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DELEUZIAN MAPPINGS WITH RAFAEL CHIRBE'S "LITTLE MACHINES"

by

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DISSERTATION

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of Wayne State University,

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Advisor

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| Acknowledgements..... | ii |
| Chapter 1: Introduction: Chirbe’s Connection with Deleuze and Guattari..... | 1 |
| Chapter 2: Chirbe’s “Minor Literature”..... | 35 |
| Chapter 3: A Two-Fold Approach to Bacon..... | 76 |
| Chapter 4: Spain: 1939-2003 | 138 |
| Chapter 5: Chirbe’s Schizos, Rhizomes, and Nomads | 197 |
| Conclusion | 268 |
| References..... | 276 |
| Abstract..... | 292 |
| Autobiographical Statement..... | 293 |

Chapter 1: Introduction: Chirbes's Connections with Deleuze and Guattari

The objective of this dissertation is to examine three novels by the Spanish writer Rafael Chirbes. An exploration will be made of how these novels correspond with important concepts developed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. We examine the manner in which Chirbes's narrative production provides affective literary reinforcement to important work being done in the area of Spanish cultural studies. A particular focus of this study will be on the *liberatory* aspects of his novels. To date, a number of critics have focused on the pessimistic tone of Chirbes's fiction, the fear and hopelessness experienced by his characters.¹ A Deleuzian approach, on the other hand, unlocks the liberating force of the works. The three novels to be discussed, often considered as a trilogy, are *La larga marcha* (1996), *La caída de Madrid* (2000), and *Los viejos amigos* (2003). Events depicted in the novels date from before the Spanish Civil War and extend to the early years of the present century.

In the first part of *La larga marcha*, Chirbes presents characters that supported either side of the conflagration that occurred in Spain between 1936 and 1939. Several of the characters directly participated in actual combat as members of the armed forces of either the Republic or General Francisco Franco. He recreates the horrors imposed on *los vencidos* (the defeated) by *los vencedores* (Franco's victorious supporters). Chirbes depicts vivid examples of the physical deprivations suffered by Spaniards of the lower economic classes during the 1940s and 1950s, regardless of which cause they happened to support during the war. These decades saw the unsuccessful attempt at economic

¹ See for example the articles by Encarnación García de León, "El miedo, legado generacional en los personajes de Chirbes," and Hans-Joachim Lope, "Los disparos del cazador (1994), Memoria colectiva e ilusiones perdidas en un récit de Rafael Chirbes," in María-Teresa Ibáñez (ed.), *Ensayos sobre Rafael Chirbes*.

autarky, the “Years of Hunger” as well as the presence of a widespread black-market. Several commentators have noted that this black-market constituted the larger part of Spain’s overall economy.² The second half of *La larga marcha* focuses on the children of the characters presented in the first part of the novel. The time period considered is that of late 1960s during the latter years of the Franco-era. Although they come from vastly different economic backgrounds, the younger characters form what Deleuze and Guattari describe as an “assemblage” in order to undermine the Franco regime, an assemblage being the coming together of different elements to form a new and innovative unit or entity.³ The multitudinous connectivity of younger characters from diverse familial environments is a constant presence in each of the novels. This theme reflects the realities of Spanish society at the time as well as those of the early years of the Twenty-First Century. The writer and former anti-Franco militant Javier Alfaya states that the students who became involved in organizations against Franco came from all levels of Spanish society, including “families at the heart of the regime.”⁴ Another theme of *La larga marcha*, and one that manifests itself in each of the other works, and which to date has not been discussed by scholars, is the incessant flow of desire.⁵ For example, members of the Spanish Falange orchestrate elaborate rallies in the name of the “one Spain, great and free,”⁶ or leftist students gather at a coffee house in Madrid to discuss Althusser or Marx,

² For example Helen Graham states that the black market in Spain during the first two decades of the Franco regime was, “so enormous that it represented the real national economy,” in her “Popular Culture in the Years of Hunger,” included in Graham and Labanyi’s *Spanish Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, p. 238.

³ See for example Deleuze and Guattari’s discussion of the “man-horse-bow” assemblage as well as other “nomadic war machines” in *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 404.

⁴ “Otros procedían de un territorio más cercano, del corazón mismo de la reacción,” Javier Alfaya, *Crónica de los años perdidos: La España del tardofranquismo*, p. 162.

⁵ Alison Ross states that desire is “one of the central themes in Deleuze’s philosophical lexicon.” “Desire,” in Adrian Parr (ed.), *The Deleuze Dictionary*, p. 63.

⁶ Alfaya, *Crónica de los años perdidos*, p. 157.

but Chirbes lifts the veil on Franco's movement as well as doctrinaire Marxism to reveal the multitudinous movements of desire that cannot be contained in any particular system or chronological history. It is desire that in fact gives rise to the various actualized systems under which life is more or less organized. And, on Deleuze and Guattari's account, desire is always prior to and more intense than the particular form that comes into being.⁷

With respect to *La caída de Madrid*, the second work in the trilogy, the events depicted all take place in the Spanish capital during a single day – November 19, 1975 – the eve of Franco's death although there are numerous recollections and memories dating from well before the Spanish Civil War. As is the case of the earlier work, the characters that Chirbes evokes in this novel come from myriad economic and social backgrounds. He features persons that form an integral part of the strongman's governmental machine or who benefit from close ties with it. Characters from the lower economic stratas of Spanish society that appear in the second work include maids, impoverished university students and unrepentant Marxist revolutionaries. As is the case with characters of *La larga marcha*, the younger generation in the *La caída de Madrid*, make common cause against Franco's government despite stark differences in their economic circumstances.. Although Franco's impending death is a sort of axis around which the novel revolves, Chirbes again presents characters emerging from multiple holes and passageways and marked by numerous connections with one another in the type of "holey spaces" that Deleuze and Guattari discuss in *A Thousand Plateaus*.⁸

⁷ See Paul Patton's "Order, Exteriority and Flat Multiplicities in the Social," in Martin Fuglsang and Bent Meier Sørensen, (eds.), *Deleuze and the Social*, pp. 34-35.

⁸ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 413-414.

In the second novel, the force of desire as such is again ubiquitous and is not solely focused on the dying dictator. The thoughts of Maxi Arroyo, for example, the sadistic head of Franco's notorious political social brigade, are consumed by the uncooperative attitude of his mistress, a prostitute that he met in a bar some months before. Lucas, an impoverished but brilliant student of history reveals that his selection of the revolutionary organization in which he militates was based in large part on how this decision will appear to Margarita, the young woman of means who mostly plays at Marxist politics.

The events depicted in *Los viejos amigos* unfold approximately twenty-five years after Franco's death. The central characters depicted in the work were comrades in a Marxist cell that was active during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Several of them have come together for a reunion dinner in an upscale restaurant in Madrid. Other members of the cell, some of them principle characters in the work, avoid the dinner that quickly turns out to be an affair of what Deleuze and Guattari would define as zero-intensity, or "a dreary parade of sucked-dry, catatonicized, vitrified, sewn-up bodies."⁹ In other words, the dinner results in the replaying of sad and unproductive memories as opposed to a vital confrontation and experimentation with life's possibilities that Deleuze and Guattari continuously call for in their individual and collective writings.¹⁰ The political debate that ensues during the reunion dinner is non-productive in terms of Deleuze and Guattari's insights because the focus of the discussion is which nation will be the Earth's future economic and political center, and none of the opinions given venture outside the current capitalist framework. Verena Andermatt Conley, among other Deleuzian scholars, notes

⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 150.

¹⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 161.

that fidelity to a particular center of power is being undone in today's world, noting that human migrations and other flows are weakening existing borders throughout the world.¹¹

Another fundamental idea of Deleuze and Guattari is that the liberating forces unleashed by capitalism could and should be extended and put to use in attempting untried approaches to living and not be simply recaptured by the axiomatic of capital or any other system overrun by hierarchical control.¹² Furthermore, the discussion is limited to historical observations that are limited to a non-intensive, chronological approach to time and do not take into account the vibrant movements and connections that official histories often fail to notice. Deleuze and Guattari call for an intensive, non-linear history or what they call the history of the event as opposed to traditional narrative histories.¹³

The narration of *Los viejos amigos* alternates between characters who provide different and usually incongruous interpretations of events, opinions about the other characters, and details about how their own lives have unfolded since the death of Franco and the much vaulted transition into democracy. It soon becomes apparent to the alert reader that Chirbes will have no truck with the selective amnesia that settled into Spanish society after the death of Franco.¹⁴ In his collection of essays, *El novelista perplejo*, Chirbes bitterly attacks the manner in which opportunistic politicians today shamelessly utilize images of defeated Republicans as well as Spaniards who later took great risks to defy the Franco regime. He accuses them of barely having had time to take off the

¹¹ Verena Andermatt Conley, "Borderlines," in Ian Buchanan and Adrian Parr, (eds.), *Deleuze and the Contemporary World*, p. 96.

¹² See Eugene W. Holland discussion of "nomad citizenship," in his *Nomad Citizenship: Free Market Communism and the Slow-Motion General Strike*, p. 98.

¹³ Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, p. 110.

uniforms in which they killed their opponents before using the names of the dead at public functions solely for the benefit of these self-same politicians, and in the process tamping down their victims' memories with another humiliating defeat.

Veo hoy a quienes apenas han tenido tiempo de cambiarse el uniforme con que mataron a los muertos, homenajearlos, inaugurar fundaciones que llevan el nombre de las víctimas y dar conciertos en su honor, derrotándolos una vez más.¹⁵

Despite their earlier commitment to revolutionary political change, most of the characters in *Los viejos amigos* that attend the dinner have been thoroughly seduced by the neo-liberal order that is now firmly entrenched in post-Franco Spain. Their depiction in *Los viejos amigos* corresponds with Chirbes's explanation in *El novelista perplejo* that formerly progressive or even radical artists and intellectuals have made their peace with money and material comforts.¹⁶ Two of the characters in *Los viejos amigos*, Guzmán and the aptly named Narcisco, have strong connections with the Spanish Socialist Party, the latter being a successful politician from the PSOE. Another character, the lawyer Taboada, appears in both *La caída de Madrid* and *Los viejos amigos*, and is clearly presented as an astute operator who began his career by forging close ties with Franco's cronies while maintaining credentials with leftists who were actually taking significant personal risks in undermining the regime. Pedrito, the most doctrinaire and violent of the former revolutionaries has become wildly wealthy through the construction trade. A concern for the possession or consumption of consumer goods pervades *Los viejos*

¹⁴ See for example Santos Juliá's explanation of the speed with which politicians involved in the drafting of documents from the period immediately after Franco's death called for amnesty, in David T. Gies (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Spanish Culture*, pp. 108-109.

¹⁵ Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 109.

¹⁶ "El dinero perdió su aura diabólica y su compañá dejó de molestar a intelectuales y artistas [...], Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 22.

amigos and is manifested through the observations of the characters.¹⁷ The enfolding of these once revolutionary characters within the grip of global capital is an example of what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as a “reterritorialization,” a danger to understand and to be on guard against.¹⁸

One character in this last novel of Chirbes’s trilogy, by dint of tremendous effort, successfully embarks on what Deleuze and Guattari describe as “lines of flight.” This effort to “find a way out” is another one of the essential themes in each of the three novels and is one of the important sites of affective connection between Chirbes’s narrative works and Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophical writings.¹⁹ In each of the novels considered herein Chirbes evokes multiple active forces at work just below the surface of Franco’s authoritarian regime or the even more stifling network produced by global capital, what Eugene W. Holland describes as a “death-state.”²⁰ Like Deleuze and Guattari, Chirbes realizes that loosening the grip of authoritative governing structures, whether they appear in the guise of Franco’s government or the “self-evident” economies of advanced capitalism²¹, requires strategic efforts. These efforts are often short-lived or unsuccessful, and they are almost always excruciatingly difficult to carry out.²² Chirbes’s narrative production includes numerous examples of characters that attempt to “deterritorialize,” a term crafted by Deleuze and Guattari which denotes the capacity for a

¹⁷ See p.10 for a view of Pedro’s sportscar; p. 51 for a description of young people’s being inculcated within contemporary marketing techniques; and p. 113 for a view of the menu of the luxurious reunion dinner as examples of the proliferation of consumer goods and services in *Los viejos amigos*.

¹⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy*, pp. 67-68.

¹⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 15.

²⁰ Eugene W. Holland, *Nomad Citizenship: Free Market Communism and the Slow-Motion General Strike*, pp. 31-63.

²¹ In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari discuss the point and circumstances at which capital “becomes the full body, the new socius or the quasi cause that appropriates all the productive forces,” p. 227.

²² The need to proceed cautiously when separating oneself from reigning hierarchies is discussed by Paul Patton in *Deleuze and the Political*, p. 67.

body or force to break free of its milieu or circumstances.²³ It is this aspect of Chirbes's work that has rarely been considered, but which will receive treatment in the present study.

To that end we will consider the history of Spain during the Franco years as well as the transition to democracy and Spain's enfoldment into the global capitalistic system. As noted, Deleuze and Guattari downplay chronological history in favor of the event. In *What Is Philosophy?*, they argue:

What History grasps of the event is its effectuation in states of affairs or in lived experience, but the event in its becoming, in its specific consistency, in its self-positing as concept, escapes History.²⁴

Events can be large or small and their coming into being, or their effectuation, as Deleuze and Guattari frame it in the above citation, does not utilize all of the event's forces or potentialities. Something is always held in reserve, perhaps for an alternative effectuation.²⁵ Deleuze and Guattari argue for an accounting for the event when constructing any chronological history. Beneath any actualization of an historic happening there are examples of the larger and more intensive and creative strength of the event. Towards that end, Jeffrey A. Bell argues that a Deleuze-Guattari approach to history requires a double reading.

There is first the effort to read history as accurately as possible, and thus Deleuze and Guattari will frequently rely upon the works of highly respected historians . . . The second reading is what we will call problematising history. This is the reading that affirms the virtual 'unhistorical

²³ *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 510.

²⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy*, p. 110.

²⁵ *What Is Philosophy*, p. 156. See also Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 64.

vapour' that is unseparable from the actualities which are the subject of the first reading.²⁶

Claire Colebrook notes that this second reading of history attempts to account for the intensive, or “the strong sense of the virtual, becoming and singularity.”²⁷ During the course of this study, we will consider the historical events that took place in Spain from before the Spanish Civil War to the year 2003, the period covered by Chirbes in his trilogy. We will also attempt to point the numerous examples of the intensive hidden or vaporous history of the event that appear in Chirbes’s novels.

The Deleuzian commentator Paul Patton notes that despite having written, with Guattari, just two books that are directly focused on political philosophy, Deleuze and Guattari are “profoundly political thinkers.”²⁸ In a later text, Patton states that despite their having said little about the issue of colonization, Deleuze and Guattari provide conceptual resources for thinking about the problems of internal colonization and decolonization.²⁹ A number of leading Deleuzian scholars have also applied Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophical concepts to analyze the economic, historical or social circumstances of a wide variety of locales. We will bring the insights from a number of these scholars into the present study. For his part, Chirbes in each of his narrative works, actively illustrates some of the clamoring forces underneath the surface of linear or chronological Spanish history.

²⁶ Jeffrey A. Bell, “Of the Rise and Progress of Philosophical Concepts: Deleuze’s Humean Historiography” in Jeffrey A. Bell and Claire Colebrook, (eds.), *Deleuze and History*, p. 55.

²⁷ Claire Colebrook, “Introduction,” in Jeffrey A. Bell and Claire Colebrook, (eds.), *Deleuze and History*, p. 6.

²⁸ Paul Patton, *Deleuze and the Political*, p. 1.

²⁹ Paul Patton. *Deleuzian Concepts: Philosophy, Colonization, Politics*, p. 100.

At this point we would like to discuss the title of the dissertation. As we explain below, both “mapping” and “machine” are specific concepts in Deleuze and Guattari’s work. We will also connect these terms to Chirbes’s literary production.

With respect to “mapping,” Deleuze and Guattari include the term in the first pages of *A Thousand Plateaus*. They argue that a benefit of producing maps is that maps can be modified or redrawn as the need arises. They oppose creating maps to tracing, a technique that is limited to identity, representation or the mere reproduction of the already thought. The map, on the other hand, serves to avoid what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as transcendent “molar” or “arborescent” set-ups or structures, terms that we will use throughout this study. On their account, these set-ups have long plagued Western thought. Traditionally, a tree with its system of roots and branches represents the ideal in Western philosophy. The merit of an idea is determined by its proximity to the trunk of the tree. Western thought, therefore, has often been stymied by a need to be linked to an original source. What flows from such a set-up is usually a representation or an attempted recreation of what has already been said or done. Deleuze and Guattari refer to this approach as “the oldest and weariest form of thought.”³⁰ In support of identity and representation, a tracing serves quite adequately. Maps, on the other hand, can be changed, erased or modified as changing circumstances warrant.³¹

To an arborescent or molar system, Deleuze and Guattari oppose the idea of the rhizome, a concept closely associated with maps. Rhizomes are plugged into available connections and bypass transcendent set-ups. Besides connectivity, they are characterized

³⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 5.

³¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 21.

by “heterogeneity”, “multiplicity” and “asignifying ruptures.”³² The rhizome is summarized as follows:

[...] the rhizome is an acentered, nonhierarchical, nonsignifying system without a General and without an organizing memory or central automaton, defined solely by a circulation of states. What is at question in the rhizome is a relation to sexuality – but also to the animal, the vegetal, the world, politics, the book, things natural and artificial – that is totally different from the arborescent relation: all manner of becomings.³³

It would be safe to say that Deleuze and Guattari’s entire oeuvre can be described as opposed to totalizing schemes. And mapmaking is an important strategy in undergoing the creative experimentation necessary to evade arborescent systems of power. In the following citation from *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari underscore the contingent nature of map-making.

The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation. It can be drawn on a wall, conceived of as a work of art, constructed as a political action or as a meditation [...] The map has to do with performance, whereas the tracing always involves an alleged “competence.”³⁴

Deleuze and Guattari also employ their concept of mapping to the longitude and latitude of a body. Longitude refers to the speed and slowness of a body given a particular event or state of affairs. Latitude speaks to the affects that a body is capable of producing at any given time. They argue in *A Thousand Plateaus* that a body is defined

³² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 7-10.

³³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 21.

³⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 12-13.

by these two properties and that cartography is involved in its changing and adaptable force.³⁵ It is important to note that for Deleuze and Guattari the concept of a body is not reducible or limited to the human body or any other organic entity. On their account, a body might be a technical apparatus, an inanimate object, a body of thought, an epoch, a few moments or any other organic or non-organic intensity capable of producing or gathering affects. They refer to these singular intensities as haecceities,

There is a mode of individuation very different from that of a person, thing, or substance. We reserve the name haecceity for it. A season, a winter, a summer, an hour, a date have a perfect individuality lacking nothing, even though this individuality is different from that of a thing or a subject. They are haecceities in the sense that they consist entirely of relations of movement and rest between molecules or particles, capacities to affect and be affected.³⁶

Deleuze and Guattari make frequent references to cartography throughout their writings. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, for example, they specifically critique psychoanalysis for dismissing the seemingly innate desire of children to create maps and for attempting to channel the totality of a child's actions or expressions through the oedipal triangle of mother, father and subject.³⁷ On Deleuze and Guattari's account, from his or her earliest days the child is driven by drives that cannot be contained within the totalizing regime of psychoanalysis. They speak of "entryways and exits" and refer to parents as agents that hinder or facilitate the child's connections with other forces. In the context of cartography Deleuze and Guattari discuss "drives" and "part-objects," forces that psychoanalysis refuses to consider. For their part Deleuze and Guattari do not concede for a moment that

³⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 260-261.

³⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 261.

a child's drives and the partial objects that surround him or her can be pigeonholed into the rubric of "mommy-daddy-me." They are, rather "[...] political options for problems [...] impasses the child lives out politically, in other words, with all the force of his or her desire."³⁸

In his collection *Essays Critical and Clinical*, Deleuze emphasizes that a skilled writer is capable of producing "maps of intensities" in his or her works. The intensive line of cartography focuses on the forces that inhabit a space during a given time and not solely with its physical dimensions. He cites the example of Freud who attempted to analyze the affective sensation that Little Hans felt after seeing a horse collapse in the street. The boy assembled various aspects of the scene that moved him – the horse's being proud, the size of its penis, its kicking and biting, being whipped, etc. Deleuze rejects Freud's attempt to canalize Little Hans's list of affects into the oedipal framework. On the other hand he stresses the open-ended nature of the boy's map of intensities, a map that simply cannot be reduced to tracing.

