Peripherealities: Porous Bodies; Porous Borders
The "Crisis" of the Transient in a Borderland of Lost Ghosts

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The aim of the paper is to investigate the position of the transient in its il/legal immigrant, colonised, refugee forms, particularly through the mestiza. *These porous bodies exist in a world that attempts to create borders, both physical, legal and geographical, which has lead to an increasing number of spaces where states of exceptions preside and a borderland consciousness has emerged. These marginalised and liminal spaces deserve analytical attention not only for what they reveal of the people that exist within them but, also, what they expose of the people who exist outside of the liminal.*

The human is clearly not conceived within human rights as these "rights" are not equally given over to all human beings. It would seem that one is only truly human if others recognise the individual as human; therefore, humanity is conditional and not guaranteed. Agamben's notion of the homo sacer, *Avery Gordon's* ghost *and Achille Mbembe's* shadow *are all theories explicated in this paper to define those marginalised, subjugated and cut off from a world of human recognition. Using Agamben's* state of exception *and* camp, *Mbembe's* colony, *Anzaldúa's* borderland *and Coutin's* space of nonexistence, *the spaces and states in which those without rights are situated are analysed and revealed to demonstrate the sheer number of those considered sub-human, non-human or* homo sacer.

The paper concludes with a suggestion of how human rights and equality can be bolstered through a post-humanist feminism based upon Braidotti's philosophical nomadism via feminist protest and Andzaldúa's autohistorias.

Keywords: borderland, homo sacer, mestiza, state of exception, transient

Introduction

An entrenched apathy develops watching the countless lives, downtrodden or departed, seen through the looking-glass of a television or read in the small-print of a newspaper. Lives seem expendable, or at least, Global South lives become consumable. Pictures, like jailbait, tantalise with the life and death drama of the Cause or Event that happens *there* (but not *here*). As

Žižek states: 'the distance which separates Us from Them, from their reality, is maintained: the real horror happens there, not here' (2002:13). There is one thing at the centre of every inequality depicted in the West by numerous Cartesian dichotomies, men/women, white/black, heterosexual/homosexual, bourgeoisie/proletariat, Christian/Muslim; the locus of all these intersectional categorisations is the human body. The emphasis on each and every one of the multiplicity of identities and categorisations is through the ambiguous classification of 'human'. Therefore, it is crucial to analyse what exactly the human is. Who is human? Who is sub-human or non-human? As Dean writes: 'what is at issue here is not so much what human beings really are or have become but how they think about who they are, and the consequences of this' (1996:210).

In this paper, I wish to highlight the social precarity and subordination of the transient body by the State due to its destabilisation of hegemonic discourse surrounding prevalent notions of contamination, invasion and biopolitical control. I use examples such as Anzaldúa's gendered analysis of *mestizaje* from her seminal text entitled *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1999) to explicate the transient body in its colonised, immigrant and refugee forms. I conclude with how I feel that the field of gender is essential in its ability to offer theoretical viewpoints

such as philosophical nomadism that can transcend, destabilise and subvert the hegemonic and provide pragmatic alternatives to resisting social inequality. The study of society, be it Sociology, Cultural Studies or Gender Studies, is always at its best when it is transformative. The need to be transformative and societally self-analytical is particularly crucial as it appears we are entering the beginning of a generation of cuts which usually comes accompanied with a burgeoning socio-political conservatism. I would argue that it is with a post-humanist feminism, based upon Braidotti's (1994) philosophical nomadism alongside feminist protest and Anzaldua's *autohistorias*, that we can develop a greater level of equality for those marginalised and excluded. Autohistoria here refers to the use of a variety of mediums to express oneself from personal narratives and poetry to testimonials and art. It is about finding alternative forms of expression that do not prevent those who have not been trained in an academic discursive tongue from expressing themselves and highlighting the intricate complexities they face to a wider audience. As Anzaldua states: '[*we are*]...participating in the creation of yet another culture, a new story to explain the world and our participation in it, a new value system...I am an act of kneading, of uniting and joining' (1999:103). It is those that exist on the periphery of reality, in the marginal spaces of

society, in permanent or temporary liminality and precarity that are the focus of this paper. The analysis of porousness envisions the body as being less solid than it may appear, perhaps even less so than borders. The porousness of borders can be seen in both physical land borders as well as the borders of social marginality (e.g. the borders of the *camp*, the borders that demarcate territoriality, and the borders that delineate social categorisations).

