoming; me, living a reality constrained to daily life; performing almost ‘bounded’ labour under a totalitarian regime. Yet, it has to be said, and made very explicit, that the wanderings and sufferings of my soul are in no comparison with the Asian immigrants. In the end, it feels as if there is no escape

to the ‘Colonial Matrix of Power’ (Mignolo, 2007). I realize that it was never a question of assessing the Laws to see if they were righteous, nor of asking if the system is profitable. The question to ask is: did living in Qatar feel dignified or human? To me, it never did. At no time in my life did I feel more desolate, unhappy and constrained in what I could do. Looking out of the window of my high-rise apartment, facing the beautiful Arabian Gulf - ‘not quite ready to jump as of yet’ - but feeling this immense pain, this tremendous sensation of profound unhappiness and fear; holding on to some hope of what could be, this little light of what could be. Feelings of alienation, suffocation, and extreme uncertainty; feelings of hardly being able to breathe were overwhelming. In these kinds of circumstances, there are only ‘non-becomings’. To me it is what happens when Capitalism shows its ugly face and, definitely to me, in a crystallization of existing disciplinary authoritarian regimes; there is no future to come, but an existing repulsive reality of daily life is right there.

I am co-constructed by Lawrence, by Claudette and by the stories of the Bedu’s past, present and future. In a way, I am co-constructed by my perceptions of the toiling workers. I am constructed by the sand as much as the glitter of the city. I sit down and write. I write this text, read it, and review it. I think I will cry... Yet, it consoles me, and makes me strong to think in (naïve, foolish, utopian?) options of alternatives outside of the systems and disciplines that have fed the World since the 16th century. Thinking and maybe collective dreaming of a ‘de-colonial’ (Mignolo, 2007) option that maybe will be able to regenerate a primordial authenticity, a releasing of the senses and a restoration of dignity and humanity. Let us reflect upon this, let us create it, let us start an experimentation of this world and with “people to come” (Deleuze and Guattari, p. 345, 1987).

Within the Global South

Working and Living in the ‘Global South’: Qatar. My research took place in Qatar. Initially, my experience as a researcher and lecturer in Qatar forced me to question what happens or results by bringing Western enlightenment thought, European higher education, art, and culture, to a region that does not share in the long common history of the Western Enlightenment. I was (can be thought of as) an agent of European ‘cosmopolitanism’. However, currently, iconic places of excessive growth, mainly include Abu Dhabi, Dubai

and Qatar—city-states within the Gulf region. These states have become loci of hyper-consumption. Davis (2007) calls this [referring to Dubai] a place of monumental excess, where the goal is to be number one in the world (2007, p. 52). Davis also found that this goal is to be achieved by gigantic architectural projects, Disney-like sites of cultural heritage and shopping paradises. The ambition includes “perfectibility with simulacra more perfect than the original” (p. 61). The city-states are in the front line of world history, generative and worldwide futures (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2012). Qatar has been depicted as an economic success story (Al-Tamimi, 2013), global cultural power (Sherwell, 2013), boomtown, part of the “new centers of the Arab world” (Al Qassemi, Qtd. Cambanis, 2013) and a football force (Conn, 2013); but also as violating human and labour rights (Rifai, 2013). Qatar continues to influence global futures by organizing big sport events such as the World Cup, establishing ambitious museums and international educational institutions. Qatari investors are taking increasingly part in Global investments and have become huge players in the art world. One such example was how “Sheikha Mayassa bint Hamad al-Thani, the sister of Qatar’s emir, is now reported to be the secret buyer – [responsible for] a world record at auction” (Sherwell, 2013).

I encountered, first hand, some of the privileges of living in such a place, such as being able to go to exciting museum exhibitions, and the Doha Tribeca Film festival, but also experienced some of the difficulties one faces when working as a professional under a kafala – ‘sponsorship’ - system of labour. These contradictions and contingencies can be approached in a much broader context, when seen as tokens of modernity in the Middle East, where development is happening regardless of the global movements in the North, such as of economic recession. This place Qatar with its economic growth, cultural aspirations and search for new forms of urbanity, into forefront of global developments. Qatar is a place where many social and cultural changes happen and with them it becomes a place where politics, social life and identity are renegotiated.

Jeremy Rifkin (2000), describes a metamorphosis to “cultural capitalism” (2000, p. 7) He describes “a long-term shift from industrial production to cultural production” (p. 7), a shift which I witnessed occurring in Qatar and the other Gulf states. Rifkin argues that capitalism is shifting to a new phase that of the ‘Age of Access’: “Global travel and tourism, theme cities and parks, destination entertainment centers, wellness, fashion and cuisine, professional sports and games, gambling, music, film, television, the virtual worlds of cyberspace and electronically mediated entertainment of every kind are fast

becoming the center of a new hypercapitalism that trades in access to cultural experiences” (p. 7) and commodifies play (p. 7). I witnessed that many of these developments were financed with revenue from the oil and gas industry, and made possible with the influx of migrant workers. Urry states that: “this is all made possible by migrant contract labourers from Pakistan and India [and to a lesser extent Western expats], who are bound to a single employer and subject to totalitarian control. Indeed, labour relations in hyper-capitalism are excessively exploitative, although this is carried to the extreme in Dubai [and Abu Dhabi and Qatar], where almost all labour is imported and workers’ passports are removed on entry” (Qtd. Davis, 2007: 64–6, Urry, p. 205).

I was also confronted with how I experienced my (professional) identity and lifestyle. As a Graduate student at Utrecht University, my research has been focused on the affect of social interactions, and as such related to: “the interaction between social transformations and organisations in the public domain” (USG, p. 1). Specifically, my research could be framed within the wider context of the nature of social transformations, wherein: “Immigration and migration, cultural and social diversification understood broadly as involving diversities related to gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, professional identities and lifestyles,” (p. 16) interact.

Comaroff and Comaroff’s Global South. Why would anyone go to Qatar? One reason I can give is that initially I was drawn by romanticism, stories such as those by Lawrence and Thesiger, the idea of sitting at a campfire or taking long trips into the desert. At the same time, the thought of becoming part of the fast moving development taking place in Qatar was tremendously attractive, especially when one considers the economic growth, urban architecture and art. And, of course, there was everything that came with being a ‘Western’ European expat: having an SUV, luxury, a certain richness, drinking illegal white ‘Chablis’ in the desert; a thousand and one nights. With these intertextualities of the Global South (Qatar) now ‘experienced’, I will turn to examples of how it is increasingly a locus for “innovative and energetic modes of producing value,” (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012, p. 117) and is, in fact, becoming a driver of “contemporary capitalism as both a material and culture formation” (p. 117) such as the anthropologists Jean and John L. Comaroff suggest in their book *Theory from the South: Or, How Euro-America is Evolving Toward Africa* (2012). At the same time, there is a very different story taking place in Qatar/the Global

South, a story that is based on the rampant over-mining of raw materials totally out of control, a set of labour relations completely out of control, and politics become blackmail. Actually, the Comaroffs state this is the world that is taking over. It is a story that I also encountered. On a daily basis, I witnessed the mistreatment of migrant workers, some of whom died due to unsafe working conditions; and of domestic workers (maids) who were not able to leave the homes in which they worked. I, like any migrant worker, was subject to all kinds of labour control mechanisms, including daily intimidation and isolation in the work place. The Kafala sponsorship system left me extremely dependent on my husband; without his permission I could not drive a car, buy a car, work or leave the country; and my husband, he was subject to an exit visa that prevented him from leaving the country without ‘permission’. Moreover, as a critical scholar, I feared that the rules conflicted with freedom of expression; for example, one cannot criticise the Emir nor the Islamic world.

Thus, another side of the story – there is never one story -- is that democracy is not rolling itself out from the West, but massive corruption, brutal labour relations and a two-tier society is rolling in from the South. By relocating myself to Qatar, I am actually ‘going into the future’. The Comaroffs’ work connects to a critical side of Deleuze and Guattari’s thought, thought that, at the time they wrote—the 1980s—was focussing on the problems of contemporary Western culture. I, however, want to move beyond Deleuze and Guattari, taking the relevance of my work right into the ‘now’ and the challenges we now confront in the wake of Advanced Capitalism, ‘embodied’.

I find the work of Comaroff and Comaroff, especially their latest book, to be inspirational. They, as scholars, have experience living and working in different places, such as Africa and the United States. In their work, they acknowledge that Euro-America and Western-Enlightenment has dominated ‘science’ since the 16th century. Within the social sciences, most of the literature with the greatest impact has been produced in Europe and North America. Nevertheless, due to the global recession, whereby many things have changed for the West economically and socially, many developments (in law, labour, Advanced Capitalism) are taking place in the so-called Global South. One can think of, for example, the massive economic growth in the BRIC countries and urban developments in Nigeria. As such, the Comaroffs seek to develop a theory from an ex-centric point of view. In *Theory from the South: Or, How Euro-America is Evolving Toward Africa*, they look from the so-called centre to the periphery—the so-called Global South. They posit that: “in the present moment, it is the so-called ‘Global South’ that affords privileged insight into

the workings of the world at large” (2012, p. 114). The ‘Global South’ has become a signifier for the world of non-European, postcolonial peoples. Comaroff and Comaroff assert that this world is “synonymous with uncertain development, unorthodox economies, failed states, and nations fraught with corruption, poverty, and strife” The ‘Global South’ is an object created by theories spun by the ‘Global North.’ They note that the Global North rarely views the Global South as “a source of theory and explanation for world historical events” They further ask whether the financial crises, privatisation of state-owned enterprises, corruption, and ethnic conflict, which also afflict many nation-states of the Northern Hemisphere, are evidence of a “positive and problematic” evolution toward the South. If those events are evidence of such an evolution, then they ask to what extent are they so? And what would this mean for the dualistic foundation of global oppositions? *Theory from the South: Or, How Euro-America is Evolving Toward Africa* draws on research Comaroff and Comaroff conducted primarily in Africa; on issues such as law, labour, and the contours of contemporary capitalism. They sought to understand these issues through the lens of a theory developed from an ‘ex-centric’ perspective (all quotes in this paragraph from 2012, p. 213).

In addressing these issues, Comaroff and Comaroff assume an inverse perspective relative to the evolutionary pathways that social scientists usually take for granted, inverting the usual order of things. Their experience living in the Global South, combined with their experience teaching in the Global North, has enabled them to address issues such as democracy, liberalism, labour and capital, religion, and multiculturalism and in ways simultaneously both strange and familiar. Since their theory was developed in the South, it affords a unique perspective on these issues. Their ethnographic point of view is sensitive to the significance of the local within a global context, where everyday lives are enmeshed with global-historical processes.

They further recognize the complexities of the formation of colonial societies and of those societies’ relations with Europe, relations with ramifications that Europe could not have predicted. The metropolis and colony, they say, contributed equally to the rise of global capitalism, creating what twentieth century philosophers Deleuze and Guattari call a double capture, “an encounter that transforms the disparate entities that enter into a joint becoming” (cited in Toscana 2005, p. 40). From this comes the acknowledgment of the critical source of value and innovation that colonies represent to modern nation-states in the North and acknowledgement of the exclusion of the colonized from full participation in

those “imagined communities” (2012, p. 116). Modernity, in their view, has always been a co-construction between the North and South. It has been a distinctly asymmetrical world-historical creation, and “however hard it may seek to ‘purify’ itself” (Latour 1993, Qtd. Comaroff and Comaroff, p. 116), “[I]t has always consisted of diverse significations, materializations, and temporalities—perpetually contested, hard to pin down, and historically labile” (2012, p. 116).

The historical production of modernity encompasses narratives originating in the South as well as the North. I acknowledge that one can identify examples of modern capitalism’s internal conflicts and emergent features in the South as well as the North. By taking an autoethnographic approach to my reporting, I point to examples of how the South is increasingly a locus for “innovative and energetic modes of producing value” and is, in fact, becoming a driver of “contemporary capitalism as both a material and cultural formation.” This perspective illuminates an image of the history of the present. Comaroff and Comaroff develop two related arguments, which I will illuminate in my MLA’s based on my experience of working and living in Qatar. (2012, p. 117).

The Comaroffs’ first argument is that the evolution of modernity is poorly understood if one imagines it as a kind of development pattern that took place only in Europe and North America. Instead, this evolution must be understood, and dealt with, in its own right. Self-conscious modernity in the South encompasses its own creation, its own possibilities, and its own departure from the past—particularly from the past as a construct of the metropolis.

The second argument is that we can better understand the evolution of modernity from outside the Euro-modernist narrative of the last two hundred years—a narrative that assumes the North to be the driver and the South to be the driven. Instead, we should pay attention to how world-historical processes first begin and develop in the South and, in a sense, prefigure events in the North. This is the sense of Comaroff and Comaroff’s “How Euro-America is evolving toward Africa.” When accepting that world-historical processes are global, we need to examine how what used to be thought of as marginal is now better understood as an advancing front wave. It is in these areas where freely migrating capital is most free to invest (relatively unregulated by the nation-state), where manufacturing is most cost-efficient, and where informal and ad hoc economies have endured the longest. As the so-called advanced economies have outsourced an increasing amount of their

extractive, manufacturing, and service activities to South Asia, Africa, and South America; the South seems “to be running ahead of the Euromodern world, harbingers of *its* history-in-the-making” (2012, p. 121).

What I focus on, in particular, are how, from an autoethnographic co-constructed point of view, the processes of primary production, labour, the signification of value, and the accumulation of wealth affect governance. The freedom with which capital can now flow globally has pressured governments into reconsidering an increasing number of ways to regulate this flow. The governments of former colonies, seeking to maximize the benefit of this flow, have negotiated agreements with multinational corporations favourable to the corporations, typically headquartered in China, India, or states in the Arabian Gulf. These corporations have little incentive to refrain from pressuring governments to provide them with tax incentives, exemptions from environmental regulations, uncontrolled labour agreements, and reduced liability—in short, these governments provide corporations with the freedom to externalize as much of their costs as possible.

Consequently, the South has become the incubator of neoliberal economic policy, policy that we find increasingly being adopted in the North. Indeed, the economic strength of Brazil, India, and South Africa has allowed capital from those countries to effectively colonize the North. The Comaroffs question whether the West recognizes that it is playing catch-up with the temporality of its ‘others’.

“The South has also led the way in the efflorescence of ‘ethnoprise,’” (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2012, p. 125) what elsewhere has been termed *Ethnicity, Inc* (2009, Comaroff and Comaroff Qtd, p. 125) “The boom in the identity economy is having thoroughgoing implications for the ways in which ordinary people experience collective being, social capital, and political attachment. And it is diffusing northward, toward those metropoles that once saw themselves as beyond ethnic parochialism or ‘tradition.’ As this suggests, the Global South is producing and exporting some ingenious modes of survival – and more” (p. 125).

It is here that the Comaroffs’ two theses (p. 125) converge: the first claims that modernity in Africa exists *sui generis*, and not as a derivative of the Euro-original, and this leads to the second, which is the counter-evolutionary assertion that in the history of the present, the Global South is running ahead of the Global North, as a prefiguration of its future-in-the-making. “We have already alluded to both. The first is that a number of

nation-states of the South, far from being marginal to the global economy, are central to it. [...] they will become ever more integral to the operations of capital, not to mention cultural imaginations, across the planet" (p. 126). "In short, there is much South in the North, much North in the South, and more of both to come in the future" (p. 127). "In the complex hyphenation that links economy to governance, and both to the enterprises of everyday life, then, the contemporary global order rests on a highly flexible, inordinately *intricate* web of synapses, a web that both reinforces and eradicates, both sharpens and ambiguates, the lines between hemispheres. As a result, what precisely is North, and what is South, becomes ever harder to pin down" (p. 127). This is why the concept of a Global South resists any substantive definition. It is the concept of a relation, not of something that exists independently. Its significance is labile, subject to the movement of materials, people, and ideas. My work inspired by Deleuze and Guattari's concepts attempts to offer MLA's written by a vulnerable human subject positioned for some time in another world: the Global South. I accept Deleuze and Guattari's postmodern idea that at the level of a 'plateau' there is only an assemblage: configurations of bodies that enter temporary processes of becoming. The MLA's are written from the first-person in order to invite the reader into this world and make reading them an experience in itself. In abstract terms, my work attempts to be like 'postmodern autobiographic' literature or art, so as to make it compelling to read. In the textual representation, it remains bounded within certain limits. An impasse arises between two different views on identity – one, a more traditional view and the other a postmodern view of humankind as decentred, which Sampson explains "portrayed person's identity less as a thing than as an ongoing process, less as something located inside the individual than as an emergence of dialogues between and among various people" (1999, p. 53). Sampson, however, suggests that, in time, alternatives to this impasse need to be explored. He also believed that "postmodernism, with its challenges to the hard-core, centralized notion of identity, may yet prove helpful" (1999, p. 53). In this postmodern line, my MLA's explore how to evoke multiple interpretations; I am as much part of ongoing relational processes of identity formation as the reader of my work who is invited to become part of a temporary assemblage. My work, to a certain degree, is similar to what Comaroff and Comaroff are doing. They are thinking the Global South in relation to the North (and the North in relation to the South) in such a way that the postmodern 'becoming' of the two can only be understood through this relation of self-other as inseparable. However, I am seeing Qatar, experiencing Qatar, in a process of becoming with Qatar, in much the same way that the South is in a process of becoming with the

North (and vice-versa). That is, ‘I’, as a decentred and thus multiple/polyphonic self can no longer be understood without reference to my relationship to Qatar and vice versa (and all the affects this provoked). In my book, the MLA’s I present evoke the ‘autoethnographical inspired co-constructed Global South’. In the final plateau, the conclusion, the Global South will reappear; on this plateau, I will draw rhizomic maps of what it can mean to live in the Global South. One might even say I will ‘go to the future’ and construct movements of interrelations. In doing so, I attempt to produce texts that offer engaging and compelling autoethnographic reflections on ‘what it can mean to have been there’. I do not do so in a self-other way of speaking about the other and thereby making the self invisible, but rather through multiple co-constructions of self-other relations. My MLA’s are not one fixed story but an autoethnographic reflection of always ongoing and moving processes of becoming..’

Plateau 2

At the Behest of the University

A Desert Sinkhole

The desert, the ever shifting grains of sand. A continuous de- and reterritorialization. Time is measured by lack of water, lack of rain, and gatherings at oases. In the desert, we find very few people. It is only the nomads who know how to negotiate this space. The shifting sands form and shape the minds of these people.

Qatar used to be a tiny, little known emirate in the Middle East. Its people had a nomadic pastoral way of living, inclusive trading and pearl diving. When all that was fading away, in the 1960s, oil brought a new way of life, a new becoming and prosperity for those belonging to the leading tribes. It is said, far and away, that in this new assemblage, there is an example of a country and “people to come” (Deleuze and Guattari, p. 345, 1987). In this country, its citizens could live a life of religious and family values, while getting an (international) education and free health care. Qatar has become one of the countries with the world’s highest GDPs:

Lamborghinis, Hermes bags, designer clothing, 2022 FIFA World Cup, events aplenty; a museum quickly replaces the culture of the desert. ‘Castles’ in the desert have replaced the tents, the settlement of ‘Ad-Dawhah’, became the city of Doha. The events of the quickly rising oil and gas prices lead to development, with the speed of light, a ‘line of flight’ in Deleuzian-Guattarian terms, in a manifestation only bespoken in Ali Baba and the desert people’s wildest dreams.

This presentation of my text is my desert of the concepts, ideas and thoughts gathered during two years of working and living in the urban oases that Doha Qatar has become. A presentation that gives attention to processes of becoming, in which one never knows what one will do or how one will react in a given situation. Becomings in the movement of my reflections and individual struggle with experimentation in identities.

These texts are affective presentations of lived intensities. They are not presented in triangulations, coding or whatever, but nevertheless they are intended to be a “gathering of experience beyond subjectivity, a transduction of forces” (Stewart, 2010, p. 340). They are

assemblages of non-linear time and lived experience, of home, family, work, leisure, adventure, dreaming and feeling lost. They reflect my feelings of what a body can do in any given situation; situations that are never meant to last in the ever changing de- and reterritorialization of a world in becoming; with the stage being a desert city in becoming. A world that I had never experienced until I moved to the Gulf; a movement into imagined possible worlds, a world that was suddenly there; a space where anything can happen, anything was possible, beyond my wildest dreams; for I was living in Qatar, when it was (and still is) leaning heavily on the influx of numerous expats, domestic workers and labourers. More than one million have come from Australia, North-America and Europe; from Asia and Africa. The Filipino, Indonesian, Singhalese and Ethiopian maids. The Nepalese, Burmese and the Filipino constructors, and the many others that fulfil the jobs needed to keep this desiring-machine going. For me, it was like being sucked into a desert sinkhole, I was taken into the unknown territory of Qatari labour affairs.

Maaike, Becoming Bounded, Becoming a Slave, Enslaving Myself...

“You will have to go for your residence permit this week” she says. I look at her and have no idea what she is talking about. She is Latasha the ‘HR manager’, sitting in a bleak concrete office with an empty dirty wall, behind a big desk. She has placed her Louis Vuitton bag in a prominent position next to her, in order for it to escape no-one’s eyes. “Residence permit?” I ask. It is October and we arrived in September. By now I would have thought we had completed all formalities. It feels like another unpleasant surprise. “What does it mean?” I ask. She says that tomorrow, Saqib, the Administrative Aid, will take me and Myrthe, my daughter to the Immigrations Office where they will take a blood sample, take Tuberculosis chest X-rays; then, he will take us to the criminal office where they will take my fingerprints. I panic, cannot believe what I hear. I look at her like she is making a joke and say, “This can’t be true”. Latasha withdraws in her kind of “I know it all, because I have lived her all my life,” position and says “This is what makes us part of this family, we all have to go through this, welcome to life in the Gulf”. I do not feel happy with it. I wonder how it comes that I didn’t know about this, why no-one told me before about this; I don’t like the idea of submission to a system like this at all. I also hate needles, which only makes things worse.

5.30, in the morning: I am at the university with my daughter. I thought long and hard. I didn't like the idea of going through this process. I didn't sleep well. I was considering going back home to The Netherlands, or my second home in Hungary. Going to the Immigrations Office, getting needles stuck in me, giving fingerprints, it feels like just another unsatisfying and alarming signal that makes me feel out of place. What's more, being a child of parents who lived through WWII, it reminds me of the totalitarian Nazi regimes of total control, of body and mind, of administrative control, '*Ausweises*' and of murdering people for their blood(lines); a thought that I carried with me, but had discarded quickly because it bore no reasonable comparison with my current situation, that of a Senior Lecturer with a university in the Gulf.

We are waiting for Saqib to take us to the Immigrations Office. He is not there. He is nowhere to be found. At 8.00 Latasha comes in. She starts phoning Saqib who is apparently driving around Doha with no particular destination, who is very unclear, but says he will be here soon. I have a six-year-old child at hand, who becomes very restlessness. We tried games on the computer. We tried painting. Now, a couple of hours later her patience is gone. I, being very tense about the idea of having to give blood, don't help to create a good atmosphere either. "Where is this Saqib?" I wonder; I become angry. I feel my blood rising to my head. I go to Latasha and say that I now really want to go, really want to take my daughter to school, that this is ridiculous, that my patience has gone, that I am angry. She looks at me with blank eyes and picks up her mobile once more to phone Saqib who, supposedly, is going to save us all. At 9.30 Saqib, an Egyptian in a long white dress '*jellaba*', shows up. He ignores our stares, says "Sorry, sorry, sorry" and then calmly states that it's too late now to go to the Immigration Department. I lose myself, I start stamping my feet, slamming doors, running over the hall, back and forth, having no place to go with my anger.... At my work! I hate myself for losing my temper in such a way at such a place, my daughter in sight with big angry eyes, but the anger stays.

Later, Alexander and I have a discussion. I am calmed down a bit. We are at home in our moist dark and dingy apartment. I am ready to go home, although home does not really exist anymore, having sold our place in Holland. I say I love him, I love Myrthe, I will love them, but I need to go home. I need to go home to keep my sanity, my self-respect, my feeling of what it means to be free. He knows how I feel, locked up, caged like a tiger, with no place to go.

The following day 5.30: Alexander, Myrthe and Maaike are driving to the university once more. I am sitting in the front of our rental car, feeling like I am being driven to my own execution, numb. Apparently the conclusion had been we'd stay. Apparently the idea was to go along with the whole thing. At 6.00 I have a *déjà vu*, being at the university with no Saqib around. He shows up at 6.30 and says "Sorry, sorry, sorry, we do have time, do come..."

I sit in the back of a white car, Myrthe sits next to me. I try to hold myself together because of her, telling her it's not all that bad, that she needs to go with me, but probably that she doesn't have to give blood. I try to be nice and comforting. I look at Saqib behind the wheel. I feel more and more like a prisoner with no say, no voice. We arrive at the Immigrations Office. Saqib says, "I cannot go with you. This is the domain of women; I will wait outside for you." I see a mirror-like door. I still feel like I should walk away, should book a ticket, should leave... Somehow my ego cannot deal with this situation, I feel better than this, and I feel humiliated already. I walk through the door and immediately I feel disorientated, I feel like I landed in hell. My eyes see cruel looking completely veiled woman dressed in black, militant, and fundamentalist. They seem to run the place. It feels like a bad movie that gets worse and worse. The eyes of other woman stare at me as well. There are hundreds of them; they look like they are from the poor part of Indonesia, or Sri Lanka. They are tiny, they are poorly dressed, and they stink. In this mass they are alone, like me. Being taller, I feel like a giant sticking out between these women. Yet, I have no idea where to go. I walk up to a desk and ignore the staring eyes. They wave a bit with their hands and point to a person sitting behind a typewriter. I walk to the typewriter, who waves with her hand and points to a chair and says something which I cannot completely understand, but sounds like I need to sit down. I sit down.