And just as the map of movements or intensities was not a derivation from or an extension of the father-mother, the map of forces or intensities is not a derivation from the body, an extension of a prior image, or a supplement or afterword.³⁹

In *Anti-Oedipus* and in other works, Deleuze or Deleuze and Guattari refer to the machinic nature of the universe. This leads us to the use of the word "machines" in our title. Desire manifests itself through machines. Deleuze and Guattari state that they are not speaking metaphorically when they declare desiring production to be a machine.

³⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 12.

³⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 13.

Machines are similar to rhizomes in that they couple with other forces or machines in unforeseen ways, connections that result in additional machines. Deleuze and Guattari note that machines regularly break down or cease to function and that even in this breaking down or periods of rest other machines are formed by desire's ceaseless movement.

That is why, at the limit point of all the transverse or transfinite connections, the partial object and the continuous flux, the interruption and the connection, fuse into one: everywhere there are breaks-flow out of which desire wells up, thereby constituting its productivity and continually grafting the process of production onto the product.⁴⁰

Deleuze and Guattari refer as well to literary machines. For example in *Anti-Oedipus*, as well as in other works, they cite Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, stating that it is "a schizoid work par excellence."⁴¹ Proust's masterpiece demonstrates myriad connections between very diverse elements. Deleuze and Guattari state, that "[...] it establishes aberrant paths of communication between noncommunicating vessels, transverse unities between elements that retain all their differences within their own particular boundaries."⁴² As noted, Deleuze and Guattari also produced a philosophical work on Kafka, in which they eschewed traditional interpretations of his work that pit a hapless subject against the ubiquitous reach of the law. Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari attempt to avoid interpretation altogether, focusing instead on what a Kafka literary machine can *do*. They highly favor experimentation in literary works and argue that

³⁹ Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, p. 64.

⁴⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. 36-37.

⁴¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 43

⁴² Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 43.

authors and other creative artists play a role in reducing the reach of arborescent structures. They write in *What Is Philosophy?* that writers and painters contribute to “deterritorialization” through the creation of percepts and affects. A percept is an intensity that results from a natural phenomenon such as a landscape or even a cultural production like a town that nonetheless remains independent of human interpretations. An affect is the intense feeling that occurs after a subject encounters an unfamiliar force. It leads to a period of consideration during which the subject marshals her own forces as best she can before venturing out or reacting. In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari provide the moving example of a child alone in the dark who sings a little song in order to overcome the terror that she feels. They write that, “The song is like a rough sketch of a calming and stabilizing, calm and stable, center in the heart of chaos.”⁴³ The song that the child sings facilitates the forming of an at least provisional territory as well as a modifiable identity, which allows for affective action.⁴⁴ The concept of the affect is important for Deleuze and Guattari because it assists in the “attempt to grasp power positively [...] in the sense that any style of societal organization or governance is immediately subject to multiple lines of escape which may prove capable of connecting with new forces that exist outside of arborescent control.”⁴⁵

In each of his novels Chirbes creates characters that successfully fashion transitional maps that illustrate intensive forces at play within Spain during given periods of time. Conversely, he also depicts the molar or arborescent structures and mores that

⁴³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 311.

⁴⁴ J. Macgregor Wise, “Home: Territory and Identity,” in Jennifer Daryl Slack, (ed.), *Animations [of Deleuze and Guattari]*, p. 108.

⁴⁵ Gregory J. Seigworth, “From affection to soul,” in Charles J. Stivale, (ed.), *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, pp. 187-190.

trapped the vast majority of Spaniards during the Franco years, and that continue to do so under advanced capitalism. As we explain in subsequent chapters, the rhizomatic forces that Chirbes depicts often escape traditional historical analysis. The number of characters successfully evading these molar dragnets decreases significantly in *Los viejos amigos*, the third novel in the trilogy. By this time, the early years of the twenty-first century, Spain has been fully engulfed in the “society of control” that is the neo-liberal order. The society of control constantly modulates individuals instead of subjecting them, as it did in disciplinary societies, to a training that continued in different places such as the school, the military or the factory.⁴⁶ Chirbes aptly depicts capitalism’s astonishing ability to box up its subjects within the axiomatic of capital. *Los viejos amigos* is an acute depiction of the immense difficulty involved in breaking free of the neo-liberal order as well as the more destructive alternative of remaining enmeshed with the death-state that this order has spawned.

Chirbes’s novels can be addressed by what they do. In *Essays Critical and Clinical*, Deleuze likens the role of a writer to that of a society’s physician who diagnoses a society’s ills.⁴⁷ Chirbes makes a very similar point about the role of the author in his collection of essays entitled *El novelista perplejo*. He discusses approvingly Proust’s comparison of an original artist with a skillful eye surgeon who performs a difficult operation that enables the patient to clearly see his or her surroundings.⁴⁸ Chirbes’ essays and novels express in affective ways what he judges to be the illnesses and limitations

⁴⁶ Deleuze, *Negotiations*, pp. 174-182.

⁴⁷ “Moreover, the writer as such is not a patient but rather a physician, the physician of himself and of the world. The world is the set of symptoms whose illness merges with man.” Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, p. 3.

⁴⁸ “[...] en ese texto ejemplar, que el artista original procede del modo como lo hacen los oculistas, que al concluir el no siempre agradable tratamiento, le dicen al paciente: “Ahora, mire,” y el paciente ve repentinamente con claridad.” Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 31.

that have plagued, and continue to limit, Spanish society during the last seventy plus years. He excoriates the repression of the defeated, los *vencidos*, by the victors after the Spanish Civil War. He maps out the areas of silence that prevailed under Franco – the reversals of the rights secured by women under the defeated Republic as well as the repression of any sexual expression outside of the heterosexual mainstream. Chirbes artistically presents the overwhelming power of global capital to expand what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as “striated space,” that is, space weighed down by impediments that check creativity.⁴⁹ In this striated space it becomes increasingly difficult to embark on creative acts of deterritorialization, a concept that Chirbes affectively demonstrates in his novels.

The work of Deleuze and Guattari is especially appropriate when considering the novels of Rafael Chirbes because the former dismissed accepted wisdom when approaching the works of writers such as Franz Kafka, Proust, and Arthur Miller, among many others. Chirbes, like Kafka, has an apparently bleak view of the world about him, and to date that is what critics have almost exclusively focused on. As noted, critics have considered Kafka’s work to be a portrayal of the ubiquitous reach of the law and the powerlessness of individuals confronting it. Deleuze and Guattari, on the other hand, see the liberating possibilities inherent in Kafka’s work. They write, “[...] Kafka was drawing lines of escape; but he didn’t “flee the world.” Rather, it was the world and its representation that he made take flight and that he made follow these lines.”⁵⁰ A number of the interpretations of Chirbes’s works likewise limit themselves to his portrayal of fear as a generational legacy dating from the Franco era as well as the dashed hopes of the

⁴⁹ In *A Thousand Plateaus*, for example, Deleuze and Guattari state that a nomad situates himself in a “smooth space” that is not an “all-encompassing totality,” p. 379.

Spanish left since the death of Franco.⁵¹ To be sure, Chirbes does provide numerous examples of characters that find themselves in harrowing situations as a result of Franco's policies or the stultifying reach of global capital. A vein of liberation, however, runs throughout his narrative production, and it is often the seemingly most defeated characters that point a way out of arborescent traps. Chirbes's works, like Kafka's, are a rhizome. The continuous alternating of the narration between the various characters in free indirect style provides for multiple viewpoints and for works that, like *A Thousand Plateaus* can be entered at any point. At one point, in the middle of *La larga marcha*, Chirbes takes the narration away from the human point of view altogether and turns it over to an abandoned dog. In *Los viejos amigos* he inserts a chapter, printed entirely in cursive, that inserts a story within a story. This chapter about the long deceased comrade Elisa is similar to the a-signifying blotches of paint that appear in the paintings of Francis Bacon, a common point of interest for both Deleuze and Chirbes. For his part Chirbes is quite clear about his intentions to wrest control of the past from the avaricious grasp of the few at the expense of the many. He turns to Walter Benjamin when stating that the reestablishing of any new "normalcy" can only occur when the legitimacy of the past is taken from the hands of oppressors and given over to their victims.⁵² Chirbes expresses, in words similar to those of Deleuze and Guattari, the desire to write for a new people⁵³. The latter goal is particularly important when considering connections between Chirbes

⁵⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, pp. 46-47.

⁵¹ The articles by Encarnación García de León, "El miedo, legado generacional en los personajes de Chirbes," and Christiane Musketa, "Contra el "miedo a no ser:" la determinación y creación de una existencia digna ante la derrota personal y el descontrol político en *La larga marcha*," which appear in María Teresa Ibáñez Ehrlich's *Ensayos sobre Rafael Chirbes* are fairly typical examples of approaches that focus on Chirbes's "defeated" characters.

⁵² "[...] la lucha por la legitimidad es la lucha por apropiarse de la injusticia del pasado. Sólo esa apropiación justifica el restablecimiento de una nueva normaldad," Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 29.

and Deleuze and Guattari because, as we shall soon discuss, writing for a “people to come” is an important element of the minor literature that Deleuze and Guattari espouse. More importantly, Chirbes presents his work as point of connection between thinkers working in greatly diverse fields in an effort to expand multiplicities. Maurizio Lazzarato states that multiplicity is one of Deleuze’s most important insights. Indeed Lazzarato argues that multiplicity is prior to its coming into existence in any particular form: “Individuals and classes are nothing but the capture, integration and differentiation of multiplicity.”⁵⁴

The exploration of the connections between Chirbes and Deleuze and Guattari begins in the first chapter with the concept of the minor writer. Deleuze and Guattari have argued that many great writers have been minor writers. Their concept of the majority and minority is directly linked to who holds power and not to mere numbers. Straight, white males comprise in fact a smaller percent of the population, but they nonetheless belong to the majority due to their access to power in every Western country. With regards to languages, a major language would be the one in a given country that is used for commercial and official purposes. On Deleuze and Guattari’s account, however, even a major language is subject to being used in a minoritarian fashion. The concept of a minor literature is bound up with power strategies, as Deleuze and Guattari make clear in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. The following citation about minor literature also refers to “assemblages” and “animals entering into things.” Chirbes’s narrative

⁵³ “Escribir otra cosa para otra gente, entregar la literatura a otro público,” Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 29.

⁵⁴ Maurizio Lazzarato, “The Concepts of Life and the Living in the Societies of Control,” in Martin Fuglsang and Bent Meier Sørensen, (eds.), *Deleuze and the Social*, p. 171.

production is filled with examples of this type of open-ended connectivity and, as we will note, numerous incidents of “animals entering things.”

To make use of the polylingualism of one’s own language, to make a minor or intensive use of it, to oppose the oppressed quality of this language to its oppressive quality, to find points of nonculture or underdevelopment, linguistic Third World zones by which a language can escape, an animal enters into things, an assemblage comes into play.⁵⁵

A major component of a minor literature is a deterritorialization of the major language. Deleuze and Guattari cite as an example Kafka’s use of the German language. Kafka wrote in German, but he did so as a Czechoslovakian Jew living in Prague. Kafka was also an enthusiast of Yiddish theater and familiar with the Hebrew language. These exposures to other languages and cultures led to Kafka’s use of German in a sparing manner. Deleuze and Guattari note a similar effect that African-Americans have had on American English. A minor usage concerns itself with creating intensities. It is to be contrasted with symbolic or representational uses of languages.

Kafka [...] will opt for the German language of Prague as it is and in its very poverty. Go always further in the direction of deterritorialization, to the point of sobriety. Since the language is arid, make it vibrate with a new intensity. Oppose a purely intensive usage of language to all symbolic or even significant or simply signifying usages of it.⁵⁶

The second characteristic of a minor literature is that it connects immediately to the political. Deleuze and Guattari note in *Kafka* that in great literature the social milieu is deemphasized in favor of individual concerns such as the family. In a minor literature family or marital concerns are linked directly to political concerns. Deleuze and Guattari specifically mention the cramped spaces from which minor writers operate. They refer to

⁵⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, p. 27.

the hierarchical triangles of power that operate behind individual concerns. The minor writer attempts to overturn oedipal power arrangements, as Kafka did, in favor of a political program that favors lines of escape. Citing Kafka, Deleuze and Guattari stress the critical importance of a minor literature.

What in great literature goes on down below, constituting a not indispensable cellar of the structure, here takes place in the full light of day, what is there a matter of passing interest for a few, here absorbs everyone no less than as a matter of life and death.⁵⁷

In their discussion of the second characteristic of a minor literature, Deleuze and Guattari emphasize that within individual concerns, “ a whole other story is vibrating.”⁵⁸ Chirbes’s novels include numerous scenes in which individual or family concerns are ostensibly addressed, and which are immediately linked to triangles of economic or juridical power. In *La larga marcha* and *La caída de Madrid*, for example, Chirbes recreates the sort of arbitrary acts of torture and execution that strongmen were able to carry out with impunity throughout Spain simply because of a demonstrable loyalty to Franco. In this way Chirbes’s narrative production provides affective force to essayistic efforts by other writers to express lingering *differends* from the Civil War.⁵⁹ As we have stated, *Los viejos amigos* features several middle-aged ex-members of a revolutionary Marxist cell. The narration focuses on their individual concerns, but these concerns are linked to the overwhelming power of global capital. Their revolutionary zeal has been subdued to the point that nearly all of them have surrendered to a zombie-like

⁵⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, p. 19.

⁵⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, p. 17.

⁵⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, p. 17.

⁵⁹ See Emilio Silva’s *Las fosas de Franco: Crónica de un desagravio* for a discussion of the capricious use of violence prevalent under Franco.

conformism within the death-state described by Eugene W. Holland.⁶⁰ It is precisely within this environment, we should state, that Chirbes continues to produce his literature.

The third characteristic of a minor literature is that “in it everything takes on a collective value.”⁶¹ Deleuze and Guattari note that often talent is not plentiful in the circumstances in which a minor literature appears. This lack of talent serves to check a particular master’s crowding out of supposedly “lesser” voices. The scarcity of talent has the additional benefit of favoring collective enunciations because a master’s voice tends to focus on individual concerns. Deleuze and Guattari argue that the lack of talent in a minor literature ensures that “what each author says individually already constitutes a common action, and what he or she says or does is necessarily political, even if others aren’t in agreement.”⁶² They note that in a minor literature there is a collapse of the solitary subject. Deleuze and Guattari oppose collective enunciations to the individual subject, “even if this collectivity is no longer or not yet given.”⁶³ The concept of an unformed collectivity, or a “people to come” is linked to Deleuze and Guattari’s contention that producing literature is always potentially a revolutionary action. Producing literature allows for thinking “otherwise” despite the difficulties of present circumstances.

It is literature that produces an active solidarity in spite of skepticism; and if the writer is in the margins or completely outside his or her fragile community, this situation allows the writer all the more the possibility to express another

⁶⁰ Eugene W. Holland, “Affective Citizenship and the Death State,” in Ian Buchanan and Adrian Parr, (ed.), *Deleuze and the Contemporary World*.

⁶¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, p. 17.

⁶² Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, p. 17.

⁶³ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, p. 18.

possible community and to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility.⁶⁴

We provide details in the first chapter about the characteristics of a minor literature as discussed by Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical volume that find depiction within Rafael Chirbes's narrative production. It would be impossible to argue that Spain, the home of Cervantes, Quevedo, Galdós, Baroja and Martín Gaité, to name but a handful of its great writers, is devoid of literary masters. In the present century, however, there are few Spanish writers of international renown, and Chirbes is among a limited number who have received such recognition.⁶⁵ A limited number of Spanish authors continue to focus on the Franco era and to link its arborescent nature to the much-vaunted transition to democracy and beyond. Each of Chirbes's novels, and not exclusively the three that the present study focuses on, consider the ravages of the Franco years or the frightening power that global capital now exercises in the nation after the strongman's death. It is manifestly clear that Chirbes considers life in today's Spain to be a mere continuum of Franco's authoritarian rule. In his essays he states, in words quite similar to those of Deleuze and Guattari's, his belief in the power of literature, particularly the novel, to provoke new sensibilities. As noted above, he cites the necessity of writing for another people. We discuss several of Chirbes's arguments in the first chapter as well as presenting numerous examples from his narrative production that reveal that his work is very much that of a minor literature.

Another concept elaborated by Deleuze and Guattari and taken up in the second chapter, "A Two-Fold Approach to Bacon," is that sensations released by original works

⁶⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, p. 17.

of art frequently resonate directly with the viewer or reader's nervous system, bypassing cognition or rationality. Deleuze produced *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, a book that considers the work of the Irish painter. For his part, Chirbes dedicates an entire chapter entitled, "La resurrección de la carne" in his collection of essays, *El novelista perplejo*, to Bacon's work and its influence on his fiction. Deleuze appreciates Bacon's attempts to break up any story that begins to express itself upon his canvases. He notes the use of asignifying marks included on most of Bacon's works that serve to interrupt any attempt on the viewer's part to discern a fixed narration. Another technique that Bacon utilizes is the distortion of the human face to the point that it is hardly identifiable as a face. Figures appearing in his works are usually seated and their bodies are horribly twisted. They are dressed in clothes that appear altogether too large, and often have oversized feet and at times a limb appears to be missing. Deleuze argues as well that Bacon possessed an extraordinary skill with color. Deleuze focuses specifically on Bacon's attempts through numerous measures to portray invisible forces at work upon bodies.⁶⁶ Chirbes also notes Bacon's ability to circumvent rationality with his art and connect directly with invisible forces surrounding us. Chirbes writes that, "Bacon plantea [...] lo de dentro, lo de fuera, lo que se rodea."⁶⁷ Chirbes concedes that the painter's work has directly influenced his fiction, particularly in his portrayal of Maximino Arroyo, the violent director of Franco's Political Social Brigade that appears in *La caída de Madrid*.⁶⁸

We also demonstrate in the latter section of the second chapter, "Sensation in the Novels

⁶⁵ María-Teresa Ibáñez Ehrlich states, "[...] hoy por hoy, Rafael Chirbes es una de las pocas voces literarias españolas con categoría internacional [...]" *Ensayos sobre Rafael Chirbes*, p. 8.

⁶⁶ Deleuze: *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 49.

⁶⁷ Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 57.

⁶⁸ "De esa visión pictórica surgió uno de los personajes más siniestros de mi libro *La caída de Madrid*." Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 59.

of Rafael Chirbes,” that each of his novels includes numerous scenes that act directly on the nervous system in a manner akin to the sensation produced in Bacon’s paintings. These scenes evoke the effects on bodies wrought by such forces as the patriarchal structures under Franco or the perversion of the death drive inherent to the axiomatic of global capital.

We discussed above that Western philosophy has been characterized by transcendent values. Deleuze and Guattari refer to the hierarchical set-ups of Western thought as “molar” or “arborescent.” We noted as well that the tree often represents such schemata. An adherence to them results in a blocking of the unending connectivity that is the eternal return of difference, which on Deleuze and Guattari’s account, is the real stuff of the universe. Chirbes includes myriad examples of molar or arborescent schemes in each of his novels. We consider several of them in the third chapter, “Spain: 1939-2003.” *La larga marcha* is the novel that deals most directly with the immediate survivors of the Civil War. In that work and in *La caída de Madrid*, Chirbes depicts the effects of the numerous laws and regulations that Spaniards were expected to live under during the most repressive years of the Franco era as well the less restrictive system during the last twenty years or so of the regime’s existence. With respect to these later years, Javier Alfaya writes that the aggressive ideology of the early decades of the Franco regime was superseded (except in cases of “emergency”) in the early 1960s by a soft but nettlesome system that eagerly facilitated consumerism.⁶⁹ Alfaya makes clear that until the end the Franco regime was perfectly capable of ratcheting up repressive measures whenever it

⁶⁹ “Bastaba con dejarse llevar y obedecer a los detenedores del poder. Eso y la desmemoria eran suficientes para hacerte un lugar en la cola para llamar a la puerta de la precaria felicidad de un consumerismo rudimentario,” Alfaya, *Crónica de los años perdidos*, pp. 156-157.

deemed it necessary to do so. Chirbes presents several artistic depictions of this mode of response throughout his works.