Through a decidedly poststructuralist conceptual framework, the foundation of this paper is based on Giorgio Agamben's conceptualisations of *Homo sacer*, *state of exception* and the *camp* alongside Foucault's notions of *biopower* and *governmentality* to demonstrate what Agamben describes as the 'old trinity composed of the state, the nation (birth), and land' (1995;1998:176). Any understanding of the human body requires an understanding of its relationship with the State as citizen/non-citizen. Through the 'prototype' body of the transient, examples such as the Chicano will be offered to provide evidence of the particular relationship between the State and the human to help reveal what has occurred in the developing ideologies in the categorisation of human. The aim is not to construct an overarching discourse to elucidate a broader theory of humanity. Foucault (1989:251) once stated: 'one of the "most destructive habits of modern thought...

is that the moment of the present is considered in history as the break, the climax, the fulfilment"' (Barry et al 1996:4). Likewise, this paper is not trying to provide the argument for a modern 'crisis' or a sudden shift or change in the conception of humanity – even if it is often perceived as such. A 'history of the present' is a fallacy that attempts to disconnect the present 'postmodernity' from previous eras, implicating some fragility in the present, whilst ignoring the differences between cultures in a globalised world: 'There is rather a multiplicity of presents, a multiplicity of ways of experiencing those presents and a multiplicity of the "we" who are subjects of that experience' (Dean 1996:210). It is necessary to be reflexive and consider the relativism of the multiplicities of states of exceptions and types of *homo sacer* that can be identified across the world. Rose (1995) states, 'to speak of a critical ontology of ourselves requires...an immediate qualification. First, what is at issue is a history of localized and heterogeneous ontologies that do not add up to either a single form of human being or a single present' (cited by Dean 1996:210). Merely, it is a reflection of the myriad of juxtaposed sociopolitical situations that have led to a proliferation of contemporary prominent spaces of exceptionality. These spaces, and the life within them, have nuanced differences in their causes occurring in a globalised world of different geopolitical loca-

tions and socioeconomic circumstances. Globalisation has led to an increasing divergence in identity formation and a multiplicity of subjectivities that, while offering opportunities for self-actualisation, has led to identities becoming increasingly de-centred, dislocated, fragmented and placed in a sense of 'crisis' (Hall cited by Dean 1996:213). To investigate this, it is first necessary to look at recent historical developments and the State's role in facilitating this perceived 'crisis' in its biopoliticisation of the body and through its creation of states of exception.

Agamben and Foucault: The Biopoliticisation of the Human

The disparity in the conceptualisation of humanity has been gathering speed since at least the beginning of the 20th Century, but has its roots in developments much earlier. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen ('*La declaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*'), written in 1789, is recognised as one of the first texts written in regards to human rights. Brought about by the socio-political upheaval of the French Revolution, it intended to set out human rights and the rights of the citizen. The document is ambiguous as to whether the rights of man and the rights of citizen are two separate distinctions or one and the same. Sieyès states, 'natural and civil rights are those rights for whose preservation society is formed, and political rights are those rights by which society is formed...it would be best to call the first ones passive rights, and the second ones active rights...All inhabitants of a country must enjoy the rights of passive citizens...all are not active citizens' (cited by Agamben 1995/1998:130). Therefore, it would seem that there is a dichotomy between life as a physiological being and life as a political being, whereby the subject as bare life (*zoē*) becomes citizen and 'the bearer of sovereignty' (Agamben 1995/1998:128). Foucault, in *The History of Sexuality*, states that 'what brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of transformation of human life' is *biopower* (Foucault 1976/1979:143). Foucault summarised that the process of mechanisms and calculations of State power turns politics into *biopolitics*, 'for millennia...man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for political existence; modern man is an animal whose politics calls his existence as a living being into question' (cited by Agamben 1995/1998:3).