We are five hours down to road. I have been shuffled from one desk to another. Myrthe has been so patient. It is her that keeps me sane. I need to hold myself together, to act like it is all right, like it's completely normal to be here. We have been changing seats for a long time. There are hundreds of seats. Each seat shift brings me closer near step two, my 'involuntarily' blood donation. I assure Myrthe that she is all right; that she just needs to be with me, that they won't take her blood. Finally, it's my turn; I walk down to Room 7. A lady from the Middle East, only a headscarf, light blue, she looks nice, she looks friendly. She asks me to sit down and to uncover my arm. I sit down I uncover my arm. She puts in a needle; it doesn't really hurt. "Patient now I think". Slowly I observe my

blood being drawn from me. It feels like a bad surrender. It feels terrible. It feels like giving up all the little bits of freedom that I had left. I am disappointed in myself. I gave up to a system to which I did not want to conform. I feel lost, I feel beaten, and I feel like a victim and a coward at the same time for not walking away.

All is not yet done. I stand up, hardly being able to stand up. I wonder why I make such a big fuss out of this. I need to bring it back into proportion, but somehow the injustice of it all, the embodiment of system, the system being able to touch my body, being able to abstract from my body, being able to judge, what I am, what I hold, my very DNA if they want. I am outraged, but look calm. There are more steps to take today. It's back to the seats.

We are at stage 3, the tuberculosis test, and more chairs to sit in. I sit; I feel that I have had enough. I am not patient any more. I feel also like I have nothing to lose anyway. I walk up front. I feel terrible for all the would-be-maids, it is painful for me to realize that in this system, that in this Qatar, I am no less than a maid, a teaching maid. To the Qatars we are probably all alike, we are sisters, and we are bounded labourers. It makes me hate the maids waiting with me even more. I do not want to be part of this system, I do not want to conform, and I do not want to be equal with poverty, powerlessness. I walk upfront. I tell them it's enough. I tell them I have a daughter. I tell them that I am not used to this.

It's O.K. They react calm. They tell me I am right. They tell me it's O.K. They tell me it's O.K. because they don't want to make the little girl wait any longer. I am hauled to another room with 20 more women. It brings me nothing but another line. I am told to undress. To take off my shirt and wait. I take off my shirt, I feel exposed. I am surrounded by veiled woman, dressed in black, no face to see, but their eyeholes. They are completely covered. But, I am standing there, I am 38 years old, I have a university degree, I have no place to hide. My breasts are exposed in public. I am lined up like at a slave market. I feel completely humiliated. It's a collective humiliation and a lesson in humility at the same time. It doesn't sit well with me. I want to throw up, I feel sick, I need to give up; I want to run away; I want to cry.

I do nothing. I look at my daughter and give her a bleak smile. There is nothing else left now. I feel that from now on it's endurance and survival. Surviving in not going mad, surviving in keeping my dignity, surviving in trying to keep the little bit of power that I have left inside. My body feels weak, my heart feels angry. My brain goes numb...

'All Hope Abandon Ye Who Enter Here'

Through me you pass into the city of woe:

Through me you pass into eternal pain:

Through me among the people lost for aye.

Justice the founder of my fabric mov'd:

To rear me was the task of power divine,

Supremest wisdom, and primeval love.

Before me things create were none,

save things Eternal, and eternal I endure.

All hope abandon ye who enter here.

Such characters in colour dim I mark'd

Over a portal's lofty arch inscrib'd:

Whereat I thus: Master, these words import.

Dante's Divine Comedy (14th century). (1814 transla. Alighieri, & Cary)

"All hope abandon ye who enter here", are the acclaimed words in Dante's vision written at the entrance to Hell. I am sitting in my office, an empty concrete cell, dirty from use over the years, no phone, no students and no colleagues. Not a friendly word around. My first office, I had decorated with fine art, inspiring prints that I had taken from the Netherlands, diplomas to underline my accomplishments, to give me some sense of who I was and where I came from. There had been a colleague too, a Pakistani girl who had studied at this university, who was very talented, who had been very submissive. She had been recognized as the ideal student, arranged wife, and teaching machine; the ideal person to serve in a system which slowly but surely takes people's voice, energy, their embodiment, until they are dried out, empty. Then, they are sent off, dumped. She and I,

we had had some conversations, shared some pictures, she had seen some of my anger after another round of (administrative) verbal violence from the university. I had planted some ideas in her head, like going off and pursuing the Masters for which she longed so much. She had told me that she, luckily, had been able to marry rather late, but that her husband would never let her go off. He would do sport five or six times a week and she, after serving long days at the university, would be needed to cook and clean the house. At her home she felt alone and excluded from her husband's life, as he would only come in to eat, and then take off with his friends again. We had shared the room for two semesters but in the end, I think, we were both on our own plateaus, with our own thoughts, our own worlds, both just surviving; probably the only experience which we shared together was being strangers in this place, onlookers who would never belong. Before the summer vacation started, I had put all my stuff in boxes, in the conviction that I wouldn't come back, that I shouldn't come back, that this had been for me the reasonable limit to what I could do.

But, yet, I had returned after the summer and a new room 'fitting my Senior position,' had been offered, and from there on I had hardly any contact with my colleagues anymore, who apparently, had gotten the message that I was some sort of pariah; in administrative isolation. My attendance was required from 8 am – 4 pm. No leave was allowed; no leaving the building was allowed. I could leave my room for about seven hours a day, when I was teaching. I had no phone, internet was under surveillance. All my time had been filled in to serve the system. It was in this time that Dante's infamous words came to my mind, they had never appeared before, but now in the connection with Qatar, with entering the country after vacation, with entering the university, with seeing the labourers suffering in 40 degrees outside, making long hours, that I almost abandoned all hope. I think I could reasonably see the abnormality of my situation which, compared to those of the labourers, workers and maids, was quite luxurious. After all, I had a substantial salary, air-conditioning, and regular days off. But, to my feeling, I did not have any freedom. Within, and outside of the university I felt disciplined and controlled, all the time. I think the Internet connections were controlled on a university level, but the home connection was granted based on my passport number. My phone was connected to my passport number. If I wanted to enter a compound, or government building I had to give my passport number and Qatari ID.

I had heard stories of friends who had complained about their company, Qatar Airways, the nation's pride, by text message only, and how they had been deported in a matter of days. We had heard stories of friends, accused by students of having insulted their boss, being locked up, and in the end not convicted, but still around as no exit visa was given, no money, no income, and no rights; locked up in the administrative and legal 'red tape' of Qatar, with no house, no job, no money, at the mercy of friends in a long wait to go home. It was told; it was confirmed to in newspaper articles.

It made me worry as well. I knew some people at the university didn't like me, I knew that sometimes I had a big mouth, I knew that since I had come to Qatar I regularly had had rounds of anger. What if my boss decided I had spoken up against the sheikh, or insulted their religion? It made me paranoid. It made it very hard to function. It made me hate me for returning to Qatar after my summer vacation, not willing, not able to walk away from job, security and family. It was almost destroying me, in the process.

Plateau 1987

Amidst Deleuze

On the Bridge [Slave Infidel]

I look out of a dusty window; the world below me is filled with sand, trucks and more trucks. The trucks bring supplies for newly built apartment buildings on the artificial island, The Pearl-Qatar. All morning I have been reading texts from *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) and my thoughts are going all over the place; they are sizzling from the speed and velocity of the texts I am reading. Deleuze and Guattari create their own language, and in my thoughts I see two dedicated, engaged authors orchestrating texts with a smile and some laughter. They even wrote a plateau about “How Do You Make Yourself a Body Without Organs?” (1987, p. 149), which is some sort of assemblage without organisation inspired by the ideas of Antonin Artaud. Also, the long sentences that use a great number of commas rather than periods, are dazzling and inspiring. But, at the same time, an uneasy feeling creeps up on me, I become unsettled by the concept of the slave-infidel-foreigner (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 395). I have read the text about this concept a number of times, and not only do I understand the concept, I also embody it—how does it feel to be a slave? It makes me feel nervous.

I feel like letting our dog, Wacky, out for awhile. I pick up the leash and Wacky stares at me, his tail wagging uncertainly. He is not sure if we will go out or not...

Meanwhile, I am still consumed by the concept of the ‘slave-infidel-foreigner’ that is brought up in plateau “1227: Treatise on Nomadology:—The War Machine” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 351). Have I enslaved myself as a slave-infidel-foreigner? I teach my students a language, and the competences, to serve the ‘Qatari city state’ in becoming, and yet, I have a strong feeling that I will always remain an outsider. I am very much an outsider—deterritorialized in Qatar, a state that presents itself as such a powerful and intense force. Deleuze, what do you mean when you write: “the slave-infidel-foreigner is the one who becomes a soldier and believer while remaining deterritorialized in relation to the lineages and the State. You have to be born an infidel to become a believer; you have to be born a slave to become a soldier” (1987, p. 393)? Could it be applied to this new state, this new cosmopolitan state, built on gas revenues; a state investing in landmark sporting events and the arts? I was born and raised outside the realm of this place; religiously, I

would probably be looked upon as an ‘infidel’ by some of the more conservative believers of Islam. And slavery does not officially exist in this place; it was abolished sometime in the mid-20th century... But, then, I encounter so many slave-like situations everywhere around me, and somehow, deep down, I feel enslaved myself as well. It is a confusing and saddening awareness; and it is probably the reason why these texts on the ‘slave-infidel-foreigner’ are making me so nervous: they function as some kind of mirror. I realize that the texts on Nomadology by Deleuze and Guattari very much fit the world I live in at the moment. It would be easy to align the idea of the concept of the ‘nomad turned state’, with the long Qatari history of Bedouins and trade and the transition currently being made towards an affluent city state moving to position itself, right in the middle of Advanced Capitalism in contemporary development. But, I also know that it is not my project. That would run the risk of becoming such a project of ‘othering,’ while I would rather remain with my own experiences, with what it means to be here.

I finally react to Wacky, and we go down 16 floors together. The heat in Doha is intense; it feels like a blanket of heat falling down on me when I open the central door of our apartment building. I pass by the reception where six workers are present. Are those ‘slave-infidel-foreigners’?

I still recall the words from the text: “Specific schools or institutions are needed for this purpose: the special body is an invention proper to the war machine, which States always utilize, adapting it so totally to their own ends that it becomes unrecognizable, or restituting it in bureaucratic staff form, or in the technocratic form of very special bodies, or in ‘esprit de corps’ that serve the State as much as they resist it, or among the commissars who double the State as much as they serve it” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 393). Is the university I work for set up as a tool of the State?

In the meantime, I have become covered with dust that sticks on my sweaty face. Wacky, the dog, seems quite happy in the heat. The concept of the slave-infidel-foreigner is still occupying my mind. When I look around me, I find that I have walked onto a building site, and there are buses full of workers, and trucks and more trucks. I try to leave the slave concept behind me, think of something else; everything is in movement, with construction going on, cars and trucks driving by, the dusty wind blowing in my face. It shouldn’t be hard to find a bit of distraction. In the distance, at the other side of the water, I see the contours of a newly constructed area that mimics Venice. I remain bounded by the concepts introduced in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987); they do not want to leave my thoughts. I imagine how to deterritorialize one’s own thought. Deleuze and Guattari had their drugs

and alcohol. I currently have my dog, Wacky, a very dynamic city undergoing a fundamental change, and a copy of *A Thousand Plateaus*. I wouldn't mind sipping a hearty malt whisky right now. I walk towards the bridge that connects the mainland to the new reclaimed land of 'The Pearl-Qatar,' and I think about extracting the concept of beauty from Venice, and transporting it here to Doha. How is that possible, the process of deterritorializing Venice and reterritorializing the idea of Venice here in Doha? The 'original' Venice, in Italy, remains the same, I can assume. But what remains of this idea in Doha? How about *Commedia dell'arte* and its joyful personages such as Arlecchino? Would they survive? Do they appear in Doha when the Venetian project is 95% finished? Is Arlecchino, with his tricks, welcome here in the heat? It would be so nice to have an Arlecchino around to bring some playfulness to this landscape. The puppet would ask questions like, "I recognize the street, I recognize the house, but where has the old thief who lived there gone"?

Then, I hear a truck stopping next to me; I feel someone taking me by the arm and pushing me next to the driver's seat. I see Wacky disappear into the loading space of the pickup truck. I am not so much afraid of being abducted as I am curious about what will happen next. However, my excitement lasts only momentarily. The driver tells me that he is a security officer, and it is forbidden to walk on the footpath on the bridge. He drives fast in the traffic, and for a brief moment we are driving beside an old American school bus on which dusty words read 'Westwood Elementary School', and I stare into the eyes of a tired looking worker. I guess that the man is from Nepal, and I see him staring with an almost emotionless gaze. I remember the texts from Deleuze and Guattari about the 'slave-infidel-foreigner'. A particular form of interaction. I struggle since, until quite recently, I had never seen myself as slave or felt like a slave, but, now, I feel like one, being brought back to my 'quarters,' surrounded by luxury, but limited in movement. The worker still stares. The driver asks me where I live and tells me that he will bring me to the door of the apartment building. I turn around and see a very happy Wacky enjoying the time in the back of the pickup truck. While driving past the Venetian quarter, I see a shadow of a figure disappearing behind a sign that states, "For Rent". I smile, was that Arlecchino? Can he stand the heat? Can Arlecchino deal with the feeling of enslavement? Wacky and I are brought directly to the apartment building. In the next moment, I am passing by the reception again, and I realise that I am looking forward to reading more parts of *A Thousand Plateaus*, to be provoked, challenged, amused, and to escape.

Finding my own Voice

I sit on a hard chair in a college room in the University of Prague, and I hear and see Romi Schneider playing the role of Leni in Orson Welles' movie *The Trial* (2002). She whispers in a sexy voice, "I've got a physical defect!" and then cries, "I'll show you, come on! ... Look! Skin between my two middle fingers, like a web!" I look at my own fingers to see whether there is a web, but I see ten rather normal fingers barely lit by the lights of the projector. I am not in Doha but in Prague, for one week, following workshops about Deleuze's and Guattari's work on *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (1986). Deleuze's and Guattari wrote this work in between *Anti Oedipus* (1983) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987). In it, they developed the concept of 'minor literature' (1986) and a number of insights that they return to in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Today is the second day of the workshop, and this beautiful summer evening is reserved for watching the movie *The Trial*, which is directed by Welles and is based on the book *The Trial* by Kafka (2007). The movie shows K being accused of something and apparently found guilty but, strangely, K never discovers the answer to the question: guilty of what? In the movie, Josef K is in his bedroom when a detective enters and tells him he is under arrest. Out of the corner of his eye he sees other employees from his work who are, apparently, providing evidence against him. The policeman does not explain to Josef K what brings him to K's bedroom, nor does he explain the crime with which he has been charged. The policeman leaves again and does not take him into detention.

Still in Prague, I reflect on my own position in Qatar. The university in Qatar feels like Josef K's bedroom, some of my colleagues are like 'spies', giving evidence of crimes not committed. In my mind, the Head of Faculty serves as a collection of *trias politica*; in him all powers are one. At times, I am summoned, made to explain why I failed a student; made to explain why I did not speak up in a meeting; made to explain why I cursed, words I did not utter. The university, and with it Doha, for me has become like a stage on which a Kafkaesque play is performed. I do not know what role I have, what crime I am about to commit, yet I am guilty already... While watching the movie, my Doha experience and *The Trial* become one in my mind. There is no difference in time and space; it becomes a Doha-Kafka's Trial-Deleuzian assemblage. Because in Doha, as stated in the last Amnesty report that I read on the plane: "Women faced discrimination and violence. Migrant workers were exploited and abused, and inadequately protected under the law. Hundreds of people continue to be arbitrarily deprived of their nationality. Sentences of flogging were

passed. Death sentences continued to be handed down, although no executions were carried out" (2010). I experienced discrimination, intimidation and verbal violence, I felt exploited, insufficiently protected under the law. There are many grounds for deportation, for "the expulsion of a resident of Qatar" (Khalil, 2010). Yet not being able to leave, being trapped, waiting in limbo because one has been refused an exit visa, would be worse.

Josef K is also in limbo. He visits his landlady Mrs. Grubach and neighbour Miss Burstner, and then he goes to his office. He goes to the opera but then a police officer brings him to a courtroom, where pornography serves as law books. He visits a law advocate, Hastler and meets his intriguing mistress, who advises him to visit the artist Titorelli. Finally, a priest tells him he has been condemned to death.

All along, I was hopeful that there would be a solution to this rather peculiar movie, but my hopes were in vain. Quite unexpectedly, Josef K is taken to a quarry by the executioners. They give him a knife with which to kill himself, and when he refuses, he is left alone. Upon leaving, one of the executioners throws a piece of dynamite at him. Josef K laughs; then an explosion follows.

I am drawn into Kafka's world, I think of Doha where I am becoming like Josef K. Lost in a world whose law I do not know. Deleuze and Guattari were fascinated by Kafka's writing. They do not describe it as much as, look at 'what the work of Kafka does'. Kafka is a German speaking Jew who lived in Czechoslovakia. Deleuze and Guattari write: "the situation of the German language in Czechoslovakia, as a fluid language intermixed with Czech and Yiddish, will allow Kafka the possibility of invention" (1986, p. 20), it allows him to create a language within the language and, in this way, create a minor literature. They explain that one characteristic of any example of minor literatures "... is that in it language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization" (p. 16). For Kafka, a Jewish resident of Prague, writing in German, expresses a distance from the Czech territoriality. The Jews in Prague were part of the German minority and at the same time, excluded from it (p.16 -17). Deleuze and Guattari conclude that "Prague German is a deterritorialized language, appropriate for strange and minor uses" (p. 17).

After the film, I have a beer with the other Deleuze scholars in one of the places where people met during the uprising in 1968. I discuss the workshop's lectures and the film with my fellow classmates and tutors. I express my admiration for the analyses regarding the discovery of one's own style of writing, which Deleuze and Guattari call a 'style of enunciation.' Kafka, according to Deleuze and Guattari, developed a minor style

of writing, that is in contrast to any major literature. The whole idea of a minor literature is fascinating because it calls for a style whereby the leading forces in society are not recognised and established. The style produces a language that gives voice to minor manifestations, and to voices that have not been heard. Listening to the lectures, I suddenly realize that during my stay in Qatar, I have only seen representations of major voices, such as the telephone company, introducing a new service, and the opening of another gas installation. I wonder where the minor voices are in Qatar, and whether someone has already found a style to represent them. A minor style has three distinct characteristics. The first characteristic is that the language is affected with a large coefficient of deterritorialization (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986, p.16), which refers to Kafka writing in the Prague German language. The second characteristic of minor literature is that everything within it is political (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986, p.17). In a minor style, the individual becomes directly connected to the political. The third characteristic is that everything takes on a collective value.

I walk on the bridge crossing the Danube River and realise that 80 years ago Kafka walked here as well, going from his writing house to the house where he lived. Since then, many aspects have changed, and in the distance I see the flickering lights of the billboards of the city. After Kafka, Fascism came, then Communism, but it was Capitalism that prevailed in the end. At the summer school, presentations are given by former dissidents, and I become very aware of the evils of the wrongdoings of Fascism and Communism, in these parts of the world. As I crossed the river, I thought about: the disappearing of the Jews; the displacement of *Schwäbische* Germans, and the more than 40 years of Communism. In the end, what is left is some type of Advanced Capitalism as a driving force. I like Prague as a place of inspiration, and yet, at the same time, it does not raise my spirits. I still feel that in Prague, as in Doha, the forces of history are very much omnipresent. I notice it is getting cold, but within me, I still carry the heat of Doha.

Becoming-Animal

I had always wanted to read Kafka, Virginia Wolf, Borges and a long list of other literature; they are on my bucket list of things to do before I die, of a time to come in which days are long and time is plenty. And, somehow, by studying Deleuze and visiting the Deleuze summer school and seminars, I had the great pleasure of being ‘forced’ and induced by

Deleuze and Guattari towards those great writers. It all started when I began reading *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), parts of which tasted like honey and other parts hard to stomach. I read what I was drawn to and soon wanted to travel into the landscapes described. One of the chapters that I liked best was “1730: Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible,” where the concept of becoming-animal spoke strongest to me. Deleuze and Guattari write about the texts of Carlos Castaneda, who writes about his spiritual indigenous experiences, the validity of which has been much debated. A book of experiences with a wise old Indian, who introduced the author to mystical wisdom and spirituality. I had already read Castaneda’s books, but after that, I did not know how to continue, and I decided to go for the ‘full monty’. I went to an online-bookstore and kind of as a joke I ordered most of the works Deleuze and Guattari refer to in the chapter. I could call this ‘Becoming- Deleuze’ very loosely after *Being John Malkovich* (Jonze, director, 1999). By entering into the books and movies of Deleuze and Guattari, and somehow connecting to them in a deep way, I felt that, by some means, I would ‘know more’. It is an affliction of many scholars, I think, and somewhat disappointing in the end, because there will always be more to read, to be inspired by, more beauty to be surrounded with. It is an endless list, and it keeps expanding. But, in my early ‘getting-inspired-by-Deleuze’ days, I bought myself into Deleuze, so to speak. Scanning my living room, I am surrounded by books with names such as *The Marquise of O*, Henrich von Kleist; *The Waves*, Virginia Woolf; *Tales of Power and Journey into the Heart of Magic*, Carlos Castaneda; *Moby Dick*, Herman Melville; and *The Basic Kafka*. I also ordered several DVDs for moments of laziness and relaxation on the couch, after a long day’s work. These titles include *Moby Dick* in different versions, *Willow*, and *Lawrence of Arabia*.

One of the fascinating concepts that Deleuze and Guattari play with is the concept of becoming-animal. It first appears in *Kafka, Toward a Minor Literature* (1986) and is further expanded upon in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987). In Kafka, it is ‘easy’. We have the story of *The Metamorphosis* in which a young man, Gregor, one day wakes up as an enormous insect, stating, in the very first sentence, “As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect” (Kafka, 1979, p. 1). Another example is Castaneda, who learns from the Yaqui Indian Don Juan Matus and is initiated into a world in which everything, including stones and plants, are very much ‘alive’. Sometimes Castaneda uses Peyote in the stories and, in one such instance, he becomes an animal. Deleuze and Guattari explain: “Castaneda describes a long process of experimentation (it makes little

difference whether it is with peyote or other things): let us recall for the moment how the Indian forces him first to find a ‘place,’ already a difficult operation, then to find ‘allies,’ and then gradually to give up interpretation, to construct flow by flow and segment by segment lines of experimentation, becoming-animal, becoming-molecular, etc.” (1987, p. 161). They also state that they are aware of the contestation of the ‘realness’ of the events—whether or not Castaneda really had these experiences: “In the course of Castaneda’s books, the reader may begin to doubt the existence of the Indian Don Juan, and many other things besides” (p. 161), however, for Deleuze and Guattari, this is not the most important question. They claim that the process of experimentation, the author as machine-man and experimental man, was important for Kafka: “A writer isn’t a writer-man; he is a machine-man, and an experimental man (who thereby ceases to be a man in order to become an ape or a beetle, or a dog, or mouse, a becoming-animal, a becoming-inhuman, since it is actually through voice and through sound and through a style that one becomes an animal, and certainly through the force of sobriety)” (1986, p.7). This quote encompasses why these processes of becoming became so important for me as a scholar-writer. My point of entry would be processes of relating, and consequently the process of ceasing to be Maaike, in order to become a shopping mall, or in order to become a dog, as way of experimentation. Could it be done, and how would it work? The Maaike becoming-shopping mall turned out to be a rather self-centred shopping mall. The writing of becoming Wacky, my daughter’s adopted dog, was also an experimentation. So, the Maaike dog-becoming turned out to be a rather poetic dog. It was not planned that way. It ‘became’ in the process of writing and ceasing to be Maaike, in the process of becoming something else. And it was no less ‘real’, but maybe this would need some explanation. Deleuze and Guattari describe how, for them, the becoming-animal process is ‘real’: “Becomings-animal are neither dreams nor phantasies. They are perfectly real. But which reality is at issue here? For if becoming animal does not consist in playing animal or imitating an animal, it is clear that the human being does not ‘really’ become an animal any more than the animal ‘really’ becomes something else. Becoming produces nothing other than itself” (p. 237).

How Does it Feel to Become Deterritorialized?

Today is a bad day; this sentence keeps circling in my mind. I walk through the apartment like a caged lion, and I keep repeating this same sentence. I prepare a cup of coffee for

myself and try to settle on the couch. Alexander and Myrthe left early this morning for school and work, Wacky is sleeping. I sip my coffee, and ask myself why today is such a bad day. This morning I intended to continue with *A Thousand Plateaus* by Deleuze and Guattari (1987). Of course, I know it all started yesterday afternoon; I had a drink with my friend Eleanor and started out in an excellent mood. I was longing to learn about the accomplishments of Qatar, the parts that are expressed in the modern arts museum, the universities, and its ambitions so vividly expressed in the 2030 Qatar vision.

Eleanor, who is from Canada, has been in Qatar with her husband Robert for 17 years. She has been engaged in a range of jobs and has a great number of social contacts. She, in other words, has been around. I explained about the opportunities, dreams and potentialities for my life in Qatar. I spoke full of enthusiasm about the marvellous changes and opportunities for me in Qatar, explaining to Eleanor that other women also find quality jobs. All she did was stare at and sip her coffee, inhale her cigarette and quietly say to me “Get real”. Over the course of a three hours monologue, she plainly said that these paths were not for expats like me.