Of particular importance in *La caída de Madrid* is the grid of mores and laws governing the prescribed behavior and demeanor of women. Spanish law under Franco viewed women as equivalent to minor children. Women were not allowed to work or to enter into contracts without the written permission of their husbands. Furthermore, control over a woman's property passed directly to her husband control upon marriage.⁷⁰ Chirbes presents several examples of women attempting to overcome these obstacles, embarking on lines of flight and evading reterritorialization.

A central theme in *Los viejos amigos* is the anti-production inherent to the neo-liberal order of global capital. The majority of the characters in this work have quietly surrendered to advanced capitalism's requirements of furthering the ethos of accumulation as opposed to glorious expenditure, or the spending of resources without linking it to accumulation or production. Death, in the sense of a spent force no longer fit for production, pervades the novel and this ubiquity corresponds with the perversion of the death instinct that is manifest under advanced capital, and which affects most of the characters.⁷¹ We present direct links between Chirbes's novels and passages in *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* in which Deleuze and Guattari discuss anti-production and the channeling of desire into merely securing a means of survival.⁷² Each work in Chirbes's trilogy includes depictions of gay desire being blocked by arborescent attitudes. In the first two works this repression results from a bigotry traditionally accepted by the

⁷⁰ John Hooper, *The New Spaniards*, pp. 166-167.

⁷¹ For a discussion of Deleuze and Guattari's approach to anti-production and how the theme appears in a literary work, see Eugene W. Holland, "Nizan's Diagnosis of Existentialism and the Perversion of Death" in Ian Buchanan and John Marks, (eds.), *Deleuze and Literature*.

majority of straight Spaniards regardless of their politics. In the case of *Los viejos amigos*, the inherited prejudices continue to hold sway, but there is an additional burden. Gay desire is rejected in part because the media and entertainment industry, as it has developed under global capital, violently interrupts the *duration* particular to gay Spaniards and the gradual unfolding of a multi-dimensional relationship between two people that may or may not include sexual expression at some point. Straight-acting Spaniards are “warned off” by nearly inescapable talk shows and reality programs. As suggested above, Chirbes regularly introduces animals or an animal-presence, a becoming-animal, into his works. Characters that cling to arborescent strictures dismiss animals as being inferior to human beings. In some cases the presence of an animal provokes sheer terror on the part of those characters particularly bound to arborescent mores.

As we have stated, a few of Chirbes’s characters successfully evade molar strictures, often at harrowing personal costs. Several occupy a “holey space” with connections to both the arborescent and the rhizomatic. The number of characters that succeed in overcoming arborescent arrangements grows smaller as Spain becomes more fully enmeshed with the grip of global capital. Chirbes’s depictions of a more cramped space is in line with advanced capitalism’s ability to *internalize* its reterritorializing project within its subjects. As noted, the society depicted in *Los viejos amigos* fits the description of a “Death-State” that Eugene Holland describes in his Deleuzian-inspired analyses of contemporary Western cultures.⁷³ A number of Chirbes’s characters attempt to break free of arborescent fabrications too quickly. This latter misstep results in a

⁷² Mark Bonta and John Protevi, *Deleuze and Geophilosophy: A Guide and Glossary*, p. 51.

subject's falling into what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as a black hole or in a botching of the "body without organs." The body without organs, or the BwO is a nonidentifiable but singular milieu wherein desire congregates and forms assemblages. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari dedicate an entire plateau to the theme of "How Do You Make Yourself a Body Without Organs." On their account, a subject needs to maintain enough striated space in order to comfortably and safely create liberating assemblages or territories. Breaking free prematurely or cutting all ties to striated space, however, can lead to death or other disastrous consequences. Deleuze and Guattari makes this clear when they state that, "If you free it with too violent an action, if you blow apart the strata without taking precautions, then instead of drawing the plane, you will be killed, plunged into a black hole, or even dragged toward catastrophe."⁷⁴ The third chapter then focuses on the very real arborescent set-ups that plagued Franco-era Spain and that on Chirbes's account have reached asphyxiating levels under capitalism since the demise of the regime. It considers those characters created by Chirbes that blindly cling to these set-ups or who disengage too quickly. Chirbes's production of characters that botch the BwO serves as a precautionary lesson for anyone attempting to disengage from striated spaces incautiously, and this lesson therefore characterizes his literature as a liberating force despite the focus of several critics on the fear and disillusionment of his characters. It must be said that although Chirbes roughly follows the outline of the historical events that have occurred in Spain during the past 80 years, his interest is continuously concentrated on the time of the event. Chirbes's approach to the historical events that occurred in Spain's event is from the middle, from what Jussi Vähämäki and Akseli

⁷³ See, for example, Holland's article "Affective Citizenship and the Death State," in Ian Buchanan and Adrian Parr (eds.), *Deleuze and the Contemporary World*.

Virtanen refer to “an insurgency without cause, from the free combination of forces in time.”⁷⁵

Opposing the molar or the arborescent, Deleuze and Guattari created such concepts such as the schizo, the rhizome, the nomad and several other terms. Each of these concepts can be linked to the liberating intensities of the event.⁷⁶ Chirbes’s characters that can be characterized as schizo, rhizomatic or nomadic are discussed in chapter four. We will argue in the course of the chapter that Chirbes’s literary machine, like other authors mentioned by Deleuze and Guattari, is an intensive force for combating hierarchical structures and that this work is part of an overall project involving other creative thinkers and artists in an effort to call forth a people predisposed to think *otherwise*⁷⁷ and to engage in cautious experimentations in deterritorializing from the many micro and macro fascisms that have taken root.

The question may arise as to why utilize the works Deleuze and Guattari in discussing Chirbes, a writer who has mostly limited his literary efforts to the novel. In attempting to answer that question we would first mention that the works of Deleuze and Guattari contain numerous references to short stories, novellas, novels and other literary works by scores of writers. They produced a book-length study on the work of Franz Kafka in which they developed their philosophical concept of a minor literature. Deleuze has written extensively about writers such as Masoch and Proust. He discusses authors as stylistically divergent as Lewis Carroll and Henry Miller, among many others, in his philosophical works. Deleuze focuses on the machinic and liberating potential of

⁷⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 161.

⁷⁵ Jussi Vähämäki and Akseli Virtanen, “Deleuze, Change, History,” in Martin Fuglsang and Bent Meier Sørensen, (eds.), *Deleuze and the Social*, p. 226.

⁷⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 39.

literature in *Essays Critical and Clinical*. In *What Is Philosophy*, and elsewhere, Deleuze and Guattari specifically mention the writing of narrative works alongside the production of painters, philosophers and scientists as being conducive to thought. Writers, painters and sculptors accomplish this through the successful production of percept and affects that allow a work to stand on its own. It is nowhere apparent that Deleuze and Guattari privilege any of the thought-provoking endeavors that they mention - philosophy, science or art - over the others.⁷⁸

Also significant is the number of Deleuzian scholars such as Ronald Bogue, Ian Buchanan, John Marks and Paul Patton who have either edited volumes dedicated to approaching works of literature *with* Deleuze and Guattari, or written articles about such a convergence. Patton discusses the South African writer J.M. Coetzee's novel, *Disgrace*,⁷⁹ and argues that Coetzee's works demonstrates an effective use of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming-animal in his examination of the event of colonization in South Africa. Patton notes that Deleuze "...made only occasional passing remarks about colonization, even though his work has since become an inspiration and a resource for many postcolonial artists and theorists."⁸⁰ Patton cites authors that Deleuze and Guattari favored, many of the ones that we mentioned above, and mentions "a Deleuzian literary canon."⁸¹ For Patton, inclusion in this canon is or would be based in part on an author's success in depicting a character that "embarks on a line of flight or deterritorialization that promises to transform the sense of what he is."⁸² For his part,

⁷⁷ See *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 377 for an explanation of the power of original thought.

⁷⁸ See *What Is Philosophy*, p. 8.

⁷⁹ Paul Patton, *Deleuzian Concepts: Philosophy, Colonization, Politics*, pp. 118-133.

⁸⁰ Patton, *Deleuzian Concepts*, p. 2.

⁸¹ Patton, *Deleuzian Concepts*, p. 119.

⁸² Patton, *Deleuzian Concepts*, p. 119.

André Pierre Colombat argued that philosophy and literature share three powers – “to demystify, to experiment and to create,” and he argues for utilizing Deleuze and Guattari concepts in approaching the works of contemporary writers to assist in the dismantling of molar hierarchies.⁸³ We will demonstrate that Chirbes’s narrative includes numerous characters that make just this sort of effort at embarking on lines of deterritorializing flights as discussed by Patton and Colombat.

Although Patton and Colombat eschew any attempt at forging a complete critical theory for approaching works of narration, Ronald Bogue attempts to do just that in his *Deleuzian Fabulation and the Scars of History*. Bogue focuses on Deleuze and Guattari’s sporadic use of the term fabulation in order to build his theory. He couples the term with Deleuze’s, and Deleuze and Guattari’s, concept of the differentiation between the linear commonsense time of *chronos*, and the open-ended, intensive time of *aion*. Bogue adds to these elements the examples of films cited by Deleuze in *Cinema Two: The Time Image* in which directors and actors are seen to be *legending*. The film that Deleuze refers to illustrate legending is that of the director Pierre Perrault, who returned to his native Quebec and convinced fishermen to attempt to catch white dolphins in the St. Lawrence River, much as their antecedents had done. The fishermen and Perrault depended upon each other in bringing about this change in their daily existences. Bogue folds into the mix Deleuze and Guattari’s insights regarding a minor language. It is interesting to note that he states that he might have simply employed the term “minor language” when approaching the five novels selected for his Deleuzian literary analysis instead of “Deleuzian Fabulation,” but declined to do so due to limited space and a lack of expertise

⁸³ André Pierre Colombat, “Deleuze and the Three Powers of Literature and Philosophy: To Demystify, to Experiment, to Create,” in Ian Buchanan, (ed.), *A Deleuzian Century?*, pp. 199-217.

in the different languages spoken in the places under consideration. In any event, Bogue mentions the works of several other first-rate novelists as excellent future candidates for his Deleuzian literary analysis.

It is important to note that each of the writers that Bogue mentions directly utilizes the chronological historical forces that have come to bear on a given culture at a specific time, and employs those forces in creating affective instances of becoming-other after engendering what he refers to as a “useable past,” or facilitating “a new articulation of the past.”⁸⁴ We will demonstrate that Chirbes also employs the historical forces of the chronological sort in exposing to view the open-ended and intensive nature of the time of the event. He succeeds in eliciting a useable past, a cogent accomplishment given the number of scholars, as well as Chirbes himself, that have commented on the acute feeling of squandered opportunity on the part of the generation that came of age during the late-Franco period.⁸⁵

It appears to us that a complete literary theory based on Deleuze and Guattari’s works remains unnecessary in approaching narrative writers. Reducing their frequent mentioning of writers to a set theory smacks of the sort of molar organization against which Deleuze and Guattari continuously warned. Although their book on Kafka and a minor literature includes a literary theory, Deleuze utilized more than that one theory in his *Essays Critical and Clinical*. Indeed, in that volume dedicated to the study of literary works, his and Guattari’s “minor literature” is infrequently mentioned. It also goes against Deleuze’s own approach to other philosophers, an approach he likened to “taking

⁸⁴ Ronald Bogue, *Deleuzian Fabulation and the Scars of History*, pp. 71-72.

⁸⁵ See especially Javier Alfaya’s *Crónica de los años perdidos: La España del tardofranquismo*, for an example of this this feeling of disappointment with the generation that came of age in the late 1960s. For an

them from behind” and producing “monstrous” offspring. This “offspring” consisted of elements that a philosopher had included in his original works as well as additions and omissions that Deleuze made to those elements in fashioning concepts that served his own purposes. It stands to reason that Deleuze would gladly acquiesce in the utilization of his concepts to highlight what narrative works *do* as Deleuze scholars such as Patton and Colombat accomplish without the need to construct a set theory for narration. In the end, however, Bogue succeeds in illuminating what the works of the five novelists accomplish with respect to calling forth a new people despite difficult or even harrowing circumstances, as well as pointing out other elements of the works that correspond with Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophical concepts. Bogue also graciously invites others to contribute in fashioning a more complete or evolving Deleuzian literary theory.

We contend then that the work of Rafael Chirbes is worthy of a Deleuzian approach that focuses on the liberating paths or lines of flight that Chirbes maps out. Chirbes has succeeded in providing a symptomology of the ills that affected cultures within Spain during the Franco period and that continue to plague these cultures under advanced capital. In *Essays Critical and Clinical*, Deleuze states that the province of writers is to focus on the symptoms that point to a society’s underlying ills.⁸⁶ Deleuze and Guattari demonstrated the ubiquitous grasp of capital and the need to cautiously disengage from it. Chirbes endeavors to use his literature, despite all odds, as a war machine and to wrest control of the past from the victors of the Spanish Civil War and

examination of this sense of disappointment as it applies to Chirbes’s characters, see Francisco Javier Higuero’s “Horizonte nihilista es Los viejos amigos” de Rafael Chirbes in *Castilla* 28-29.

⁸⁶ Gilles Deleuze, “Literature and Life,” in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, p. 3.

their opportunistic successors who, in the words of Walter Benjamin that Chirbes himself quotes, have, “emerged victorious and who never cease to emerge victorious.”⁸⁷

In the following section, we argue that Chirbes’s works correspond with Deleuze and Guattari’s idea of a “minor literature” due to their urgent themes that are necessarily political, collective and that involve what is for Chirbes a life and death struggle. He utilizes techniques such as “boring holes in language,” “stammering” and the use of a free indirect style of narration that gives voice to characters of diverse backgrounds. Images are also essential in Chirbes work in the sense that nearly every scene involves views that are linked to “triangles” of repression. The essential theme of Deleuze and Guattari of becoming-other is also enhanced in Chirbes’s novels by his refusal to privilege male, heterosexual human beings, or even humans at all.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, pp. 108-109. Please note that this and the subsequent brief translations from Spanish to English in this dissertation were undertaken by Daniel O’Dunne.

⁸⁸ See Patty Sotirin’s “Becoming Woman,” in Charles J. Stivale, (ed.), *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, p.117, where she explains that for Deleuze (and Guattari), becomings “are about passages, propogations and expansions.”

Chapter Two: Chirbes's "Minor Literature"

Chirbes's narrative production reveals multiple connections with concepts developed in Deleuze and Guattari's *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, as we explain in this chapter. Deleuze and Guattari list three elements of a minor literature: the deterritorialization of language; an immediate connection of the literature with the political; and that everything in the literature takes on a collective value.¹ We will explain each of these elements as they are elaborated by Deleuze and Guattari and then examine how the elements are reflected in Chirbes's novels.

Throughout their individual and co-authored books, Deleuze and Guattari discuss triangles and triangulation. The Oedipal triangle of mommy, daddy and me is itself a reproduction of more nefarious triangles of control and repression. The family, the office, the church and the psychologist's office, to name but a few locales, are (continuous) training grounds for submitting to arborescent authority. Deleuze and Guattari urge writers to combat such triangles and the repressive forces that they buttress through the creation of a minor literature. Chirbes joins this fight through the inclusion of scenes in each of his novels that demonstrate the presenting of arborescent lessons within the types of "private" milieus mentioned above. The attempt to impart these lessons is always depicted by Chirbes in a negative light. For example, in *La caída de Madrid*, Tomás Ricart repeats to his son Quique the same debilitating lessons about accumulation that his father had given him some twenty years earlier. In *Los viejos amigos* the newly rich Pedrito, the former cell member who had first suggested holding the reunion dinner, bitterly recalls the rejection of his prospective father-in-law due to Pedrito's lack of

¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, pp. 16-18.

financial resources. He also recalls his subsequent meteoric but soul-deadening success in putting himself financially on an even par with the elder man.

Deterritorialization of Language

The first characteristic of a minor literature is that it is “affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization.”² Deleuze and Guattari refer to Kafka’s unique situation as a Jewish intellectual living in Prague, Czechoslovakia. The official German language spoken in that country was significantly altered by its contact with Czech. The Jews who left the countryside and moved to Prague quickly took up German as their vernacular language, endeavoring to suppress the use of the Czech language in their effort to rise within the bourgeois class. Kafka was one of the few Jewish writers living in Prague that spoke and understood Czech. In Kafka’s case, his knowledge of other languages such as French, Hebrew, Yiddish, and perhaps to a lesser extent English, influenced his use of German. The Yiddish language played a particularly important role in Kafka’s artistic production. He was active in promoting Yiddish theater in Prague, often in the face of hostile reactions from middle-class Jewish audiences who viewed Yiddish as a threat to their acceptance within middle-class society. Deleuze and Guattari remark on the fascination that the language held for Kafka because of its origins in High German. Yiddish itself is itself an example of the deterritorialization of a major language as it takes elements from German and recasts them within Hebrew and Slavic sounds. Kafka also appreciated that Yiddish does not have a fixed grammar and that is amenable to intensities and connections. We have seen in the introduction to this study that such a lack of fixity and the openness to connectivity are extremely important in Deleuze and

² Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, p. 16.

Guattari's work. They state that Yiddish is "a language [...] that is filled with vocables that are fleeting, mobilized, emigrating, and turned into nomads that interiorize 'relations of force.'"³ With respect to the use of German by Czechoslovakians, Kafka celebrated the "poverty" of Czech German. He determined to make the language "vibrate" through intensity:

He will opt for the German language of Prague as it is and in its very poverty. Go always farther in the direction of deterritorialization, to the point of sobriety. Since the language is arid, make it vibrate with a new intensity. Oppose a purely intensive usage of language to all symbolic or even significant or simply signifying usages of it.⁴

Deleuze and Guattari credit Kafka for his boldness in using a major language, in his case German, in a minor fashion, and for making it as intense as possible so that it is felt at least as much as it is understood. This minor use of literature also allows Kafka to anticipate and thus attempt to defuse unseen threats – "Fascism, Stalinism, Americanism, *diabolical powers that are knocking at the door.*"⁵

Literature and the Political

The second characteristic of works of a minor literature is "that everything in them is political."⁶ In a major literature the concerns of the individualized subject⁷ are privileged and forces affecting his or her social milieu are often relegated to the

³ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, p. 25.

⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, p. 19.

⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, p. 41.

⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 17.

⁷ An individualized subject on Deleuze and Guattari's account is hardly the individual traditionally represented in Western literature or philosophy, but rather the product of a series of folding and unfolding. See, for example Ronald Bogue's article, "Deleuze, Foucault, and the Playful Fold of the Self," in Bogue, *Deleuze's Wake: Tributes and Tributaries*.

background. No such luxury exists in a minor literature. Deleuze and Guattari state that a minor literature's "cramped spaces forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics."⁸ They are even more emphatic with regards to the stakes involved in a minor literature. Quoting Kafka, they refer to much of what occurs in a major literature as a "not indispensable cellar." A minor literature can ill afford such background clutter. They write that "what is there a matter of passing interest for a few, here absorbs everyone no less than as a matter of life and death."⁹ In a major literature the individual subject towers above all else. Conditions affecting society are a mere prop to the conceit of an active subject. Such a set-up cannot occur in a minor literature. Deleuze and Guattari state that every "individual intrigue" is linked directly to politics. The individual subject is a mere component among larger issues at play, as Deleuze and Guattari explain,

The individual concern thus becomes all the more necessary, indispensable, magnified, because a whole other story is vibrating within it. In this way, the family triangle connects to other triangles – commercial, economic, bureaucratic, and juridical – that determine its values.¹⁰

Minor Literature and the Collective

The third characteristic of a minor literature is that "in it everything takes on a collective value."¹¹ Deleuze and Guattari speak of environments in which a scarcity of talent proves beneficial because literary products cannot be said to belong to a particular

⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 17.

⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 17.

¹⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 17.

¹¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 17.

master or to his or her school. They state that apathy and skepticism often prevail in a given society and that literature alone has the capacity of breaking through the ennui. Deleuze and Guattari contend that, “It is literature that produces an active solidarity in spite of skepticism [...]”¹² They state that circumstances can become so dire that literature alone is capable of issuing “collective and even revolutionary enunciation.”¹³ A minor literature is key in what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as creating “a revolutionary-machine to come.”¹⁴ They cite approvingly Kafka’s disdain for the use of a traditional narrator and his penchant for a solitude that connects with the outside world.¹⁵ Kafka’s designation of an important character simply as “K” is crucial because of its “machine-like assemblage” and its solitude being an intensive marking of collective enunciation.