Historically, sovereign powers wanted to invade and control other lands; contemporaneously, the attention has turned to invading and controlling other bodies. Capitalism's dominance would, arguably, have not been possible without the disciplinary control of biopower which, combined with new technologies, helped create

Foucault's 'docile bodies' that could be moulded, shaped and structured in a way better suited to the State's need (Agamben 1995/1998:3). The 'docile body' ushers forth the biopolitical analysis of power, whereby biological existence becomes reflected in political existence (Foucault 1976/1979:142). Foucault's analysis of power as being fluid and able to move in all directions marked a distinct split in the previous theorisations of power which usually only recognised vertical juridico-institutional power from the State to the people and vice versa. However, Foucault recognised the ability for power to move horizontally too. Power is exchanged in every interpersonal relationship and, through these experiences, power has the ability to mould as 'power penetrates subjects' very bodies and forms of life' (Agamben 1995/1998:5). With a Foucauldian approach to power, we can now look at Agamben's theorisations on the *homo sacer* and the power dynamics involved with the sovereign.

The figure of *Homo sacer* originates within an Ancient Roman law that dictated that, as the sentence to a crime, one could be reduced to bare life; unable to be sacrificed to the gods or murdered but equally free to be killed at will (Agamben 1995/1998:8). This may seem contradictory but it demonstrates that the individual who has bare life has been removed from political law as well as religious sanctity. Carl

Schmitt defines sovereignty as: 'he who decides on the state of exception' (Agamben 1995/1998:11). The state of exception is the space in which emergency powers are invoked and normal juridical rule is suspended. Therefore, the sovereign demarcates where *homo sacer* exists and, through the biopolitical power over bare life, distinguishes the state of exception by which bare life becomes included in the polis through its very exclusion (*Sovereign -> Biopower -> Homo sacer -> Exception -> Sovereign*). Paradoxically, the sovereign states that nothing is outside of the law whilst, simultaneously, demarcating the state of exception thereby placing himself outside of the law (that "nothing" is outside of): 'the sovereign...is "*at the same time* outside and inside the juridical order"' (Schmitt cited by Agamben 1995/1998:15). Therefore, within the concealed nucleus of Western biopolitics, bare life establishes the political in its exclusion but is included through its exclusion from the *polis*: 'The exception does not subtract itself from the rule; rather, the rule, suspending itself, gives rise to the exception and, maintains itself in relation to an exteriority' (Agamben 1995/1998:18). Therefore, it is bare life (sacred life) which is exposed to death that constitutes the original political element as opposed to natural simple life (Agamben 1995/1998:88). Through a *relation of exception*, it can be demonstrat-

ed that sovereignty is founded upon a 'double exclusion' which takes the form of a 'zone of indistinction' (Agamben 1995/1998:83). I will now utilise analyses of transient bodies to provide examples of spaces of exception in which biopoliticisation and governmentality have led to the formulations of bare life.

Anzaldúa's Mestiza and Mbembe's Shadow: The Colonised Body

The transient body, in the confines of this paper, covers both bodies that are hybridised through colonisation and occupation (such as Anzaldúa's *mestizaje* (1999:27)) as well as those who are illegal immigrants, refugees and slaves. I would argue these figures are a form of bare life, also known as *homo sacer* (sacred man); the life '*who may be killed and yet not sacrificed*' (Agamben 1995/1998:8). If the sovereign, or State, is intrinsically connected with those it relegates to bare life, then we must question the borderland that they exist within. The emphasis is on an analysis of the borderland, as a state of exception or space of nonexistence, and the effect it has on the life that exists in this interstitial locality. Anzaldúa defines the borderlands as: 'physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory' (1999:x) whilst Gupta and Ferguson (1997) define the borderland as not a: 'fixed top-

ographical site between two other fixed locales (nations, societies, cultures) but an interstitial zone of deterritorialization and hybridization' (Coutin 2003:171). The two definitions together recognise the geophysical and socio-political aspects of the borderland space. The space can be a dangerous one to cross, as passing through any space of liminality is. Anzaldúa notes how President Reagan identified the border between Mexico and America as a frontline war zone (1999:33) which means that those who cross from Mexico into America end up living in a no-man's-borderland, caught between resistance and deportation (Anzaldúa 1999:34). There are various reasons why those who exist in transience would risk crossing, and existing, in such spaces.