I pick up my copy of *A Thousand Plateaus* and open it up to a random place. I have an issue with people like Eleanor, people who are able to spoil such a potentially nice afternoon with their version of ‘reality.’ And then, at the same time, I knew she was some kind of ‘*sensagent*,’ a grand, tough old lady, who had seen a great number of people come and go. She became a great source of information, comfort and friendship and, as such, invited me into ‘her Qatar experienced’. I read the name of the plateau where I opened the book; it reads “587 B.C.-AD. 70: On Several Regimes of Signs” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 111). So Deleuze and Guattari will relate to the Roman Empire. I slowly forget my frustration with my initiation into ‘another’ Qatar by Eleanor and become engaged in reading. By now, I have gained insight into a great number of Deleuzian-Guattarian concepts, and I have enjoyed reading them and their non-linear way of thinking about philosophy and culture. I have become especially interested in the ontological idea of becoming. It is a liberatory thought, a thought where connections come and go, a thought about and how these connections relate to the stability versus instability of structures. It puzzles me, on the one hand, that this philosophy which liberates, which calls for processes of destratification and awareness, is highly critical of over-emphasizing signs, and favours processes of experimentation, and, on the other hand, that my life in Qatar makes it so clear that liberatory thoughts are in many ways only for dreamers. And yes, I heard this

before: “You knew beforehand, my dear”. Eleanor has also entered my mind and thoughts. It is as though she has settled in, and is not planning to leave.

I concentrate on the text again; some of the sentences I have to read twice. These attracts my attention: “Destratify, open up to a new function, a *diagrammatic* function. Let consciousness cease to be its own double, and passion the double of one person for another. Make consciousness an experimentation in life, and passion a field of continuous intensities, an emission of particles-signs.” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 134). The part “Make consciousness an experimentation in life” (p. 134) in particular, made me laugh as I sit on my large white leather couch overlooking the Arabian Gulf. Deleuze and Guattari are talking to me and laughing at me. I have to go out and play. I decide to dive into a number of related concepts and start reading about ‘experimentation’.

For me experimentation, as a lived experience, involves the temptation of wanderlust, *fernway*, my personal and almost compulsive need to move, to travel and at the same time the struggle that is involved in moving about in the world (while at home and adrift). Working, on the other hand, with experimentation as a free-flowing concept, loosely inspired by philosophical concept, is to see how I can make sense of it, to see if it is possible to make sense of it: “Experimentation does not represent imaginaries, dynamics or free associations, nor interpretations, structures with formal oppositions or fully constructed Signifiers” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986, p. 7). I only believe in a “politics that is neither imaginary nor symbolic” (p. 7), but rather an experimentation that is without interpretation or significance, resting only on the test of experience. As such, it is constituted by “states of desire, free of all interpretation.” What counts is affective experimentation constituted by processes of desire (pp. 7-8).

Deleuze and Guattari say: “to think is to experiment, but experimentation is always that which is in the process of coming about—the new, remarkable, and interesting that replace the appearance of truth and are more demanding than it is. What is in the process of coming about is no more what ends than what begins” (1994, p. 111). In this they say that “experimentation is not historical. It is philosophical” (p. 111). Deleuze, in *Dialogues* (2002) with Claire Parnet, reconsiders some of his most important concepts. He says that “there can no longer be but one thing, life-experimentation. One never knows in advance, since one no longer has either future or past. ‘See me as I am’: all that stuff is over” (pp. 47 - 48). There are “only programmes of life, always modified in the process of coming into being”. Deleuze says “let there just be fluxes” (p. 47), “processes of experimentation,

protocols of experience” (p. 48). “A whole world of micro-perceptions which lead us to the imperceptible. Experiment, never interpret” (p. 48). Deleuze refers to authors such as Kleist, Kafka, and Castaneda, as authors who make ‘programmes for life’ (p. 48).

I realise that my work can be seen as a site of ‘experimentation’ that addresses complex processes of becoming and involves critical practice. ‘Experimentation’ is a key concept in my work, since it links the philosophical with the methodological, and has a direct link to art and science. I realise that I create my own plateaus and enter into processes of experimentation. On this plateau I can develop my own thinking, play with concepts and see how they work—too bad that Eleanor also joined my plateau, by entering into my mind.

I look at the DVD box that I received from the Library. The box is called *The Deleuze Abecedaire* in which Deleuze introduces concepts with Claire Parnet. I find the PC and while I open the cover, the *Pippi Longstocking* movie starts playing. I see Pippi riding on a horse in a Swedish landscape and interacting with the locals. What an organized society they present in the movie. I close down the computer again and think about the books Deleuze and Guattari wrote together.

Together they wrote four books: *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1983); *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (1986); *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987) and *What is Philosophy?* (1994). The books deal with an impressive collection of philosophical and social issues. They can be seen as an enormous concept creation machine. Deleuze and Guattari propose to move beyond a politics founded on processes of identification and introduce, in its place, a call for a politics of becoming. This concept of ‘becoming’ is the foundation of Deleuze and Guattari’s work. Slowly, I have become more relaxed, and Eleanor is pushed from my mind; and yet, she’s still there. I hear her mumbling in a shrieking voice, “Are you sure you want to enter into a process of experimentation, you naïve fool?” Some time ago, I heard people, speaking at a Deleuze conference in Amsterdam, say that anything goes for Deleuze and Guattari; others reacted to this, saying, that for Deleuze and Guattari, the world is continuously changing, in a process of endlessly ‘becoming’, not ‘being’. I agree with the scholars who reacted, and I have been busy with the process of ‘becoming’ ever since. The concept of experimentation I have just been reading about is directly related; this vision of a life as a process is linked to Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy of experimentation as ‘an image of thought.’

Deleuze's work here is indebted to Spinoza. Deleuze, in his book *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* (1988), refers to Spinoza's principles that are connected to affect, because human beings do not know "ahead of time the affects one is capable of; it is a long affair of experimentation," (1988, p. 125) and "You do not know beforehand what good or bad you are capable of; you do not know beforehand what a body or a mind can do, in a given encounter, a given arrangement, a given combination" (p. 125). Deleuze makes it clear that in his application of Spinoza's thoughts on experimentation as a method of inquiry, that it is essential to study "the capacities for affecting and being affected that characterise each thing. For each thing these relations and capacities have an amplitude, thresholds (maximum and minimum), and variations or transformations that are peculiar to them" (p.125). And, "they select what affects or is affected by the thing, what moves it or is moved by it. For example, given an animal, what is this animal unaffected by in the infinite world? To what does it react positively or negatively? What are its nutriments and its poisons? What does it 'take' in its world? Every point has its counterpoint: the plant and the rain, the spider and the fly. So an animal, a thing, is never separable from its relations with the world. The interior is only a selected exterior, and the exterior, a projected interior. The speed of metabolisms, perceptions, actions, and reactions link together to constitute a particular individual in the world" (1988, p. 125). Later in the book *Dialogues* (2002), in which Deleuze and Parnet look back on his philosophical concepts, he describes how his own process of experimentation with Guattari worked. I think it is also his explanation of how the method of experimentation, which at first might seem improvisational and free flowing, is, at the same time, for them a rigorous method of (self)reflection and introspection: "In each of us there is, as it were, an ascesis [self-discipline], in part turned against ourselves. We are deserts, but populated by tribes, flora and fauna. We pass out time in ordering these tribes, arranging them in other ways, getting rid of some and encouraging others to prosper. And all these clans, all these crowds, do not undermine the desert, which is our very ascesis; on the contrary they inhabit it, they pass through it, over it. In Guattari there has always been a sort of wild rodeo, in part directed against himself. The desert, experimentation on oneself, is our only identity, our single chance for all the combinations which inhabit us" (2002, p. 11).

I like reading these texts; and, apart from reading them, I also feel that these concepts are active agents, settling in my mind, ready to be transformed. Eleanor is also still there, sitting in a corner, mumbling her stratified lines. I make myself some coffee and

feel much better, even liberated. Reading provides me with so much freedom of thought. I realise that Eleanor's world has been formed around the concept of structure and 'truth,' and she sits right in the middle of it. I feel the need to address different movements in the work of Deleuze and Guattari.

Deleuze and Guattari often refer, to following movements, toward the unlimited, in other words, towards a theoretical point of movement. These absolute points provide good insight into the nature of movements, when they reach their limit. An absolute movement of deterritorialization results in a 'black hole'. The 'black hole' effectuates a rupture and breakage of relations with other signs; it attains, according to Deleuze and Guattari, "an absolute deterritorialization expressed in the black hole of consciousness and passion," (1987, p. 133) since this absolute movement also involves, "The absolute deterritorialization of the cogito" (p. 133). It remains in the realms of the virtual or Deleuze and Guattari's 'plane of consistency'. It is the realm of the non-representational; the multiplicity, and, as such, opposed to 'self-contained' or bounded individualism (Sampson, 1988). According to Deleuze and Guattari "Multiplicities are defined by the outside: by the abstract line, the line of flight or deterritorialization according to which they change in nature and connect with other multiplicities. The plane of consistency is outside all multiplicities" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 9). On a 'plane of consistency', many new connections, beyond fixed identities, are brought out, at the same time and in a myriad of different spaces and speeds of manifestations. They become: "lived events, historical determinations, concepts, individuals, groups, social formations" (1987, p. 9). Deleuze and Guattari refer to Kleist as having invented a style of rhizomatic writing: "a broken chain of affects and variable speeds, with accelerations and transformations [...] opposed in every way to the classical or romantic book constituted by the interiority of a substance or subject" (1987, p. 9), an example of what we could call someone who produces art and philosophy.

I realize that the concepts have settled in my mind and are active in their own respect. They invite me on a trajectory of experimentation. I hear Eleanor scream from afar that this is foolish. And for once I agree with her; how can I pull this off 'safely'?

I pick up my books again; via the index, I find the processes of change that Deleuze and Guattari refer to as 'deterritorialization' and 'reterritorialization'. The Deleuzian-Guattarian process of becoming, a philosophy which sees the world as continuously

changing and which they call ‘deterritorialization’ and ‘reterritorialization,’ leads the reader into a purely philosophical exercise. Deterritorialization can best be understood as a movement producing change. In *What is Philosophy*, Deleuze and Guattari indicate that “Deterritorialization can be physical, mental or spiritual” (1994, p.68). “Deterritorialization indicates the creative potential of an assemblage. Anything can serve as a reterritorialization, in other words, ‘stand for’ the lost territory; one can reterritorialize a being, an object, an apparatus or system...” (1987, p. 508).

Hierarchical and rigid contexts decompose and move away from ‘arborescent’—treelike—contexts, which seek to package things (concepts, objects, etc.) into discretely categorised units with singular coded meanings or identities. At the same time, they move towards a ‘rhizomatic’—root-like—zone of multiplicity and fluctuant identity, or ‘ensembled’ individualism (Sampson, 1988), where meanings and operations flow freely between things said, resulting in a dynamic, constantly changing set of interconnected entities with fuzzy individual boundaries. This zone takes control and orders apart from a territory that is already established; breaking its habits which Deleuze describes as a ‘plane of consistency’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987).

When speaking about reterritorialization, on the other hand, Deleuze and Guattari state, “anything can serve as a reterritorialization, in other words, ‘stand[s] for’ the lost territory; one can reterritorialize on a being, an object, an apparatus or system” (1987, p. 508), it makes the reterritorialized world an embodied one, the ‘plane of organization’ in which people are part of social assemblages, structures and hierarchies. During processes of deterritorialization, the subject moves into a multiplicity on a related ‘plane of consistency’; while processes of reterritorializing are on a ‘plane of organization’.

An ontology of becoming recognises some sort of ‘structure,’ which Deleuze and Guattari call ‘Assemblage’. These becomings are repeated, when the form becomes a ‘known’, some sort of signified thing. Sitting here on the couch, I see many of these. The concept of ‘Assemblage’: this Deleuzian-Guattarian concept, first appeared in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), and is more or less a continuation of the concept ‘machinic connection’, which appeared earlier in *Anti-Oedipus* (1983). Assemblages refer to configurations of bodies that enter a process of becoming. During the process of becoming, affects, intensities, and new becomings are produced. An assemblage, such as Deleuze and Guattari describe it, includes “lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata and territories;

but also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification. Comparative rates of flow on these lines produce phenomena of relative slowness and viscosity, or, on the contrary, of acceleration and rupture. All this, lines and measurable speeds, constitute an *assemblage*" (1987, pp. 3-4).

I think about my project and know how to proceed; I will write texts organised around plateaus, in which I engage in experimentation of processes. In the texts, I will speak about the experience of living in a Middle Eastern Emirate and its configurations. When I moved to Qatar, I was full of expectations. Call me adventurous, or call me naïve, if you like. It was an endeavour that I very much looked forward to: the expat life; getting to know the desert and its peoples (in a Lawrence of Arabia, orientalist fantasy); a longing for being part of a place that developed with the speed of light; assisting my university in developing their brand and international education, and so on. We have already established the Deleuzian reading of Spinoza that: "you do not know beforehand what good or bad you are capable of; you do not know beforehand what a body or a mind can do, in a given encounter, a given arrangement, a given combination" (1988, p. 125). My texts are different reflections of my capacities for affecting and being affected in the context of Qatar. As "in the experimentation it is essential to study the capacities for affecting and being affected that characterize each thing," (p. 125), we can wonder: what were my capacities for affecting and being affected in the Qatar experimentation? For example, what am I unaffected by in the Qatar world? What do I react to positively or negatively? What are my likes and dislikes? What does it 'take' [to be able to become] in my world? These are the questions that guide my (re)search. Every point has its counterpoints: I am never separable from my relationship to the world. My perceptions, actions, and reactions link together to constitute me in the world (based on p. 125). We can say that these are stories of one individual's struggle in this world, my struggle. They are an experimentation in support of a project that takes up the challenge of attempting to move towards affective social studies. The stories serve as reflections on passages from one experiential state of the body to another. The multiplicity of Qatar's plateaus, with its intensities, offers me—retrospectively—a cultural laboratory on which to reflect. In the Deleuzian-Guattarian philosophy, the world is continually in becoming, continually on the move. To them, deterritorialization and reterritorialization (becoming) take place all the time, willingly or unwillingly; for example, immigrating to a different country or looking for a new role in one's organisation versus becoming ill. The concepts of affect and de(re)territorialization

play the role of orienting frameworks. When considering affect, Spinoza's *affectus* is an ability to affect and be affected. It is a pre-personal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implies an augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act (p. xvi).

It is time for lunch, and I realise that Eleanor has left my mind, she is gone. I look around the room. A room filled with books, DVDs including *Pippi Longstocking* and her locale in Sweden, and a view of the Gulf. After lunch, I decide to focus on 'rhizome' and 'plateau' and their relevance for my project.

I experienced living in Qatar and moving about the world as a rhizomic experience. While being in Qatar, but also after moving back to Europe, it felt like a dreamlike state, in which, often, realities, text, movies, and fiction became intertwined. I experienced my life on different plateaus, never knowing where they would start or end. My texts are like a rhizome, my ways of 'becoming' (after Deleuze and Guattari, p. 21), my inter-relationalities to the world, Qatar, the university, labour relations, politics, animals, natural things , like my dog and artificial things, like the shopping mall. They are texts that are vibrations of lived intensities, and then make a perpendicular move in direction or fall apart.

What a Body can do

Today, I go swimming. The water is rather cool, and the sun does not yet burn. My hands touch the water, and I can see the bottom of the pool and realise that I am all by myself. I think about the texts I read this morning. Texts regarding the concept of affect by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) are relevant for underpinning the methodology of experimentation and are directly related to processes of becoming. I have to remember that the Deleuzian-Guattarian understanding of affect is quite unique and different from other authors. Swimming feels good; when I look up, I can see a billboard, 120 metres high, representing a soccer player and promoting the World Cup nomination 2022. I have an idea while floating in the pool; I decide to record the affects of experimentation. Affects are products of processes of becoming. I also have a literature collection of authors who use the concept of affect in their work. I leave the pool and return to my desk. I sit there with my copy of *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), in which the concept of affect brings to light processes of becoming. This is relevant since my methodology needs to be able to grasp vitality, as I

state in the Introduction. The following, direct quote, inspires me, it links affects with the process of becoming: “We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body, either to destroy that body or to be destroyed by it, either to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body” (p. 257). The concept of affect, as Deleuze and Guattari develop it, is a useful tool for thinking beyond effects. In its Deleuzian-Guattarian sense, affect refers to an impersonal intensity that augments or diminishes a body’s power of action and, as such, moves beyond representation. ‘Smooth’ or open-ended processes of becoming are considered vital, while ‘striated’ processes relate to stagnation or diminish the power to act (p. xiii). Deleuze and Guattari also write in *A Thousand Plateaus*: “To the relations composing, decomposing, or modifying an individual there correspond intensities that affect it, augmenting or diminishing its power to act; these intensities come from external parts or from the individual’s own parts. Affects are becomings.” (p. 256).

Explaining the Difference Between Affectio and Affectus. Affect can be seen as a mode of thought which has no representational character (Deleuze, 1987, p.2). “The affect is not reducible to an intellectual comparison of ideas, affect is constituted by the lived transition or lived passage from one degree of perfection to another, insofar as this passage is determined by ideas; but in itself it does not consist in an idea, but rather constitutes affect” (p. 3-4). “Affectus was determined as the continuous variation of the power of acting” (p. 4).

Brian Massumi, the translator of Deleuze and Guattari’s *Mille Plateaux* (*A Thousand Plateaus*) writes about the difference between the Latin ‘*Affectio*’ and ‘*Affectus*’. He explains that, in the original French text both words are translated as ‘*L’affekt*’, leading to confusion and ambiguity. Massumi clearly states that ‘affect’: “Does not denote a personal feeling (sentiment in Deleuze and Guattari). ‘*L’affekt*’ (Spinoza’s *affectus*) is an ability to affect and be affected. It is a pre-personal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body’s capacity to act” (1988, p. xvi). In *L’affekt et l’idée*, a lecture from 1978, Deleuze explains that “Affect and Idea” focus on the history of philosophy, specifically on the concepts of ‘idea’ and ‘affect’ in Spinoza (Deleuze, p. 1), both of which are essential in order to understand the Deleuzian and Guattarian concept of ‘affect’. For

Deleuze, when he employs the word ‘affect’, he is referring to Spinoza’s ‘*affectus*’. Deleuze indicates: “Thus when I use the word ‘affect’ it refers to Spinoza’s *affectus*, and when I say the word ‘affection,’ it refers to *affectio*” (1978, p. 1). Deleuzian affects are ‘capacities of what a body can do.’ In Deleuzian thought, the focus is on multiplicities, singularities, and affects. Here, Deleuze and Guattari indicate that singular identity and individuals who, in Deleuze and Guattari’s view and indebted to Spinoza, are part of an immeasurable multiplicity: “a given Individual, which may itself be part of another Individual governed by another, more complex, relation, and so on to infinity” (1987, p. 254). To summarise we can say that when encountering ‘affect,’ in the work of Deleuze and Guattari, it means an increase or decrease in the ability to act.

The sun is shining, the water is cool. In a surprise, and I guess for only momentarily, Deleuze and Guattari have nothing more to say to me. I grin and close *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987).

Plateau 2014

Self, Affect and Text

Reflexions on what Others have done with Self, Affect and Text

It is early in the morning, and I am driving my car, crossing a large number of roundabouts while the radio plays pre-recorded BBC interviews, as it usually does at this hour of the day. This time there is an interview with a children's book author whose name I no longer remember. The subject of the interview moves towards the best place to write, and the author refers to J.K. Rowling, author of the Harry Potter books, who writes best in a café and moves from one to another, to avoid writers block and simply to blend in. It is amusing that this is on the radio since I am on my way to my favourite location in Doha, the Mathaf Arab Museum of Modern Art. I like the museum; it is a dynamic place that hosts exhibitions, programmes, and events exploring and celebrating modern and contemporary art. Moreover, the museum has an extensive library, where I will write today and in the coming days. I switch off the radio, since I cannot have too much input.

I remember playing with Deleuze and that the relevant concepts for my methodology, are his concepts of 'Affect' and 'Experimentation'. This plateau focuses on how these concepts inspired my research methodology, which is able to grasp affects generated through interactions, drawing a map of the processes of deterritorializations, reterritorializations, and challenging lines of organization that prevent the becoming of new combinations. Another recollection from my play with Deleuze, is that when affect leads to an increase in a body's capacity to act, it can be seen as a positive experience.

I park my car and enter the museum and, soon after, the library. I am the only visitor, so there is not much for me to blend in with. Today, I would like to focus on sources from scholars who have used an autoethnographical approach, and concepts of Deleuze and Guattari in their own work, as a method of qualitative inquiry and reporting; authors such as Spry (2001), De Schauwer and Van Hove (2011), Kaufmann (2011), Isaac (2007), and Stewart (1996, 2007). I will use their work as examples and sources of inspiration. Denzin and Lincoln, authors of many books and articles on qualitative research, state: "So at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, it is time to move forward. It [is] time to open up new spaces, time to explore new discourses" (2011,

p. ix). One such example is Kathleen Stewart who, in *A Space on the Side of the Road*, provides me with her vivid texts on an ‘other’ America; she says “Picture how it [culture in an occupied, betrayed, fragmented and finally deserted place] gives itself over to a ‘thousand plateaus of intensification’” (Qtd. Deleuze and Guattari, 1992; 1995, p. 17). Stewart is particularly useful for me, because she writes deep, exemplary ethnographies that address what it is like to live in a region. In the book *Ordinary Affects* (2007), she pays “attention to the affective dimensions of everyday life,” (2007, cover) and relates the intensities of experiences from her own life, “to reflect on how intimate experience of emotion, the body, other people, and time inextricably link us to the outside world” (cover). I will address authors’ contributions shortly, and assess how they combine Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophical concepts with an autoethnographical approach to inquiry and reporting; it is within their tradition and experience that I place myself and frame my research.

Tami Spry, a professor in the Department of Communication Studies at St. Cloud State University, uses autoethnographic writing and performance as a critical method of inquiry into culture and communication (Department of Communication Studies). “Her publications appear, among others, in *Qualitative Inquiry*, *International Review of Qualitative Research*, *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* and various books and anthologies (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 766).

Spry writes: “Autoethnographic texts reveal the fractures, sutures, and seams of self-interacting with others in the context of researching lived experience” (2001, p. 712); my autoethnographic texts can be seen as a lived experience. The ‘autoethnographic’ approach (or should I write autoethnographic performance?), as a method of inquiry, puts my living and working in Qatar into a relational context. The purpose is “to embody an intimate understanding of self’s engagement with another within a specific sociocultural context. In autoethnographic performance, self is other” (Spry, 2001, p. 716). My sociocultural context is the social—ever changing—scape of Doha, Qatar.

I rely on—dance with—Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts in order to (re-)construct my own perceptions. They looked for concepts that would address, ‘(bounded) individualism’, moving beyond mere representation. De Schauwer and Van Hove’s work examines Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of ‘desire’ through qualitative research addressing the encounter with the other. “Desire pushes you and leads you to new and

positive futures. On the back of desire, you fly along rhizomes away from a stable and universal identification [...] You discover always new connections and possibilities. You construct and reconstruct yourself over and over. You do not have to look for these processes very hard, they just happen. Desire gives you endless opportunities to keep in movement and continuously become by crossing borders, dichotomies, and categories. You are privileged to meet a multiplicity of differences" (2011, p. 226). Deleuze and Guattari, like Spinoza, consider spaces that are 'smooth' or open-ended to be vital whereas spaces that are in non-movement are 'striated' or places of death (1987, p. xiii).

Deleuze and Guattari also address the productive power of desire: "Productive desire is a power, a passion that moves one towards something new, the other. Desire does not lack anything; it does not lack its object. It is, rather, the subject that is missing in desire or desire that lacks a fixed subject" (2004, p. 26, Qtd. Geert De Schauwer & Elisabeth Van Hove, 2011, p. 228). So far so good; but then comes the 'sucker-punch': "there is no fixed subject unless there is repression" (p. 228). In other words, repression leads to fixed subjects. Identification takes place not in a rhizomic way but, rather, in a "rigid and organized" way (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 41). As we can see, while desire initially seemed to be a utopian concept that could develop in any instance it pleased, Deleuze and Guattari also point out, there are what they call 'micro-fascisms' at work in society, as well as in oneself. This aforementioned 'fixed labelling' can be seen as an affect that diminishes the body's capacity to act, providing fixedness. In this respect, desire becomes a critical concept and, as such, part of the idiom to be used in critical theory. Deleuze and Guattari's book *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1983) was a project in "radical philosophical analysis of desire that shows how we can combat the compulsion to dominate ourselves and others" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, back cover); In Doha, Qatar, I faced my negative becomings, 'lines of death', that could be described as the 'fixed' becomings of a 'traditional' expat labourer, wife, foreigner, non-Muslim, female and many others. Combining different becomings, my texts can be understood in light of de(re)territorialization, and as an experimentation in identity: all concepts that, in the embodiment of daily life, can be creative as well as restraining. In Qatar, both processes were at work. For example, the text "Voicing the Shopping Mall" creates a space that burns down and kills, but at the same time gives comfort to those who like to be 'asleep'. My book is an effort to construct these different movements; different 'space-time configurations' as they are experienced in their postmodern complexity.

Jodi Kaufmann, Associate Professor of Research, Measurements and Statistics at Georgia State University's Department of Education (Kaufmann, n.d.) "thinks her stories through each other and the work of [among others] Deleuze" (2011, p. 16). Although she does not use the concepts of de(re)territorialization or affect, her work is a qualitative, autoethnographic example of how one can rework Deleuzian Guattarian concepts. Kaufmann employs concepts such as 'a world to come', 'a line unfolding', 'the fold' and a 'body without organs' (Deleuze, 1987, 1995 Qtd. Kaufmann, 2011, p. 16, 19). For Kaufmann, engaging with Deleuze means bringing out the best in herself. In her autoethnography she examines how her stories can be written in such a way "that I may emerge the capacity to meet you. Building a world to come" (Deleuze 1995, Qtd. Kaufmann, 2011, p. 16), "may become not through me understanding you, examining you, storying you, helping you, but through emerging the capacity in me to meet you face to face" (Caputo, 1993, Qtd. Kaufmann, 2011, p. 16), "in order that together we may become on a line unfolding" (p. 16). Addressing the body without organs she 'spits' – her own choice of words to describe her writings—her doubts: "Without my stories will I become a body without organs?" (Deleuze, 1987, Qtd. Kaufmann, 2011, p. 19). She enjoys the thought of "qualitative research as a tool to make a better world to come" (Deleuze, 1995 Qtd. Kaufmann, 2011, p. 19), and believes that "collecting stories, housing them in my body, I am beginning to think, allows me little space to become a world to come" (Deleuze, 1995, Qtd. Kaufmann, 2011, p. 19). She concludes, "my stories fold you and me" (p. 19). I am not sure the extent to which Kaufmann understands the concepts of Deleuze and Guattari, she takes a lot of freedom in using and applying them. I like her poetic language, her very vivid stories, and yes, maybe even her juggling of the concepts. It is common knowledge that Deleuze liked to see people work with concepts and develop them. As such, she is creating in her work, and in her body, what I would like to describe as a micro-cosmos of unfolding stories that address self and other. I also recognise her critical examination of how to combine post-structural inquiry and autoethnography, while exploring the relationship between her personal stories and her capacities as a qualitative researcher, which can be a mind boggling and extremely difficult at times.