The letter K no longer designates a narrator or a character but an assemblage that becomes all the more machine-like, an agent that becomes all the more collective because an individual is locked into it in his or her solitude.¹⁶

Deleuze and Guattari argue that the use of the mouth to form speech is a deterritorialization of its original purpose related to eating and drinking. Speech is ultimately reterritorialized into “sense” and therefore deposited in an ordered system of rules and standards. This reterritorialization gives rise to the enunciating individual subject and to representation.¹⁷ Kafka, through myriad situations, sounds, and characters as well as other elements in his letters, stories, and novels, all of which form part of his

¹² Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 17.

¹³ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 17.

¹⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 18.

¹⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 18.

¹⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 18.

writing-machine on Deleuze and Guattari's account, combats the binding of language to sense by providing lines of escape for expression that allow it to exist for itself independent of molar set-ups.

Everywhere, organized music is traversed by a line of abolition – just as a language of sense is traversed by a line of escape – in order to liberate a living and expressive material that speaks for itself and has no need of being put into a form.¹⁸

Minor Literature and Becoming

In their examination of Kafka's minor literature, Deleuze and Guattari make reference to their essential concept of becoming. As we noted in our introduction, far from organizing beings or enunciations under some organizing structure, becoming allows for "the maximum of difference."¹⁹ Words buzz or growl in an asignifying fashion. For Deleuze and Guattari it is not an expectation that there is a literal becoming "man-like" in an animal or the human taking on specific characteristics, recognizable in the animal. In *Kafka* they refer to becoming as a "circuit of states" in a multiplicity,²⁰ What becoming *does* is emphasized in *A Thousand Plateaus*: "The wolf is not fundamentally a characteristic or a certain number of characteristics; it is a wolfing. The louse is a lousing, and so on."²¹ It is important to note that Deleuze and Guattari do not specify a specific method for creating minor literature. In addition to authors who create asignifying sounds, they refer as well to the works of thoroughly realist writers such as

¹⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 20.

¹⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 21.

¹⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 22.

²⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 22.

²¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 239.

Arthur Miller who based their fiction on their own experiences, but did so in a manner that connected immediately with outside forces and that fostered becomings that hampered further adherence to arborescent moorings. Deleuze and Guattari write that, “As in Arthur Miller’s novel, *Focus*, or Losey’s film, *Mr. Klein*: it is the non-Jew who becomes Jewish, who is swept up in, carried off by, this becoming after being rent from his standard of measure.”²²

Language and Power Grids in Chirbes’s Fiction

Rafael Chirbes’s fiction demonstrates that his is very much a minor literature. Chirbes, a native of the province of Valencia, grew up speaking Catalan;²³ a language in which as an adult he feels ill equipped to compose. In his collection of essays, *El novelista perplejo*, Chirbes admits to experiencing affective feelings when he reads works written in the language of his youth or when conversing in it, all the while realizing that he must necessarily write in Castilian.²⁴ In the essay, “De lugares y lenguas,” Chirbes voices a protest against the murder, the imprisonment or the exiling of the best non-Castilian writers in the wake of Franco’s victory in the Spanish Civil War.²⁵ Chirbes notes with optimism, however, that the history of literature written in Castilian is itself replete with examples of irreverent and nonconformist works that served as mechanisms

²² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 291.

²³ It should be noted that in his essays Chirbes usually refers to his native language as Valencian (valenciano) and not Catalan, pp. 131-132.

²⁴ In *El novelista perplejo*, Chirbes records wistful feelings after reading Joan F. Mira’s *Tirant lo Blanc*, written in ‘lengua vulgar valenciana.’ Chirbes states that he felt “una añoranza de haber perdido esa lengua para mi escritura,” pp. 131-132.

²⁵ “Sus más cuidadosos e inteligentes escritores habían sido fusilados, encarcelados o exiliados,” Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 133.

for the weakening of hierarchical power structures.²⁶ His observation is very much in line with Deleuze and Guattari's insights that within any major language, those power grids are intertwined with viable lines of escape. Deleuze and Guattari argue that even "when major a language is open to an intensive utilization that makes it take flight along creative lines of escape which, no matter how cautiously, can now form an absolute deterritorialization."²⁷

In his novels Chirbes provides myriad examples of "triangles beyond triangles" and how these triangles of power are reflected in the use of language. *La larga marcha*, for example, includes scenes in which the Castilian language crowds out Spain's other vernaculars. The opening scene of the novel portrays the birth of Carmelo Amado in the Galician village of Fiz.²⁸ Carmelo's father Manuel names the baby in honor of his (the father's) deceased elder brother who perished in Spain's imperialist adventure in Morocco. Manuel recalls his brother's letters in which the Galician-speaking and homesick soldier complained about the difficulty of understanding orders barked at him in Castilian.²⁹ Some years later the family has been uprooted to Madrid after the Franco government designated the valley in which their ranch was situated as the site of a future hydroelectric dam. Carmelo, now in high school, notices that in the classroom numerous students speak Castilian with diverse accents because they, like him, came to the capital

²⁶ "[...] el *Lazarillo*, la *Celestina*, la *Lozana andaluza*, Cervantes, Moratín [...] Galdós, Cernuda o Machado son unos pocos ejemplos," Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 134.

²⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 26.

²⁸ Chirbes's beginning the first novel of the trilogy with a scene that takes place in Galicia by itself introduces the political into his work as Galician was one of the regional languages suppressed during Franco's rule.

²⁹ "Se había limitado a vestirse el traje de soldado, a cargar con el petate y a someterse a órdenes que, pronunciadas en castellano, le resultaban difíciles de entender [...]," Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 18.

from different regions of Spain. He notes, however, that it is the Castilian as it is spoken in Madrid that is privileged. Students who spoke with other accents were dismissed as “slow-witted.”

En clase se marcaba una clara diferencia que enaltecía a quienes eran de Madrid, y hablaban arrastrando las palabras [...] y que condenaban a un claro lugar inferior, como torpes, a quienes habían nacido fuera [...]³⁰

Chirbes provides numerous other examples of the authoritative use of the majoritarian language as a buttress for the established order. For example, contingents of the Civil Guard are dispatched to Fiz to dissuade unhappy villagers from protesting too forcefully, or taking any direct action, against the condemnation orders affecting their properties. The adolescent Carmelo notices that adult villagers refer to the young guardsmen with the formal “usted,” despite their being, in many cases, much older than the young policemen. Chirbes’s narrator obliquely notes the fear that the presence of the Civil Guard instills in the populace.³¹ The narrator’s focus on the child’s understanding of the use of *usted* by adults toward other younger adults demonstrates the linkage of this respectful third person singular pronoun with the triangles of religion, education, law and money. The last person mentioned in the citation below toward whom “usted” is employed by the adults of the village is “el indiano,” that is a resident of the village who had made a fortune in the Americas.

Carmelo sabía que la palabra usted los niños debían usarla con los mayores, pero los mayores sólo la usaban ante el

³⁰ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 210.

³¹ “Era un temor que se convertía en respeto, porque los vecinos jamás pasaban al lado de ellos sin llevarse la mano a la boina [...] y decir “buenos días tengan ustedes.” [...], Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 135.

cura, el maestro, el notario que venía de Mondoñedo, o ante el indiano de la casa de la plaza.³²

The tandem use of power and language is on display as well in *La caída de Madrid*. History professor Juan Bartos permits leftist students to meet in his office in order to plan protests and other activities against the Franco regime. Bartos is also the only professor that students address with the familiar “tú.” He insists, however, on referring to his students with the second person plural “vosotros,” even when alone with an individual student. Margarita Duran, the daughter of an extremely wealthy family with very close ties to the Franco government,³³ fancies the married Bartos, and recognizes that his insistence in using *vosotros* while addressing her is a strategy meant to deny individuality to her and other students, thus denying an enhanced chance at *becoming-other*. It is worth noting that Margarita associates the word “rebaño,” flock or herd, as an insult. This use of a term normally associated with animals coincides with the limited line of flight that Margarita embarks upon, as we will later discuss. For now we simply note that Chirbes’s more reactive or molar characters always refer to animals in a negative fashion.

[...] porque lo que quería decirles cuando les hablaba así era que mientras que él era un individuo capaz de acumular experiencia y de sacar conclusiones, ellos – “vosotros” -, en cambio era un rebaño que se extraviaba, una masa ciega [...]³⁴

³² Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 135.

³³ Several commentators have pointed out that resistance to Franco often came from the children of well-connected families. See, for example, Carolyn F. Boyd, “History, politics and culture, 1936-1975,” in David T. Gies (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Spanish Culture*, p.101, as well as Elías Díaz’s article, “The Left and the Legacy of Francoism: Political Culture in Opposition and Transition” in Helen Graham and Jo Labanyi (eds.), *Spanish Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, p. 284.

³⁴ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, pp. 227-228.

Chirbes reveals an understanding of the potential major and minor uses of an established language in *La caída de Madrid*, again through the depiction of Margarita Duran. Lucas, an impoverished but brilliant student of history who grew up in an orphanage in the province of Ávila is in love with her. The former is rhizomatic character while Margarita, as we will see, for the most part remains mired within hierarchical structures. He bemoans that his knowledge of languages is limited to “the rough Castilian of Old Castile,”³⁵ and compares himself unfavorably with Margarita’s fluency in two of Spain’s other languages, Galician and Catalan and her more than passing familiarity with Basque. She also speaks French, German and English with an apparently impeccable pronunciation. Margarita brags about her impressive knowledge of various languages, but her use of them is invariably majoritarian.³⁶ Despite his much more limited knowledge of human languages Lucas uses what he does know in the service of deterritorializing activities. As we will demonstrate in the next chapter, Margarita will literally run from liberating opportunities and toward arborescent ones.

An acute example of the mutual support between power and language appears in *Los viejos amigos*, the last novel of Chirbes’s trilogy. Ana Malta de Thalit, the owner of a prestigious art gallery named Esquema widely advertises that the painter Demetrio Rull is autodidactic despite her being fully aware that he had attended art school for a time and benefited from the teaching of caring and insightful instructors. Ana’s labeling of Demetrio as self-taught serves her commercial purposes because the gallery specializes in abstract art and photography, forms of expression that Demetrio refuses to participate in

³⁵ “[...] oyendo siempre el duro castellano de Castilla la Vieja [...], Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 114.

³⁶ As an example, the narrator recalls Margarita’s going through the languages that she speaks. With respect to French, which she learned in a convent, Margarita explains, “[...] ¿Cómo no, si hice el bachillerato con

and that Deleuze specifically criticizes in *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*. Ana, a former member of the same Marxist revolutionary cell that Demetrio belonged to is now, twenty-five years later, reterritorializing her former comrade by subjugating him to the demands of global capital.³⁷ His picturesque landscapes are occasionally sold to rich patrons for their yachts or weekend homes away from Madrid. Demetrio realizes with much bitterness that Ana's reterritorializing tactic serves to keep him in his place within the capitalist system that her art gallery services. He states, "O sea, que lo de llamarme autodidacta era una forma de ponerme limites, de ponerme en mi clase [...]"³⁸ This citation indicates Chirbes's affinity with Deleuze and Guattari's concept regarding the possibility that lines of flight are capable of coagulating into reactive forces, as Ana and other characters in each of the novels clearly do as they are reterritorialized by neo-liberal forces and work to serve those forces.

The Deterritorialization of Language in Chirbes's Fiction

In his recent volume, *Deleuzian Fabulation and the Scars of History*, Ronald Bogue grafts elements of Deleuze and Guattari's minor literature onto his Deleuzian literary theory. Concerning the difficult task of uncovering specific examples of the deterritorialization of language in a particular writer's work, Bogue states that "All too often in discussions of the deterritorialization of language, including those of Deleuze and Guattari, concrete examples and extended close readings are rare."³⁹ Bogue opts to

unas monjas francesas?," Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 114. The other languages in which she is able to communicate were also learned in such arborescent environments.

³⁷ See *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 457-458 for Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of subjectification as opposed to enslavement. The former results in an entrapment much more pervasive than the enslavement of the despotic regime of earlier periods.

³⁸ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 26.

³⁹ Ronald Bogue, *Deleuzian Fabulation and the Scars of History*, p. 10.

not use this element in his approach to the five novels that he considers in *Deleuzian Fabulation*, although he retains it as a component to his analytical apparatus.

Fortunately, Chirbes provides examples of the deterritorialization of language in his works. In *La caída de Madrid*, for example, Joaquín or “Quini,” as his friends and family call him, is the younger of Tomás and Olga Ricart two sons. Quini’s grandfather, the industrialist José Ricart, has profited from nepotistic ties with the Franco regime. His closest friend is the commissar Maximilio Arroyo, the head of Franco’s infamous Political Social Brigade. Ricart has built a fortune through various means, few having anything to do with fair competition in an open market. Indeed, he mocks his son Thomas’s credulous belief in the competitive market.⁴⁰ Ricart earned a large portion of his money by marrying a young woman who stood to inherit some of the most fecund orange groves in Andalusia.⁴¹ He fortified his growing fortune after the war through the use of Republican prisoners who were allowed by Franco to “redeem” part of their sentences through forced labor.⁴² He also made money through black-marketeering.⁴³ At the end of the novel the well-connected Ricart’s grandson Quini, with a ski mask on his face, participates in a demonstration in which he throws rocks at police breaking up a student protest. He later watches the end of the melee from a park bench and considers his family’s past while envisioning his own future. He considers the parts of his body as

⁴⁰ “Pero a ver si es que ahora te crees que la empresa es una fruta nacida en el árbol del mercado libre. No, no nació de la libertad esta empresa. Después sí; después hemos estado en el mercado, no sé si libre o no, aunque con muchos más apoyos que unos y con un poco menos apoyo que otros.” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 22.

⁴¹ “la inconsciente heredera de huertos y de una empresa exportadora de Grao [...]” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 218.

⁴² “¿Fue resultado de un concurso la contrata con la Dirección de Prisiones para gestionar el trabajo de los presos?” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 22.

mere appendages of the Franco regime. The citation that follows provides an excellent example of what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as “making language tremble.” Besides referring to the sources of his family’s wealth as outlined above, Quini makes a oblique reference to his godfather whose violent death occurred under mysterious circumstances, perhaps as a result of falling out of favor with the regime. The listing of body parts can be considered as a “stammering,” that is, the bold attempt to create expression when force outstrips the capacity of language to contain it.

Él era un poquito de cada una de esas ignominias familiares, por ejemplo, las uñas eran la redención de penas; el pelo, el estraperlo; la nariz, un tipo que se llamaba como él y que, por alguna razón, yacía tirado en una cuneta.⁴⁴

The listing of body parts linked (fingernails, hair, nose) to his father’s nefarious involvement with, and benefiting from, Franco’s government is also an indication of a triangle outside the familial triangle in which arborescent lessons are absorbed. The sudden mentioning of the uncle, his unexplained death and the narrator quickly moving on and not mentioning him again provoke discomfort in the reader. This causing of sensation is a concern for both Deleuze and Chirbes as we explore in the next chapter.

In *Los viejos amigos* Pedro Vidal is, as we have noted, the former Marxist cell member who amassed a fortune in the construction business and is the character responsible for having organized the reunion dinner. After the dinner, as is his custom, Pedro visits a brothel where he engages the services of women from outside Spain, in this case from Brazil and Latvia. In the following citation Chirbes’s narrator employs the term

⁴³ “Maxi [...] le había propuesto emprender un negocio de estraperlo en el mercado de Legazpi [...], Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 54.

⁴⁴ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 288.

“occidente” (Western) to relate Pedro and other men’s⁴⁵ flippant attitudes about the brutal exploitation of Third-World immigrants who sell themselves, in Pedro’s words, for the price of a pack of cigarettes. Chirbes again provides a “stammering” to render visible invisible forces:

[...] los muy gilipollas, los corruptos, esos cuerpos se los han entregado a *occidente* por dos duros, para pagar la deuda externa; para comprar alcohol de garrafa; entregar estas chicas, estas diosas, para que *occidente* las contamine, las triture, las entierre *occidente* a cambio de un paquete de Camel.⁴⁶ (my emphasis)

This repeated use of “occidente” points to the exploitation of foreign workers within Spain, in this case prostitutes, who work for low wages and few benefits. It also makes a reference to Spain’s geographical position as the “gateway” to Western Europe through its southern frontier. Chirbes thus utilizes the deterritorialization of language to refer to Spain’s problematic relationship with its immigrant population.⁴⁷

Chirbes includes in his essays an article about the Russian novelist Boris Pilniak. He focuses especially on Pilniak’s novel, *The Naked Year*, which endeavors to capture a measure of the forces that were actualized in part during the Revolution of 1919. In the lengthy citation that follows, a character pleads for somebody to share what he hears, the natural elements themselves partaking in the revolution by emitting asignifying sounds.

⁴⁵ Pedro who no longer lives in Madrid receives the address and recommendation of the brothel delivered with a wink by the supposedly progressive Guzmán, a character who loudly identifies himself with the Spanish Socialist Party. See, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 210.

⁴⁶ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 211.

⁴⁷ See David Corkill, “Race, immigration and multiculturalism in Spain,” in Barry Jordan and Rikki Morgan-Tamosunas, (eds.), *Contemporary Spanish Cultural Studies*, pp. 48-57.

Pilniak twice mentions a witch (bruja) or witches (brujas), a theme to which Deleuze often returns.⁴⁸

¿No oyes cómo alarda la revolución como una bruja en la ventisca? Escucha: ¡Gviuú, gviuú, shooiá, shoooiá...gaau!
Y el silvano tamborilea: ¡gla-vbum!, ¡glavbuum! Y las brujas, barre que te barre por detrás-delante: ¡kvart-jós! ¡kvart-jós!...Y el viento, y los pinos, y la nieve: shoiá, shoiá...jmuuú...Y el viento: gviiuuú...⁴⁹

This quote upon Pilniak which Chirbes lingers can be linked to Deleuze's insight that, "The writer returns from what he has seen and heard with bloodshot eyes and pierced eardrums."⁵⁰ Again, Deleuze and Guattari do not prescribe a specific artistic style or technique as being uniquely amenable for rendering visible invisible forces. For his part, Chirbes does not often resort to asignifying words in his fiction. He does, however, utilize sensation and the inclusion of affective series among other strategies in his minor literature for the purposes of expressing forces upon a body.

Chirbes and the Political

We recall that one of the characteristics of a minor literature is that everything in them is political. Rafael Chirbes is a profoundly political writer. The critic Pedro Alonso states the importance of Chirbes in rescuing a collective memory from the oblivion in which the neo-liberal order has placed it. His narrative production serves to delegitimize the molar structures at work in silencing the struggles that took place during the Franco era or worse, molds them to fit the demands of advanced capitalism. Chirbes, "ejerce su

⁴⁸ Deleuze and Guattari often refer to sorcerers and witches with respect to artistic visions that artists see and then attempt to share with others in their work. For example, see *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 246. With respect to a minor literature see *Essays Critical and Clinical*, p. 5 where Deleuze writes that a minor language is "a witch's line that escapes the dominant system."

⁴⁹ Pilniak, cited in Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 41.

⁵⁰ Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, p. 3.

papel en la construcción de la memoria colectiva deslegitimando a su vez una memoria oficial que ignora, manipula o silencia nuestro pasado.”⁵¹ It is worth noting that Chirbes is a forward-looking writer, and not interested in evoking memory for nostalgic purposes. His interest in collective memory is for its possible role in fostering change in Spain and moving away from the overwhelming control of global capital. Chirbes refers to the Franco dictatorship as a regime marked by “stubborn brutality.”⁵² With respect to the so-called transition to democracy, Chirbes dismisses it as a “long treachery that called itself the transition.”⁵³

In *Kafka*, Deleuze and Guattari reject the conventional readings of Kafka as a writer obsessed with interiority and a quiet surrender to the ubiquitous presence of law or power. As we stated previously, Deleuze and Guattari seem at times content to do away with any interpretation of Kafka’s work altogether, focusing on what a Kafka machine *does*.

We believe only in a Kafka politics that is neither imaginary nor symbolic. We believe only in one or more Kafka machines that are neither structure nor phantasm. We believe only in a Kafka experimentation that is without interpretation or significance and rests only on tests of experience.⁵⁴

Chirbes’s writing machine has produced works that have made palpable the fear that the losers of the Spanish Civil War experienced at the conclusion of the conflagration. In like fashion he has succeeded in recreating the sense of relief that upper class Spaniards felt after Franco succeeded in taking the reins of power as well as their

⁵¹ Alonso, “Memoria de la posguerra española: aproximaciones a ‘La buena letra’ y ‘La larga marcha’ in María Teresa Ibáñez (ed.), *Ensayos sobre Rafael Chirbes*, p. 12.