Anzaldúa analyses the U.S.-Mexican border where the Global South meets the First World, in which the border '*es una herida abierta*' [is an open wound] that: 'grates...and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country – a border culture' (my translation, 1999:25). This *mestizaje* border culture has been formed through the historical entanglements of the two States Mexico and America, whereby America essentially annexed parts of Northern Mexico and, in the process, split a people from their homeland. The *mestiza* are formed of the hybridisation between the Indians of Mexico

and Yucatán and the Spanish *conquistadors*. Later, after American acquisition and hybridisation, with Anglo-Saxon influence, the *mestiza* became Chicanos (Anzaldúa 1999:27). The border culture is in a constant 'state of transition' where the *mestiza* are seen as transgressors and alien. This identification not only leaves them in a land that does not want them but also without juridical recognition so that the land becomes a state of exception, yet shared alongside those who are recognised: the American citizens.

The space of illegality defines the space that is legal. Coutin argues that the space of illegality is necessary in its classification of the legal space. 'Defining that which is illegal simultaneously indicates what is legal, determining who is to be excluded also reveals the criteria for inclusion, and borders could not exist unless there was something to divide' (2003:173). Paradoxically, this binary division of the negated defining the legitimate, ties in with Agamben's conception of the state of exception as the space which defines that which it is not: the sovereign and juridical sphere of recognition (1995/1998:6). The borderland, where those considered 'alien' within a territory exist, are often involved in the inadvertent legitimisation of the State through engaging within the informal economy. The space of illegality is arguably necessary, though discursively destabilising for the State, as it requires the 'alien' to engage in clandestine productivity that helps support the economy without a demand on welfare benefits. For example, Mexican border-crossers work in unregulated factories known as *maquiladoras* (Saldívar-Hull in *Borderlands* 1999:3). The *maquiladoras* export factories provide cheap labour for American industry. However, it is not just the First World State that benefits from the income; untaxed income can provide substantial remittances for the Global South countries, such as the Philippines and Mexico (Coutin 2003:192).

Many women from countries such as Mexico and the Philippines work as live-in maids for American citizens, whereby the American citizens themselves accept the 'alien' for their own labour purposes in opposition to official State acceptability. The maids earn as little as $15 per week and experience social isolation, concern of being deported if caught, and suffer serious health problems. Ong considers the maids a form of *neoslavery*, living in 'zones of exception', wherein foreign domestic workers are 'subhuman' (2007:196). The Mexican women are typically at most risk, often having to pay a smuggler to help in getting across the border from Mexico to America. 'Often the *coyote* (smuggler) doesn't feed her for days or let her go to the bathroom. Often he rapes her or sells her into prostitution. She cannot call on... state health or economic resources

because she doesn't know English and she fears deportation. American employers are quick to take advantage of her helplessness' (Anzaldúa 1999:34). The absence of legal recognition leads to a lack of protection and encourages 'aliens to go further underground, into the shadows, whereby they may find themselves engaging in greater levels of illegality, e.g. drug-use or sex work, to earn money or to escape their situation. The industries that undocumented migrants can become involved in leave them open to being taken advantage of by informal employers in often low-income occupations which prevent upward social mobility and leave refugees and migrants vulnerable.

People-trafficking for the purposes of labour is not a new phenomenon. Forced migration has occurred for hundreds of years. The forced migration that arguably has had the most effect on a global scale was the movement of Africans to the Caribbean and North America which has shaped contemporary demographics. Mbembe describes the experiences of slaves from plantations and demonstrates how they were effectively 'shadows' suffering a triple loss: 'loss of a "home", loss of rights over his or her body, and loss of political status. This triple loss is identical with absolute domination, natal alienation, and social death (expulsion from humanity altogether)' (2003:21). The plantation slave, kept for labouring, is kept in

a '*state of injury*': 'a phantomlike world of horrors and intense cruelty and profanity' (Mbembe 2003:21). Without any political engagement, the slave represents the bare life commodified through biopoliticised techniques of power that gives ownership of the slave as a possession for the plantation owner whilst the colony represents the site in which the sovereign exercises power exterior to the law (Mbembe 2003:22-3).