Carol Isaac, whose primary research interest is in leadership and gender in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine (STEMM), wrote her dissertation on "Women Deans: Patterns of Power" which was published in 2007 ("A portal for change"). She "[C]o-developed and taught an interdisciplinary evidenced-based 'Women and

Leadership’ seminar for women in STEMM departments through the UW-Madison College of Engineering” (Isaac).

Isaac, in her courageous autoethnographic story of her sister’s suicide (2007), “explores Deleuze and Guattari’s oppositional binaries and the author’s need to search the silence” (Isaac, 2007, p. 1209), using Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts of the ‘rhizome’ and the ‘fold’. On her webpage she writes: “my sister, a physician-practitioner at a top-tier medical school, took her life because of her inability to secure a tenured research position” (Isaac, 2007). “The question of whether an institution can be blamed for such a death can be debated. Less debatable is the effect on other striving women in the profession of a woman killing herself. Intellectually, I know that organizations do not kill people; people make their own choices. However, it was this tragedy that propelled me to create an intervention that is accessible to other professional women” (“A portal for change”). Her article spoke to me in two ways. First, her consideration of silence reminded me of moments in Qatar where I had often felt silenced and voiceless. Secondly, I admire the way in which she skilfully explores philosophical concepts in her autoethnography. For example, by using words like “deterritorialized my reality via rhizoanalysis,” (2007, p. 1210) she explores Deleuzian Guattarian concepts. In her investigation of what had happened to her sister as a professional within an organization, she used Deleuze and Guattari’s language as a method of inquiry and ‘unfolding’ (analysis). By giving voice to her sister’s actions and thoughts, she also brought up memories of my own experience, working at a small provincial college in Qatar. In her article Isaac writes:

“However, for a variety of reasons, my sister did not leave, could not leave, and placed the entire blame on the institution for her act” (p. 1210);

“My sister seemed to be negotiating her personal value with the value assigned to her by the bureaucratic segmentation” (p. 1211);

“It is amazing in times of crisis what little we present to the world, especially to our families” (p. 1213);

“Her proper status was not that of a researcher”; and “Her status in the hierarchy was immovable” (p. 1212);

“My anger raged as I reflected on our errand to retrieve her possessions from her small, insignificant office behind the copy room. So distant and sterile was our reception at this institution that had been so important to my sister” (p. 1215);

“I was amazed that none of her colleagues met us, and her boss was conspicuously absent” (p. 1214);

“I wanted to look into the eyes of the chairman and her supervisor. I wanted to know what kind of men could have created this kind of pain in my sister” (p. 1214);

“As I listened to the tape, I realized that I had never understood the depth of her commitment to her students and patients” (p.1217);

“Her colleagues and students admired her but had no awareness of her depression and her problems at work” (p. 1217).

Isaac’s texts made me realise that my experiences as a teacher and researcher in Qatar were not an isolated experience. Her sister’s experiences, although in a different time and place, resonated quite a bit with my experiences. The reader will recall how, from the very beginning of my stay in Qatar, I had tried to leave, but due to various circumstances, I had not; how I connected so much of my personal value to my professional life; how little my family in the Netherlands, my Dutch colleagues and friends, had known or understood of my crises and difficulties; how my status as a senior lecturer—which in the Gulf essentially means an inhuman teaching load – ‘had been written in stone’ immovable in the hierarchy; how my office had been hidden away on the second floor; how my boss would have been absent on the very day that I left, had I not run into him at the elevator; how it was possible that the behaviour of the two male managers had provoked so much pain in me; and, finally, how I was, irregardless, and to the very last day when I was completely depleted of any energy whatsoever and feeling very depressed, how I was so very committed to my students many of whom liked me very much. They had no idea I was suffering so much. So, yes Isaac, when you write at the end of your article that “no textual representation can describe my love and pain; however, this text provides a break in the silence in which many women are still voiceless. We must never forget those who lost theirs” (2007, p. 1219), I am convinced that you are greatly affected and skilfully employ the thought of Deleuze and Guattari in your autoethnographic example and story about ‘suffering’ and human dignity.

I walk through the library, grab a coffee in the restaurant and look outside. I see a large desert filled with all kinds of small buildings and trucks. I walk back to the library and browse through the collection. It is quite good. I am still the only visitor, and to my surprise I find two titles by Deleuze, *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) and *Cinema 2* (2005). I smile; somehow they have found their way here, if only in text. The books look unread, which does not surprise me, but, at the same time, does make me curious about who would have ordered them. The titles must have mattered to someone. I walk back to my spot and continue working until evening falls and then drive home.

Reflexions on what I do with Self, Affect and Text

Today, in some way, will be spectacular, not the kind of spectacle with fighter planes, ATP tennis matches, or motorboats, as ‘we’ are so used to here in Doha. What I intend to do today, is first to have some coffee, and then, theoretically, dive into the concept of experimentation. The goal of this exercise will be to see whether it is relevant to connect this concept with the concepts of affect and becoming. I have written about this concept before, but in a rather isolated manner.

I stare into the distance and see a faraway island in the Arabian Gulf. I do not know why, but I wonder what it is like to go there; is it simply sand or is there more? Today I will write about my research approach.

Writing, like all other processes, becomes a process of unfolding. It can also be seen as a crystallisation process; in the text, forces that were hidden become reconstituted. One of the aspects of my texts—besides the other aspects of identity formation already discussed—is that they are momentary crystallisations of what Zygmunt Bauman, regarding Derrida’s life, calls “culturally stateless” (Bauman, 2005, p. 1092). For Bauman, this stands for what it means to have “more than one homeland, building a home of one’s own on the crossroads between cultures” (p. 1092). This is relevant for large groups of people in a global society, on different levels: for example, refugees, migrants, indigenous people, and international knowledge workers. Derrida’s “‘home on the crossroads’ was built of language” (p. 1092). Bauman cites Michel Maffesoli’s *Du nomadisme: Vagabondage initiatiques* (1997), saying, “Maffesoli writes of the world we all inhabit

nowadays as a ‘floating territory’ [...] ‘Rootedness,’ if any can be only dynamic; it needs to be restated and reconstituted daily” (p. 1093).

My text, “Maaike, Becoming Bounded, Becoming a Slave, Enslaving Myself...” explores what it can mean to function in multiplicity as a process of self-(mis)construction. Living and moving in an increasingly fragmented and mobile world, I like to focus on what it means to live in diversity. More specifically, I would like to give you an idea about the affective dimensions of the embodiment of living in a global world. The everyday in text, which vividly evoke my bodily experience while negotiating the local and the global. While not offering an analysis in the traditional sense, I leave ‘affective modulation’ to do its work, accepting Geertz’s (1973) claim that “thick description” can reveal (crucial aspects of) the experiential life-world.

The work of Kathleen Stewart, especially in her book *Ordinary Affect* (2007), explores the affective dimensions of everyday life. Affect is, as stated by Gregg and Seigworth, “an impingement or extrusion of a momentary or sometimes more sustained state of relation as well as the passage (and the duration of passage) of forces or intensities. [...] the name we give to those force – visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally other than conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion” (2010, p. 1). It is a mode of critical discourse within social studies. If we look at how Stewart describes affects (based on Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus* [1983] and *A Thousand Plateaus* [1987]), as “the varied, surging capacities to affect and to be affected that give everyday life the quality of a continual motion of relation, scenes, contingencies, and emerges” (2007, pp. 1-2), she also states: “Affects are not so much forms of signification, or units of knowledge, as they are expressions of ideas or problems performed as a kind of involuntary and powerful learning and participation” (p. 40). I am inspired by the work and applied use of the concept of affect by Stewart, but it comes closer to a ‘psychological’ use of affect – to do with emotion. My understanding of affect is closer related to ideas or ‘effects’.

Deleuzian-Guattarian affects are, in the sense of ‘capacities of what a body can do’, connected to the concept of becoming. The focus is on multiplicities, singularities, and affects. The notions of ‘self-contained’ individualism, and ‘ensembled’ individualism (Sampson, 1988) are helpful. ‘Ensembled’ individualism in a Deleuzian-Guattarian sense, is part of an immeasurable multiplicity: “a given Individual, which may itself be part of another Individual governed by another, more complex, relation, and so on to infinity”

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 254). My outlook on affect has to do with ‘effect’ and multiplicity of interconnecting: the capacity to do, to act, to relate. My affective texts, can be seen as intertextualities of ‘what it means to have been there’ and offer an applied opening to the work of Deleuze and Guattari, from middle class, white, male dominated France into a more embodied approach, and approach whereby one ‘reaches out and actually goes places’. At present, I also feel a discrepancy between the philosophical concepts of Deleuze and Guattari and their lived experience. Somehow, when they write, they leave out ‘self’. Nevertheless, what I do not find in the work of the aforementioned authors is a research approach that takes as its starting point pre-personal affect and yet, on the other hand, includes self and interrelatedness. For example, Isaac, who offers a highly personal story of her sister’s suicide, is not able to voice her sister’s experience per se. When looking at the work of Stewart, we see a professor in liberal Austin, Texas, moving to conservative West Virginia, and offering ethnographic stories in the third person. Stewart describes her book as “an experience” as “transpersonal, or pre-personal – not about one person’s feelings becoming another’s, but about bodies literally affecting one another and generating intensities” (2007, p. 128). Her identity remains under-exposed, even though this must have had an influence on her. However, whereas Stewart starts with ethnographic examples that locate ordinary affective forces as “public feelings that begin and end in broad circulation,” (p. 2) my texts are examples of affective forces stemming from particular experiences but which become affect, illuminating the general. They are cultural performances of the everyday and movement, beyond simple representation. The reason for choosing the concept of affect is that I feel it is a useful way to address issues that are difficult to manage because of their complexity. My writings are animate texts; they are informed by forces of migration, cultural and social diversification, as they become settled and unsettled in the Middle East. Whereas Stewart writes her texts in the third person, I choose not to represent my text as separate from myself, writing in the first person, hereby offering a text that is meant to engage the reader in an almost intimate way. As such, it is capable of producing affective forces and taking them away in multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural. In my intertextualities, I present ideas, visions, dreams, flashbacks, experiences and ‘stuff’ that I have called MLA’s. I include these texts throughout my work. They are intended to transpose the reader into a certain web of intertextuality, to invite the reader into the space and territories of my experience. Emphasis will be placed on the experiential truth-claim: i.e. that the writing gives the reader the feeling that ‘one has been there’.

My day comes to an end and I cannot see the far away island anymore, my view has been replaced with the glittering lights of downtown Doha.

Engaging in a Process of Writing

It has been half a year since I came back from Qatar, experiencing working and living in a Gulf state. The view of the Arabian Gulf has been replaced by an old Dutch landscape of trees and cows. Reflection processes began when I started to revisit my Qatar experiences in my writing process: going back and forth in memory through field notes, tape recordings, newspaper clippings, photographs, e-mails, Facebook entries and academic papers. I have to think about the concept ‘society of control’ as defined by Deleuze, building on Foucault’s ideas regarding the ‘disciplinary societies’. Deleuze addresses the concept of ‘society of control’ as follows: “The conception of a control mechanism, giving the position of any element within an open environment at any given instant (whether animal in a reserve or human in a corporation, as with an electronic collar), is not necessarily one of science fiction. Félix Guattari has imagined a city where one would be able to leave one’s apartment, one’s street, one’s neighborhood, thanks to one’s (*dividual*) electronic card that raises a given barrier; but the card could just as easily be rejected on a given day or between certain hours; what counts is not the barrier but the computer that tracks each person’s position--licit or illicit--and effects a universal modulation” (1992, p. 7). A ‘*dividual*’ is seen as “Individuals [who] have become ‘*dividuals*,’ and masses, samples, data, markets, or ‘*banks*’ (p. 5). In Qatar, I felt tracked all day long. Mobile phones and internet were coupled to passport number and censored constantly. Moreover, one needed an exit visa to leave the country. It was, for me, a manifestation of shapes such an imagined control society could take. My texts helped me to reflect on control government, freedom and foreclosing potentialities.

As Tami Spry argues “Autoethnographic performance makes us acutely conscious of how we ‘I-witness’ our own reality constructions”. She indicates that “Interpreting culture through the self-reflections and cultural refractions of identity is a defining feature of autoethnographic performance” (2001, p. 706). She defines the autoethnographic performance as “the convergence of the ‘autobiographic impulse’ and the ‘ethnographic moment’ represented through movement and critical self-reflexive discourse in performance, articulation of the intersections of peoples and culture though the

innersanctions of the always migratory identity” (p. 706). ‘Innersanctions’ I imagine to be her capacity to move into and be reflexive on the complex processes of individualism that are not easily addressed, or too ‘sacred’ to be addressed. It takes great effort and sensibility to enliven and attend to these in a sensitive and transformative way. Spry states that autoethnography, must be well crafted, emotionally engaging, as well as critically self-reflexive (p. 713). These criteria I have adopted for my research as measurement of the quality of my texts. As Spry writes: “Mediocre writing in any venue lacks the ability to transform readers and transport them into a place where they are motivated to look back upon their own personally political identity construction. Second, good autoethnography must be emotionally engaging” (Behar, 1997; Ellis, 1997; Ronai, 1992 Qtd. 2001, p. 713). In this I believe I succeeded after several rewrites. My English language editor wrote in an e-mail: “With regard to the body of the text I became so engrossed and immersed in your experiences that I had to go through it again because I completely forgot to read it with an eye to grammar etc.!” (Turner, May 21, 2012). Others, too, confirmed, that people would not doubt that I had been there, and that my texts evoked personal memories and, as such, my texts had the ability “to transform readers and transport them into a place where they are motivated to look back upon their own personally political identity construction” (p. 713).

Wacky came with me and sits now in the corner of the room. I look outside and the oak is still there, standing on a small hill, which lifts it above the rest of the landscape and out of view.

The texts are different reflections of my capacities for affecting and being affected in the context of Qatar inspired by the concept of affects, becoming and experimentation. As “In the experimentation it is essential to study the capacities for affecting and being affected that characterize each thing” (Deleuze, 1988, p. 125) we can wonder: what were my capacities for affecting and being affected in the Qatar experimentation? For example, what am I unaffected by? To what do I react positively or negatively? What are my likes and dislikes? What does it ‘take’ [to be able become] in my world? These above mentioned questions guide my search. Every point would have its counterpoints: I am never separable from my relationship to the world. My perceptions, actions, and reactions link together to constitute me in the world (based on Deleuze, p. 125). We can say that they are stories of one individual’s struggle in this world, my struggle. This is an experimentation, the attempt to develop a type of descriptive and relational MLA that is able to account for social relatedness. They serve as reflections on passages from one experiential state of the body

to another. The multiplicity of Qatar's plateaus, with all its intensities, offered me – in retrospective – a cultural laboratory on which to reflect. In the Deleuzian-Guattarian philosophy the world is continually in becoming, continually on the move. To them deterritorialization and reterritorialization (becoming) does take place all the time willingly or unwillingly; for example, immigrating to a different country, searching a new role in one's organization versus becoming ill. The concepts of affect and de(re)territorialization play roles as orienting frameworks. When considering affect, Spinoza's affectus is an ability to affect and be affected. It is a pre-personal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act (Deleuze, 1988, xvi).

It is time for dog Wacky to go out, it rains, he doesn't like it and I don't like it. It becomes a very short walk.

Notwithstanding Qatar? Dialogues with Armand. When I was just back in The Netherlands writing my book, I was walking along a commercial street, seeing shops around me and hearing people talking. The shops were the usual kind that one sees in every Dutch city. I looked at the shops but hardly saw them. My mind was bursting with unsettling ideas and I thought of texts I wanted to write, texts I already had written and a number of texts I still needed to (re)write. I could still remember a great deal of detailed experiences from Qatar, and I was afraid that I would, through the mundane dealings of daily life, forget the subtleties, would forget their intensities and complexities. How to find my own voice, and not to remain suppressed by emotions, anger, disbelief? I thought about my husband's friend Armand, whom we happened to have dinner with a few nights earlier. We had dined around a wooden table in what the French would call an *agreeable* setting: an old table, oil paintings, philosophy books, a simple but tasty meal, and Armand himself who was a great host, and seemed in my eyes to be what people call 'an old soul'. Would it be possible to engage him in conversation and share our passion for philosophy, while at the same time have him help me reflect on the events of the past two years in Qatar? It started raining; I didn't mind. An idea had settled in my mind, and I would explore it a bit further.

Hesitantly, I showed my initial writings, asking if Armand would be interested in looking them over and giving me some feedback. He did so, and I remember visiting him one morning and discussing my text about how I felt enslaved in Qatar with him. Towards the end of our discussion he said, "you became a slave, but you also enslaved yourself." It

hurt me, threw me into a state of mind that forced me to think differently, to reflect differently, but it was painful nevertheless. He also showed me an oil painting with a life-size portrait of himself. It showed a friendly, noble looking man, with his little son in his arms. It was a painting that you could not miss. We were standing in front of it and talking about it. Then he pointed out the little daemon-like-figure that was depicted on one of the pillars in the painting. To me the daemon had a strong resemblance to Armand, and maybe it was meant to be this way. It became evident to me that our conversations would not be easy, and if I was going to engage in them any further, I would have to commit myself to a rigorous process of (self)reflection. I had a strong feeling that Armand would be able to help me, in the role of interlocutor, become aware of my feelings, perceptions, emotions, behaviour and consciousness.

The process became one of lengthy conversations with what I now like to call my ‘friend-psychoanalyst-philosopher’, Armand, who in the re-writing process of my autoethnographic texts has helped me reflect on how my experiences are interconnected with my environment and others. Oftentimes we would meet at his home, and these sessions were recorded. From 2011 to 2013 we developed an almost weekly practice of having conversations that consequently resulted in the re-writing of my autoethnographic texts. Additionally, we shared a myriad of notes, articles and thoughts through e-mail and Facebook about philosophy, the challenges of education, culture, contemporary politics and ‘how to pursue passion’, notes hidden away in e-mail folders, to be taken up in various other intensities, spaces and times.

I have the idea that I grew during our analytical talks about writings and readings. Our talks moved beyond the living room and finally grew into a mutual sense of excitement and direction. We became friends who drank cappuccinos and lattes while writing together. A friendship that extended into shared walks, visiting lectures and academic conferences on Deleuze. This experience of reflection and camaraderie also contributed to my well-being.

In this repetition and cycle of meeting-discussing-re-writing autoethnography became what David Altheide and John Johnson call “a disciplined way to interrogate one’s memory, to contextualize or re-contextualize empirical facts or memories within interpretations or perspectives that ‘make sense’ of them in new or newly appreciated ways” (2011, p. 584). My MLA’s became reflections about my positions as Maaike –

teacher, mother and wife, researcher and stranger, to name a few, and remain “critically self-reflexive of one’s socio-political interactivity” (Spry, 2001, p. 713) and a contribution to academia. One of my friend’s roles was to guide me in the insights about the free associations of my identity. Our discussions were reflections on territorialized old identifications and transformed them into more reterritorialized positions: a range of association-reflexions leading to newer thinking and the clarification of my goals. Together we would examine my premises, my original manuscripts and pictures. The meetings between Armand and me were sometimes rigid or ‘disciplined’—let’s not forget his training as a psychoanalyst and the little daemon in the painting—but also an outlet for what I would like to call a process of ‘playful searching and a negotiation of meaning’. A reminder of the way Deleuze and Guattari would work when they created their collective books, as is described by their famed words in *A Thousand Plateaus*: “The two of us wrote Anti-Oedipus together. Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd. [...] We have been aided, inspired, multiplied” (1987, p. 3). But, of course, I am not Deleuze and Armand is no Guattari. My original autoethnographic texts would serve as the starting point for our conversations. These frequent meetings also helped me “to provide insights and justify my multiple positions” (De Schauwer and Van Hove, 2011, p 224). Initially, I would often feel extremely vulnerable and cry at home while revising and (re)writing. Later on I saw a shift in my thoughts that enabled me to focus on social relatedness. As a result, my writings became more affective than Deleuze and Guattari’s texts. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, they make “an effort to construct a smooth space of thought” (1987, p. xiii), an effort to move beyond merely representation and Deleuze’s cognitive art, but it is an effort in which they do not succeed. They end up producing texts, in Deleuze’s own words: “highly philosophical ‘trips’, bringing out the wild rodeo from within” (2002, p. 11). They are thus unable to escape conceptual philosophy.

In my intertextualities, I posit relational processes of becoming via the autoethnographical narrative voice that I take up and develop on and beyond Deleuze and Guattari’s own notions of de- and reterritorialization. From this position, I do not simply critique their conceptual thought but attempt to offer an alternative. My intertextualities tend to shift the Deleuzian-Guattarian concepts into an interrelational context, while remaining highly inspired by their work. I present them in a way that is highly reflective. My texts have become shared, in that way I have been aided, inspired, multiplied. This sharing has resulted in the texts as they are presented in this book. My emotions functioned

as a blockage and reviewing them led to a catharsis of my thoughts, a process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization of previously fixed thoughts and memories into academic processes and the writing of this manuscript. One of the goals that my friend and I had, was to work through my anger and depression regarding my premises and conclusions toward becoming more conscious of my disposition as an academic, as an unbound woman while, at the same time, establishing an academic intrusion. These dispositions informed my affects. As my friend would say, I developed my own ‘Maaikian’ thinking. “Moving singularity into becoming imperceptible, creating creative lines of flight into possibilities of growth” (Gouvernante van Raders, 2011 - 2013). In hindsight, it was a delicate process, with an epistemology that was politically, culturally and scholarly driven, and led to a ‘decentring of Maaike’. It can be seen as a shift in the ‘line of flight’ of my book. It was then that I could also emphasise ‘human rights’ and ‘my need to speak up, where others can’t’. This is connected to the work of Deleuze and Guattari insofar as it brings out some of the problems of contemporary Western Society, but things have changed since Deleuze and Guattari were writing, in the way that the West, nowadays, is not rolling out democracy in the South, but *au contraire* manifestations of Advanced Capitalism, with all the problems surrounding labour relations and modern slavery, are rolling out from the South. And this was not what I had expected, and it scared me—a lot. The conversations between Armand and me served to progress my thinking, in my role as a researcher etc., making me aware of my talents and academic possibilities, but, over time, I also found that I developed a refreshing view on identity, meaning and others.

Sometimes it would take weeks before I could rewrite. The presented texts offer multiple positions, multiplicities of me within the family configuration; me at my workplace—an educational institution in Qatar, and objects and people being hosted in a shopping mall. These multiplicities sometimes meant being part of a controlled society, but, at the same time, they offered an initiation into lines of flight. The texts are a review and expansion of my understanding of my experiences of daily life and the culture in which I lived. What is being developed is an experimentation with my ‘affective’ mode of living in Qatar for almost two years as an autoethnographical process of experimentation and ‘hindsight’.

It wasn’t until I became ‘decentred’ that I could move from self to other in my reflexive texts. This is why the texts that I present hereafter on the plateau “Going out

There”, couldn’t be written until I had developed an understanding of interrelationality, and I was ready to focus on those aspects of my experiences in Qatar.

Plateau 5

Going out There

Voicing the Shopping Mall [A Reterritorialization into the Shopping Mall]

La La La, another busy day at my place. Let them come, the spenders, the eaters, the children. Vigorously and eagerly I receive them all with elegance, charm and beauty. My future is bright. Despite the economic crisis in other parts of the world, here people spend billions on shopping and I keep strong and grow rapidly. We are the richest people on earth; of course those consumers have confidence! Let me flourish, I deserve it and people expect this! I am the embodiment of exponential growth. All my parking spots are filled and I must admit, secretly I like watching people who forget their car's parking space and desperately look for their car with their hands full of shopping bags. I am admired too. The investors, financiers, architects, planners and people from education and real estate enter to admire my beauty and wealth. You probably know that my design is inspired by Venice in Italy with a dab of Las Vegas, like glitter and glamour. I have beautiful painted skies, and Venetian-like oarsmen who take visitors on gondola tours alongside my indoor canals.

I am so proud to be part of Doha, Qatar, this 'Urban Magnificence'. Qatar's international profile is a magnet to international governmental institutions and multinationals, and what to think of all those world renowned universities that have branches here? This cosmopolitanism brings in lots of international diplomats and executives and their women shop with me!

I offer an 'extended family' and workplace to the young talented Qatari. They can become part of my success and be part of a worthwhile and exciting career in retail. There is so much to be learned here! What to think of entrepreneurship and the glitter and glamour of cosmopolitanism? Already so many young ones work here as part of 'Qatarisation', a programme that ensures that our nationals will be taught and coached towards enriching lives. However, to my astonishment, I still need so much staff to occupy my shops that I keep on receiving workers from the Far East. There are more than one million here. They are cheap but that, too, comes with a price. The concern I have is regarding their ability to speak the proper Arabic language. You will be amazed by the

large amount of people who speak English regardless of whether or not my fine Arabic guests understand a word. It's a squandering of our traditions.

The Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays are safe and fun filled days at my place. These are the family days on which only families are welcome. No single men. In fact they are stopped at the door by my excellent security staff. These family days are like a blessing from heaven. My body is filled with families who come to enjoy shopping, going to my amusement park or ice skating rink. I even have a nursery on my first floor where children can play safely while their parents go out to shop. They stay for dinner too. Apart from shopping, you know, people can also experience eating under my roof. I must admit that I not always agree with the scenes I host. I sometimes look ashamed the other way when I watch the success of the fast food. The burgers, pizzas and French fries affront me with my fine Italian (Venetian) upbringing and associated good taste. It makes my Qatari fellow citizens obese and prone to diabetes. A true epidemic.

It is somewhat busy and quiet at the same time, as many of the visitors are women or families who are very reasonable and well behaved. It is unfortunate and such a shame, that occasionally poorly dressed expatriate family visitors, are allowed in, because they are indecently dressed. This is in contrast to the Qatari ladies who dress up so nicely in their black veiled abayas, designer shoes and bags (and out to buy many more, oh my!) and the men who wear their traditional white dress, the thong.

I love the 'oil-financed lifestyle.' For example, recently I have opened a new wing which is rather unique since it is far more upscale than the rest; moreover this wing has a special extra ordinary door policy, since it bans children and people who look too unsophisticated or financially limited. This wing deviates a little from my Venetian look and feel and has acquired a French palace look and feel with large numbers of chandeliers. I love Dean and Delucca, a Deli from New York with only the best fine foods one can imagine, the Ralph Lauren and the Louis Vuitton Shops, but my greatest pride is the elaborate Porsche Panamera up for sale. Yes, my people know how to live a stylish life.

This is in contrast to the expatriates who sometimes forget how to dress properly. They show up in singlet and shorts above the knees. I do not fancy that at all, I love people watching, but watching these indecently dressed people, it hurts. It hurts my image and self-esteem and I pretend not to see those 'deviants'. Of course there are some single Qatar boys, some American or European bachelors, who slip through the system; they come

joyfully shopping on family days. I have to be reasonable! Some call it discrimination, or even worse segregation. To me, they do not fall into the category of the indecent, bad-smelling, poorly-dressed adult working men, so they are welcome all the same. I do not mind the decent Qatari bachelor boys so much as they blend in with my landscape and, of course, it's very easy to sell them some of my newest gadgets such as the latest model Galaxy or iPhone.

I incorporate the family days because the single workers come like swarms of bees that seem unable to stop staring at women. Another way of banning the bachelors is to move them out of the residential areas at the outskirts of the city, which means that I won't have to see them at all anymore. Good for me! Since the government enforced the bachelor ban on single men living in residential areas many of the local small grocery stores had to close. The bachelors were sent off to live in labour camps and bachelor accommodation outside the city. Bigger business for me I would say. Now all the others have to come to my Carrefour to buy groceries and I can grow all the better. They will also design autonomous areas where the single workers can spend their leisure during the weekends, so they won't flock around me at all anymore. They can eat there, play their cricket, and watch movies. To me it's a good thing to keep those bachelors out of the vicinity of families. In fact I have nothing to offer those workers anyway, my shops only stock upscale items, and nothing that caters to labourers needs.

Oh, the shame and the sorrow! The most devastating and unthinkable thing has happened. 19 people were killed at my place by an inferno. A day like any other day. Glitter and glamour at my place which has been named by some 'one of the most luxurious shopping malls in the world'. Something in my electrical wiring went wrong. I could feel it snap. The alarm bell rang. I thought "it happens all the time" just carry on as usual. But then I was woken up by a raging fire; before I knew it I was squeaking and screaming, urging the mall staff to take action but they did not know what to do. I felt the smoke pouring through my air-conditioning. My sprinklers faltered. My emergency lights didn't work. And then, oh my! I suddenly remembered that some of my emergency exits had been closed to avoid bachelor workers from entering illegally. The smoke became so thick, I could not do anything, I couldn't see or breathe because of the thick smoke.

What to do but offer my condolences? Those poor children, those poor playgroup staff who became trapped in the first floor nursery. And those poor fire fighters. A

government investigation has already determined that the fire was caused by an electrical fault. It found failures by mall staff, a lack of fire-safety training and inadequate safety equipment, among other lapses. Initially there were no fire fighters to be found, but the place was filled with police officers who stopped everyone from going in – even those looking for their kids. It has been called ‘indifference’ on the side of the police, I don’t know. Yet, I know it took them two hours to reach the kids because I couldn’t hold up the stairs anymore... I tried my best, but in the end I just had to let go. They made a hole in my ceiling to cut those poor, suffocated souls out. I remember the fierce fight the fire fighters put up. I am indebted forever to the Iranian and Moroccan fire fighters that gave their lives. The Persian died with two children in his arms “May Allah give him Jannat-ul-Firdaus -- highest level in paradise, amen.”

A prosecution. Who is to blame? Am I to blame? Maybe so. I in my heart I know I was guilty, guilty of ignorance. Ignorance about what hospitality involves. “May the departed souls rest in peace and may almighty Allah give fortitude to the bereaved families to bear this irreparable loss” (CNN Wire Staff, 2012).

I try to think about the good things like the friendly smiles as the kids were brought to my nursery. The friendships among them and the endless care of the South African - Philippine staff. The kids laughing and playing. And yet, in the silent days and nights that follow I hear them shouting and screaming in Spanish, Kiwi, Japanese, French, Tagalog and Arabic. The cacophony of voices. In the height of the inferno I was mummified: I did not understand; I could not act. There was so much smoke, I was so hot. Oh, the heat. The voices faded away, their lives ended by smoke asphyxiation.

I have been closed for months and now finally maybe I am to be open again. It will restore my proper place in society. This opening has been called “outrageous, hurtful and indefensible” by some, and I don’t blame them. But what to do? I am a shopping mall and my becoming is shopping, dining and entertainment. There is work to do. There was so much debris and water. Shop fronts were broken and shutters malformed. My once splendidly painted blue sky has been damaged by smoke. And still, the pungent smell of smoke. There needs to be a lot of clearing and cleaning.

I am woken up. It should never have happened. It happened. I am in deep grief. A realization is there too. Safety first on how to prevent and contain such an incident in the future. A hard learned lesson, at a very high price.

Inside the Pearl Exhibition

A raindrop fell from a spring cloud, and seeing the wide expanse of the sea, was shamed. ‘Where the sea is’, it reflected, ‘where am I? Compared with that, forsooth, I am extinct’. While this regarding itself with an eye of contempt, an oyster took it to its bosom, and fate so shaped its course that eventually the raindrop became a famous royal pearl. It was exalted, for it was humble. Knocking at the door of extinction, it became existent.

Bostand or the Orchard, a Persian poem of the thirteenth century composed by Sa’di, translated into English by James Ross (Qtd. Bari & Lam, 2009, p. 17)

Did you know that the pearl, in order to grow in the oyster, is entered by a parasite who then dies and becomes a pearl? The parasite does not know it is entering the oyster. The oyster does not know it will ‘bear’ a pearl. Lying at the bottom of the ocean. Repetition. The Qatari pearl fishers of the early 20th century did not know that their way of life would be extinct so soon. Father upon son would sail these coasts and, under the rhythms of the drummer who was on board to keep up morale, they would search the ocean for pearls. In the act of doing so they would ruin their ears, eyes and skin. Many would die. Yet, they were proud to be pearl fishers. The fishing was an act of religious justification and purification. What would they know of the artificial Japanese pearls that would soon win the world markets and end their very way of existence? We cannot imagine the hardship of their lives and, now, only the stories remain. 60 years later the oil industry has brought wealth and late modernity to the Gulf States in which Qatar is no exception. It has become a country of Sheiks, Princes and Princesses and smart businesspeople; some proud decedents of pearl fishers and traders. The museum of Islamic art organized the Pearl Exhibition in which they recreated the life of the pearls and showed how the natural pearls of Qatar were part of a global economy in which many of Qatar’s pearls had begotten a new life in the jewellery of rajs, queens, designers and movie stars. In the Pearl Exhibition some of the top pieces, such as Marilyn Monroe’s necklace, lay dead - just like the pearl fishing industry - in the museum’s show case, for all to see, but not in its very function, that of making her more beautiful. All is dead, and yet alive...

I sat down on one of the plush velvet red couch, and sunk into thought... And what about me? Was I the parasite or the pearl, or maybe neither? Lured by the developments of Qatar, the idea of being part of a society that developed with the speed of light into one of the wealthiest countries of the world, lured with the idea of being part of something big, of

being part of the building and education of a new society it feels that I was the parasite, who entered the oyster. After 1.5 years I stand at the end of the line and feel entrapped; entrapped as if there is no place to go, no place to stay; a dead parasite who will never know if she would or would not become a pearl. Functioning, travelling across continents, speaking to people, trying to hold up some kind of dignity but at the same time knowing that death has already entered. This is the difference. The parasite being a monad with no active memory, as we can assume. And yet, I am not a parasite. I am contemplating the ways in which a new line of flight can be constructed and with this my mind is travelling from past, to future and back...

I would like to dwell on the thoughts of some of my ancestors – or related people who were part of a defining group of people belonging to late 19th century socialism. In this I like to honour men like Anne Rauwerda who was a foreman at the Friesche *Volkspartij* (people's party) and propagandist for land nationalisation ("Anne Rauwerda"). He was a teacher like me and had a keen eye for injustice in the Frisian agricultural landscape of his time. He warned against the dangers of chauvinism, militarism and clericalism. He turned against the revolutionary dream of Domela Nieuwenhuis but did not trust Troelstra, the famous Dutch socialist, either. I love the story of how in 1892, at the visit of 'queen regent' Emma and daughter to the Frisian village of Stiens, he sang along with a national song, and afterwards rapidly changed place to join the members of the People's party who sang a protest song. He tried to steer away from conflicts and wrote more than 1,000 articles concerning land reform in the Leeuwarden Courant, trying to change the system from within.

Here I am in Qatar, driving in my Pajero and travelling back in time. I have never been a socialist, I never even joined a union. Maybe, somehow, I felt more associated with people in power, with leaders and employers. I think about the local labourers such as the Nepali workers, who are working in temperatures of more than 40 degrees and sometimes dying of heart attacks. I think about some of the Filipino maids who are heavily mistreated in being underpaid, de-privileged of liberties such as free time and sometimes raped by their 'sponsor'. I think about myself and about how I ended up in a situation of such powerlessness, that right now, I hardly see any way out. I feel I cannot compare my own situation to that of those who are many times worse off. But still, I feel that my rights as a Dutch worker, for a Dutch university abroad, have not been upheld. I feel that my university's expat agreements have been breached. I feel ignored and voiceless after

another email in the direction of the ‘home’ university which goes unanswered. Somehow, the consensus seems to be that I am a local hire, and this means no voice, no participation, a management who leads in an extremely autocratic manner. I am underpaid, too. All other staff members would be entitled to housing, but since I am married, I do not receive any of these benefits. Many staff fled, but what to do? My husband is tied by commitment and career to this place, at this moment in time, slowing mine down. I sent out plenty of job applications but, without relations, there are not many chances to get hired. I am afraid too; afraid about the exit permit which my husband needs to leave the country, every time he needs to go abroad.

Being in the car I think about this. I think ‘this is what happens when capitalism shows its ugly face’. I think about the privileges of having the right to vote, having the right to participate, having the rights to unionize, and I wonder how I could have been so ignorant not to see the values of these kinds of mechanisms. I wonder to what extent this experience of being in Qatar will change me. I watched movies with Slavoy Žižek (“De filosoof-entertainer en de comeback van links”) who states that “Western human beings are not ready for revolution”. For one thing, I know, I am not ready for revolution, but at the same time I reflect upon possibilities to influence what is happening to large groups of people in Qatar; to influence what is happening to me. I read Deleuze and Guattari and think about their ideas of ‘voluntary enslavement’. Yes, I am guilty too. Still, a part of me wants to participate in the development of this country. I am, no matter what happens, a believer, a dreamer. What if? What if I could still become a part of this country, chase my original desert dream of building and being part, maybe, of the museums that are being built, not being a parasite, not being the pearl, but maybe in this becoming a pearl fisher holding on to the last sparks of a vivid industry? What if, I would move back to my second home in rural Hungary and live the life of horses, dogs, continental philosophy and music? Not quite part of developments of the speed of light but, still, quite honourable. That would be some line of death, of my intellectual capacities, but at the same time convenient and some kind of rest, some kind of premature and soft death...

I bought a pearl-ring. I needed it to remind me of beauty. I needed it to remind me of the parasite. I needed it to be part of a Qatar that never really made me part of their space. It is a silver ring in some kind of Danish simple yet lavish design. It feels at home on my finger, travelling where I go. A bit of Nordic thought, a bit of a created Qatari Pearl identity. Not quite dead yet. Ready to stay, move in, in movement; a small and memorable

opening to a new world; a vector out of recent realities; a world not yet defined, not yet thought up, a world yet to come. My Pearl Ring and me. We make good company. It goes where I go and vice versa. Together we are the line of flight; we are the line of life. Travelling together into new lives, into new becomings...

Plateau 6

Towards Friendly Association

Malika “Every Year I Change my Car”

The desert and its perception, or the perception of the Arabs in the desert, seem to pass through Goethean moments. In the beginning there is light, but it is not yet perceived. It is instead a pure transparency, invisible, colourless, unformed, untouched.

The Shame and the Glory: T.E. Lawrence (Deleuze, 1997, p. 115)

Oh “The Shame and the Glory” (Deleuze, 1998, p. 115)? I turned it somewhere in my thoughts into ‘The Shame and the Sorrow’. What shame and sorrow? What does keep me awake at nights and fill my daydreams?

What I feel is the heat and the shimmering of the air as I stand on the not quite finished platform of my home, the ZigZag Towers, surrounded by a fence so I cannot quite enjoy the views. I know what is there. When I look to my left side there is nothing but desert; when I look to my right side there would be the Hyatt Regency positioned in an oasis lookalike; the glittering towers of the Ritz Carlton; and the building sites of a reinvented Venice.

I look up and stare in the faces of three Indian maintenance workers who are there, looking, lingering, hiding and who do, apparently, nothing. I do not blame them. And yet, rather than shame I would say this is a filthy place: the newly arrived deck chairs are falling apart, into pieces, and none would care to repair them. The cushions are mussed up – with what I do not know, so I would rather not sit on them. The newly installed showers are already tarnished. In this heat, the swimming pool was long awaited and now it has been opened, no-one cares. Again these stares; I can stare back, ignore or scream; it doesn’t matter. This is not a very happy place. I am alone, and they are alone. I can swim, they can’t. When lowering my body into the water I feel the prickling eyes of the Indians on my thighs. I feel filthy – and yet, if I want to swim, I need to ignore it. I lower my body into the water and I am free. Slowly and steadily I swim, back and forth. It is this that keeps me

in movement. It would be easy to become trapped somewhere in Doha, this city state in the desert, to hide, to simply crumble away; like many – quite depressed – expat stay at home mums. To me it feels like they suffer, their children suffer. But this cannot be. I divide my day into small rituals to give sense (and sanity) to my life. To stay in movement, to stay alive, to create a life.

Most of the time I am alone; alone in my thoughts, alone in my movement. I ignore the outside. The sand, the Indian maintenance workers, the 60 or so glass windows gazing down on me like a Foucauldian panopticon.

Ignore the sand, ignore the filth; wash it off with water and movement. Feel the rhythm, let's start the day. Get out of the water, there is no-one there. Get dressed at home, start work, stay alive...

My rituals of the day bring me to the university. There, I think of her.

I know her. She is known. She is different. She has a friendly face. At first all I saw were the friendly faces of the female students at university, the students that attended my classes. In black they are clad... and mostly Qatarsis. They are clad in an abaya the black national dress and a niqab, the headdress that covers them. Sometimes I can only see their eyes, sometimes their faces. Glued to their hands is a diamond decorated phone, a designer bag. And such frail hands. We almost touch in the elevator that takes us up – and always down - but then I am just so tired, too tired to notice.

They are friendly those Qatari female students, they are interested and look at me as I look at them. Sometimes there are experiences that I do not like and choose to ignore. "Hello teacher" they say, and sometimes scream: "Teacher, teacher, come here" with an hand wave like a mistress calls her slaves... "I am not your secretary" I say. What would I know, who is here and there? They look for another teaching victim, "Teacher, teacher [again this hand movement that means here]! Where's Khalil, where is, Osman, where is Miss Irma, where is..."

I take a liking to them; they mostly move in groups of three, and slowly, I start to distinguish faces and names. This is a princess of the royal family, her niece, and a friend. And here moves [another princess] Amirah, small, sturdy, intelligent and happy. She says: "Hey Miss Miki, do you know where to go?"

I sit with them, take photos with them. These photos are a means of bonding, of sharing something, of putting into eternity those moments where I meet them. For Facebook, for trophies of war, and truly shared memories. For remembrance and tokens of the time that I taught in the Gulf. Trying so hard, working so hard. ‘Entertain me!’ And I entertained them. I thought, think and feel, they deserved that. To be challenged, to be fed, to be introduced to what they came for.... Communications, Marketing, Research, more Research and HR Management - the last a system that, here in the Gulf with different practices, seems to me from another time and galaxy.

We sometimes share our meals. I enjoy looking at their faces. Some have blue eyes, are those contact lenses? I never dared to ask, but with the olive skin it looked stunning, they looked stunning. They tell me about their excitement for travel to London, Frankfurt and Paris. “I flew to Paris last weekend Miss; I spent the holidays in London”. “We took Qatar Airways to Frankfurt this weekend Miss...” “Which did you like best?”, I ask as we share pita bread and a croissant that was heated up by the Filipino kitchen assistant in a microwave. “I like Frankfurt Miss...” “Frankfurt I ask?” And she says “Yes, it is there that I am most free. I can move about without being seen, without having to dress in headscarves and simply clad with a fashionable headscarf, and, at the least risk of running into one of my nephews. It is there that shopping is greatest”. They are as cosmopolitan as I see myself, and with way more to spend than I...

I had seen her, and I liked her. Her friendly balanced, slightly matured face. With hair escaping from under her niqab. She was in all the lessons. Friendly, willing to answer when asked. And she moved about the hallways with a gliding elegance.

There were some students I got to know a little better. The woman from Iran who worked at a bank in Villagio - a shopping mall - a working woman like me. Amirah, who spoke about her Bedouin parents and values of modesty, and simplicity. And then Aisha who was crippled and elegant, and wrote her thesis about accessibility in museums, making her challenge her strength. And then, of course, Malika - the one with the escaping hair. We sat at the Hyatt aircon luxury hotel, where I had invited her for coffee and an interview for my research. I was sitting there all day, holding my ‘residence’, and making the Hyatt hall my home for a day. I watched them walk back and forth, the Filipinos, Indonesian, Syrian and Palestinian staff. The German interns who were managers to be,

and the expatriate general manager. And then the visitors, the business people, the tourists, the lost, the lonely, the hookers.

I watched three Qatari ladies moving up the stairs with their long clad abayas, slowly moving up, the abaya just an inch or so too short to reveal the pumps in yellow, pink and blue with heels of at least 18 centimetres. I was not the only one watching. We all watched in these still seconds, the workers, the staff, the businessmen and the tourists. We watched the long, stiletto-clad abayas move up the stairs.

She smiled when I saw her. She was maybe not so sure as to what had brought us here, and I explained again that I was doing research into Qatar, history, identity, and stories. We ordered a cappuccino and we smiled. I asked if I could tape, but she smiled and said that I could take notes. There was not so much conversation, only a little chitchat back and forth. She was nice. She was, I think, a little shy. She was a fellow mum, woman, and world citizen; like me, but then not-like-me. There was not so much to say as we drank a cappuccino or two, and she explained how she had always been different. How she was not Qatari. And yet, Qatari, but with a bit of Bahraini mixed in. How her father was a successful business man, and how they [the citizens] all worked in Bahrain. How that did set them apart from the Qatari that did not hold relatively ‘small’ jobs. How she had been more free. How she had driven cars long before any of the Qatari women. She smiled and became happy; I smiled and became happy. I asked her how she placed her identity; she said “I like shopping, because this makes me feel powerful. And also, I look forward, happily, to my new car that is going to be a Bugatti. But then, Miss, I really like my Lexus sports car convertible – my father sells and trades them, but not this one, that gave me so many happy moments and really drives forcefully.” We talk about cars, when she says “Miss you know what I also like? Those spas.” and it is funny, the more exited she gets, like many Qataris when speaking excitedly, she starts sounding really ‘Arabic’. “Hey, Miss, I really like the spas and how about, I like Al Shark where they treat you exquisitely.” She smiles and asks how I like the spas and how this is something that has really made Qatar something different.

It reminds me of being in New York about twenty years earlier and being asked by the sisters of my Jewish New York friends how I liked the shopping, and I felt very remote. I came to NY, I had no money and had not come for that – the shopping – but for something else, I guess, for a desire to live differently.

So, back to the spa, and yes I had been there, been treated exquisitely while swimming, sunbathing, and when lunching, when escaping and laying my body down for a two hour massage, and a ‘vacation’ to China, or Thai ‘imagined beaches’, anywhere but Qatar. She talks on with so much excitement, which shows how she really enjoys it, and if, and when, I shared this passion of going to the spa too, would I be willing to join, to come, to spend a day, or so? I look at her excitement, her hair sticking out that sets her apart in this particular way, she is almost jumping up and down her chair. Suddenly, I am the teacher again; I would like to follow her, to come with her, to join her. And yes had it been in the sharing of food, of walks in a park, or going into the desert, oh yes I would not have hesitated. But, the spa she spoke about so excitingly is not so cheap, and Al Shark Spa is exquisite and pricey. What about our mentor-student relationship; my independence, freedom to supervise, autonomy to grade, reflecting the marks that she deserved?

So, our paths had maybe come together for one or two exciting moments, over cars and massage, yet, I had already taken off, and felt very remote, as if watching from above. Back in my head, wondering and tempted, but in reality, an impossibility to go, with her, be treated by her. I could not really afford Al Shark myself, apart from going once or twice to its expensive swimming pool, and yet she was so willing to give this treat to me. She looked at me in an asking way, and I felt moments passing; in my rather stifled, “Thank you I will think about this” I knew - and she possibly knew too - that this would not be. We climbed the stairs of the Hyatt Regency hall, this happy Bahraini-bit-Qatari woman and me. I could have walked back home, it would not have taken more than a minute or two. But yet, I took from her the only thing that I felt was safe ‘taking’. “I wonder” I said... “I came by taxi but should you, could you...” she smiled. The valet service arrived with her most beloved Lexus car and we shared the small trip home, the other side of the street, the ZigZag Towers.

Being with Irma

I will show you around she said. Have you already been to the souk, to the bars, to the desert? Irma was a stout European girl and my university’s own breed, so to say. She finished her Master’s degree in Holland and then started working as a teacher and later on as a team leader in Qatar. Technically, she was my boss, but in her easy and sharing way, I

doubt if there was ever something like such a hierarchical relationship standing between us.

So, Irma, in a way, was my initiation into the university, the desert, the souks and the high-end shopping malls. We all have a rough time here, she said. Let me take you to the shops and have some fun, let's treat ourselves. Outside the university, a big Mitsubishi Pajero was waiting for us. I was surprised that a teacher could afford to drive such a big car. The engine really roared and I was excited to go into town with someone that would soon become a close friend.

We spent the whole afternoon at the Villagio shopping mall: this marvellous temple of global consumer society. It had faux Venetian canals and painted ceilings. The hallways were of marble. It had a high-end side, the Via Domo. We visited Gucci, we visited Fendi, we visited Louis Vuitton. I need you to buy a bag there, she said. You deserve it! Irma was walking around with a big bag herself, it was the size of a beach bag, and it was one of many. I looked at the bags in the windows; I looked at the bags in the stores. I had never had much interest in them. I felt a bit estranged. So many bags everywhere, they functioned like a universe of bags in which I stood in the middle. I didn't know where to start. Irma suggested that I might want to buy a Louis Vuitton purse first, as they were less expensive. The Pilipino shopping lady showed me a few. I took them in my hand, I didn't want to look cheap, but I didn't find one that appealed to me. Meanwhile Irma was looking frantically through the store, looking and asking for bags with names like Alma, Montaigne and Brea, like they were close friends of hers. To me they sounded like strange names in unknown territories. The long wallet cost about 600 euros and I wasn't quite ready for that. I also thought, this is three times as much as what the sales lady is probably making a month, yet she smiles all the time. I wonder what she really thinks; but in the shopping ladies professionalism, this was not shown. In the end, Irma hadn't bought anything, she would look on the internet she said, on which she was pretty sure that she was able to buy the same model from a Vienna LV store for a slightly better price, and her sister would send it to her. We didn't leave Villagio before venturing to Burberry, where there were more bags.

Everyone seemed to know Irma. I would hold on to her skirts, so to say. She introduced me into the single woman's life of Qatar. She took me to the movies in which they had 3-D screenings, and many clothing stores in every size, such as Debenhams,

Evans and Marina Rinaldi. She said that even the students appreciated her for her sense of fashion. I wondered if it was her clothes, or if it was something about ‘her aura’ that the students liked and enjoyed, or maybe her blunt sense of humour. Maybe it was her willingness to engage with the students, or her effortless negotiation skills with management. All, including me, seemed to like her.

She introduced me to a Canadian couple that had been in Qatar for more than 25 years - Eleanor and Robert. We would join up together and all go into the desert. Irma, with her Mitsubishi, the Canadians with a Nissan Patrol and us with a rented 4 x 4 Suzuki seven seater. I was very worried about something happening to our car, when we drove into the desert, as I knew that it wasn’t insured as we drove up and down the sand dunes. When we reached the sea, there where many rocks and there was a piece of rocky beach, that had to be conquered in order to get to this very ‘special one’, taking us deeper and deeper into the desert. We parked our cars, swam, barbecued, enjoyed the sun setting, and life became almost perfect.

It was also on a desert trip that Irma introduced her secret lover from Saudi Arabia, Mohammed. Mohammed was swift and handy, and before we ventured into the desert, he had gathered all kinds of firewood, meat, bottles of water, and others things that he deemed necessary. He looked trendy, in his Western clothes; more something like a tourist on a beach vacation, wearing his sailor’s cap, in a hip way. Now and then he would seek for a sheltered dune, lay down his beach towel, wash his hands with the bottles of water, and pray. He spoke English with an Arabic accent but I do not think that during that day I got to know very much about him, as he appeared to be nice, but at the same time, he kept to himself.