⁵² “[...] tozuda brutalidad,” Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 21.

⁵³ “[...] esa larga traición llamada transición,” Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 12.

⁵⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, p. 7.

apprehension in the waning days of the strongman's rule. Chirbes diagnoses the many cutting off of flows of desire and points to possible lines of escape. He maps the constrictions in the flow of gay desire that occurred during the Franco years and that continue to manifest themselves under global capital where "everybody knows everything" based on their viewing television talk shows and other shallow forms of "infotainment." We discuss in the third chapter how certain durations have been upset by television talk shows. Chirbes recreates the limited spaces in which Spanish women moved and continue to move. He refuses to cooperate with the unwritten vow of silence wherein the actions taken by Leftist militants during the 1960s and 1970s are hushed up in an era when many of them have accommodated themselves to the neo-liberal order that he bitterly opposes. Chirbes points out that the only ones who today talk about having been jailed or beaten during the Franco era are politicians who make mention of such instances strictly to gain political advantage and not to insist on fundamental changes in Spanish laws.⁵⁵ Finally, Chirbes, through his works, urges Spaniards to resist succumbing to an infinite debt in an era of plenty. He seeks to bear witness to numerous unresolved differends that have resulted in Spain from the "stubborn brutality" of Francoism and the uneven transition to democracy, a transition that Chirbes derides as simply the continuation of an oppressive war via different strategies. He points to the lack of overt oppression as simply an indication of the overwhelming strength that the powerful few now possess.

⁵⁵ When the narration of *Los viejos amigos* first focuses on Rita, she describes how members of the Spanish Left keep silent about their past while politicians brag about such experiences. People without power are afraid of the suspicion that would follow them if they were to admit in the twenty-first century to having confronted authority during the 1960s. "Además, hoy en día, del pasado, de ese tipo de pasado, sólo presumen los políticos: para el resto de la gente, haber estado en la cárcel hace tiempo que ha vuelto de ser sospechoso de algo: drogas, marginalidad, terrorismo. Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 49.

Nos lo enseñó la transición, que no fue un pacto sino la aplicación de una nueva estrategia en esa guerra de dominio de los menos sobre los más, y donde si hubo poca crueldad fue porque, por entonces, los menos eran fuertes y débiles los más.⁵⁶

Chirbes often quotes Walter Benjamin and in one essay utilizes Benjamin's thought to describe what he wishes for his own literature *to do*. He seeks to prevent the neo-liberal order from appropriating Spain's past and thus denying alternative futures. In his essay, "Madrid, 1938," Chirbes evokes Benjamin who advised that, "the only historian who has the right to use the past to ignite a spark of hope is the historian that knows that not even the dead are safe from the enemy if he emerges victorious, and that this enemy never ceases to emerge victorious."⁵⁷

The events depicted in *Los viejos amigos*, the last work in Chirbes's trilogy and the work that focuses directly on post-Franco Spain, demonstrates that for Chirbes, literature is quite literally "a matter of life and death." Several commentators have rightly considered that the majority of the characters in *Los viejos amigos* have turned their backs on the progressive issues that they struggled for during Franco's reign.⁵⁸ The critic Antonio Muñoz Molina, a contemporary of Chirbes, explains that in his own circle of intimates he and his companions planned to quickly do away with capitalism but were instead seduced one by one.⁵⁹ Muñoz Molina's personal reflections serve as an apt

⁵⁶ Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 108.

⁵⁷ "[...] el único historiador que tiene el derecho a encender en el pasado la chispa de la esperanza es el que sabe que 'ni siquiera los muertos estarán a salvo del enemigo, si éste vence.'" Benjamin añadía: "Y este enemigo no ha dejado de vencer." Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 109.

⁵⁸ See, for example, Francisco Javier Higuero's "Horizonte nihilista en *Los viejos amigos* de Rafael Chirbes" in *Castilla: Estudios de Literatura*, p. 133, and María-Teresa Ibáñez Ehrlich, "Memoria y revolución: el desengaño de una quimera" in Ibáñez Ehrlich, (ed.), *Ensayos sobre Rafael Chirbes*, p. 71.

⁵⁹ "Se dicutía si íbamos a derribar sólo el facismo o si, ya puestos, derribábamos también el capitalismo - luego fue el capitalismo el que nos derribó uno por uno a nosotros [...]" cited in Ibáñez Ehrlich, (ed.), *Ensayos sobre Rafael Chirbes*, p. 61.

description for nearly all of the characters in *Los viejos amigos*. For these characters, the quiet surrender to capitalism has resulted in the death that comes about when capitalism advances to the point where glorious expenditure is replaced by an endless demand for increased production and accumulation and where resources, including human ones, are managed until their production wanes and they are discarded.

In his article, “Nizan’s Diagnosis of Existentialism and the Perversion of Death,” Eugene W. Holland states that death is the central theme in Paul Nizan’s novels *Antoine Bloyé* and *The Trojan Horse*. The main characters in each novel have turned their backs on glorious expenditure and instead surrendered to the capitalist axiomatic that now requires a subject’s very life in its quest to maximize production and heighten accumulation. The axiomatic of capitalism stands in contrast to the requirements of the despotic societies of earlier epochs that did not require a subject’s life, but rather his death in case of disobedience. Holland notes that death in civilized society has fallen silent whereas under the despotic regime death was routinely a noisy and public spectacle.

Death is not silent under sovereign depotism: it is on the contrary very noisy, visible, dramatic – and terrifying. But once social value in the modern regime of bio-technico-power is assigned to continually enhanced production and reproduction to the exclusion of death, waste, expenditure and deviance, then death must fall silent, must become instinctual.⁶⁰

In *Los viejos amigos* Chirbes puts forward the same concerns as Nizan’s works. Death pervades this novel. Two of the principal characters are suffering from fatal illnesses. The painter Demetrio is HIV-positive. His lover Jorge, a minor character in the

⁶⁰ Holland, “Nizan’s Diagnosis of Existentialism and the Perversion of Death,” in Ian Buchanan and John Marks (eds.), *Deleuze and Literature*, p. 258.

work, is in the final stages of AIDS. The failed novelist Carlos suffers from what may be a terminal melanoma. Two members of the former Marxist cell have already died as has Pau, the eldest child of Carlos and Rita, his ex-wife. In an interview about *Los viejos amigos*, Chirbes spoke about the prevalence of quiet and isolated deaths in the work. He mentions as well that the lack of dialogue in the work, despite its being centered on a reunion dinner, is linked to the characters' utter lack of a common project and their failure to make any real connections. Chirbes states,

Porque es una época de dispersión: esa gente vive sola y va a morir sola. No hay un superyó que organice todo eso. Ni siquiera me valían los diálogos porque no hay un proyecto común.”⁶¹

Most of the other characters in *Los viejos amigos* fall into black holes of one form or another – alcohol or drug abuse in the cases of Rita and Amalia; a cholesterol-laden diet in the case of Guzmán; or the obsession with accumulating money in the case of Pedro. We examine these black holes in closer detail in the third chapter, which focuses on the arborescent.

Collective Value in Chirbes's Fiction

The third characteristic of a minor literature, that is, the taking on of a collective value, is a determination that goes to the heart of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the minor. In a majoritarian set-up, the standard is that of a white, heterosexual, bourgeois male. Although the actual number of this type of person may in fact be smaller than the number of women and others, the straight, white male maintains his majoritarian privilege because of his privileged position in Western power hierarchies. As we have seen, Deleuze and Guattari oppose this model with that of becoming. Becoming minor is

a step in the direction of becoming-woman, becoming-animal, becoming imperceptible. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari argue that the minor is specific and therefore applies ultimately to “everybody” while the majority is a nebulous vacuity that really applies to nobody.⁶²

Deleuze and Guattari express an enduring interest in bodies. As noted in the introduction, however, they do not limit their definition of a body to the human form. For example while discussing the term “erogenous body” in *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari cite sequences that appear in the works of Samuel Beckett, “stones, pockets, mouth; a shoe, a pipe bowl, a small limp bundle that is undefined, a cover for a bicycle bell, half a crutch.”⁶³ Deleuze and Guattari focus on what a body can do, whether it is capable of receiving and producing affects.⁶⁴ In *A Thousand Plateaus*, they consider as well what a body consists of at a given time and how it affects other bodies and is in turn affected by them.⁶⁵ With respect to the forming of rhizomes, we have seen that Deleuze and Guattari emphasize the open-ended relationality of components that evade categorization.

Chirbes depicts several characters that form rhizomatic assemblages with animals, machines or bodies of thought as a “way out.” There is a consistent insistence on the collective nature of desiring production throughout his fiction. In *La larga marcha*, for example, Carmelo Amado forms a machinic assemblage with the movie screen while still

⁶¹ Chirbes, in an interview with Javier Rodríguez Marcos, *Memoria y revolución: el desengaño de una quimera*, in Ibáñez Ehrlich, (ed.), *Ensayos sobre Rafael Chirbes*, pp. 60-61.

⁶² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 105.

⁶³ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 324.

⁶⁴ For example in *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, Deleuze approvingly notes Spinoza’s inquiry “[...]but we do not even know what a body can do.” pp. 17-18.

⁶⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 260.

a child in Galicia. He strengthens this assemblage later in Madrid, reveling in the “collective hypnosis created by the watching of a film.”⁶⁶ At university Carmelo incorporates his membership in the Cine-Club as part of an overall militancy against the Franco regime.⁶⁷ This rhizomatic movement leads him as an adult to become a respected film critic. Also in *La larga marcha* the illiterate worker Gregorio borrows a bicycle without permission from the rich woman who employs him (and who unsuccessfully attempts to use him sexually and otherwise), and pedals it each night several kilometers to a bar on the outskirts of town where an open-ended sexuality is at play. On the road he joyously rings the bicycle’s bell in response to the greetings of other cyclists riding in the other direction. Within the bar he discovers a solidarity waiting for him that he has never experienced. It is outside the bar, this “space of affect,”⁶⁸ that he hears for the first time in his life the words “I love you” addressed directly to him, words which send him reeling with affect.⁶⁹

In *La caída de Madrid*, the often maddeningly conventional Olga de Ricart causes a scandal within her bourgeois family by consultating with a psychiatrist, and then rejecting his advice because it amounts to little more than adopting an attitude of resignation in the face of patriarchal demands. Instead Olga sets up a studio in the Ricart household where she tries her hand at painting and sculpting. Soon realizing that she

⁶⁶ “[...] un hipnosis colectivo [...]” Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 211.

⁶⁷ For a discussion of the role that Spanish film directors as well as audiences played in tandem to subvert Franco’s censors see Rob Stone, *Spanish Cinema*, pp. 37-60.

⁶⁸ For an explanation of “Space of Affect,” see Charles J. Stivale’s *The Two-Fold Thought of Deleuze and Guattari*, pp. 164-166.

lacks sufficient artistic talent, Olga determines to use her influence and contacts to assist gifted artists without regard to their leftist political leanings. There are also numerous examples of “becoming-animal” in Chirbes’s work that we will discuss in greater detail in the next chapters. Chirbes’s molar characters without exception view becoming-animal with hostility. His rhizomatic characters, on the other hand, view contact with animals or machines or a “becoming imperceptible” as highly positive foldings of an actualized subjectivity within the forces of difference. Chirbes himself reveals openness to becoming-animal in the narration between the first and second parts of *La larga marcha* wherein a dog left behind in the village of Fiz after its condemnation takes up the narration.⁷⁰

The collective nature of Chirbes’s work is announced by the artwork appearing on the cover of his novels. These covers are war-like in their presentation, a fact that corresponds with Deleuze and Guattari’s insight regarding the nomad and his invention of war machines. *La larga marcha* features *Punto de Mira II*, a painting by Juan Genovés. This work features scores of persons running wildly on what appears to be a parched, desert-like surface. The pell-mell nature of their running appears, however, to contradict Deleuze and Guattari’s admonitions regarding lines of flight, although they caution that such fleeing must be undertaken with a measure of self-protection. In *Dialogues*, for example, he advises that it is fine “to flee, but in fleeing [...] seek a

⁶⁹ “Lloraba porque tenía frío, porque estaba solo y porque había tenido miedo de quemarse al calor de ciertas palabras escuchadas en la oscuridad de la noche a la puerta del bar,” Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 205.

⁷⁰ To be sure, several critics have pointed to a more conventional interpretation of the focus on the dog in *La larga marcha* as a metaphor for “the human condition.” See to that effect López Bernacocchi and López de Abiada, “Para una lectura de *La larga marcha*,” in Ibáñez Ehrlich, *Estudios sobre Rafael Chirbes*, pp. 105-134.

weapon.”⁷¹ Some critics, furthermore, have seen a link to Mao’s Great March in the mobile figures on the cover of *La larga marcha* as well as in the title of the work.⁷² The cover of *La caída de Madrid* includes a reproduction of *Riot*, a mural made up of scraps that the British artist Tony Cragg collected in the streets and alleys of London. *Riot* depicts mounted policemen savagely beating demonstrators. A more apt presaging of some of the events depicted in *La caída de Madrid* could scarcely be imagined, both in terms of authorities breaking up the demonstration at the end of the novel as well as the “scrap materials” that make up the denizens of Madrid depicted in the work. The novel includes a scene in which Maximino Arroyo inspects a work of art hanging on a wall in the Ricart household. The work depicts prisoners elaborated from what appears to be police records. The existence of this provocative piece and the fact that it is displayed in the home of a friend infuriate the commissar. Chirbes’s essay “Material de derribo” (Scrap Material) considers Juan Marsé’s essential novel *Si te dicen que caí*. He notes that Marsé, like Cragg, “worked with discarded materials.”⁷³ Chirbes notes that Marsé’s work considers those “beneath those at the bottom.”⁷⁴ Marsé demonstrates that “the generation that emanates from the ruins of a defeated and humiliated generation will itself be corrupt and sickly.”⁷⁵ It is this “corrupt and sickly” generation, Chirbes’s own, that he takes to task in *Los viejos amigos*. Chirbes’s comments about an infirm generation

⁷¹ Deleuze, *Dialogues*, p. 136.

⁷² Pedro Alonso “Contra el ruido y el silencio,” p. 12.

⁷³ “Marsé trabajaba con castigados materiales de derribo,” Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 98.

⁷⁴ “Si te dicen que caí mira además de lateralmente desde abajo de los de abajo,” Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 98.

⁷⁵ “[...] en este libro formativo que cuenta cómo de las ruinas de una generación derrotada surge otra corrompida y enferma,” Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 99.

correspond closely with Deleuze's insights about the novelist as a diagnostician of a society's ills that he discusses in *Essays Critical and Clinical* and elsewhere.

A reproduction of the painting by Equipo Crónico, *El acorazado Potemkin* appears on the cover of *Los viejos amigos*. The painting is a rendition of the famous Odessa staircase sequence in Sergei Eisenstein's film *Potemkin*. The inclusion of that particular painting attests to the importance of cinema in Chirbes's as well as Deleuze and Guattari's work. That the massacre on the Odessa steps is a fictional account parallels the half-hearted attempts at revolutionary activity on the part of many of Chirbes's characters, particularly those appearing in *Los viejos amigos*. Chirbes puts this bitter realization in the words of Rita, one of the characters who refuses the invitation to Pedro's low intensity dinner and who refers to herself and her former comrades as "sellers of air."⁷⁶

José Martín Martínez refers to both Equipo Crónico and Genovés as "luminaries" of the Spanish art of the 1960s. Martínez adds, "responding to a lack of political freedoms in their own country, artists frequently adopted a militant anti-Francoism that conceived of the work of art as an instrument of protest."⁷⁷ Equipo Crónico demonstrated a sensibility toward the collective in their very make-up because it was an artistic team that labored for several years in Madrid. Similar to the example of Deleuze and Guattari in the books that they co-authored, the members of Equipo Crónico refused individual

⁷⁶ "Éramos rebeldes, nos alimentábamos del aire, seguramente porque lo único que éramos era vendedores de aire," Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 58.

⁷⁷ Martínez, "Painting and sculpture in Modern Spain," in Gies (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Spanish Culture*, p. 245.

distinction for their efforts. By including this art on the cover of his novels, Chirbes, in a rhizomatic assemblage, links his prose to protest collective paintings and murals.

Deleuze and Guattari, as noted, focus more on what a work can do rather than ascertaining its correct interpretation.⁷⁸ Chirbes shows himself to be in accord with this concern. In *El novelista perplejo* he echoes Deleuze and Guattari's crucial concept of "creating a people to come." The latter express this concept again in *Kafka*, stating, "this situation allows the writer all the more the possibility to express another community and to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility."⁷⁹ In the opening essay of *El novelista perplejo*, Chirbes states that a novel has the capacity to "feed" the "sensibility" of a people. He mentions, in terms that are strikingly similar to concepts elaborated by Deleuze and Guattari, that an original novel has the capacity for "opening a continent," and above all his desire to "write something for another people, to give literature to another people."⁸⁰ Chirbes recalls the reception that the books of artists such as Zola and Flaubert first received – how their works provoked scandal among the guardians of public mores all the while influencing daily life in manners unforeseen by the particular artist. Chirbes displays little patience for those who pine for some lost sense of order. He mentions that the times in which we live, ravaged as they are by neo-liberal order, are not entirely dissimilar to other periods where a perceived absence of collective values threatened to upset perceived order. He mentions the ominous times in which Chateaubriand, Dante, Boccaccio and Fielding, among several other artists and writers,

⁷⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 45.

⁷⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 17.

⁸⁰ "Escribir otra cosa para otra gente, entregar la literatura a otro pueblo," Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 29.

lived and worked. Chirbes casts doubt on the notion that there has ever really been a time without a perceived crisis of values.⁸¹ He advises writers of narrative to proceed with confidence, citing examples such as Proust, Flaubert, and Cervantes, whose works in time proved capable of altering the manner of viewing a world by way of a power that hardly seemed likely when their works first entered circulation. Chirbes claims that the novel possesses a unique ability to change the perception of reality by mining what it is that we perceive because there is always *more* to any present moment than what can be taken in. Chirbes advocates for the novel's singular capacity to create a "new space" from which to view reality.

Digamos que la novela tiene sus propias formas de impregnación. Es un género que trabaja despacio y que mina la realidad – la percepción de la realidad – desde los ángulos y no desde el centro. [...] lo que importa es que alguna vez el mundo ha sido contemplado desde un nuevo lugar.⁸²

In his article, "Comment peut-on être deleuzian? Pursuing a Two-Fold Thought," Charles J. Stivale discusses the potentiality for becoming (*devenir*) as opposed to being (*être*) Deleuzian. A strategy that Stivale finds in Deleuze and Guattari's work is to operate from the middle (*dans le milieu*).⁸³ Deleuze and Guattari recommend working from within smooth and striated spaces in order to free up potentially liberating becomings. Chirbes makes a similar plea in *El novelista perplejo*. Referring again to the work of Juan Marsé, Chirbes stated that Marsé understood that he would not get anywhere by standing up for some truth. Marsé's strategy was to instead place himself

⁸¹ "Hubo algún tiempo en el que los valores no estuvieron en crisis?" Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 34.

⁸² Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 27.

⁸³ Charles J. Stivale, "Comment peut-on être deleuzian? Pursuing a Two-Fold Thought," in Ian Buchanan, (ed.), *A Deleuzian Century?*, pp. 137-138.

between official histories, to dislodge with the mere presence and power of his works the space occupied by an authoritarian recollection.⁸⁴ Stivale suggests that for Deleuze and Guattari “ongoing processes of smooth becomings, in diverse projects, however disparate [...] are nevertheless fertile possibilities for the production of becoming, circumstances permitting.”⁸⁵ Stivale encourages “continual experimentation-vie (life experimentations) that may somehow punctuate striated frameworks, even minimally [...]”⁸⁶

Stivale has also focused on what he calls “spaces of affect,” and how they foster connections between “collective assemblages” on global scales and how they are made manifest in a particular place, notably the Cajun dance floor.⁸⁷ When musicians go on the road outside of Louisiana, dancers, musicians and spectators respond to the music, as well as each other in various ways, depending on the specific locale and the mixture of people that come out to an event. At times there is confusion on the part of the majority of spectators who adopt a passive listening mode while those more familiar with the music and the traditional ways of dancing to it are in turn frustrated because of a lack of space in which to dance or by the expectations of the management of the venue concerning audience participation. At other times, and even within Louisiana, dancers with knowledge of the traditional ways to respond to Cajun music may disagree whether a waltz or a jitterbug should be danced when a certain song is played. Stivale describes,

⁸⁴ “Marsé sabe que no puede aspirar a ergirse con la verdad; que su destino es ocupar con su historia un espacio entre las historias; utiliza el principio de Arquímedes de la literatura, según el cual la presencia de un nuevo elemento en un espacio desaloja a otro,” cited in Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 103.