The power relations of the colony are particularly important given that the majority of the world was colonised by a handful of European states. If Africa was one of the major geopolitical sites of colonisation then Africans themselves were the body of colonisation – their commodification scarred upon their bodies. The globalised power relations and depictions of humanity given to decolonised nations still have a residue effect through the leftover set of written social and spatial relations. '*Colonial occupation* itself was a matter of seizing, delimiting, and asserting control over a physical geographical area – of writing on the ground a new set of social and spatial relations' (Mbembe 2003:25). This can be often seen in the media portrayal of Global South countries as 'backward' with the citizens 'repressed' and 'victims'. This victimisation is less about demonstrating the West as saviours and more about depicting the Global South as somehow less than human. The sovereignty involved in

colonising relegated the colonised to a third zone between subject-hood and objecthood (2003:26); the colonised who exist in this interstitial space are considered '*savage life*', equated to any other '*animal life*', and represented as: '"natural" human beings who lack the specifically human character, the specifically human reality' (Mbembe 2003:24). This third zone can be seen as a borderland in which the slaves and the colonised are not quite human and not quite animal, not quite subjects but not quite objects. It is this dichotomy which becomes the root of violence in the colony through the separation of the coloniser, as human, and the colonised, as *savage*.

The Migrant and Refugee Body: The Ghost in the Borderland

Now I wish to briefly move on to another form of the transient body embodied in the 'illegal' migrant and refugee. In 2000, international migrants numbered 175 million, with 1 in every 35 people in the world constituting an international migrant, whilst there were 17 million refugees in the world (Jolly and Reeves 2005:6). These numbers are staggering when considering the invisibility of immigrants and refugees. There is almost no legal recognition of the illegal immigrant and refugee, who simply disappear into 'spaces of nonexistence'. Coutin, studying Salvadoran illegal immigrants in the US, stated her characterisation of the borderland as a: 'space of non-

existence...because it divides the legal and the illegal, the legitimate and the illegitimate, the overt and the clandestine. Legality is spatialized in that those who do not exist legally are imagined to be "outside," in an "underground," or "not there"' (2003:172). This absence can be seen as the invisibility of *homo sacer*. When the legality of citizenship is removed, it is as if the physical body disappears with it. Illegal immigrants and refugees can become exiled from their home by the threat of death and encamped in detention centres in the new State they find themselves in demonstrating how the space of nonexistence is also a space of violence. The undocumented immigrants are denied legal rights, restricted in movement and identification without full personhood, excluded from the original State and rejected from the new State creating a double-bind of ostracism.

This absence, arguably, leaves an apparition of the originating culture. Utilising Gordon's conception of the 'ghost' as a sociological haunting, one can see how these transient bodies are also ghosts; 'ghosts are characteristically attached to the events, things, and places that produced them in the first place' (2008:xix). Thus, it is difficult for illegal immigrants to move past the loss of their former selves creating an apparition of what was lost leaving their identities torn, split in two, and severed. This is not just

the case for those who have been forced into transience through migration or State occupation. Gordon's theory of the haunting of loss which creates the ghost also aptly reflects Mbembe's shadow plantation slave. It also can be seen in those who experienced the *camp*; they will never have forgotten the effect of being the subject of biopoliticisation and instigated into bare life, even after redemption, legal recognition and citizenship resumed. However, it is not just what is left behind that becomes an apparition; it is also the subject themselves. The illegal immigrant, often banned from returning home and rejected from the new State, becomes a ghost in themselves. As Gordon states, 'the ghost is not simply a dead or missing person, but a social figure' (2008:8), and, 'to be haunted is to be tied to historical and social effects' (2008:190). Illegal immigrants become intrinsically tied to their past through their exclusion from the present; the exclusion both spatial as well as temporal. Anzaldúa argues that 'a borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary' (Anzaldúa 1999:25). It is this very emotional residue that leaves a void in the subject that haunts. In this effect, the *homo sacer* is both the apparition and the haunted. If the undocumented are ghosts, then the space of nonexistence is the graveyard; the place where juridical rights are buried. The muted graveyard is pro-

liferate with ghosts who demand attention; the documented ignorant or wilfully blind to the *homo sacer* around them.