Irma was also the one who initiated me in the tacit knowledge about the university, provided me with guidelines of how to deal with manipulation and dominance, introduced me to staff members, and told stories about those who had come before me. From then on, the university would never be the same for me. The university had lived a fast life with scandalous stories about short lived and long gone directors, and practices in a country with, so far, hardly any government involvement in education. Irma introduced me in the scandalous side and I experienced it as an academic wild west story about fake, bought PhDs: about the teachers that got their PhDs before they got their Master’s degree, and about practices of students hiring teachers as private tutors.

She was living somewhere in Doha in the workers quarters, “a hole in the wall” as she called it, and promised to show it to me one day. She told me that she couldn’t reach her home without having to pass 100 or so, staring immigrant workers. She also told me about one of the previous directors, and dean at the time, who had allegedly earned a fortune, and who – on occasional visits to Holland - couldn’t stop talking about his villa and private swimming pool. So many Dutch colleagues in the Netherlands had found him a bore and show-off because of this. She said that he always kept his promises. For that, I wished I could have worked for him.

Irma, whom I lunched with almost every day, showed me every little dirty lunchroom in old Doha; she became my only trusted friend and colleague, but she had to leave. Irma had become pregnant by her mysterious boyfriend from Saudi Arabia. She didn’t know much about her 35 year old boyfriend, but supposedly - she didn’t know this for sure - he was married. As a single woman, she was not allowed to visit Saudi, so she never went to visit him, and he had come to Qatar instead. Now, being pregnant in Qatar, as an unmarried woman, was not only unfortunate but potentially very dangerous. Single women were arrested, locked up and had to give birth in prison (what happened to the babies?); they were whipped 100 lashes, depending on country of origin and religion, and deported to never return. No one was to know she was pregnant. She had been scolded by the private doctor in the hospital. She had been hurt too, during the examination. But to whom could she complain, she should be happy to still be moving about and be free... Plans were made for her to leave the country, in as short a time as possible, no pregnancy leave, no money, no job. An almost 30 year old working professional, left to live with her mother in a small town in Austria.

This was not all; there were complications. In her early years in the desert she had ventured there with many friends, having parties and gatherings at campfires. In one such instance, there had been hashish, and the whole group had been arrested. She spent a day or two in a Qatari prison, and was then acquitted of having had anything to do with the affair. So far so good. But not in Qatar, where there is a sponsorship system, and one needs an exit visa to leave the country. She was still waiting for a letter that wasn’t there, a letter permitting her to leave. A child was growing inside her, becoming more visible day by day, and the letter still had not arrived. She had been waiting for the letter already for two years, so why would it come now? Nevertheless, Irma started making preparations to leave. She threw a party for her Qatari students, in which many presents were given; necklaces,

perfumes, fancy jewellery, and a 30 Euro stone horse, which she gave to me. They had told her they would miss her, as I would miss her. She was crazily trying to sell her car, having several meetings at shopping malls, with no buyers showing up. In the end, I asked her how much she wanted for the car and I bought it, giving me something that I liked very much and never thought I would have. It helped me very much to belong, driving along in this big black monster. It was about the only thing in Qatar that made me feel that I belonged. The Qatari had their Land Cruisers, the Shell men their Nissan Patrols, working women have a jeep. I had a jeep, I started to belong.

The last thing separating Irma from leaving was having her passport and letter of no objection. The university didn't know anything, as she never told them, and they were not supposed to know anything. I never saw her nervous and admired her a lot for this. Maybe I was more worried than she was. I was hoping that her passport would arrive soon, as I was already thinking that we would have to smuggle her out of the country somehow. Would they –the customs – be able to see the difference between one Western woman and another? I discarded the thought...

She wanted to buy one keepsake for herself to remember Qatar by. We drove to The Pearl a recently opened project, which they called 'Riviera Arabia', a large manmade island with residences looking like Venetian Palazzo's, a harbour filled with yachts, many fancy shops such as Missoni, Rolls Royce, and Kenzo to name but a few - only to be equalled by Monte Carlo as they say. To me, it looked like a fabricated story from 'a Thousand and One Nights'. We were the only ones shopping there; it was very desolate and quiet. I followed Irma and almost couldn't keep up with her in her search for something to take home. I guess she was always, in a way, 'larger' than me, more fearless, more limitless, and embracing life and Qatar in a way I could not keep up with. My letter has come in she said, I will be flying out tomorrow. It made me very happy and relieved. I knew that potentially tough times and financial rough times lay ahead of her, but nothing worried me so much as a woman, trapped in a Qatari prison while awaiting birth, while... I didn't want to think about it. She looked at me and smiled. Let's go, I want to show you something. We entered Bulgari. A showcase of pink, blue, yellow and green handbags, were staring at us. This is what I have dreamed of for a long time, she said. She knew exactly what she wanted. She bought a bright green 1700-euro bag as a going-away present to herself. She smiled and said "The diapers will fit right in".

I drove down to the airport at 7 o'clock in the morning. On the sidewalk we said goodbye, a big hug followed. When she had disappeared, I cried. With Irma, a part of me had left, and I never saw her again.

Xavier and Liesel

Alexander met someone working at Shell who had been in Qatar for a while; a woman aged about 45 who was energetic, fun and had invited us to her Christmas party. I first hesitated; found it at that time and space already difficult to connect, especially with people that I didn't know yet, and not having so much energy. But in the past Alexander had come up with several people that had become close friends so I decided to come along to the party.

We had trouble finding her compound which was somewhere in the East-Bay area, a quite posh expatriate quarter close to hotels such as the Intercontinental and the sea. We drove around, knowing that maps wouldn't help us and that street names virtually didn't exist. My mood immediately started to go beyond level zero and I was quite ready to go back home. We didn't have their phone number so that didn't help much neither. We drove around three or four more times, when Alexander decided to ask for the compound that was previously Shell's. It was close, and soon we entered a small place with about 12 villas. We had to go past security, had to give Alexander's Qatari ID before entering. Upon entering the front patio about eight faces looked at us, an eclectic company of Shell workers, tiny foreign wives and sturdy looking men. People seemed to be having a great time. Myrthe immediately took off looking for the nine cats which Liesel had adopted over the years, a good sport. I went to Xavier her husband to ask him to show me his Porsche 911 convertible that he had bought. We went outside find three parked cars, all as good as new: a VW Golf, a black Porsche, and a Landcruiser Prado. I was not a person that liked stuff a lot, but some sense of jealousy overwhelmed me. What did we do wrong? We both worked, but had ended living in a two bedroom apartment and it had taken a year or so before I had bought my first car, a Mitsubishi Pajero, which I most of the time shared with my husband, Alexander. When we needed more cars we would rent, or take a taxi. I loved Xavier's car. He was so excited, so happy, so cheerful about it. It brought him so much of what he had been looking for somehow that my jealousy disappeared immediately. We sat down in the car; I enjoyed the smell of new leather seats and the happiness of a full-grown

man-child. We went back to join the group which had gone inside to play a game. The game was Picture It in which you had to draw a painting of which others had to guess the answer. I hate games but for the sake of it, it was only my first visit and I didn't want to fall out of tone, I joined in. During the game all the hate for living in Qatar, and the suppression and idiocy of the Qatars came into the pictures. When someone called out loud "I HATE QATAR" I saw a few squared faces and someone immediately made a sign as if the room was bugged and said very loud "WE LOVE QATAR". Seriousness combined with play and we were all chanting "WE LOVE QATAR, WE LOVE QATAR". We left at about 23.00 to join another New Year's party in town. This was with our close friends Conrad and Reina.

The second time that I met Liesel was when I was joining Alexander on a trip to pay our rent. He had said that there was an interim office that supplied staff for Shell, which I thought would be a better bet to work for than the university. So I joined him in paying our rent first, a monthly ritual in which he handed over the check to an Indian administrator, drank some tea, and then would leave. We walked between two sky high buildings, it was tremendously hot and I was feeling extremely uncomfortable in my black business suit when we bumped into Liesel, nervously smoking a cigarette outside. She was happy to see Alexander and kind of ignored me. Alexander stated that we were going to the interim office to look for a job for me. I felt a bit annoyed, felt exposed, as I had been posing to people that I was quite happy in what I was doing. Liesel looked oddly at me. She said that Shell wasn't all that great either and then quickly moved on.

We went on a trip to the desert by car; dune bashing, which means that you take an expensive four-wheel drive vehicle and drive it into the desert. It felt like a rich kid's hobby to me, but honestly, I came to enjoy it a lot, the feeling of excitement when driving in the sand dunes. I loved the risk of getting lost, of ruining your car or of getting hurt. I loved the togetherness of going into the vast sand plains and ending the day with a secret beer and picnic. The Dutch Speaking Association had organized the trip today and about 30 cars where participating. We had joined the beginner group as we didn't want to risk ruining the car. We were very happy to see that Xavier and Liesel were leading our group, they were cheerful, loved life and Myrthe liked them both as well. We were a small group, but soon all of us had been stuck at least once within the first half hour. When a car would get stuck all of us would stop, check the tire pressure (to see if it was low enough), check the gearing (4-wheel), but many times it meant either pushing or hauling. The pushing was

great fun! All participants gearing up to push, having your feet in the sand, feeling the heat, the chance of a car being stuck for longer... Liesel would always be at the forefront. She was a rather tall and sturdy woman, who would wear dresses that exposed her rather big calves. She was big in all her gestures and it worked like a contagious drop of happiness. She would run towards the stuck car, screaming to everyone to help her. Her running in the dessert looked like a goose stuck in the mud, but worked rather comically on me and made me happy as well. After that first round we decided to go to Benny Hill, which was really steep, like a ski slope. We lined up and looked down. When sitting in your car you could not see where you were driving and, supposedly, it was like a rollercoaster. I felt the adrenaline rushing through my body. First I didn't really want to do it, was afraid that it would kill us, but after seeing some people going down well, we followed, and what a rush it gave! When all were down Myrthe went up and down several times with Xavier and she looked like she had won a million dollars. When we looked again she was driving the Land Cruiser while sitting on Xavier' lap. I thought "we created a monster," is this girl ever going to be happy again with normality, whatever that might be? I wasn't too big and strict on rules, but thought that once she would have tasted this kind of power that it would be hard to stop her in anything.

We met, again, the day before Myrthe and I would leave Qatar. Xavier and Liesel had left their old compound and had exchanged it for a stand-alone-villa in East-Bay, the ultimate trophy for an expat. She was throwing a house warming party to which we were invited. I had known and met Xavier and Liesel on quite some occasions and I was happy to go to see them in their new home. Liesel's enthusiasm worked like honey on me. Like the first time, we couldn't find their house, but this time we had a phone and Xavier kindly explained where to go. When we arrived I couldn't believe my eyes. Smoke and dust was all round, my eyes were hurting. We had ended up in what looked like a Qatari war zone, where they were destroying houses that had only been built a couple of years before to be replaced with something else, probably more posh, more luxurious. It looked like what I imagined Bosnia looked like at the height of the Yugoslavian war. Upon entering their villa, which stood in my imagined war zone, clustered with about three other villas, I soon discovered that inside the villa a war was going on as well. Upon entering I had seen their three cars, the seven surfboards and a number of labourers standing in an empty dusty swimming pool. Inside Liesel was coughing and looking strangely at us. She said that the party had been cancelled but since we showed up any way we were kind of welcome to

stay. It was hard to hear her because she was playing Beethoven's 3rd Symphony, the music the Russians had played upon entering Berlin during WWII, which made it impossible to speak to one another. Xavier took care of us and showed us around their 10-bedroom villa, complaining about the bath's decorations that were not according to plan. He was also cynical saying that they had all these rooms now, but never would have the friends nor visitors to occupy them. He offered Alexander a room to stay in during his one month extra stay in Qatar. Upon returning Liesel was screaming to four Indian labourers. The labourers, poor guys who probably didn't make more than 80 dollars a month, had put up a flat screen television under a leaking air-conditioner. She was going bazooka. The Indians stared at her, took a towel and put it over the flat screen. I made a joke to Xavier, to help to save the situation, but Xavier became very angry with the Indians as well. He started jumping up and down and screaming to them that they wouldn't get their money, they would lose their visa, they would be deported. The Indians laughed a bit, shuffled around and stared, but didn't do much. Liesel switched Beethoven up even louder, making wild gestures to the music and her eyes almost started popping out. She sat down on the couch again screaming how she hated those bloody ignorant Indians, how she would make them work, how they were already suffering by having to clean the swimming pool with illegal chemicals. I wondered if I really had known Xavier and Liesel. I didn't feel sorry for them. I already felt 3,000 miles removed from them. I felt levitated. The heat, the anger, the abuse of workers, the dust and the smoke, somehow it all had come together in this villa that breathed the ultimate feeling of unhappiness, to me it felt like a living hell. I drank my glass of wine and we left.

A Dog Becoming

Voicing a Dog Called Wacky. I jump, I dive, I play around, the mighty creature that I am. For years our sort has been around, I am related to all of them; the mighty Saluki tribe of dogs, of creatures whose fame reaches far and near. We are liked, we are fed, and we feed. And we are the only ones allowed to be near the Sheikhs.

I have massive paws and can run about, at the service of my master's might. For rabbits I hunt together with that creature hawk; and we'll beat those rabbits every time. We never stay long, we move about, me and my tribe – my family.

I rule the tent and am much appreciated, I take care of all of them with desert fresh rabbit dishes, then go out and dig a hole, or two; I close my eyes and silently wait.

The camel has been replaced by SUV, the tent by a castle compound. Gone are days of desert digging operations and mobility. I look around for where to find some rabbits or the hawks of days gone by. I sneak out, feel disorientated and enter a complexity of building sites; get lost and have no longer a home, or family.

I hunt, for trash and get kicked around, miss my pack and sheikh. What happened to belonging to a family? I look for shelter at building sites; there's not much food about. Days are hot and the land is dry, not a drip of water to be found. Strange sounds and smells fill the air, Nepalese are about. I feared that they would eat dogs, but it is food and water that was given to me.

I survive, I sustain, for two years or for more. The Nepalese left and were not replaced. In search of food I wandered farther out and end at what has been called the Gulf. A beach, a lot of sand, but water, there was none.

I found a pack of newly settled beach tribe dogs. We roamed about and ate at McDonald and KFC. The air is dusty, smells nasty and I feel weak. I hear about dogs being shot and lost a mate or more. I was captured, brought by car – I don't like cars – to a different place. Full of love and 'dog walkers' who took care of me. Ended are the days of walkabout, of digging in the sand. We are some 100 or 200 here, and fed, yes that we are too.

A lovely girl, I had dreamt of her, I have seen her many times before. She smells so sweet and cuddles me, even if her mummy tells her No. We walked about the date farm, many a day. I always long to see her more, I think I fell in love. How did love happen? As I am flee infested and have a dozen ticks, feel weak, and nothing like I used to be before, but she loves me even more.

I am carried away to this strange place. A concrete tower with a desert view, but desert there is none for me. At times I am taken out, on a leash no less, but cuddles are here to stay, and I am fed day after day. Whatever Saluki blood was left in me I feel I became domesticated, I am the only one to lay on the dog couch, free of flees, free of ticks, but sand no more.

There are these happy days; they take me out for days galore. We drive in the car – I hate this thing, but like my ‘freedom’ even more. In the desert I run, I jump, I dig a hole; my newfound mistress runs with me. There is a happy synergy. Gone is longing for before.

My balls were taken ouch! I felt some stings or so. I was packaged in a box, never had I felt so bad before. This time was cold, I panicked, could take no turns. I could not see, was shaken around, I was certainly not me.

There, somewhere, a door opened to a world anew, she was there, the one that smelled so nicely. Now I know that I can rest, hopefully together for eternity. The desert days are gone for good, but as an adopted housedog – the one that was found on Al Wakrah beach - I hold up nicely.

Connecting with Wacky. I have been in Qatar for a week. On 3rd September 2009 I read a small article in an English language newspaper: Qatar’s only animal rescue shelter QAWS had been devastated by a fire and more than 40 animals lost their lives. Luckily, I read: with the help of volunteers about another 130 were rescued out of the fire. I found it a horrible story, and also thought about the kind of devastation such a fire must have brought. Imagine the smell of burned animals, it made me sick to the stomach. I wanted to do something, help, but it did not immediately put me into action as I did not know what to do.

One evening – it was still Ramadan so we could not go out to buy groceries until sunset - I came out of the shopping centre which was crowded with enormous enthusiastic crowd celebrating the evening and entered the incredible heat. I think it must have been close to 40 degrees Celsius, Myrthe was next to me. She was a little bit high on all the Sucre candies they had been handing out to her, so she was jumping up and down. We were disturbed, and slightly afraid as there was a lot of noise, and we didn’t know what to expect. We were approached by some tough looking men riding their Harley motorbikes and who – it soon became clear - were doing a charity ride to round up money for the poor QAWS’ dogs and other animals. They stopped in front of the entrance of the shopping centre and I saw there was a lot of support for them. It seemed like an interesting group of people. They gave Myrthe a small goody bag with a toy Polly Pop with a tiny dog – and more candy. I felt slightly envious of all these people who seemed to know each other and

who seemed to be having great fun. I was also interested in what was going on at this animal rescue shelter that had been burned down.

From other expats in the Dutch community I heard that they were located at an old date farm, just outside the city and that you could go down there to walk a dog and also that it was possible to donate food. I looked them up on the mobile internet in the car. Their website showed the kind of food that was needed. Myrthe looked at me with big eyes and I said “Yes we go”. Alexander, Myrthe, me, we all love dogs very much. Myrthe decided she would want to be a dog rescuer and I decided that I would assist her in that. We went to the Carrefour supermarket and bought 15 cans of Pedigree and two brightly coloured leashes. We also bought some fleece blankets and towels. This felt strange, picking all these items for dogs we had never met, while standing in a cold air-conditioned shop. As yet, we had never been to the place where the shelter used to be. Back home I looked up their phone number and I called them the next day. My call was answered by a very British sounding lady and we were very much welcome to visit them. She asked me if I knew where the shelter was and as I didn’t I was given directions and wrote them down.

On to the shelter, we are now in the car with the three of us. It was about 5 in the evening and it was already getting dark. Now, one aspect of Qatar is that many streets do not have names; people go so far, to such and such roundabout – ‘sports’ roundabout, ‘pearl’ roundabout – and then get given directions from there. I had no idea what to expect. We would have to drive to the Villagio shopping mall and I had directions from there. We would need to drive a mile, or 5, straight into the desert. Then, take a right turn at a second road and then immediately left. Things started to look a bit dusty and run down - not as well groomed as other newer parts of Doha. Then, there was nothing but desert and darkness. We had no idea where to go, and our cheerfulness was replaced by a feeling of disappointment. Myrthe had become rather quiet. Someone had to take the decision to turn round, and in the end it was Alexander who said that we would try again tomorrow. For today our mission had failed and I felt very disappointed.

The next day, I phoned the shelter’s number again and explained about our trip the evening before. The lady - I think it was the same one I spoke to the day before - said that we had been rather close. That night we tried again, slightly earlier, immediately after ending our working day that had started at 7 am and ended at 4 pm. We picked up Myrthe, who was still in school uniform and, without her getting changed, drove on.

We drove along a dusty road into what looked like the desert. I saw some palms standing rather alone at what looked like an oasis. It was a strange piece of land, not quite desert, but also desolate with some shelters here and there, but no houses. Coming from Doha and the urban environment that I had seen so far, it felt a bit strange. Myrthe spotted a large rabbit jumping around and got very excited. We decided to follow it for a bit by car and left the road. Myrthe and Alexander jumped out of the car in a faint attempt to catch it. I looked at them from behind the car's window; they were having lots of fun. Meanwhile, I myself was very self-conscious of what we would find at the animal shelter, what it would look like, whom I would meet there as I also wanted to make a good impression. Maybe I could find some people and animals (!) to connect to.

We parked our car in front of an empty ditch and walked over a small bridge. We ran into a happy looking dog, with only three legs, who was called Mortimer. I told Myrthe that she could not touch the dogs as I was very afraid of ticks and fleas but, of course, this was such a silly request, which dog lover could be near her favourite four footers and not hug and cuddle? There were cats, dogs, some puppies, a donkey and some geese as well. They looked as estranged as I had felt. Someone showed us around. The leashes are here. The dogs are there. They are all nice, so please take them out "you can walk as many as you like, but one at a time and, also, please do not go near other dogs". The rules seemed clear and easy. That night we walked three dogs, of different sizes. After that night, dog walking became one of our rituals, and we returned many more times. It was nice to walk in the sand, under the palm trees, talk a bit, play with the dogs. It felt like one of the few places in Qatar where I felt happy, connected and able to chill out after a long day of work. I spent most of my days in the air-conditioning, and being able to walk into 'nature' with a warm blanket of air, family and dogs around me was very soothing.

One night I had a dream... There was this dog that came to visit me. She was so close, felt so close, almost like she was speaking to me. A frail and lovable being. It felt like she had been with us for eternity. A deep feeling of love and connection.

It took me some time to wake up, as I didn't want to part from this feeling. I somehow felt that the dog of my dreams was the dog that was 'waiting' for us and her name was 'Paris'. We had walked her three times and this sweet creature was always happy to go on a walk. I told Alexander about my dream and my desire to adopt a dog. We didn't tell Myrthe because we didn't want to disappoint her. She had been asking us for a dog 'for

herself' all these past months. We went to QAWS but Paris was no longer there. I realized it had been simply a dream that I had attached to, but I was disappointed nevertheless. We continued walking the dogs, our family ritual. I was happy I hadn't told Myrthe.

Then, one day, one of the women that seemed to run the place (I was never sure who was who) asked us if we would be open to foster a dog, as the asylum was over-spilling with dogs and other animals. I think there were more than 200 at any given time. She asked us if we would be willing to train a dog named Wacky to become accustomed to a dog cargo crate so he would be able to fly to his new home in Texas. Wacky she told us – was named after Al Wakrah Beach where he was found. Initially, two years earlier, he had been adopted by an expat family, but when they returned home, they had asked the vet to give him a lethal injection (!) However, the vet had recognized the dog – a thoroughbred Greyhound Saluki - whom he had nursed back to life two years earlier, and refused to do so. He had taken the dog away from them, and brought him back to QAWS. Part of the deal was that we would receive a big pet crate and instructions about how to train dogs. Our dog trainer was going to be Birgit.

Wacky gave us - and Myrthe especially - a whole new purpose in life. He was awaited with much excitement. We had allocated a place in the living room of our ZigZag Towers apartment where he could sleep, bought food bowls and dozens of Pedigree cans. Then Birgit arrived with the dog Wacky, Alexander assisted her with taking the huge pet crate from her car. Wacky looked so powerful. I was very impressed with his claws; they were massive in comparison with the rest of his skinny body. He had such a friendly and slightly 'aristocratic' face, if you could say so for a dog.

Our dog walking days were over and our Wacky days had entered our life. Wacky was our reason to go into the desert, let him run, run with him. It was an enjoyment to see the kind of speed such an animal could develop when being out in the open. He was an easy dog too, slightly aloof but, with time, affectionate as well. After a while Wacky also slept in his crate. They always say that a Saluki chooses his owner and not the other way round. We earned his trust.

June came about and Wacky had to go. What a devastating event. Yes, of course, we could be 'big' about it, but for me, and Myrthe especially, it was very hard to see him go on to his new life somewhere in Texas. Birgit came to our home. Alexander and Birgit took the crate to her car. Then we had to let him – he who was found on Al Wakrah beach –

go, and shed our tears. We reminded ourselves that we were ‘dog rescuers’ and that seeing Wacky off, was a result of a successful mission, that should be celebrated with happiness.

Summer came and went. After summer vacation in September we wanted to start our dog walking days again, so we drove into the desert to ‘our’ dog oasis. We inquired about the wanderings of Wacky and how he was liking his new home in Texas? It was amazing how the people at the shelter always seemed to know the names of the dogs that had resided there. She said, come with me, and showed us to a more secluded place. There, in a secluded cage, we found a dog that was but a shadow of the once proud Wacky. He could barely lift his head, looked very frail and depressed. Initially he looked at us with empty eyes, but when he saw Myrthe he started to wag his tail. I was devastated, what had happened, and why hadn’t they called us? It became clear to me that for three months, during the heat of the summer season Wacky had been at QAWS all along and had never left. The people in Texas, had found the cost of flying a dog in too expensive and had abandoned the idea. Again, I thought, but why hadn’t they called us? When Birgit, who liked Wacky a lot, had seen that he became disheartened, she had taken him closer to her little shack, but it had seemed too late. She asked us if we would like to foster him once more... Alexander lifted Wacky, who was tick and fly invested and carried him in his arms to our car. We were crying.

We fostered him like he was our little baby. For weeks the ticks were crawling over the plastered wall, but then we seemed to get rid of them. Wacky restored, somewhat. He stayed very thin, walked often with his tail between his legs, and seemed to be a bit afraid. We did not love him less. One night, Alexander, while walking Wacky, was stopped on the street by an excited Qatari in his Landcruiser. Without asking he started looking in Wacky’s mouth, ‘make him do turns’. The Qatari was thrilled to see such a beautiful Saluki exemplar, he said. Alexander wasn’t sure what to do; did the man want to take the dog, had the dog belonged to him? Then the man said that the ultimate dog test was if the dog could jump in the back of the car. Wacky refused. The man exclaimed that this dog was worth nothing because it was afraid; and he drove off. Alexander continued on his walk vaguely confused.