⁸⁵ Stivale, “Comment peut-on être deleuzian? Pursuing a Two-Fold Thought,” p. 138.

⁸⁶ Stivale, “Comment peut-on être deleuzian? Pursuing a Two-Fold Thought,” p. 142.

⁸⁷ Charles J. Stivale, “Spaces of Affect’: Versions and Visions of Cajin Cultural History,” in *South Central Review* 11.4, pp. 15-25. See also the fourth chapter of his *Disenchanting Les Bons Temps: Identity and Authenticity in Cajun Music and Dance*, pp. 110-131.

however, other evenings in which spectators, dancers and musicians succeed in establishing spaces “in the middle” wherein traditional approaches to the music are relaxed so that people who turned up at an event, even those new to Cajun music, are able to participate. Stivale notes the opportunities for becoming-other that this type of moment facilitates.

[...]this interchange consists of a complex polyogue that moves beyond subjects into the thisness of the event, into the creation of affective becomings in the dance and music interchange. The reflection [...] about spaces of affect provides the basis for examining other sorts of in-betweenness, which the instantaneous scenes help to animate.⁸⁸

Chirbes makes similar entreaties throughout the essays of *El novelista perplejo* that correspond with his desire to wrest through connectivity and other tools a measure of freedom from what he considers to be the terrifying grip of global capital. Indeed, Chirbes argues that today’s Spain is marked more by similarity than difference with respect to the Spain of the Franco period.⁸⁹ Against what he perceives to be a state of stagnation, Chirbes states that the only option remaining to a novelist is to make a new attempt⁹⁰ with another creative work that will not simply repeat what society wants to hear, but that will offer an alternative vision of how things could be otherwise.⁹¹ Chirbes also shows himself to be in accord with Deleuze’s admonition that the writer should serve

⁸⁸ Charles J. Stivale, *Disenchanting Les Bons Temps: Identity and Authenticity in Cajun Music and Identity*, p. 120.

⁸⁹ “[...] también en la España que sucedió a Franco vemos hoy más rasgos de continuidad con respecto a la etapa anterior de los que veíamos durante la transición,” Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, pp. 30-31.

⁹⁰ Chirbes writes, “Ante la duda, lo único que le cabe hacer al novelista es arriesgarse en un nuevo intento,” Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 89.

⁹¹ Chirbes extols past and current writers who do not belong to the age in which they happen to live. He credits as well readers who seek out such writers. Chirbes states, “A las obras caducas se afilian los que pertenecen al mundo que agoniza, mientras que las que buscan mirar desde otro lado acaban encontrándose con quien se piensan en la posibilidad de mundos diferentes,” Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 86.

as the physician of a society's ills.⁹² The novelist quotes approvingly from Proust who compares an original artist's task to that of an occultist who after performing an arduous surgery, removes the bandages and instructs the patient, "Now look!"⁹³

Deleuze and Guattari utilize the terms "singularity" or "haecceity," the Latin word for "thisness" to denote moments of intensity in which as Gregory J. Seigworth explains, "a universe pours in, flows out – an unlimited One –All, universal-singular."⁹⁴ The haecceity evades precise categorization because it "has neither beginning nor end, origin or destination; it is always in the middle. It is not made of points, only of lines."⁹⁵ Deleuze and Guattari focus on what a haecceity can do or provoke, and this focus entails a rejection of both subjectivity and chronological clock-time through the tactical use of the, "Indefinite article + proper name = infinitive verb."⁹⁶ An example might be, "a river quickens," which highlights the force of a river instead of some rote classification of it as a body of water. Chirbes has shown sensitivity to this idea of haecceity in his essays as well as his novels. In his comments regarding Boris Pilniak, he enthusiastically cites Pilniak's narrator in *The Naked Year* who exclaims that a "purifying" revolution has passed through the land and that those who did not experience it for themselves simply could not understand the beauty or intensity of it all.⁹⁷ Chirbes's novels include numerous examples of characters that find themselves in moments of singular intensity. He

⁹² Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, p. 3.

⁹³ "Ahora - ¡mira!" Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 31.

⁹⁴ Gregory J. Seigworth, "From Affection to Soul," in Charles J. Stivale, (ed.), *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, p. 182.

⁹⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 263.

⁹⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 263.

⁹⁷ "Sobre la tierra ha pasado la purificación más grandiose: una revolución. Tú no sabes qué hermosura," cited in Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 40.

demonstrates an affiliation with Deleuze and Guattari's insight regarding the productivity of desiring machines. They state that "The productive synthesis [...] is inherently connective in nature: "and..." "and then . . ."⁹⁸ Chirbes, referring again to Pilniak, as he did with Marsé per our discussion above, praises the Russian writer's ability to fill his novel with seeds which are only in appearance incompatible, but which in their haecceities form a remarkably connective work⁹⁹

Chirbes's Style

Up to this point in this chapter we have discussed the themes that Chirbes includes in his fiction. The themes, inherently political and collective in nature, clearly mark Chirbes as a minor writer. He points out repressive or fascist elements in Spanish life that emanate from both the left and the right. He develops characters that demonstrate the difficulty of making one's way out of repressive snares through creative lines of flight. We would like, however, to discuss a bit further Chirbes's style of writing. Deleuze and Guattari did not mandate any specific model for producing minor literature, but as we have seen they do discuss the different approaches of several writers.

To begin with, Chirbes utilizes what the critic Pedro Alonso calls a magisterial use of the free indirect style in his novels.¹⁰⁰ Gerald Prince, in his *Dictionary of Narratology*, states that the free indirect style of narration usually operates simultaneously on two levels – that of the character and that of the narrator. Prince states that other commentators argue that it is "a speakerless (narratorless) representation of one

⁹⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 5.

⁹⁹ "Pilniak es una esponja que hincha su libro con estas simientes en apariencia dispersas [...], cited in Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 43.

¹⁰⁰ Pedro Alonso, "Contra el ruido y el silencio: los espacios narrativos de la memoria de la posguerra española," en María-Teresa Ibáñez (ed.), *Ensayos sobre Rafael Chirbes*, p. 19.

subjectivity or self.”¹⁰¹ The presence of the free indirect style manifests itself through the use of grammatical and contextual markers. The grammatical markers, according to Prince, include the “backshift of tenses . . . and . . . deictics referring to the character’s spatiotemporal frame . . .”¹⁰² Prince further argues that the contextual markers are more significant than the grammatical ones. Contextual markers are those words, “intonations,” attitudes, and judgments that verisimilarly correspond to a given character (rather than the narrator) and his or her social class.¹⁰³

Deleuze himself has a high regard for the creative potential of the free indirect style. In *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*, Deleuze cites approvingly the director Pier Paolo Pasolini’s finding that it allows the artist to render poetically the most brutal or low subject matter. As always in the work of Deleuze there is a focus on the assemblages that the use of the free indirect discourse makes possible. Deleuze writes, “It is this permutation of the trivial and the noble, this communication between the excremental and the beautiful, this projection into myth, which Pasolini had already diagnosed in free indirect discourse as the essential form of literature.”¹⁰⁴ The use of the free indirect style also connects with what Deleuze notes about the ability of Samuel Beckett to “drill holes” in language and see “what was lurking behind” a particular grouping of words.¹⁰⁵ This concern for what lurks behind words (or for what is knocking at the door) is part of an overall focus on rendering visible the invisible forces that act upon bodies. We take up this focus in considerable detail in the next chapter on sensation. We do note, however,

¹⁰¹ Gerald Prince, *Dictionary of Narratology*, p. 34.

¹⁰² Prince, *Dictionary of Narratology*, p. 35.

¹⁰³ Prince, *Dictionary of Narratology*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁴ Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, p. 74.

¹⁰⁵ Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, p. lv.

that Chirbes shares with Beckett and other realist writers such as T.H. Lawrence and Arthur Miller the concern with rendering invisible forces visible. He utilizes techniques that are similar to those used by Beckett for calling forth invisible forces. Luis Morales Olivas, in words strikingly similar to those used by Deleuze (Morales Olivas utilizes “chisel” instead of “drill”), spoke about Chirbes’s ability to “chisel the word until the ephemeral is transformed into art”.¹⁰⁶ This result is effectuated in Chirbes’s novels by a “smoothing” of unpleasant or difficult realities by way of rich metaphors.¹⁰⁷ A smoothing here, as Morales Olivas uses the term, by no means contradicts Chirbes’s artistic appeals for alternatives to molar structures, although the critic appears to limit his study to an appreciation of the beauty brought forth by Chirbes’s language. We contend, however, that Chirbes’s use of language is linked to the creative works of writers, artists, philosophers and other affirmative forces of change because it is used almost exclusively in his damning depictions of triangles of repression.

Let us consider examples of Chirbes’s use of the free indirect style. The character José Pulido is introduced in the seventh chapter of *La larga marcha*. Pulido is the father of the worker Gregorio Pulido who forms part of the Marxist cell broken up at the end of the novel. The elder Pulido is introduced in the work lying face down near the bank of a river in Extremadura. He is gauging the movement of Civil Guardsmen before attempting to cross the river with the booty of acorns and other crops that he pilfered from the landowners in the region where he lives. He routinely sells his hauls in the store operated by the black marketer Andrea. One morning he enters her store to collect money for the

¹⁰⁶ “[...] de cincelar la palabra hasta conseguir que lo efimero se transforme en arte,” Morales Olivas, “El elemento lírico en la narrativa de Rafael Chirbes,” in María-Teresa Ibáñez Ehrlich (ed.), *Ensayos sobre Rafael Chirbes*, p. 164.

¹⁰⁷ Morales Olivas, “El elemento lírico en la narrativa de Rafael Chirbes,” p. 164.

sack acorns that he had delivered the night before. Before receiving his pay, however, José was forced to flee from the back door because members of the civil guard suddenly arrived. Andrea, however, crosses herself and swears that the civil guardsmen had confiscated the sack of good. In the citation that follows José reveals his suspicion that Andrea sold the acorns and cut him out of the profits. He laments his inability to confront her due to the helplessness of his situation. The cupboards in his home are empty and the stolen foods that he pilfered from a wealthy neighbor are running out. The passage includes a reference to José's illiteracy (he is unable to read what for him are the esoteric scribbles in Andrea's notebook) as well as the circle of theft that comprised the black market in Spain during the 1950s. The narrator takes us on a visual tour of the overstuffed shelves of Andrea's store and compares them with the empty stores of José's home. In the citation that follows, Chirbes demonstrates a deterritorialization of language, by way of a "stammering." He juxtaposes words that denote desperation such as "necesita", "vacía," "robó," and "acabando," in depicting Pulido's helplessness with "lleno" and "están" in rendering Andrea's ample provisions as well as the notebook that annotates all that Pulido owes her.

José Pulido sospechaba que es ella la que ha escondido para sí el saco, pero no se atreve a decirle nada, porque la alacena de su casa está vacía y en cambio el cuaderno de Andrea está lleno de anotaciones debajo del nombre de él y en los estantes de la tienda están las garrafas de aceite que él necesita y los sacos con los garbanzos, que también necesita porque ya se le están acabando los que robó en la finca de los Beleta [...]¹⁰⁸

As we will see in more detail in the next chapter on sensation, one solution that Pulido arrives at is to exchange sexual access to his wife with the town baker for bread

¹⁰⁸ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 79.

and flour. In *La caída de Madrid* Chirbes inserts the character of Luis Coronado, who first appears in *La larga marcha*. Coronado is the son of a street vendor who fought on the “right” side during the war. The father comes to ruin anyway and his son becomes a torment to the rhizomatic Carmelo Amado. After a rupture in their friendship due to Coronado’s acute insensitivity, they eventually cross paths again as comrades in Alternativa Comunista, a clandestine Marxist organization. Coronado operates under the “war name” of Carlos (i.e. Karl Marx). Coronado is Carmelo’s superior and is an especially doctrinaire member of the group. In *La caída de Madrid* he resurfaces at the anti-Franco protest disguised as a “literary marathon.” Coronado enters with an authoritative air the rooms where the protest is taking place and exhorts the bemused participants to drop what they are doing and to immediately set out on a “march on Madrid.” The protesters assure him that they will do just that and hustle him out the door, after which they take to ridiculing his bombast. In the meantime the protesters, whose group consists of students from every economic strata, go back to the more prudent activity of fashioning a creative response to the authoritarian regime under which they live. This use of free indirect style is employed to depict the molar attempt of a rigidly doctrinaire Marxist to reterritorialize a spontaneous event.

Los reunidos le habían asegurado a Coronado que, en pocos minutos, se dirigían al lugar marcado, pero en el momento en que desapareció nuevamente tras la puerta, se había burlado de su fervor revolucionario.¹⁰⁹

In *Los viejos amigos* the narrator or Carlos or both through free indirect style consider the black hole into which Pedrito has fallen. Like the Coronado of *La larga marcha* and *La caída de Madrid*, Pedrito was on the surface especially doctrinaire in his

¹⁰⁹ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 98.

Marxism. Again, as in the case of Coronado, he used his political activity to impress girls, and eventually fell for the upper class Elisa. Years after Elisa's early death, however, and after having amassed a fortune in the construction industry, Pedrito remains mired in unproductive memory, a failing for which Deleuze and Guattari hold little regard.¹¹⁰ The reason behind the reunion dinner, as we have seen, is a vain attempt on Pedrito's part to connect with the long deceased Elisa. As Carlos ponders Pedrito's catatonic state he notes that there is an inequality amongst the economic classes that persists even after death. To buttress his point he uses the example of Tutankhamen and the lowest of his slaves that were killed in order to "accompany" the young king to the next world. Like the pharaoh, Elisa continues in death to "turn her whip" on Pedrito, in Carlos' estimation, because the former refuses to turn away from sad memories. The citation is also a strong example of Chirbes's awareness of the difficulties of breaking away from the rigidity of societal norms because, according to his narrator, the strong resistance of class privilege to change persists even after death.

Hay una resistencia de la clase aún más allá de la muerte. No me digas que la muerte ha igualado a Tutancamón y al último de sus esclavos, porque no es verdad. Elisa ha muerto y, en el recuerdo, aún le impone su clase a Pedrito y lo fustiga con ese látigo, y no importa que él siga vivo y haya ganado mucho dinero [...] La correosa resistencia de la clase a borrear sus fronteras.¹¹¹

Luis Morales Olivas has pointed out that reality is "recreated" by Chirbes through the gaze of the various characters upon innumerable simple objects that convert those objects into "something more permanent and timeless."¹¹² Morales Olivas's insight into Chirbes's work corresponds with Deleuze and Guattari belief that an artist's greatest

¹¹⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 167.

¹¹¹ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 130.

challenge is in getting a work to stand on its own in the production of percepts and affects.¹¹³ Morales Olivas states that each view in Chirbes's work is linked to forces beyond it, a theme again resonant with the concerns of Deleuze and Guattari. This series of views repeats throughout Chirbes's narrative. We will present an example from *La caída de Madrid* that offers an example of the sort of "recreation of reality" that Morales Olivas discerns in Chirbes's work by way of a character's gaze. In this case it is the pristine view of an elegant dinner table, as it briefly exists before guests arrive to corrupt it. Olga de Ricart confesses "in the depths of her being" that she is happy that her friend Sole Beleta arrived early for the birthday party that Olga is preparing for her father-in-law José Ricart. She is content because Sole will be able to provide her with a witness of the "perfection" that she was able to reach in the setting of the table. The momentary measure of control that Olga takes delight in with her friend is undermined throughout *La caída de Madrid* as the narration focuses on the reduced spaces in which Spanish women of all economic classes moved during the late Franco period. This arresting contradiction between Olga's thoughts and the repressive state in which she operates may be considered an example as well of boring holes in language. In any event, in the following citation Olga extols that fleeting moment in which she is able to achieve "perfection" of a well-set table.

[...] Olga . . .había tenido que reconocer finalmente que la presencia de su amiga . . .serviría como testigo ante la que exhibir la perfección original de su trabajo: ese instante tan frágil en el que el salón brillaría plenamente antes de que nada se moviera de su lugar, el destello de una perfección antes de que nada se moviera de su lugar [. . .]¹¹⁴

¹¹² Morales Olivas, "El elemento lírico en la narrativa de Rafael Chirbes," p. 163.

¹¹³ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 164.

¹¹⁴ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 35.

As we have noted Chirbes interrupts any prolonged focus on a human subjectivity by inserting a chapter in *La larga marcha* that focuses on a dog left behind in the village of Fiz after its condemnation. The animal interacts with human characters and other animals, exchanging prolonged gazes with them and reports its reaction to what it sees and experiences. In *Los viejos amigos* there is an entire chapter in cursive script that focuses on the continuing influence of the deceased Elisa upon the rest of the diners at the zero-sum dinner. Finally, Chirbes inserts the menu for the reunion dinner for the “old friends” into the novel itself in an off-putting way. The rich viands and choice wines could not contrast more with a meal destined for a group of people who once fancied themselves to be the protectors of Spain’s proletariat.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have outlined the characteristics of a minor language as Deleuze and Guattari have elaborated the concept in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. The three characteristics of a minor language are “the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation.”¹¹⁵ Chirbes demonstrates sensitivity to the deterritorialization of language by including numerous scenes in which characters deterritorialize the Spanish language or manifest an awareness of how this majoritarian language is intertwined with power. Chirbes uses Spanish in a minor fashion by making it stammer in his own unique style. He accomplishes this in part through the use of the free, indirect style of narration. In like fashion, he manifests the connection of the individual to a political immediacy. Characters are intertwined with one another because of the more nefarious aspects of Franco’s authoritarian rule and, years after the general’s death, the even more oppressive

environment in Spain that global capitalism has engendered. Most of Chirbes's characters succumb to the onerous demands made of them while a limited few courageously embark on lines of flight. Chirbes also focuses on the collective assemblage of enunciation. This collectivity is in a sense built into his novels. Each of his major characters takes up the narration, providing a particular vision of events as well as an additional view of the other characters. In this regard Chirbes works in the vein that Deleuze teased out of the philosophy of Leibniz in which monads have a specific view of a best possible world, but these views do not necessarily overlap. On Deleuze and Guattari's account these views do overlap and there is no transcendent "best possible world." In *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, Deleuze writes, "Thus God does not merely choose the best of all worlds – that is, the richest compossible totality in possible reality – but he also chooses the best allotment of singularities in possible individuals (other allotments of singularities and other demarcations of individuals could be conceived for the same world)."¹¹⁶ Events and the resulting subjectivities continue in a continuous folding and unfolding of the universe's endlessly creative production without regard to any ideals of perfection.

Chirbes's narrative work is marked as well by the awareness that his contributions as an artist are literally a matter of life and death. This is particularly true in the case of *Los viejos amigos* in which Chirbes portrays today's Spain as a "death-state"¹¹⁷ populated by zombies wholly given over to advanced capitalism. One effect of Chirbes's writing is indicating a possible way of sidestepping some of the trepidations of advanced global capitalism instead of just surrendering to what Kenneth Surin describes as "the current

¹¹⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, p. 18.

¹¹⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, p. 66.

¹¹⁷ See Eugene W. Holland's article "Death-State Citizenship" in his *Nomad Citizenship: Free Market Communism and the Slow-Motion General Strike*, pp. 31-63.

finance-led, equity-based growth regime with its concomitant American hegemony and continuing worldwide economic polarisation.”¹¹⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, in their individual and co-authored works have, as Ronald Bogue indicates, engaged in “thinking alongside literary writers, an engagement of philosophical issues generated from and developed through encounters with literary texts.”¹¹⁹ In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari argue that there are at least three fields that facilitate thinking: philosophy, science and art, and that none of these three fields is superior to the others.¹²⁰ Literature, according to Deleuze and Guattari, works alongside philosophy to draw readers “into the compound” of calling forth a new people.¹²¹ Chirbes has accomplished these goals by employing in his fiction the techniques of a minor literature as elaborated by Deleuze and Guattari.

¹¹⁸ Kenneth Surin, “1,000 Political Subjects” in Ian Buchanan and Adrian Parr, (eds.), *Deleuze and the Contemporary World*, p. 74.