Refusal and Dissent: The Language of Resistance

A key aspect of the 'alien' existing in the 'muted graveyard' is that, without any legal recognition or social rights, they are unable to speak or, more importantly, be listened to. If one considers the millions of refugees and migrants, abovementioned, the silence is deafening. Of *Mexicana* and Chicana women, Anzaldúa writes, *'en boca cerrada no entran moscas'* ("Flies don't enter a closed mouth") (1999:76). This poetic statement refers to the expectation for women to be quiet and respectful, as the individual exists first as kin and last as self (Anzaldúa 1999:40). The denigration by the hegemonic sovereign culture leads to the emasculation of *Mexicano* and Chicano males, which encourages hypermasculinity and the redirection of unreleased frustrations on Chicana and *Mexicana* women. This interestingly demonstrates how the sovereign culture degrades the individual through its treatment of the wider minority group, whereas the minority group denigrate individuals within their own minority, targeting women, homosexuals and transgendered people. This flow of negation from the sovereign down to the marginalised of the minority group creates fractures that

produce tensions in the traditional gendered relations and strict condemnation of those who dissent. One example of this fracture can be seen in how many Latinos consider the border language created through the Chicanos as a bastardisation of Spanish (Anzaldúa 1999:80). However, it is crucial to recognise border languages as a living language which emerges from a border identity within a border reality. It is effectively a personality produced through border living. Anzaldúa's refusal to apologise for her language or to bow to demands for silence (1999:81) is testament to the resistance of border people, from Chicanos to Palestinians. As Coutin states, 'because they defy categorization, borderlands have been seen as sites of resistance, as sources of alternatives to the status quo, as places where a modus vivendi that redefines the social order can be devised' (2003:171).

It is important to attempt to recognise the language of resistance so as not to ignore the agency that an actor can have in counteracting an oppressive environment. Resistance can come through polyglots who, being between languages, have an advantageous position for deconstructing identity (Braidotti 1994:12). Resistance can also emerge through verbal protest in the form of a refusal, or physical protest in the form of self-immolation, aggression, or martyrdom. Paul Gilroy advises that we must recognise 'the

anti-discursive and extralinguistic ramifications of power at work in shaping communicative acts' (cited by Mbembe 2003:21). Refugees and immigrants may be ignored and forced into invisibility but they do still have memories and a history that does not disappear even when they themselves often seem to. It is through this that a rooting, or grounding, point of reference can be found from which the 'alien' can attempt to reinforce their own identity free of the negation of the sovereign. Those who are placed in a state of exception and therefore positioned 'outside' the law are, in a manner of speaking, free (Coutin 2003:190).

The 'freedom' of those in states of exception can be found in the ability to influence the sovereign through their mutual inclusion/exclusion. However, rather than thinking of inclusion and exclusion in dichotomous terms, it is more useful to see this positioning as a 'folded force'. Gilles Deleuze (1988:100-1) coined the term 'folded force' to refer to the bending of the outside through a series of practical exercises where interiority is nothing other than the fold and the folding of 'peristaltic' movement of the outside. As Dean explains, 'one might speak of a folding of exterior relations of authority to sculpt a domain that can act on and of itself but which, at the same time, is simply the inside marked out by that folding, an Inside of the folding of an Outside...the establishment of an interior domain is thus

dependent on the enfolding of external authority' (1996:222). Thus, one can see how states of exceptions are by no means separate or external to the sovereign *polis*. They are one and the same, folds of the same body, which appear external only because they are exterior to an interior rather than being removed. Marginality of minority groups and their existences in liminal spaces can be seen as an effect of their being on the outside of the interior as opposed to excluded into a separate sphere linked through its propping up of the sovereign sphere.

Agamben's theorisation of the state of exception is dystopic inasmuch as it insinuates that states of exception are continuous and multiplying. However, Deleuze's 'folded force' emphasises a more optimistic conclusion to the state of exception. If the state of exception is merely located on the exterior of the interior then the exterior exception is included in the sovereign interior through its exclusion on the exterior. This nuanced difference of exterior exception as opposed to exclusive inclusion allows for the realisation that those in a state of exception, the bare life, can regain inclusion through repoliticisation. One can see then how there are, in fact, 'gradations of existence' (or exception) with a multiplicity of non-existences and not just a binary of existence and nonexistence (Coutin 2003:173). This fits aptly within Deleuze's conception of a *folded force*, as op-

posed to Agamben's binary spheres of sovereign and exception; the gradations of existence merely refer to the locality within the fold. The further from the centre, which could be seen as being 'mainstreamed', the closer to the exterior, or being 'marginalised'. Therefore, it makes more sense to think of the 'alien' as moving in and out of existence, existing simultaneously in multiple ways depending on the 'frame of reality' being used (Coutin 2003:173).