Later than we had hoped for, and sooner than expected, our Qatar days came to an end. With a flash I had to think about Wacky. There was no way that I was going to leave him behind. I looked on the internet about bringing a dog to the Netherlands, but became

lost in a myriad rules and regulations. We called Birgit. She said that we could have Wacky for free, in the good desert tradition that you never buy a Saluki, but that he was bestowed on you as one of the greatest sheikh's gifts. Birgit knew a 'dog expatriation manager' that could take care of the whole 'process'. The whole adoption would take months, involving several rounds of vaccinations and waiting. Myrthe and I went home to Holland, Alex and Wacky stayed. Alex came home to Holland, Wacky stayed with our good Venezuelan friend Mercedes and her son Seba. Then in July, upon Alexander's very last trip to Qatar. We celebrated: In the belly of Alexander's KLM flight Doha – Amsterdam, Wacky had come home.

Three years later I came across two QAWS 2011 Facebook entries. The first on 30 March, it said: "Qatar Animal Welfare Society (QAWS) is so happy for Wacky, who after 3 years of moving between QAWS, foster homes & adopted homes, has finally found his forever home! His latest foster parents have fallen in love with him and he will be moving to Holland with them in July. Good luck to him in his new forever home x" (Qatar Animal Welfare Society, 2011). The second, in July, said: "Great news for Wacky! After months of foster homes, blood tests and waiting, he has now arrived, safe and sound, to his new home in Holland [...] We're delighted this lovely boy has such a wonderful new family and wish them all the best" (Qatar Animal Welfare Society, 2011)

I wish us all the best!

Onto the Seventh Plateau [Conclusion]

L'affect (Spinoza's affectus) is an ability to affect and be affected. It is a pre-personal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act (Deleuze, 1988, xvi)

A dream. I am back in Qatar once more...

I invite you, 'the reader,' to join me on this trip for a bit longer. So glad you came all this way to talk with me about my experiences. I truly appreciate your interest in my story and am so pleased we both could meet in Qatar. How was your flight?

As you know, my particular research interest has been to develop a multiple relational self in text, its potentiality and affects. I realise that these processes are interrelated with transformational processes of deterritorialization, reterritorialization and a process of becoming. The central problematic of this book was summarized as follows:

"What does an autoethnography that addresses the processes of de- and reterritorialization look like?"

In my book, I followed the lines of an experimentation and invited you, the reader, to join me in an autobiographically inspired journey presented on different 'plateaus'. These plateaus are a part of relational processes that co-construct particular people and worlds. Plateaus are seen as always in becoming, and through them, I am always in becoming.

In my writing, I began to construct my plateaus from the premise that identity is relational, by which I mean that processes of identity formation are not the fixed result of a subject acting upon an inert object, but rather are interactional and negotiated amongst those involved. My research is most immediately inspired by the work of Deleuze and Guattari, although it is not, therefore, Deleuzian. Instead, my own style unfolds throughout the writing of this book, a style that builds upon not only the work of Deleuze and Guattari, but also the Comaroffs' point of view in which the world develops as much from the 'Global South' as from the 'Global North'; and Sampson's postmodern understanding of humankind as decentred and multiplicitous.

At the beginning of my experimentation and book, I spoke of abstract machines: "*machinic assemblage* of bodies, of actions and passions, an intermingling of bodies reacting to one another" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 88). However, I speak, rather, of

developments, to further illustrate the temporal character of abstract machines, to move away from a Deleuzian-Guattarian vocabulary, and to create my own text. Today, I will describe four developments which describe movements of deterritorialization and reterritorialization across plateaus. I have been thinking about these for quite some time. I invite you to join me and have a cold soft drink at the top floor of one of the brand new luxury hotels in Qatar and to experience the ‘matter’ from another perspective, just as Michel de Certeau does in New York. While de Certeau looks down on New York City from a skyscraper, we will go to the top of the hotel together, to enjoy the views and discuss the plateaus and their texts, and to address interconnectivities from the rooftop. Here in Qatar, it is so hot on the street level and hard to see the interconnectivities between the plateaus since one is intertwined with them. Let’s take a taxi and drive directly to the hotel. Look how this country has developed: there, they are building the metro, and here, they started building the National Museum. Okay; we are at the hotel already, Doha was never very big. Let’s put the suitcases behind the concierge’s desk and take the elevator; I have so much to tell you, and I can’t wait.

Oh my, a sign! It reads that the elevator is ‘out of service’. Do not worry, now. You do not really have to take the stairs. This is something I have experience with; the elevator is not really out of service, it is just a sign. We cannot lose any time. We have a task at hand, and it is far too hot to take the stairs anyway.

I want to talk about the interconnectivities and identify (give birth to) developments of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. These developments are not simply autobiographically inspired and co-constructed processes but transformational processes that transcend the plateau and text level. The developments caused by processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization provide insight into the development of multiple identities and the potentiality for processes of identity formation in the co-constructed relations of Qatar between 2009 and 2011 and its residuum.

For us to reach the top floor I only need to push ‘button 34th’. The cabin is quite hot, but, don’t worry, the AC will soon blow this heat away. During the ride I will provide you with some background. You see, the door already closes, and we will soon be having a cool drink. I’m looking forward to my lips touching the ice cubes. But why is it so dark in here? ... I continue...

Looking back, scanning through the texts and following the news about Nepali migrants dying in Qatar in *The Guardian* (Gibson & Pattison, 2014), I feel rage; a rage from deep within my body. It is a rage connected to lost potentialities and intolerance

towards ‘corrupt’ becomings; a rage about losing out, losing out on the potentiality of experiencing the affects of processes, deterritorialization and reterritorialization, processes of a country moving towards new urbanity, regarding sport, museum developments and city development. After the rage, I again study texts on the related plateaus. From this elevated position we should be able to identify transformations of deterritorialization and reterritorialization across the plateaus.

The elevator door is closed now. It is dark, the AC is off and we are standing here, just the two of us. I try to feel for the alarm button. I try to find the buttons, while sweat is pouring from my body. I am vaguely aware that this dream that started out as an uneasy feeling is starting to turn into a nightmarish event. I become sick, have to throw up. Is it the emotion or the heat? The fear of literally being ‘stuck’? And yet, I do not want to disappoint my guest, who travelled so far to talk to me. “Focus! You need to focus!” I seem to scream to myself, and like in a nightmare, it echoes far away, up and down the elevator shaft, taking on circles that start in Doha, then the Arabian Peninsula, moving from the Arab World and beyond. “Focus,” I scream again, “you have come so farrrrrrrrr,” and I wasn’t sure if I was speaking to my guest or to myself.

Deleuzian-Guattarian ‘Philosophical Map’

In this elevator I feel that I am morphed, de-reterritorialized at the same time, and now I really have to throw up, my stomach cannot hold it. “The rhizome is altogether different, a *map and not a tracing*. Make a map, not a tracing,” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 12) Deleuze and Guattari seem to scream at me; like ghosts they have entered the elevator, maybe “only for laughs” (p. 22), as though they know me, and are playful. But Deleuze also looks at me in a kind of fatherly way and seems to say: “The rhizome is altogether different, a *map and not a tracing*. Make a map, not a tracing” (p. 12). “I do not need to be ‘re-Oedipalized’ by you,” I scream, but no voice comes out. I vaguely remember how those two wrote about the rhizome: “It is composed not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion. It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (*milieu*) from which it grows and which it overspills” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 21). Or, again: “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.” (p.

21). Another thought, “Deleuze and Guattari should not build elevators,” enters my mind and leaves as soon as it shows up.

I force myself into remembering the ‘philosophical rhizomic map’ I had thought up, because my work is not only to be a reflexive account of my own experiences and affectivities as situated in Qatar, it is also, in constituting processes of deterritorialization / reterritorialization, experimentations and identity formation, a contribution to knowledge. I could see the map very clearly; it appeared as some kind of projection in space.

My map is based on the main ideas emerged out of my literature review and autoethnographic intertextualities. It is a sketch of the becoming of an assemblage. One can pose two axes, or movements, on an assemblage. The first movement is the creation of territory, which is the movement between destruction (deterritorialization) and re-creation (territorialization). A deterritorialization takes place on the ‘plane of immanence’, and a territorialization takes place on the ‘plane of organization’. The other movement is based on affect: the movement between an augmentation and a diminution in a body’s capacity to act (Deleuze, 1988, xvi). In the becoming of an assemblage, self-other unity is changed and reconstructed within these dimensions.

I wanted to move to the top of the building, I wanted to bring up all manner of discussions, thoughts. I throw up. Are we really alone in this elevator? It is dark now, and I have the feeling that we are not alone; that the room is filled with selves of past, present, and future, all merged into one. I would have liked to have shown my guest to the top floor. I have so much to share. I let go. “I need a whisky,” I think. Would they serve one? Dreams and visions emerge, where am I, am I lost? And who is this visitor, I was talking to?

“Think Maaike; think!” I say to myself. What were these maps that you thought about so hard and re-lived in writing down your often quite painful memories? Now it is time to envision them.

I created these different maps in order to allocate the affect evoked in my texts. For example, when deterritorialization takes place and there is a diminution in the body’s capacity to act, it is unlikely that reterritorialization will take place. Deterritorialization then leads to Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘plane of immanence’. In my earlier text “Maaike, Becoming Bounded, Becoming a Slave, Enslaving Myself...”, it was impossible for me to conform to the idea of subservience. There was anger, dehumanisation, disbelief, etc. I did not identify with my role; my whole being objected to it, and I fought against it.

However, when deterritorialization takes place and there is an augmentation in the body's capacity to act, most likely, reterritorialization and identification will take place. For example, when I return to the text "Voicing the Shopping Mall" it gave me some kind of 'ontological' security. The interrelationship gave me some comfort, and it turned out to be a shopping mall. In the text "Voicing the Shopping Mall" I realised that it was very soothing and comforting to give in to the temptation of consumerism. The shopping mall created a place for retail therapy: finding clothes to buy; treating oneself to a spa treatment and a manicure; going to the movies; sharing time with one's husband and child. I introduce the text with a wink to Capitalism. As a critical studies scholar, I have a healthy suspicion of the dangerous leeways Capitalism provides. I also like to see myself as a culturally-aware person and as someone who likes travelling, swimming, golfing, the mountains, drinking malt whisky, listening to a wide range of music, and visiting museums. Yet, in the embodiment of everyday life in the Middle East, I realised that it was in a shopping mall that I reterritorialized; it was there that I felt at home, and could locate my identity. Advanced Capitalism, gives comfort, you can be 'asleep,' there are familiar clothes and all kinds of familiar things, and it gives a kind of security for those who 'fall for it'. My text is an example of postmodern complexity in which there is never one story, but rather many stories – neither good nor bad – that co-evolve.

One has to keep in mind that there is no fixedness in the making and unmaking of an assemblage. Affect, de- and reterritorialization is a continuing movement in time and space. This means that in the context of the Qatari assemblage I am 'becoming slave', 'becoming consumer', 'becoming a bounded teaching machine' and 'becoming an expat' in a continuing movement of thoughts, emotions, dreams, experiences, memories and interactions.

Experimentation. My work can be seen as an experimentation: "In the experimentation it is essential to study the capacities for affecting and being affected that characterise each thing" (Deleuze, 1988, p. 125). In my maps, I represent reflections of 'affect' as evoked by my intertextualities. They reflect what, in a given context, or, in Deleuzian-Guattarian terms, in a given 'territory', characterises me. My maps are guided by the following questions that make up territorialization, deterritorialization and reterritorialization: What am I (un)affected by? To what do I react positively or negatively? What are my likes and dislikes? What does it 'take' [to be able to become] in my world? Together these questions

constitute experimentation (p. 125). In my maps, I combine the workings of the key terms affect, deterritorialization and reterritorialization into an ‘axis of movement’. It is my attempt to visualise ‘experimentation’ and the embodiment of affect, deterritorialization and reterritorialization in which I am “never separable from my relations with the world” (p. 125).

And, then, as an adventurer, like in the times of Lawrence or Thesiger, I extract my four rhizomic maps on which my tracings in the desert are to be followed.

Map 1. The Development of an Educational Institution, Producing Asymmetrical Relationships. Reterritorialization and Affect’s Diminution in the Body’s Capacity to Act. I can see that the plateaus “Going into the Future” and “At the Behest of the University”, are very strongly connected because they provide a legal base and a student base for operating a university. The university can operate within the context of the state apparatus, whose affects are addressed in the texts of the plateau “Going into the Future”.

The development of an educational institute producing asymmetrical relationships – on the plateau “At the Behest of the University” - was preceded by what I saw as a great opportunity: to go Qatar. It is also the plateau whereby the inability to connect meaningfully, and ruptures inflicted on the self, resulted in the decision to leave the plateau and, consequently, the university and Qatar.

The breakages and flows of an educational institution producing asymmetrical relationships have strong ties to both the plateaus - “At the Behest of the University” and “Going into the Future” - and produce asymmetrical developments. I have named this interaction ‘asymmetrical developments’ because the plateaus show developments in two ways. The first development is a becoming that deterritorializes the professional – lecturer - and reterritorializes the body as a worker, deprived of the opportunity to create and to participate fully in the reterritorialization of Qatar. The other development is a movement that expresses the joy or pleasure of teaching and interacting with students. I enjoyed teaching. In a way, it was a tale of teaching the sheikhs’ children and the cacophony of Russian, Serbian, Dutch, Austrian, Tunisian, Syrian, Iranian, Indian and Pakistan students. There were some students I got to know a little better than others. But interrelating with students – for fear of becoming part of a system of corruption in which lines of what is accepted and what is not – would slowly fade. “But, the spas she spoke about so excitedly, are not so cheap, and Al Shark Spa is exquisite and pricey. What about our mentor-student

relationship; my independence, freedom to supervise, autonomy to grade, reflecting the marks that she deserved?” As such, the relationships with students remained ‘hollow’.

What I also see is a university staff whose development is tightly managed by ‘primitive’ forces and control mechanisms, which are visible in the texts on the plateau “At the Behest of the University.” While healthy transformations are addressed in texts referring to students, unhealthy and clinical interrelationships with and among staff have developed and consequently asymmetrical interrelationships have been established. This can be seen in the following example: On an administrative level, the mission statement of the university borrows language from the Dutch mission statement which states³: “Unleashing potential in our students, staff and surrounding communities”. Conversely, the university, strikingly enough, only wanted to unleash potential in students, and wished not to engage in unleashing the potential of staff and its surrounding communities. Their mission is: “We strive to be the leading internationally recognised educational institution for offering a holistic education by unleashing the potential of students in a multicultural and challenging environment”. Evidently, the university does not want to engage in a relationship of unleashing the potential of its staff, not even as lip service.

The development of an educational institution generates asymmetrical relationships that function, in terms of management, as a production unit under sponsorship, and, in terms of the students, as the provider of lessons, attention, and a means to a degree. In order to control this relationship, the university, within the legal foundation of the state, including the sponsorship system and the illegality of organised (unionized) labour, creates for its staff a management style designed to produce ‘zombi like’ teachers: “Somehow, the consensus seems to be that I am a local hire, and this means no voice, no participation, a management who leads in an extremely autocratic manner” and “I am sitting in my office, an empty concrete cell, dirty from use over the years, no phone, no students and no colleagues. Not a friendly face around”. The denial of any form of staff development produces the university machine, which is fed by a ‘slave mentality’ and overworked teachers. “I realise that it was never a question of assessing the laws on being righteous nor asking if the system is profitable. The question to ask is: did living in Qatar feel dignified

³ For reasons of privacy the author has decided to redact the name of the university in question.

or human? To me, it never did. At no time in my life did I feel more desolate, unhappy, and constrained in what I could do”.

It was in Qatar that I encountered the temporary limits of the territory in which I could move, the limits of what I could do, before my assemblage – family, work, sense of identity – fell apart. What an outlandish space. Not able to leave the current ‘plane of organization’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987), living with the essentials of what life in the Gulf brought me. Attuning to it in a ‘cruel optimism’ (Lauren Berlant, 2011), an affective world of becoming attached to a life that did not work. It became a reterritorialization that felt like Dante’s *Inferno*.

The one who plays this game best and stays longest, stands the chance of becoming a superior slave-infidel-foreigner turned believer; it leads to favouritism, university dishonesty and sheer narcissism. One such example was the salary reward for obtaining an unaccredited PhD, which was rewarded over traditional scholarship, image above identity. In the plateau “Within the Global South”, reference was made to the work of Jean and John Comaroff (2012). Many in the Global South, including CEOs, Ministers of State and university professors seem to have MBAs and PhDs from a diploma mill.

Map 2. Developing New Urbanity. Reterritorialization and Affect’s Augmentation in the Body’s Capacity to Act. I envision myself standing on high, sipping malt whisky; as more developments are at work across the plateaus and texts. Developments directly relating to an area where I want to situate identity; I always dreamed of being part of major developments, and ‘being there, where things happen.’ To be part of something that is energised with new vitality, new futures, new potentialities, and new urbanities. I call this development ‘new urbanity’. I envision a life in a pressure cooker, where connections would be energised, where paradoxes would be played out in a cloud of sheer unlimited potentialities. I was thinking about the Golden Age in Amsterdam and New York in the lead up to the roaring ‘20s. These cities represented periods of rapid societal development. Going South felt like opting out of ‘recession hit’ Europe, where the evening news bored me ‘to death’, with salary cuts, rising unemployment, highly debated governmental cuts in spending and xenophobia.

The map produces affect on two dimensions, like Janus, a Roman deity with two faces. The first dimension involves the Qatars who value tradition, such as tribal affiliation, traditional dress and religion, and, at the same time, produce a nation that

partakes in and shapes global developments as stated in the “Qatar National Vision 2030”. The second dimension is personal and involves the desire to connect differently, away from pre-established lifestyles, which is described in the texts “People to Come” and “Into the Future”. It is a personal quest/desire for difference. During my stay in Qatar, enormous developments took place regarding investments in culture, sports, commercial spaces and tourism, fuelled by seemingly unlimited natural gas reserves, which I placed on the plateau “Going out There”. I was part of these developments, by connecting to students on the plateau and actively participating in social and cultural life on “Towards Friendly Association”. When work was done, I would resort to the swimming pool, the desert, a museum, or shopping mall. “The museum of Islamic Art organised the Pearl Exhibition in which they recreated the life of the pearls and showed how the natural pearls of Qatar were part of a global economy in which many of Qatar’s pearls had begotten a new life in the jewellery of maharajas, queens, designers and movie stars”. The desert would offer solace and long dog walks: “After that night, dog walking became one of our rituals, and we returned many times. It was nice to walk in the sand, under the palm trees, talk a bit, play with the dogs. It felt like one of the few places in Qatar where I felt happy, connected and able to chill out after a long day of work...”

Fridays at the shopping mall were crowded events filled with expectations, enjoyment, laughter and ‘retail therapy’. After morning prayers, the Qatars would hit a modern manifestation of the old idea of the weekend trading centre of the Bedouin, the Souq; the shopping mall. Whereas a Souq would have been a market where one could taste, barter, and purchase according to Arabian custom the specialities of Middle-Eastern food, the modern air-conditioned shopping mall has supermarkets, international brands, food courts and restaurants, cinemas and amusement parks. It is filled by the noise of people from all over, with their rich national dress and languages. In “Voicing the Shopping Mall” a proud and self centred Qatari shopping mall makes the following remark: “Let them come, the spenders, the eaters, the children. Vigorously and eagerly I receive them all, with elegance, charm and beauty. My future is bright. Despite the economic crisis in other parts of the world, here people spend billions on shopping and I stay strong and grow rapidly. We are the richest people on earth; of course those consumers have confidence! Let me flourish, I deserve it and people expect this!” And yes, every week I too was lured to this marketplace, a common practice on the weekend, which starts on Friday. It is one of the best events of my week. (I know!) In this autoethnographic

example of postmodern complexity, I realise how Capitalism lures most of us. In the desert, I too was lured to this marketplace, it worked like a band aid for my soul... I also bought a car, from a friend who was leaving Qatar. It was good for my self-confidence, and made it possible to reterritorialize: "In the end, I asked her how much she wanted for the car, and I bought it, giving me something that I liked very much and never thought I would have. It helped me very much to belong, driving along in this big black monster. It was about the only thing in Qatar that made me feel like I belonged. The Qatari had their Land Cruisers, the Shell men their Nissan Patrols, working women have jeeps. I had a jeep, I started to belong".

But the other part of the story that I experienced was raw labour relations and poverty all around me. The cost of the 'new urbanity' was, so to speak, 'paid for' by hundreds of thousands of labourers working in intolerable conditions. Racial background and marital status would determine who could enter and who could not. In the becoming-shopping mall the following statement was made: "I started hosting family days because the single workers came like swarms of bees that seem not to be able to stop staring at women. Another way of banning the bachelors is to move them out of the residential areas which means that I won't see them at all anymore. Good for me!" In the end, the double-bind was unliveable; it reached the limits of what I could stand.

Map 3. Consider the possibilities; Welcome, pick your car and how would you like to live? Deterritorialization and Affect's Augmentation in the Body's Capacity to Act. I visit my friends who live in expat compounds. They are expensive places to live, and make me think vaguely about places where 'Stepford Wifes' or 'Desperate Housewives' dwell. Although I was initially drawn to those compounds, after reconsideration of our more modest housing budget, I chose to live in a different place: a brand new architectonical and more culturally mixed skyscraper called the 'ZigZag Towers'. At the compound, there is a faint smell of flowers mixed with desert dust and chlorine. There are servants who are barely there, not meant to be seen. It feels like a fabricated suburban life, is this Qatar? Again with this postmodern complexity; there are so many lives and stories in Qatar! This kind of life is one of a certain luxury, abundance that at the same time feels to me like confinement, and suffocates me. It reminds me of what Stewart wrote about the 'vagueness of the ordinary': "This is no utopia. Not a challenge to be achieved or an ideal to be realised, but a mode of attunement, a continuous responding to something not quite already given and yet somehow happening" (2007, p. 127). The get-togethers with our friends

ended in some kind of apocalypse in which we visited them in their newly built villa: “We had ended up in what looked like a Qatari war zone, where they were destroying houses that had only been built a couple of years before to be replaced with something else, probably more posh, more luxurious. It looked like what I imagined Bosnia looked like at the height of the Yugoslavian war. Upon entering their villa, which stood in my imagined war zone clustered with about three other villas, I soon discovered that inside the villa a war was going on as well”. Our friends revealed attitudes that would not have been out of place in colonial times: “Liesel was screaming to four Indian labourers. The labourers, poor guys who probably didn’t make more than 80 dollars a month, had put up a flat screen television under a leaking air-conditioner. She was going bazooka. The Indians stared at her, took a towel and put it over the flat screen. I made a joke to Xavier, to help to save the situation, but Xavier became very angry with the Indians as well. He started jumping up and down and screaming at them that they wouldn’t get their money, they would lose their visas, they would be deported”.

In the co-construction of Qatar where you live, how you dress and what car you drive become an important part of daily life. Malika expresses: “I am looking forward, excitedly, to my new car; it is going to be a Bugatti. But then, Miss, I really like my Lexus sports car convertible – my father sells and trades them, but not this one; it’s given me so many happy memories and really drives well.” I realize that my longing to own a car is an attempt to reterritorialize myself, find a place for myself here in Qatar. I bought a car from a colleague who was leaving the Gulf: “In the end, I asked her how much she wanted for the car, and I bought it, giving me something that I liked very much and never thought I would have. It helped me to belong, driving along in this big black monster. It was about the only thing in Qatar that made me feel as though I belonged. The Qatari had their Land Cruisers, the Shell men their Nissan Patrols, working women have a jeep. I had a jeep, I started to belong”.

Map 4. The Slave-Infidel-Foreigner. Deterritorialization and Affect’s Diminution in the Body’s Capacity to Act. I am not a slave, and I strongly believe that no one in this world should be put in such a position. In my autoethnography “Maaike, Becoming Bounded, Becoming a Slave, Enslaving Myself...”, it was impossible for me to conform to cultural practices and norms that positioned me as subservient. There was anger, dehumanisation, disbelief, etc. I did not identify with the role, my body objected to it and I fought against it.

The text looks like a snapshot that offers a perspective onto affect's theorisation, a process that Seighworth and Gregg call work undertaken by “peoples living under the thumb of a normativizing power – that attend to the hard and fast materialities, as well as the fleeting and flowing ephemera, of the daily and the workaday, of everyday and every-night life, and of ‘experience’” (2008, p. 7) and “where persistent, repetitious practices of power can simultaneously provide a body (or, better, collectivise bodies) with predicaments and potentials for realising a world that subsists within and exceeds the horizons and boundaries of the norm” (p. 7). The affects of this ongoing engagement fit into a world that evokes feelings of shame and inferiority.

In Qatar I encountered several slave-like conditions – for myself – and encountered many more such as the labourers toiling in 40 degrees outside and domestic workers confined to the house where they worked. The position of slave-infidel-foreigner, for me, remained in the domain of a strongly decreased affectivity combined with the domain of deterritorialization. It was my whole constitution, body and mind, that sickened me, provoked so strongly by the idea of submission to co-constructed societal practices like Kafala (work, state, husband; all serving as ‘sponsors’) that it gave me a strong feeling of vulnerability. I also have a feeling that, had I stayed slightly longer, my strong headedness would have gotten me into trouble, perhaps led me to be falsely accused of insulting the emir or other higher orders in the Qatari belief system: “What if my boss decided I had spoken up against the sheikh, or insulted their religion? It made me paranoid”; or maybe a small traffic accident with a Qatari would have sufficed. By going to Qatar, I never realised that I would enslave myself, so to speak.

The first big shock and awareness of my situation came when I was applying for my driver's license, for which I needed the permission of my husband (who was my formal sponsor) and his signature: “I soon learned what it meant to be judged as being ‘merely’ someone’s wife: not to be able to sign, speak or testify for herself”. In the elevator of this delusion, I relive it: “feeling this immense pain, this tremendous sensation of profound unhappiness and fear; holding on to some hope of what could be, this little light of what could be; feelings of alienation, suffocation, and extreme uncertainty, feelings of hardly being able to breathe”.