¹¹⁹ Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Literature*, p. 2.

¹²⁰ “In fact, sciences, arts, and philosophies are all equally creative,” Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, p. 5.

¹²¹ *What Is Philosophy?*, p. 177.

Chapter Three: A Two-Fold Approach to Francis Bacon

The title of this chapter finds its inspiration in one of Charles J. Stivale's books on the works of Deleuze and Guattari.¹ The title appears especially appropriate because Deleuze wrote *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* (hereafter referred to as *The Logic of Sensation*) and Chirbes includes a lengthy essay about the painter in his collection *El novelista perplejo*. The cover of this work features a reproduction of Bacon's 1967 painting *Portrait of George Dyer Staring Into a Mirror*, a detail that provides further evidence of Chirbes's affinity for Bacon. The painter's influence upon the novelist is important because it speaks to the latter's attitude toward the much vaunted characteristics of logic and order upon which capitalism rests. For their part Deleuze and Guattari credited capitalism for its ability to promote deterritorialization. They wanted to maintain this positive aspect of capitalism while denying it the ability to organize all facets of desire through a single axiomatic.² Chirbes also expresses hostility toward an unrestrained enthusiasm toward capitalism, as we have seen, because it serves as a vehicle for appropriating Spain's past as well as corralling all expressions solely through its auspices. The first two sections of this chapter will focus therefore on the reactions that Deleuze and Chirbes have had in their respective encounters with Bacon's paintings as these reactions are expressed in *The Logic of Sensation* and in Chirbes's essay "La resurrección de la carne." In the third section we examine several episodes in Chirbes's trilogy that are remarkably similar to Bacon's work – scenes that include characters screaming or convulsively crying, deformed and mangled bodies and hanging slices of

¹ Stivale, *The Two-Fold Thought of Deleuze and Guattari: Intersections and Animations*.

² Eugene W. Holland, *Nomad Citizenship: Free-Market Communism and the Slow-Motion General Strike*, pp. 96-97.

meat or exposed flesh. Chirbes also includes in each of his novels an indomitable character that uses the sensation inherent to a fall as a rhizomatic springboard for demolishing individual subjectivity and fostering a becoming-imperceptible. This speaks to the importance of the connections between the novelist, the painter and Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical production.

Deleuze and Bacon

The Logic of Sensation is written in what Jennifer Daryl Slack describes as a "serpentine fashion,"³ and is comprised of seventeen "rubrics" that culminate in Deleuze's expositions on color and the relationship between the eye and the hand. Daryl Slack explains that Deleuze utilizes "rubric" instead of, "chapter" or "element" because *rubric*, associated as it is with the Latin word for "red chalk," already produces a sensation. Other alternatives present a danger of allowing a narration to re-enter Deleuze's account of the logic of sensation.⁴ For Deleuze, Bacon rejects the traditional subordination of the hand to the eye. Instead he contends that the eye should develop a tactile function that is uniquely its own. The hand should, conversely, develop its own visual powers. Deleuze writes "there is indeed a creative taste in color, in the different regimes of color, which constitute a properly visual sense of touch, or a haptic sense of color."⁵

³ Jennifer Daryl Slack, "Logic of Sensation" in Charles J. Stivale, (ed.), *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, p. 133.

⁴ Jennifer Daryl Slack, "Logic of Sensation" in Charles J. Stivale, (ed.), *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, pp. 133-134.

⁵ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 123.

With respect to the importance of color, Deleuze states that all the elements in Bacon's work "converge on color, in color."⁶ He refers to Bacon as "one of the greatest colorists since Van Gogh and Gauguin."⁷ Deleuze explains that colors are like "shores" and "flows" in Bacon. The flows refer to the figures themselves, figures often engaged in violent or spasmodic movement. The shore refers to the surrounding materials and contours in Bacon's paintings. Color also works in his oeuvre as a modulator and a distributor of the various elements, as the following citation reveals.

And it is modulation, that is, the relations between colors, which at the same time explains the unity of the whole, the distribution of each element, and the way each of them acts upon the others.⁸

Deleuze focuses on Bacon's use of reds and blues to render the color of meat, an abiding theme in his paintings. The theme of meat extends to the many portraits that Bacon produced, "In each case, it is the affinity of the body or the flesh with meat that explains the treatment of the Figure through broken tones."⁹ A consideration of the reproductions of Bacon's works on the covers of *El novelista perplejo* and *The Logic of Sensation* reveals examples of the broken tones referred to above. In *Portrait of George Dyer Staring Into a Mirror* the Figure is shown twisted violently toward the rear and is staring into a mirror or some sort of screen. A large gap divides his reflected face and sections of Dyer's distorted visage are rendered in meaty pinks and reds. Flecks of blue appear in the Figure's head, which again recall the various colors of butchered meat. The

⁶ Deleuze, Francis Bacon: *The Logic of Sensation*, p. 116.

⁷ Deleuze, Francis Bacon: *The Logic of Sensation*, p. 114.

⁸ Deleuze, Francis Bacon: *The Logic of Sensation*, p. 116.

⁹ Deleuze, Francis Bacon: *The Logic of Sensation*, p. 120.

face of the Figure appearing on the cover of *The Logic of Sensation* has been completely effaced. The pinks, reds and white are surrounded by tones of gray. The mouth appears lost in an indecipherable expanse.

Much of Deleuze's discussion of meat in *The Logic of Sensation* appears in the rubric "Body, Meat and Spirit: Becoming-Animal." He holds that Bacon succeeds at creating a zone of indiscernibility between humans and animals.¹⁰ In his work, the actualized body is usually concentrated in the Figure. This figure, and thus the body, is not to be confused with "the spatializing material," i.e. the structure composed of bone and surrounding fill-in. Bacon, on Deleuze's account, separates the body, which is meat, from the bone which is an *organizing structure*, the type of structure against which Deleuze and Guattari ceaselessly militate. Bacon also rejects an insistence on formal organization, thus his privileging of the head and the distortion of faces in his portraits. Traditionally, the face remains mired in organization. Bacon, on the other hand, finds "an animal spirit" or "animal traits" in heads that attempt to break free of organizational schemes.

Bacon's paintings of faces include wiped off or smeared areas. The mouth ceases to be an organ with a specific function, but becomes instead a "hole through which the entire body escapes, and from which the flesh descends [...]"¹¹ Again, hanging meat is a constant in Bacon's work. Deleuze states "the body is revealed only when it ceases to be supported by the bones."¹² Bone and flesh reach their full potential only when they "exist

¹⁰ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 19.

¹¹ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 24.

¹² Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 20.

on their own terms” vis-à-vis one another.¹³ Deleuze cites Bacon’s affective feelings that he felt upon entering a butcher shop, referring to its church-like atmosphere. He marveled at the fact that it was the carcasses of animals, and not his own, that were offered for sale. The hanging meat in the butcher shop resulted in Bacon’s pondering that human beings and animals share a zone of indiscernibility. On Deleuze’s account we are all, potentially, just so many cattle. The products in the butcher shop bring to mind the reality of “suffering man.” Bacon’s affective feelings regarding meat are closely connected with Deleuze’s key concepts of becoming.¹⁴

[...] the man who suffers is a beast, the beast who suffers is a man. This is the reality of becoming. What revolutionary person in art, politics, religion, or elsewhere, has not felt that extreme moment when he or she was nothing but a beast [...]¹⁵

Deleuze moves from Bacon to the late eighteenth century novelist K.P. Moritz who described similar affective feelings after witnessing the execution of four men. Moritz felt a certainty that “in some strange way this event concerns all of us, that this discarded meat is we ourselves.”¹⁶ The discussion regarding meat and executed men is germane to a discussion of Chirbes’s novels because two of the works in his trilogy contain graphic depictions of slaughtered animals. Each novel also includes riveting passages that illustrate the arbitrary actions of Franco’s security forces meting out punishment, including physical liquidation, to suffering bodies. The implementation of

¹³ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 20.

¹⁴ It will be recalled that “becoming” along with “difference” are two of Deleuze’s most essential concepts. See Cliff Stagoll in Adrian Parr (ed.), *The Deleuze Dictionary*, p. 21.

¹⁵ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 22.

¹⁶ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 22.

capital punishment continued in Spain until the end of Franco's rule, despite protests from throughout world, and especially from Western Europe. Each novel in Chirbes's trilogy puts several broken bodies on display, bodies beaten down by the demands of an overabiding adherence to molar structures. We will provide specific examples later in this chapter.

A related theme in *The Logic of Sensation* is the scream. Deleuze postulates that for Bacon the scream or cry is "one of the highest objects of painting."¹⁷ Bacon states that cries or screams are a visible representation of the "invisible and insensible" forces that pervade us. Deleuze notes that in Bacon's series of the screaming Pope Innocent X, he paints the scream, but deliberately leaves out what provokes it. Dana Polan states that "when Bacon distinguishes two violences, that of spectacle and that of sensation, and says that one has to renounce the former to attain the latter, this is a sort of declaration of faith in life."¹⁸ This faith in life calls for a struggle with invisible forces. Deleuze suggests that defeating or perhaps befriending these forces is not an insurmountable challenge. Such a struggle, however, requires rendering the affect of forces upon the

Figure.

It is within this visibility that the body actively struggles, affirming the possibility of triumphing, which was beyond its reach as long as these powers remained invisible, hidden in a spectacle that sapped our strength and diverted us. It is as if combat had now become possible. The struggle with the shadow is the only real struggle.¹⁹

¹⁷ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 51.

¹⁸ Polan, "Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation" in Boundas and Olkowski, (eds.), *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy*, p. 242.

¹⁹ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 52.

As we will detail below there are connections between the screams that appear in Bacon's portraits and Chirbes's narrative production; in *La larga marcha* and in *La caída de Madrid* Chirbes includes scenes of screaming or wailing figures whose anguish is most certainly linked to invisible forces working upon a body. Chirbes thus hazards an answer to the question that Deleuze states has been important throughout the history of painting - "How can one make invisible forces visible?"²⁰ That these screams are mostly absent in *Los viejos amigos* attests to Chirbes's attempt to render the consequences of the anti-production of global capital in which Spain is now enfolded - death has fallen silent.

Deleuze answers the above question by stating that Bacon has shown that the primary way of rendering visible invisible forces is through the Figure. Bacon's works are characterized by relations moving in both directions, between the material sources of the painting and the contour (the ring or parrellelepiped structure that surrounds most of Bacon's works) on one hand, and the Figure on the other. The Figure (the word is continuously capitalized in *Logic of Sensation*) is the person that "is seated, lying down, doubled over, or in some other position."²¹ Deleuze states that the contour serves to isolate the Figure.²² This isolation serves an important function for Deleuze because it helps to "break with representation, to disrupt narration, to escape illustration, to liberate the Figure."²³

This isolation of the ring, which Deleuze refers to as an "operative field," is often heightened by the Figure's being placed "within a ring, upon a chair, bed or sofa, inside a

²⁰ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 49.

²¹ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 5.

²² Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 5.

²³ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 6.

circle or parrallelipiped.”²⁴ Deleuze emphasizes that this isolating is not meant to lock the Figure in immobility. To the contrary, Bacon’s aim is to, “render sensible a kind of progression, an exploration of the Figure within the place, or upon itself.”²⁵ The swirling and interlocking relations between the material sources, the contour and the figure are developed further in the third rubric, entitled *Athleticism*. The contour and the material sources limit the Figure to a degree, but the Figure escapes from itself into its surroundings through violent spasms or movements. These movements in turn influence the Figure’s enclosure. Deleuze cites as a literary example the imprisoned mariner in Joseph Conrad’s *The Nigger of the Narcicuss*, who while locked in a small compartment appears to be attempting to force his entire body through a small peephole. Deleuze explains that similar scenes are common in Bacon’s paintings. Figures that are attempting to slide down a drain or whose features are splayed upon a shiny surface abound as the examples we considered earlier attests. Deleuze relates the scream to this function of escaping the body through one of its organs, “And the scream, Bacon’s scream, is the operation through which the entire body escapes through the mouth. All the pressures of the body.”²⁶ In the fifth rubric Deleuze comments on the continuous interactions between the Figure and its surroundings, and concludes that “this most closed of worlds was also

²⁴ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 7.

²⁵ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, pp. 5-6.

²⁶ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 21.

the most unlimited”²⁷ because the Figure, material structure and contour open to an infinite outside.²⁸

A certain irony exists in the athleticism of the Figure. The Figures by and large are endowed with absurdly large feet, even clubfeet. At times limbs appear to be missing altogether. Deleuze records the reality behind any mobility, stating that “According to Beckett or Kafka’s law, there is immobility beyond movement: beyond standing up, there is sitting down, and beyond sitting down, lying down, beyond which one finally dissipates.”²⁹ Deleuze plays with this irony further, stating that the “true acrobat is one who is consigned to immobility within the circle.”³⁰ The violent movements of the seated or prone figures, however, reveal, as we have seen, a recurring concern for Bacon – “the action of invisible forces on the body.”

Many of the figures in Bacon’s paintings, Deleuze notes, are depicted while engaged in bizarre strolls. In the citation that follows Deleuze notes the mobility of both the contour as well as the figure:

More generally, Bacon’s Figures are often frozen in the middle of a strange stroll [...]. The round area or the parallelepiped that isolates the Figure itself becomes a motor, and Bacon has not abandoned the project that a mobile sculpture could achieve more easily: in this case, the contour or pedestal would slide along the length of the

²⁷ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 29.

²⁸ For a further discussion of Deleuze’s concept of the outside, see D.N. Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze’s Time Machine*, pp. 148-151; Rodowick, “Memory of Resistance” in Ian Buchanan, *A Deleuzian Century?* p. 38; and Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze and Literature*, pp. 190-191.

²⁹ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 36.

³⁰ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 36.

Deleuze connects Bacon's figures with the literary characters of Beckett. Both the painter and the writer include series of "spastics and paralytics inside the round area."³¹ Deleuze's explanation of Bacon's use of the contour and the spasmodic movement of the figure in his work is important for our purposes because Chirbes's novels include numerous enclosed characters, some imprisoned in Franco's jails, others in the rooms of boarding houses or attics. Several characters, particularly the female characters, are locked in the reduced spaces reserved for them. Deformed, diseased or mutilated bodies appear in all of the works that we consider.

An essential component of Bacon's painting is the use of the diagram. The diagram is a smearing or brushing of the paint so that narration is disrupted. This strategy is key to Bacon's project of avoiding the reintroduction of a story on the canvas.³² The scrambling of the facial features in the reproduction of Bacon's work that appears on the cover of *The Logic of Sensation* and the splaying of George Dyer's features in the work reproduced for the cover of Chirbes's *El novelista perplejo* are prime examples of the use of the diagram. The diagram, Bacon warns, must avoid the temptation to take over the entire painting as occurs in abstract or expressionist painting. It must limit itself to being "suggestive" or to "introduce possibilities of fact."³³ In the last rubric Deleuze drives home the importance of the a-signifying diagram's provocation of unplanned consequences:

The essential point about the diagram is that it is made in order for something to *emerge* from it, and if nothing

³¹ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 43.

³² Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 34.

³³ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 83.

emerges from it, it fails. And what emerges from the diagram, the Figure, emerges both gradually and all at once [...]³⁴

The use of the diagram to upset any pretensions of a story creeping back into Bacon's works is related to Deleuze's important concept of the Body Without Organs. This concept is considered in several of Deleuze and Guattari's books and in others that Deleuze authored without Guattari. In *The Logic of Sensation*, for example, Deleuze refers to the Body Without Organs as an entity that has thresholds or levels instead of specific organs. Deleuze reiterates the vibratory nature of sensation. In the seventh rubric he illustrates his concept with the idea of the egg that is crisscrossed by "axes and vectors, gradients, zones, kinematic movements, and dynamic tendencies, in relation to which forms are contingent or accessory."³⁵ This open and changeable system is upset by the imposition of "organic representation."

It is in this seventh rubric that Deleuze again turns to his radical take on bodies. As we discussed in the introduction, on Deleuze's account bodies are "defined only by a longitude and a latitude."³⁶ Bodies are perceived as changeable entities that are capable of being affected by other bodies and in turn causing affects on other bodies. He again voices his opposition to the organism because of its mania for control and organization. Additionally, Deleuze focuses on the role of sensation when it takes on bodily form because sensation exposes the limits of the organism's operations.

It is a whole nonorganic life, for the organism is not life, it is what imprisons life. The body is completely living, and yet nonorganic. Likewise sensation, when it acquires a body through

³⁴ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 128.

³⁵ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 39.

³⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 260.

the organism, takes on an excessive and spasmodic appearance, exceeding the bounds of organic activity. It is immediately conveyed in the flesh through the nervous wave or vital emotion.³⁷

Deleuze finds the same ambition toward organization and control in the photograph. He states that much as the organism attempts to manage organs, the photograph attempts to reign supreme over vision.³⁸ This surrender to figuration tends to blind us to the singular forces that we might otherwise sense at work upon bodies. The photograph's penchant for telling a story robs us of the potential for discovering new possibilities and new lines of escape. Deleuze notes Bacon's disparaging of the artistic pretensions of photography as early as the second rubric and discusses how Bacon confronted these pretensions. Philosopher and artist both held that in some quarters it is believed that photography has completely taken over the documentary role that the plastic arts previously fulfilled. Bacon argued that serious photographers would not be content to simply pursue a creative vocation, in this case the documentary function, abandoned by the supposedly superior art of painting. In the eleventh rubric Deleuze returns to the theme of photography. He discusses Bacon's mixed reaction to this technology. The painter personally enjoyed photographs. He used them while painting subjects that he knew. Bacon referred as well to photographs of Velázquez's works when completing his renditions of the screaming Pope Innocent X. He dismissed, however, the artistic pretensions of photography because "the photograph tends to reduce sensation to a single

³⁷ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 40.

³⁸ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 12.

level, and is unable to include within the sensation the difference between constitutive levels.”³⁹

In the eleventh rubric “The Painting before Painting” Deleuze directly confronts the clichés that are already present upon the canvas before any painter begins to work. Bacon is especially concerned with the ubiquitous clichés that come to us through photography and the mass media. “We are besieged by photographs that are illustrations, by newspapers that are narrations, by cinema images, by television images. There are psychic clichés just as there are physical clichés – ready-made perceptions, memories, phantasms.”⁴⁰ Deleuze stresses that artists must continuously fight against the cliché with “much ruse, perseverance, and prudence [...]”⁴¹ He holds that Bacon’s hostility toward the cliché and photography results from his belief that they eliminate *chance*. They remain in the service of *probability*, which stifles creativity. Deleuze states that a technique that Bacon employs in his attempt to reintroduce chance on the canvas is the use of free, a-signifying marks. He argues that although these marks are a-signifying, they are not unplanned. This emphasis on the painting before the painting underscores the workmanship of Bacon’s approach to rendering visible the invisible:

It is in the manipulation, in the reaction of the manual marks on the visual whole, that chance becomes pictorial or is integrated into the act of painting. Hence Bacon’s insistence [...] that there is no chance except “manipulated” chance, no accident except a “utilized” accident.⁴²

³⁹ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 75.

⁴⁰ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 71.

⁴¹ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 79.

⁴² Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 78.

In the critical sixth rubric Deleuze expounds on Bacon's strategies for going beyond figuration, which is to say beyond representation and identity. The painter stated that the only available paths are through abstract art or through the Figure, which is sensation. Bacon eschews the first option because he deems it too close to the bone, too close to the head, too dependent on organization. Avoiding figuration through figuration (i.e. through the use of the Figure) goes directly to the nervous system, a perennial concern of both Deleuze and Bacon, not to mention Chirbes. The former cautions that sensation is not to be confused with the "sensational," the "ready-made" or the "spontaneous."

Deleuze credits Cézanne for giving sensation "an unprecedented status."⁴³ He focuses on Cézanne's rendering of an apple, positing that Cézanne succeeded in rendering the sensation of "being apple." Cézanne's work allows for a zone of indiscernibility to open between the subject and object because the sensation is physically contained in the paint, "it is the same body that being both subject and object, gives and receives the sensation."⁴⁴ Cézanne referred to this process as "painting the sensation" while Bacon referred to it as "recording the fact." Deleuze notes the similarities between the two painters despite "the obvious differences," most notably Cézanne's focus on nature and Bacon's use of "the world as artifact."

Sensation in art, according to Deleuze is "transmitted directly, and avoids the detours and boredom of conveying a story."⁴⁵ Sensation, Deleuze notes, is a singular

⁴³ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 31.