Philosophy of the Desert: Towards a Modern Nomadism

In recognising the reality of 'gradations of existence' within a 'folded force', one could argue that it is not just the transient body that is alienated from our geopolitical environment to varying degrees, as Braidotti recognises, we all are. 'The truth of the matter is that, from the moment you were born, you have lost your "origin"' (1994:14). It is important to recognise the level to which one is alienated varies greatly upon a number of intersecting categorisations, privileges and prejudices which constitutes one's positioning within the gradation. This difference in position within the 'folded force' creates different barriers that can prevent or hinder individuals from attaining equality or inclusion. The question of how to counteract the biopoliticisation of the state, objectification of the marginalised and the re-inclusion of states of exception as the norm can be found in the no-

tion of a philosophical nomadism. As Braidotti states, 'philosophical nomadism is a creative process... nomadic becomings are rather the affirmation of the unalterably positive structure of difference, meant as a multiple and complex process of transformation, a flux of multiple becomings, the play of complexity, or the principle of not-One' (2006:145). The space in-between, the exceptions and areas of transit, can be described as a *desert* (Braidotti 1994:20); a place of alienating solitude but also one freed of roads and preconceived routes of consciousness to which one can add their own disruptive and unexpected directions of identity. The location is both geographical and a space defined by language and socio-political relations. It can be found historically in the colonised nation-states and in the plantation slave; it can be found contemporaneously in the neoslaves of global cities (Ong 2007), in the airports as transit zone camps (Braidotti 1994:20), and it can be seen and felt in the multiculturalism *within* the same culture (as well as *between* cultures) (Braidotti 1994:12-13).

Conceptual nomadism is a way to help realise the nonfixity of borders within the state of exception and to transgress those divisions through the transmigration of intellectual academic concepts and the multiplicity of real-life interconnections. Philosophical nomadism, as a term, may be the language of

academia and the privilege of those who exist within such a sphere to debate and discuss. However, the oppressed, the marginalised and excluded still desire freedom and strive for it, regardless of whether they use the same language to word their thoughts and actions as the scholarly tongue might. Without failing to recognise that many immigrants and refugees' movements are directly or indirectly dictated by socioeconomic and political forces outside of their control, the first emphasis here is on a discursive nomadism that helps break down the exclusivity of academic intellectualism and seeks to highlight states of exceptions, creating coalitions of protest and resistance with the bare life that exists within it, which then ultimately works to subvert socio-political borders. As Deleuze wrote: 'the point of being an intellectual nomad is about crossing boundaries, about the act of going, regardless of the destination. "The life of the nomad is the intermezzo...a vector of deterritorialization."' (cited by Braidotti 1994:23). Therefore, the nomad becomes a way of actualising the international dispersion and dissemination of ideas (Braidotti 1994:24). This does not mean that a nomad is unable or unwilling to create stable bases of identity; merely, subjectivity is not taken as a fixed identity. The nomad is metaphysical with a transgressive identity that is based upon a transitory nature that allows for coalitions, interconnec-

tions and resistance to hegemony and repression (Braidotti 1994:33-36).

> *'Life is a bridge. Cross over it, but build no house on it'*
> Indian Proverb (Chatwin 2005:181)

Conclusion

In conclusion, the position of humanity is a complicated and nuanced concept to identify. The human is clearly not conceived within human rights as this definition cannot be said to apply to all human beings. It would seem that one is only truly human if others recognise the individual as human; therefore, humanity is conditional and not guaranteed. Agamben's notion of the *homo sacer*, Avery Gordon's *ghost* and Achille Mbembe's *shadow* are all terms used to define those marginalised, subjugated and cut off from a world of human recognition. Using Agamben's *state of exception* and *camp*, Mbembe's *colony*, Anzaldúa's *borderland* and Coutin's *space of nonexistence*, the spaces and states in which those without rights are situated within have been analysed and revealed to demonstrate the sheer number of those considered sub-human, non-human or *homo sacer*. It would appear that we are all exposed to degrees of the camp.