The second big shock came when I had to submit to a blood and tuberculosis test: “they will take a blood sample, take tuberculosis chest X-rays [...] they will take my fingerprints. I panic, cannot believe what I hear”, and “slowly I observe my blood being

drawn from me. It feels like a bad surrender. It feels terrible. It feels like giving up all the little bits of freedom that I have left. I am disappointed in myself. I gave in to a system to which I did not want to conform. I feel lost, I feel beaten, and I feel like a victim and a coward at the same time for not walking away". And yet, I stayed. The 'slave-infidel-foreigner' becoming became a lived space and temporality of work in the starkest of circumstance chronicling my 'encampment' in the Arabian Peninsula. How could I keep my sanity, self-respect, and sense of freedom?

It is now, much later, that I realise that systems such as Kafala put one in a position of extreme vulnerability to the government, in labour relationships and within a marriage. This is a position that is open to all forms of power abuse: "Part and parcel of working in Qatar meant becoming part of a system that lately has been described as 'slavery'. The country uses a 'Kafala' system which means that the foreign workforce has to be sponsored by an employer who is responsible for their visas and rights to exit the country. In fact, it means that you cannot leave the country for vacation or if you resign, if your boss does not sign your exit visa. It is a system prone to manipulation and something that kept me awake at night". I had also not realised that maybe I should have done my home work better; that, within Qatar, there is a long history of slavery at home, which had only been abolished in the mid-20th century, and that much of the social fabric of this society still operated according to such rules and one's hierarchy within the tribe, of which I was not part: "I felt estranged twice, once for not being a man, and again for not being able to become one of the Arabs. Even if I wanted to be in the custody of strangers it would have to be behind the Nicab (Veil) and joining the female conversations". By going to Qatar, so to speak, I enslaved myself and, in the end, I could not, and would not, 'play by those rules – or, to speak in Deleuzian terms, reterritorialize myself into the slave-infidel-foreigner assemblage.

Leaving the Elevator

Breathing heavily, my visitor has gone silent; I have gone silent. But, all is not lost. Unexpectedly, the doors of the elevator open. Finally I can breathe. I step out of the elevator and wait 'for de-reterritorializations to happen.' These de-reterritorializations make relational processes. I wake up...

My maps show tracings of how one individual (me) is an ongoing part of different assemblages: family, university, Qatar, Advanced Capitalism that “may be considered an *assemblage*, and [according to DeLanda] Deleuze’s theory of assemblage is exactly the kind of theory we need to conceptualise correctly each entity without any essentialist presuppositions” (DeLanda, 2006, p. 252). In processes of reterritorialization and deterritorialization there are processes at work “which stabilise or destabilise their identities. The smallest scale comprises a population of individual persons, but the subjectivity of each of these persons must, itself, be conceived as an assemblage of sub-personal components” (p. 252).

In my autoethnographic intertextualities, I speak about the way I was affected by/during the experience of living in a foreign Middle Eastern Emirate and my configuration to a self-understanding of territorialization, deterritorialization and reterritorialization on the basis of its affects. These affects are pre-personal and therefore transcend self.

My writing process, in itself, has been a method and process of inquiry and analysis. My texts tell the story of being deterritorialized while simultaneously struggling with processes of identity construction; the fear that my family life would fall apart; feelings of being exposed, of shame and inferiority. My texts also speak of how I reterritorialized into being part of Advanced Capitalism, being a consumer, dwelling in the shopping mall and about resentment. The texts integrate inquiry and analysis. They are a major part of my work, and they have been presented throughout this book, addressing the social context that I am studying and, as such, enlightening my interaction within the context of Qatar and ‘struggle’ with my self-understanding as a creation visible to the reader of my work.

My work evolved out of the idea that in Deleuzian-Guattarian thought, a ‘self’ is multiple and in a continuously and ‘rhizomatic’ process of change. My texts seek to understand the following: whether the application of Deleuzian concepts can illuminate an experience of the deterritorialization of self as a temporary resident in Qatar. What I experienced was that deterritorialization did not actually lead to ‘vital’ reterritorialization in the sense that ‘all change is good’. In my text there are many examples of how deterritorialization leads to feelings of being lost, disconnected, uprooted, exploited etc.

I experienced, somehow, that life is constantly moving, that there are forces of deterritorialization and reterritorialization constantly in process. They are affective movements of bodies, ‘lines of flight’ in time and space. I felt more ‘at home’ in some places than others. If affectivity alone was considered, one would rather be in these ‘homely’ places, however the large forces and constant movement at play within the processes of becoming mean that this is not always the case...

What I have discovered through the process of ‘writing as inquiry and analysis’ as well as plenty of conversations concerning Deleuze and daily life experiences over the last few years, is that life is vital, violent and unexpected. Sometimes one becomes stuck in a place; when being stuck means that you cannot identify with it, you cannot place your identity there, it also means that, when in such a space, one stays deterritorialized. It is Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘plane of immanence’ and possibly leads to schizophrenia, neurosis and, ultimately, even death. In my experimentation on the retro-perspective experience of being somewhere in the Middle East there are several movements whereby one can distinguish between desirable and extremely painful affective moments. It is a composition of lived experiences and a way to make sense of them. It is also a representation—between the reader and the text – of ideas, images, and insights into the challenges one encounters when moving about in the world and a frame of orientation for discussing organizations (e.g. oil companies, educational institutions, museums, multinationals) in a global world and what they means for identity, diversity, lifestyle and profession.

The writing of this book took place against complex relations and, as Deleuze and Guattari suggest, within a constantly changing world history in becoming: China’s economic growth and renaissance as a world finance leader and at the same time a global recession; a war in Afghanistan and Iraq; a war on terror; the election of Obama; the Arab Spring; violent protests in Egypt; and a civil war in Syria. In many countries there are also issues of human rights, ethnic troubles and lack of access to an education. My work is a reflection of my daily life struggles, of a body within this global field, which can inform people involved in policymaking. Somewhere, maybe, somehow it can contribute (even if at the grassroots level) to change global corporate and social guiding principles in order to increase individual and society’s affect in what they can do while creating spaces for shaping ones identity, regardless of race, gender, sexuality, age, talent, background, education, or religious beliefs. Perhaps it can make it possible for everyone to find a space in Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘plane of organization’, to (re)territorialize. My writing stems

from a critical social studies point of view in which I hope for a better, and this includes a more compassionate, future for humanity. I presented my work as a theory and practice of qualitative research, more specifically autoethnographic writing as a process of investigation and experimentation. It represented some of my experiences of living in the Arabian Gulf and teaching in Qatar, addressing issues relating to the affectivity of capitalism, globalisation and neoliberalism. It would be interesting to follow this project up with other research approaches that offer different ways of portraying a person's identity as an ensemble of "dialogues between and among various people" (Sampson, 1999, p. 53) and with a further rethinking of the Global South in relation to the North (and the North in relation to the South) in such a way that the postmodern 'becoming' of the two can only be understood through an inseparable self-other relation. My work is meant to contribute to the field of social studies and address a range of audiences, including (graduate) students searching for inspiration for 'doing' research differently – motivating 'minor' voices - and faculty informing themselves about further possibilities in the field of qualitative research. In a way, my writing has been risky. In the increasing positivism of Western Enlightenment thought, never mind the increasing body of knowledge that has been produced during the last twenty years in the theory and practice of qualitative enquiry, my type of 'experimental' qualitative research can easily be at risk of becoming marginalised. Nevertheless, I hope my employment of the combination of poststructural Deleuzian ontology and autoethnography as a method of inquiry will be inspirational and an example of what an autoethnography that addresses processes of de- and reterritorialization could look like.

Deleuze and Guattari's Kafka at the Back Door

"[T]he diabolical powers of the future that are already knocking at the door – capitalism, Stalinism, fascism. It is that which Kafka listens to, and not the noise of books – the sounds of a contiguous future, the murmur (*rumeur*) of new assemblages of desire, of machines, and of statements, that insert themselves into the old assemblages and break with them" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986, p. 83). The Global South breaks into the existing assemblages of Advanced Capitalism as a result of centuries of exploitation by the 'enlightened' West, and then will break with them, taking off on a line of flight into unknown futures. These futures will not be known until they evolve from the virtual, where they have been in

conscious lurking, and crystallise into actualities yet to be. We can only sense what they will be like; we cannot define them, these powers as they are vibrating in the fast developing nomad city-state of Doha, Qatar. My texts intent to grasp at the affects of these vibrations. The Global South vibrates and becomes, in reading them, post-personal; they are the proposed linkage by DeLanda beyond the ‘micro’ and the ‘macro’ (DeLanda, 2006).

Nevertheless, my texts did something else... I leave it up to you, the reader to be ‘my judge’ and decide if I succeeded in demonstrating that my Deleuzian inspired text of affect avoids the pitfalls of sentimentality. Did I succeed in my challenge to write engaging autoethnographical text, an affective social study, that recognizes Deleuze’s cognitive art, but moves beyond it in a way that shows social relatedness in a relational and descriptive form?

And please do not be too harsh, for, as a careful reader, you got to know me well, my weaknesses, my hopes, wishes, (in)ability to relate as always in becoming. My work is almost finished, and now I suddenly realise this is not a work about The Arabs, this is not a work about darkness in organizations, or globalisation. No, it is a work that became something else. In the process of researching, in the process of writing, I created an autoethnography as a minor language. A language of ‘Maaike,’ writing about her life in a different country, in an English language that is not her own. We could almost call it a minor literature, but yet, the narratives were not intended as literature; they were intended as a scholarly work contributing to social studies. And then, somewhere from in between Kafka, Deleuze, Stewart and all the others, somewhere there evolved what I called a ‘minor literature autoethnography’ (MLA).

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Samenvatting in het Nederlands (Abstract in Dutch)

Wordingsprocessen, een (De-) (Re-)reterritorialisering

Een Social Studies Autoetnografie als ‘Literatuur Minor’

In dit boek volg ik de lijnen van een wetenschappelijk experiment en nodig ik mijn lezers uit om mee te doen aan dit project. Al deze lijnen vormen een netwerk – of rizoom, als we spreken in Deleuziaanse, Guattariaanse termen (1987, p.7) – zonder een begin- of eindpunt en waarin ieder willekeurig punt aan een ander punt verbonden kan worden. Hoewel mijn boek beschouwd kan worden als het vormen van een soort ‘rizoom’ met de wereld (p. 11), zijn mijn teksten zoals *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* door Deleuze en Guattari (1987), georganiseerd in wat men plateaus noemt. Deze plateaus zijn min of meer tijdelijk en zijn manifestaties van geleefde intensiteiten. Ze ontstaan uit de ervaringen en bewegingen die continu worden gereconstrueerd met referenties naar mijn persoonlijkheden: expat, student, moeder, hondenliefhebber, vrouw, vriend, Deleuziaanse academicus en vele anderen, allemaal in relatie met elkaar, als een rizoom.

De plateaus in dit boek zijn heterogeen van aard en de geschriften worden gevoed door verhalen, ideeën, regels en lichamen, alsmede de interacties van zelf met anderen. Ze evoceren affecten die geproduceerd worden op een plateau. Ik zie ‘affect’ in termen van vermogen—het vermogen om te doen, te handelen en te relateren. Affecten maken een verscheidenheid van interconnecties mogelijk. Door het evoceren van deze affecten, zijn mijn teksten gevormd door en beschrijven ze de complexiteit van ‘wat het betekent om het meegemaakt te hebben.’ Het zijn assemblages van non-lineaire tijd, levenservaringen en reflecties op wat een lichaam kan doen in een bepaalde situatie. Ze drukken ‘straat niveau’ interacties uit in de zin van Michel de Certeau’s zin ‘clasped by the streets’ (1998).

Hierdoor faciliteren de plateaus in mijn boek en zijn ze een onderdeel van relationele processen die specifieke mensen en werelden co-construeren. Het zijn interactieve ruimtes waar zelf wordt gevormd en hervormd. Omdat de organisatie van een plateau in beweging is, kan het bewegen richting een proces van deterritorialisatie, of disintegratie waarbij het ongedaan wordt gemaakt, of het kan bewegen richting een proces van reterritorialisatie, of organisatie, waarbij het meer gearticuleerd wordt. Plateaus

bewegen zich gelijktijdig richting disintegratie of integratie. Plateaus zijn daarom altijd in wording, en daardoor ben ik altijd in wording.

In mijn schrijven begin ik met het construeren van mijn plateaus uitgaande van de veronderstelling dat identiteit relationeel is. Hiermee bedoel ik dat ik processen van het vormen van identiteit niet beschouw als het vastgesteld resultaat van een subject dat inwerkt op een inert object, maar eerder als interactief en onderling besproken door de betrokkenen. Mijn onderzoek is rechtstreeks geïnspireerd door het werk van Deleuze en Guattari, hoewel het niet Deleuziaans is. Mijn eigen stijl ontvouwt zich tijdens het schrijven van dit boek, een stijl die niet alleen voortbouwt op het werk van Deleuze en Guattari, maar ook op Comaroffs point of view, waarin de wereld zich net zoveel uit het ‘Globale Zuiden’ als uit het ‘Globale Noorden’ ontwikkeld; en op Sampsons postmoderne begrip van mens-zijn als gedecentreerd en meervoudig. Ik vertel niet simpelweg wat er gebeurd is – maar ik tracht te ontwikkelen en te articuleren wat op een bepaald moment werd gevoeld, de mogelijkheden die er op dat moment ontstonden, wat er tot stand kwam of wat er werd vernietigd in deze ruimte en tijd. Door het toepassen van een autobiografische benadering in mijn onderzoek breng ik de ontwikkeling van onderlinge relaties op en tussen meerdere lagen van sociale en politieke realiteit in kaart. Deze studie vind plaats tegen de achtergrond van globalisatie en specifieker de globalisatie in de co-constructieve relaties van de Arabische Golf.

Uitgaande van deze constatering onderzoeken mijn teksten wat het zou betekenen om te functioneren in een verscheidenheid als proces van zelf-(mis)constructie. Levend en bewegend in een steeds meer versplinterde en mobiele wereld, wil ik me graag richten op wat het betekent om in diversiteit te leven. In het bijzonder wil ik de lezer een idee geven van de affectieve dimensies die deel uitmaken van de belichaming van het leven in een globale wereld. Het ‘alledaagse’ in mijn teksten, de beschrijvingen van hoe het voelde op een bepaald tijdstip en op een bepaalde plaats, evoceren mijn lichamelijke ervaring op een levendige manier terwijl ze het lokale en het globale tot stand brengen. Hoewel ik geen traditionele analyse verstrek, laat ik ‘affectieve modulatie’ haar werk doen, en accepteer ik Geertz (1973) zijn claim dat ‘dikke beschrijvingen’ (cruciale aspecten van) de ervaringsgerichte filosofie kunnen blootleggen. De centrale problematiek van dit boek kan als volgt worden samengevat:

“Hoe ziet een autoetnografie eruit waarin aandacht wordt besteed aan de processen van de- en reterritorialisatie?”

Ik behandel deze vraag binnen het kader van drie verschillende academische tradities. Elke traditie biedt nuttige concepten waarmee ik een dergelijke autoetnografie kan ontwikkelen. Hoewel geen van deze tradities vrij zijn van kritiek, kunnen ze als trio dienen als een steigerconstructie voor de grenzen van het project (boek) en elkaar aanvullen om zo de basis voor een autoetnografie te verstrekken.

De eerste traditie is het werk van Deleuze en Guattari, of preciezer gezegd hun concept van de- en reterritorialisatie zoals geïntroduceerd in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987). Met dit concept bepleiten zij het denken door processen van wording. Ik ben geïnspireerd door de manier waarop Deleuze en Guattari *A Thousand Plateaus* hebben georganiseerd, en met welke concepten ze dit doen: ‘rizoom’ en ‘plateau’ (1987). Mijn gehele boek relateert aan het concept van een rizoom, dat, volgens Deleuze en Guattari, “opereert middels variatie, expansie, overwinning, verovering en uitlopers” (1987, p. 21). Deleuze en Guattari leggen het concept van rizoom zo levendig vast, en zo in samenhang met de beweging van deterritorialisatie: “Anders dan een structuur, die wordt gedefinieerd door een verzameling van punten en posities met binaire relaties tussen de punten en tweevoudige relaties tussen de posities, is de rizoom uitsluitend opgebouwd uit lijnen: lijnen van segmentariteit en stratificaties als haar dimensies, en de lijn van vlucht of deterritorialisatie als de maximum dimensie waarna de verscheidenheid een metamorfose ondergaat, van aard verandert” (Deleuze en Guattari, 1987, p. 21). Een rizoom is opgebouwd uit plateaus (p. 21). Ik beleefde leven in Qatar en reizen over de wereld als een rizomatische ervaring. Terwijl ik in Qatar was, maar ook nadat ik terug naar Europa was verhuisd, had ik het gevoel in een dromerige staat te verkeren waarin realiteiten, teksten, films en fictie vaak in elkaar verstrengeld raakten. Ik beleefde mijn leven op verschillende plateaus, zonder te weten waar de plateaus zouden beginnen of waar ze zouden eindigen. Mijn teksten zouden begrepen kunnen worden als een rizoom, evenals mijn manieren van ‘wording’ (na Deleuze en Guattari, 1987, p. 21); en de meerdere zelf-relaties waarin ik mezelf heb bevonden; relaties met de wereld, Qatar, de universiteit, arbeidsverhoudingen, politiek, dieren; natuurlijke dingen—zoals mijn hond—en kunstmatige dingen—zoals het winkelcentrum zijn vibraties van geleefde intensiteiten. Toen, bewogen ze of vielen ze uiteen. Voor de lezer kan dit een desoriënterende ervaring zijn. Wanneer een assemblage uit

elkaar valt, kan het voelen alsof je ‘van het plateau af valt’ en dat is precies de bedoeling van mijn teksten, om zo de geleefde intensiteiten te evoceren, de breuken en de scheuren.

De tweede traditie is het werk van de Comaroffs over het ‘Globale Zuiden’ (2012). Ook zij ontwikkelen het idee van wording door te benadrukken dat de productie van kennis moet plaatsvinden op de locatie waar dergelijke processen plaatsvinden. Met andere woorden, in hun studie naar de relatie tussen het ‘Westen’ en het ‘Globale Zuiden’ concluderen ze dat de omstandigheden voortdurend veranderen, of in wording zijn. Zij beschouwen het ‘Globale Zuiden’ als een plek die globale toekomsten produceert. De Comaroffs “stellen dat, in het heden, het het globale zuiden is dat bevoordecht inzicht biedt in de werking van de wereld” (p.1). Volgens deze manier van denken is Qatar, gelegen in het zogeheten ‘Globale Zuiden’, één van die plaatsen. Zodoende, wanneer men iets wil zeggen over de relatie tussen het ‘Westen’ en het ‘Globale Zuiden,’ kan men niet op de traditionele manier het ‘Zuiden’ benaderen als een object van een autoritaire etnografische studie, want dit ontket de interacties, onderhandelingen en onderlinge relaties die deel uitmaken van de notie van het ‘Zuiden.’

De derde traditie is het werk van Sampson, die, voortbouwend op het postmoderne idee van het individu, een gedecentreerd en veelvoudig beeld van het mens-zijn promoot. Hij schrijft: “het postmodernisme beschrijft de identiteit van een persoon minder als een ding dan als een voortdurend proces, minder als iets dat in een individu zit dan als de opkomst van dialogen tussen verschillende mensen” (2009, p. 53). Een persoon wordt beschouwd als inclusief eigendom; een ‘verzameld’ individualisme. De meervoudige zelf-andere relaties ontstaan uit de sociale en politieke processen waar de persoon bij betrokken is (Sampson, 1988). Volgens dit principe zijn de processen van identiteitsformatie voortdurend en zijn ze onderhevig aan processen van deterritorialisatie en reterritorialisatie. Sampson voert terug naar Deleuze en Guattari om duidelijk te maken dat processen van identiteitsformatie op meerdere lagen realiteit plaatsvinden, en zodoende beschouwd kunnen worden als rizomatisch en multidimensionaal. Door te focussen op affecten worden mogelijkheden en actualiteiten gemanifesteerd. In het boek bekritiseer ik de poging van Deleuze en Guattari om deze gedecentreerde benadering op te pakken. Erickson suggereert dat schrijvers zoals Deleuze, maar ook Derrida en Lyotard de gezaghebbendheid van teksten en vroege modernistische verlichting discoursen die “trachten de ‘master narratives’ te construeren in twijfel te trekken (2011, p. 52) en “de fundamentele gezaghebbendheid van teksten per se” uit te dagen (p. 52). *A Thousand*

Plateaus als een tekst was, de poging van ‘twee postmoderne academici’ om zo’n uitdaging aan te gaan. Ik laat zien dat hoewel zij pleiten voor een dergelijke gedecentreerde benadering, hun werk nauwelijks een indicatie geeft dat zij hun egocentrische positie van de blanke man als academicus in Parijs hebben opgegeven, en dat zij, als auteurs, afstandelijk blijven van hun schitterend gedeconstrueerde en speelse teksten.

Ook bekritiseer ik het werk van de Comaroffs. Hoewel zij schrijven vanuit de positie van het ‘Zuiden’ om de wording in relatie tot en met het ‘Westen’ vast te leggen, bieden zij uiteindelijk nieuwe grootse verhalen, die de onderhandelingen en onderlinge relaties waaruit de situatie waarover zij spreken is opgebouwd, buiten beschouwing laten. Dit zorgt dat zij het ‘worden’ dat zij trachten te formuleren dus ook buiten beschouwing laten. Door mezelf in Qatar te positioneren, ben ik nu in staat om teksten te creëren die “de auteur behelzen (en de ‘standpunt’ perspectieven van de auteur) als een expliciete aanwezigheid in het veldwerk” (Erickson, 2011, p. 52). Tot slot, hoewel ik het werk van Sampson waardeer voor zijn gedecentreerde visie op de mens en zijn filosofische basis van een relationele benadering, ben ik van mening dat de ‘taal’ ontbreekt die nodig is om processen van wording op een adequate manier te kunnen bespreken.

Door middel van zowel deze drie tradities als mijn kritiek erop, is mijn project gebaseerd op een theoretische/filosofische benadering die ingaat op de kritiek van traditionele methoden op een statisch object/object identiteitsformatie die door alle drie de tradities worden uitgesproken. Anders dan deze drie tradities, echter, doet mijn project dit op een manier dat het in staat is om de ‘wording’ van het onderwerp te behouden. Op een methodologisch niveau is mijn project gecentreerd rond de drie concepten/ideeën van affect, processen van experimenten en een autobiografische benadering van verslaggeven, ook wel “autoetnografie genoemd” (Erickson, 2011, p. 52). In de affectieve tekst tracht ik in te gaan op relationele processen van wording middels de verhalende stem die ik me eigen maak en ontwikkel.

Door deze twee niveaus met elkaar te integreren, dus de onderlinge relatie tussen het theoretische/filosofische en het methodologische, creëer ik een autoetnografische intertekstualiteit die is geïnspireerd door ‘minor literature’ zoals ontwikkeld door Deleuze en Guattari (1986): “‘Major’ en ‘minor’ kwalificeren niet als twee verschillende talen maar eerder als twee gebruiken of functies van taal” (1987, p. 104). Volgens Deleuze en Guattari is Kafka’s werk een typisch voorbeeld van ‘minor literature.’ Als een Tsjechoslowaakse

jood die schrijft in het Duits, schrijft hij in de taal van de ‘major literature’ maar van een andere kant van wording. Kafka creëert dan ook een taal binnen een taal. Deze sub-taal is een “potentieel, creatief en gecreëerd, worden” (p. 105 – 106). Het is gerelateerd aan de grote taal, die een “constant en homogeen systeem” (p. 105) is, maar op een manier dat het in staat is om met dit systeem te spelen en het uit te dagen, en een stem geven aan stemmen die anders niet gehoord zouden worden. Kafka gebruikt Duits om het soort teksten uit te vinden dat een stem geeft aan nieuwe perspectieven. Deze nieuwe perspectieven bieden uitdaging aan de manieren waarop de grote krachten in een maatschappij worden gehandhaafd; een ‘minor literature’ maakt het daardoor mogelijk om nieuwe persoonlijkheden en onderlinge relaties tussen persoonlijkheden die collectiviteiten produceren die, in hun wording, complexe relaties hebben met dit heersende systeem.

Tijdens het onderzoek en het schrijfproces heb ik een autoetnografie als een ‘minor’ taal gecreëerd. Een taal van ‘Maaike,’ die schrijft over haar mede-geconstrueerde dagelijkse bezigheden in een ander land, gelegen in het ‘Globale Zuiden,’ in een Engelse taal die niet haar eigen is. We zouden het bijna ‘minor literature’ kunnen noemen (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986), en toch zijn de verhalen niet bedoeld als literatuur; ze zijn bedoeld als academisch werk dat bijdraagt aan sociale wetenschappen. En dan, ergens halverwege, ergens evolueerde iets wat ik een ‘minor’ literatuur autoetnografie of MLA zou willen noemen. Het heeft kenmerkende eigenschappen die het onderscheiden van de meer ‘realistische’ of ‘major’ etnografische benaderingen, echter volgt het een non-gezaghebbend perspectief, waarbij ik een andere positie inneem dan een “wetend subject.” De focus ligt op de mede-geconstrueerde verscheidenheid en de ‘minor’ stemmen die vaak niet worden gehoord. Mijn ‘minor’ stijl van schrijven is anders dan een ‘major’ benadering omdat het geen zoektocht is naar ‘één enkele interpretatie,’ maar eerder een poging om de wordingen te adresseren die ontstaan uit deze onderlinge relaties, in een taal die nieuwe perspectieven een stem geeft.

In zeven plateaus presenteert ik teksten die een licht werpen op affecten die worden geproduceerd door deterritoriale en reterritoriale bewegingen. De serie teksten die op de eerste zes plateaus functioneren zijn mijn ontdekking van de potenties en worstelingen van zelf om verwikkeld te raken in dergelijke onderlinge relaties. Het zevende plateau, mijn conclusie, is een tekst waarin de onderlinge relaties tussen de plateaus nader worden besproken.