The best way to interrupt this sovereign/exception arrangement, and possibly offer the opportunity to create a fairer structure in which all humans are truly recognised as equally such, seems to be through the empowerment of those who live in the borderland and the states of exceptionality. If the state of exception defines the sovereign sphere then that would imbue the excluded with a subversive power to redefine the polis. The bodies that exist within *peripherealities*, may not have the support and recognition of the law, but they are nonetheless 'steeped in power' (Butler and Spivak 2007:9). It would seem necessary to use protest if one hopes to repoliticise the *homo sacer* and to create one's own space. Protest could be found in the use of one's experience of oppression as a source of power to overcome it, to turn the negation back on itself; by sharing *autohistorias*, we can help build social communities and collectives with any number of variously subjugated peoples: 'The polylingual voices of the multi-located subjects of the global nomadic, diasporic, hybrid diversity are producing concretely grounded micro-narratives that call for a joyful kind of dissonance' (Braidotti 2006:93). These dissonant micro-narratives can be seen in Anzaldúa's belief that a *borderland consciousness* is emerging from the mixture of races, the hybridity of cultures, cross-pollinating in both a biological, racial, ideological and cultural sense (1999:108). This can be seen as a recentralising of the periphery identity. Through this hybridised collec-

tive, one could synthesise a world more free and accepting, tolerant through experiences of being oppressed and repressed, of being *homo sacer*. As Anzaldúa writes, 'I want the freedom to carve and chisel my own face...to fashion my own gods out of my entrails. And if going home is denied me then I will have to stand and claim my space, making a new culture – *una cultura mestiza* – with my own lumber, my own bricks and mortar and my own feminist architecture' (1999:44).

It is not merely those who exist in the borderlands and the states of exceptionality that can endeavour to produce change in the structure of the State. It is also the challenge for the politically-engaged intellectual to stand up for those who exist in the state of exception. I believe this is where Gender Studies offers an unrivalled critical lens and provides an essential destabilising discourse. There has been a prevalence of pessimism recently regarding the economic cuts and the 'crisis' of a return to a socio-political conservatism for the field of Gender Studies. However, this is arguably not a 'crisis' at all. Gender Studies has invariably worked from the periphery and never entirely accepted by mainstream discourse, even during apparent periods of social liberalisation. This epoch is merely an occasion to regroup, to refuel the 'fire in our bellies' and reach out over the walls of academia to offer support in protest and resistance to non-academic and marginalised groups. This is not to speak in their place but to help in attaining recognition for those who are dehumanised beyond recognition; to help the ghosts reclaim their space. As Gordon agrees, we should, 'side with the excluded and the repressed: to develop insights gained in confrontation with injustice, to nourish cultures of resistance, and to help define the means with which society can be rendered adequate to the full breadth of its human potentialities' (Gordon xix. See also: Braidotti 1994:21). Those who are not academics and do not live in the borderland can, too, live *sin fronteras* (without borders) and exist in a 'crossroads' through activism and philosophical nomadism (Anzaldúa cited by Saldívar-Hull 1999:12). The intention is not to create a metanarrative to explicate some grander theory of humanity but to help construct the lens through which to recognise the multiplicities of states of exceptions and types of *homo sacer* that can be identified across the world. By using a post-humanist feminism based upon nomadic ethics, one could live aware of the fluidity of borders and become a modern form of nomad, existing in sedentary cities and towns, but free to traverse across lands and cultures without paranoiac possessiveness of territoriality or of rigid cultural reclusiveness. Nomadic consciousness could help the political resistance against hegemonic and exclusionary forms

of subjectivity (Braidotti 1994:23). A nomadic philosophy would loosen the obsession for geopolitical control over territory and rejects the need for normalisation of the population through discipline and control. A nomadism based upon contingency and not fixity could envision identities outside of narrow, exclusionary binaries, free of dualistic oppositions, with territories as circumstantial and difference as the norm; this would release the need to control anomalies, to try and solidify porous bodies with their trickling fluids and penetrable orifices, and to cut lines in the land and create artificial barriers in an otherwise open expanse.

'I am a turtle, wherever I go I carry "home" on my back'
    Gloria Anzaldúa (1999:43)

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