⁴⁴ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 31.

⁴⁵ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 32.

force, but it is “embodied” in various orders, levels or forms. This point is important because in this sixth rubric Deleuze appears to suggest that other art forms can participate with painting in capturing those invisible forces that act upon a body.⁴⁶ He makes a point that he will subsequently reinforce in his volume on Leibniz. Deleuze states that, “Every sensation, and every Figure, is already an ‘accumulated’ or ‘coagulated’ sensation, as in a limestone figure.”⁴⁷ Since these folds necessarily occur differently and at different durations, there will necessarily be different orders and levels of sensations. With respect to how sensation unfolds in the work of Cézanne, Deleuze quotes approvingly from D.H. Lawrence who noted that after forty years of effort Cézanne succeeded in capturing an apple on a canvas, and to a lesser extent a jug. Deleuze focuses on what Lawrence called Cézanne’s “first step.” Lawrence wrote, “That was all he achieved. It seems little, and he died embittered. But it is the first step that counts, and Cézanne’s apple is a great deal more than Plato’s Idea. . . .”⁴⁸ This “first step” that Lawrence senses in Cézanne is significant when one considers Chirbes’s novels because each work includes examples of rhizomatic characters attempting uneasy first steps against arborescent power arrangements as we explore in more detail later in this study.

Deleuze also credits Cézanne for using an “analogical” as opposed to a “digital” approach to painting. The latter corresponds to a code that implies organization and the organism. The analogical approach on the other hand belongs to the nervous system,

⁴⁶ Throughout *The Logic of Sensation* Deleuze suggests that other arts can participate in rendering “invisible forces visible.” For example in the seventh rubric Deleuze writes that “Sensation is not qualitative and qualified, but has only an intensive reality [...]” In the eighth rubric he states that “there is a community of arts, a common problem [...]” See also Dana Polan, “Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation,” p. 241.

⁴⁷ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 33.

⁴⁸ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 72.

which is “a language of relations, breaths and screams, and so on.”⁴⁹ The analogical also liberates bodies, planes and colors leading to continuous zones of indiscernability.⁵⁰ Indeed, Deleuze’s Bacon, as Dana Polan reminds us, “defigures representation and breaks the figure from representation in hopes of rendering sensation in and of itself.”⁵¹

In this section we have analyzed Deleuze’s approach to Bacon’s paintings and the artist’s ability to avoid clichés, bypass cognition or narration and apply sensation directly to the viewer’s nervous system through the use of blurred faces, the force of a Figure imperfectly enclosed, as well as several other rubrics. Jennifer Daryl Stack writes that Deleuze’s approach to Bacon assists us because “we can take up the challenge to vanquish life-deadening clichés, befriend life-enhancing colours and rhythms that already pulse with unacknowledged intensity, and embrace the accidents, encounters and chaos that unleash creative possibility.”⁵²

Chirbes and Bacon

Bacon’s influence on Chirbes is evidenced by the fact that the painter is mentioned in two of Chirbes’s early novels, *Los disparos del cazador* and *En la lucha final*. In “La resurrección de la Carne,” an essay in his collection, *El novelista perplejo*, Chirbes notes that the creation of the character Maximino Arroyo, the sadistic head of Franco’s Political Social Brigade, was influenced by Bacon’s work as were particular

⁴⁹ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 93.

⁵⁰ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 96.

⁵¹ Polan, “Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation” in Boundas and Olkowsi, (eds.), *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy*, p. 237.

⁵² Jennifer Daryl Slack “Logic of Sensation,” in Charles J. Stivale, (ed.), *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, p. 162.

scenes depicted in *La caída de Madrid*.⁵³ These scenes include a view of the bodies stacked in a state morgue as well as a comparison by Arroyo of Spanish peasants having sex in a field, a scene Arroyo had witnessed as a child, with the coupling of dogs. Chirbes reports that posters with reproductions of Bacon's work have hung from the walls of each of the three homes that he has lived in, and that for a time Bacon was his favorite painter.⁵⁴

The novelist makes other observations in "La resurrección de la carne" similar to those expressed by Deleuze in *The Logic of Sensation*, and many of these perceptions find resonance in his novels. He notes approvingly Bacon's refusal to bend to any artistic or spiritual ideal and that Bacon's example encourages him to do the same with literature.⁵⁵ Chirbes credits Bacon for representing on his canvases the human body and refusing to illustrate abstract ideas. He concedes that Bacon's focus on the figure emboldened him to do likewise. In the citation that follows Chirbes focuses on the solidity (el peso) of the body as opposed to the lightness (ligereza) of ideas. He makes a direct link between his literary work and Bacon's painting and the concern on the part of both of them for representing the world in its totality (la totalidad del mundo).

Como tiene que ver con mi empeño literario su tozudez
pictórica por seguir representando la totalidad del mundo,
el peso del cuerpo del hombre y no sólo la ligereza de sus
ideas.⁵⁶

⁵³ "[...] creo intuir mejor por qué me ha atraído tanto Bacon. [...] por qué hay referencias a él en *Los disparos del cazador* y *En la lucha final*; por qué, en *La caída de Madrid*, inventé ese personaje torturador que asociaba los cuerpos de los cerdos desgollados con los de los cadáveres de la morgue, los apareamientos de los campesinos con los de los perros." Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 63.

⁵⁴ "Incluso hubo un tiempo en el que fue mi pintor predilecto [...]" Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 48.

⁵⁵ "[...] cuando pienso en su obra [...] revive en mí el deseo de un arte que no renuncie a esa decabellada aspiración al deicidio. Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 63.

⁵⁶ Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 63.

Chirbes notes Bacon's use of sensation in his paintings. He quotes the painter's take on realism, an artistic movement to which the painter acknowledged a debt and appreciates the "attempt to capture the appearance along with the accumulation of sensations that appearance excites in me."⁵⁷ Chirbes echoes what Deleuze expressed about an "analogical art" by manifesting disdain for attempts to foist any overriding organizational role on art. He argues instead for an art that works slowly "by osmosis," and that proves its mettle (or fails to) "in the long term by the way it is included as one of the materials that succeeded in building up the sensibility for change during the time in which it was produced."⁵⁸ Chirbes views the novel as one of several forces that can work to change a society and to create a people to come. He argues that Bacon's strength lies in the "radical intensity" with which he renders his figures.⁵⁹

Certainly connected with Bacon's representation of the human body and the use of sensation is the prevalence of meat. The title of Chirbes's essay, "La resurrección de la Carne," (The Resurrection of Meat) attests to his appreciation of this facet of Bacon's work. He states that for Bacon, "meat is the homonym of being,"⁶⁰ and quotes the critic Sam Hunter who said that for the painter, meat is the "basic substance of life."⁶¹ Chirbes's observations are remarkably similar to Deleuze's discussion of Bacon's

⁵⁷ My translation. "[...] un intento de capturar la apariencia junto con el cúmulo de sensaciones que esa apariencia excita en mí." Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 49.

⁵⁸ Digamos que no actúa directamente, sino por osmosis, por capilaridad, y que su peso se mide a largo plazo, en la medida en que forma o no parte de los materiales con los que se construye el archivo de la sensibilidad de una época." *El novelista perplejo*, pp. 56-57.

⁵⁹ "[...] nos brinda una sobreimpresión de estados, una totalidad, con lo que el carácter de la persona representada se nos ofrece con radical intensidad." Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, pp. 52-53.

⁶⁰ "[...] la carne constituye el homónimo del ser." Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 59.

⁶¹ "[...] la sustancia básica de la vida." Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 59.

affective feelings upon entering a butcher shop. He echoes Deleuze's comments that hanging meats bring to mind suffering man.⁶² Chirbes quotes Bacon's comments about meats, reminding us that we are all potential carcasses, potential victims.⁶³

Although Chirbes does not use Deleuze and Guattari's term "Body Without Organs," he does, as mentioned above, express disdain for any organizational scheme foisted on art. Chirbes notes the mixed up nature of organs and body parts that appear in Bacon's works, "Músculos, venas, piel, esfínteres, bocas, dientes, sangre; lo motor, lo circulatorio, lo digestivo y lo sexual confundidos."⁶⁴ Chirbes notes that the clothes worn by the figures themselves appear to be part of these changeable organs that resist the completion of an organism, "Toda esa mitad [...] se resuelve con una serie de arrugas de la ropa que adquieren pliegues y densidades que nos hacen pensar en vísceras, intestinos, e incluso en un gigantesco órgano sexual."⁶⁵ It is clear that Chirbes perceives something very similar to what Deleuze calls the "Body Without Organ," where organizing principles are discarded and recognizes it as an integral part of Bacon's work.

The same applies to Deleuze's insight that a zone of indiscernibility opens up between the human and the animal on Bacon's canvases. Chirbes directs attention to the figure twisting rearward to gaze into a mirror in *George Dyer Staring Into a Mirror*. He writes that the figure's fascination with its reflection recalls Bacon's abiding interest in

⁶² "Los seres humanos de Bacon parecen con frecuencia animales desollados y los animales eviscerados adquieren la categoría de víctimas, de mártires." Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 59.

⁶³ " 'Somos carne, somos osamentos en potencia', dijo Bacon." Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, pp. 59-60.

⁶⁴ Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 59.

⁶⁵ Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 60.

the behavior of monkeys who in turn also display an interest with themselves.⁶⁶ Chirbes senses that there is continuity between the animal, the monstrous and the human and that this continuity is reflected in Bacon's paintings.⁶⁷ Although Chirbes includes several positive examples of becoming-animal in his novels, his coupling of the human and the animal in *El novelista perplejo* at times rings a dour note. Recalling the atrocities that human beings visited upon one another during the Twentieth Century, with special mention of the victims of Francoism, Chirbes argues that "any war, any act of torture renews the pact of continuity between man and beasts."⁶⁸ He notes that Dyer's "bristly" hair appears to be that of an "aggressive or rutting animal."⁶⁹

Like Deleuze, Chirbes takes note of the contour although he does not refer to it by that term. In the first sentence of the article, he notes that the figure is that of "a man without a face, torturously placed in a seat located in the center of a round blue moquette peeking at a mirror or a screen [. . .]."⁷⁰ Attuned to the theme of isolation associated with the contour that Deleuze notes in *The Logic of Sensation*, Chirbes notes that invisible forces (those emanating from the trauma of the Second World War) are expressed by

⁶⁶ "[...] al pintor le interesaba profundamente el comportamiento de los simios precisamente por esa capacidad para mostrar interés hacia sí mismos con una naturalidad y un placer que raramente vemos en los hombres." Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 54.

⁶⁷ "[...] de la continuidad de lo animal y monstruoso en lo humano [...] El ser humano guarda en algún lugar de sí la memoria genética de la bestia." Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 57.

⁶⁸ "Cualquier Guerra, cualquier acto de tortura ponen al día, renuevan el pacto entre el hombre y la bestia." Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 59.

⁶⁹ "[...] e incluso el cabello hirsuto, como de un animal en cello, o agresivo [...]." Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 60.

⁷⁰ "[...] un hombre sin rostro, tortuosamente sentado en una silla situado en el centro de una redonda moqueta azul se asoma a un espejo, o pantalla [...]." Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 45.

Bacon in his portrayal of “painful, stifling and closed private spaces.”⁷¹ In his fiction, Chirbes will concentrate his artistic efforts on the victims of Franco as well as those suffering under the trepidations of global capital. He suggests that the ringed contour and the small chair in which the figure sits serves to create a place where pain increases.⁷² The writer then focuses on the painter’s combinatory use of light and isolation to provoke the *sensation* resulting from forces at work upon the body.

[...] también nos hace pensar en ese foco de luz que cae sobre el boxeador, sobre el actor, o sobre el que es interrogado y torturado en una siniestra comisaría. Se acrecienta así la sensación de juego de disfraces y desnudamientos, al mismo tiempo que la sensación de desolación que transmite el personaje.⁷³

The above citation is relevant as it mentions a light that falls upon the body of a boxer or someone undergoing interrogation. Similar scenes are recurrent in Chirbes’s novels. Chirbes, like Deleuze, notes Bacon’s belief that art must be based on the universe, as it really is, thus his rejection of abstract art. He cites approvingly Bacon’s reference to abstract art as a free-wheeling fantasy about nothing.⁷⁴ He perceives the violent movement of the figure,⁷⁵ and links it with invisible forces working on the body. Note

⁷¹ “Entendida así, en su pintura las convulciones de la vida pública de una Europa recién salida de la Guerra, se expresaban en dolorosos y asfixiantes y privados espacios cerrados.” Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 56.

⁷² “Pero todo eso necesita de la organización de un espacio, la creación de un eterno en el que el dolor crezca.” Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 61.

⁷³ Deleuze, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 62.

⁷⁴ My translation. “[...] piensa Bacon que sólo desde la realidad puede el artista levantar su arte. De hecho, en una entrevista que le hicieron en 1963, dijo ‘El arte abstracto es la libre fantasía de nada.’” Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 55.

⁷⁵ “[...] parece moverse con decisión enérgica.” Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 52; Also, Chirbes notes on page that the model “gira con tal violencia sobre la silla [...] que su rostro sale disparado contra el espejo.” Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 60.

Chirbes's wording regarding Bacon's portraits – it is quite similar to Deleuze's description of the contour curling its way around the figure as well as his concept of “the fold” that the latter develops in his book about Leibniz. Chirbes states that the “atoms of the painted subject, what is inside, what is outside, what surrounds him, explodes [...]”

[...] ante nuestros ojos estallen confusa y luminosamente todos los átomos del retratado, lo de dentro, lo de fuera, lo que lo rodea.”⁷⁶

One recalls that Bacon's use of the diagram is, in Deleuze's words, “like the emergence of another world [...] marks or brushstrokes are irrational [...] They are nonrepresentative, nonillustrative, and nonnarrative.”⁷⁷ It is safe to state that Chirbes would not find himself in complete agreement with Deleuze's take on the diagram as evidenced by his comments regarding *George Dyer Staring in a Mirror*. Instead of the contour and the diagram engaging one another in counter-movements and the diagram attempting to escape itself through a distorted head, Chirbes attempts to interpret the diagram, despite having noted elsewhere in the essay that Bacon's portraits are not open to representation.⁷⁸ In any event, Chirbes stands transfixed before the diagram, mentioning it no less than three times.⁷⁹ This focus coincides with what Deleuze

⁷⁶ Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 57.

⁷⁷ Deleuze, “The Diagram” in Boudas, *The Deleuze Reader*, p. 194.

⁷⁸ “Bacon plantea el retrato como una forma de conocimiento, de indignación, y no como una forma de representación [...]” Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 57.

⁷⁹ See page 45 of *El novelista perplejo*, where Chirbes notes that the mirror reflects a split face (“una cara escindida”); See also page 47 in which he does seem to coincide with Deleuze noting that the face seems to be fleeing from the character in order to throw itself against the mirror (“ese rostro que parece huir del personaje para arrojarse sobre el espejo [...]”); On pages 60-61 Chirbes offers his interpretation of Dyer's splayed face against the mirror which he calls the face of a cadaver or a mortuary mask (“Es el rostro [...] de cadáveres [...] esa textura cerúlea de las máscaras mortuarias.”)

describes as the mission of the diagram – to make something happen. Like Deleuze, Chirbes takes stock of the white a-signifying blotches of paint that, as discussed above, are common in Bacon’s works. Chirbes, however, again attempts to assign meaning here as well, referring to them as seminal splotches emanating from a force so strong that the figure cannot hold it within.⁸⁰

As we mentioned earlier, Chirbes agrees with Bacon about the limitations of certain genres of art. He decries what he calls abstract art’s breaking off communication with the larger world as well as that art form’s tautological communications with itself.⁸¹ We observed earlier that this insight into maintaining a dialogue with the world coincides with Deleuze’s concept of the outside, which can also be described in Nietzschean terms as difference. Although Chirbes does not use the word diagram, he does affirm, in terms remarkably similar to those of Deleuze, that the use of distorted faces appearing on shiny surfaces points to Bacon’s ability to utilize this technique “to show things that reality cannot teach us.”⁸² Chirbes’s comment regarding the force of painting’s ability to show us something that actualized reality cannot reveal also coincides with Deleuze and Guattari’s essential concept of the virtual.⁸³ The actualized present is always open to

⁸⁰ “[...] que se desborda fuera del propio cuerpo en esas manchas blancas, seminales que cruzan el cuadro [...]” Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 61.

⁸¹ “[...] y rompe con el diálogo con el exterior del arte para hacerlo consigo mismo [...]” Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 51.

⁸² “Bacon juega aquí a que el espejo sea no sólo deformante, como le pedía Valle-Inclán al espejo del Callejón del Gato en sus esperpentos, sino que además, *muestre cosas que la realidad no nos enseña.*” Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 54.

⁸³ “Thus opens a rhizomatic realm of possibility effecting the potentialization of the possible, as opposed to arborescent possibility, which marks a closure, an impotence.” Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p. 190.

multitudinous becomings not yet actualized. As Deleuze and Guattari show us, there is always much more to the present than we are able to perceive.

As noted above, Deleuze contends that abstract art is characterized by codes while Bacon's art and that of other singular artists are marked by the presence of sensation. Chirbes writes that Bacon makes two important breaks with the traditional codes relating to portraits. First he violates rules that spectators have come to expect from portraits (i.e. a realistic rendition of a subject). He also discards the necessary "logic" of portraiture.⁸⁴ Chirbes admires Bacon's decision to borrow from the great portraitists of the past while at the same time attempting something new, "a choice that bordered on the extraordinary."⁸⁵ This borrowing from tradition while refusing to remain stuck in a particular mold is akin to what Deleuze calls Bacon's third path.⁸⁶ A thinker's borrowing from the past without becoming enslaved to it is in line with Deleuze and Guattari's appeal to recreate the force of a literary or philosophical machine and not merely repeat or "polish" its contents.⁸⁷

Chirbes reveals his affinity with Deleuze's machinic concerns by commenting on how he is affected by viewing Bacon's paintings. Recall that in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari ask, "Given a certain effect, what machine is capable of producing it? And given a certain machine, what can it be used for?"⁸⁸ Chirbes

⁸⁴ "Bacon rompe doblemente con el código de la convención del retrato, primero con el espectador y luego con la propia gramática del cuadro, con su lógica." Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 54.

⁸⁵ "[...] una elección que rozaba lo extraordinario." Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 51.

⁸⁶ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 90.

⁸⁷ In *What Is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari quote Nietzsche who said that philosophers "must no longer accept concepts as a gift, nor merely purify and polish them, but first *make* and *create* them, present them and make them convincing. p. 5.

⁸⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p. 3.

attempts to answer these questions in his essay. First, there is the Deleuzian concept of making assemblages and connections.⁸⁹ For his part Chirbes dismisses attempts to translate into words what Bacon attempts to do on his canvas, although occasionally he seems to fall into that temptation as we have seen. Chirbes speaks of the desire to form connections (poner en relación unas cosas con otras) that Bacon's work inspires in him, comparing it to a seduction that took place over many years.

A lo mejor, no se trata de traducir a palabras, sino de poner en relación unas cosas con otras. Relacionar la historia de Bacon y Dyer. Mi propia historia con la pintura de Bacon. Preguntarme por qué me sedujo durante años.⁹⁰

Chirbes marveled at Bacon's ability to render the unfolding of time in his paintings. He repeats a quote from Cocteau that Bacon used to make a point about being able to observe the ceaseless approach of death by considering one's own reflection in a mirror.⁹¹ Chirbes renounces the capacity to "translate" a painting into another "language." He repeats the appeal for connectivity that Bacon's paintings inspire, stating that it would be better to "read" a painting and to connect it with another "system." Chirbes writes, "A lo mejor no se trata de traducir un cuadro a otro lenguaje, sino de leerlo poniéndolo en relación con otros sistemas."⁹² The system, or machine, that Chirbes practices is literature, and he believes, as did Deleuze and Guattari, that a singular novel can prove to be one of many forces that foster the becoming of a people that are missing.

⁸⁹ For a further discussion of the importance that Deleuze places on connections and forming assemblages, see John Rajchman, *The Deleuze Connections*, pp. 3-14.

⁹⁰ Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 48.

⁹¹ The sentence by Cocteau that Bacon cited, according to Chirbes is, "Mírate toda tu vida en un espejo y verás a la muerte afanándose como las abejas en una colmena transparente." Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 50.

As noted in the introduction to this study, in *El novelista perplejo*, Chirbes provides examples of novelists that have succeeded in providing new ways of looking at the world. We will now turn to a discussion of Chirbes's novels to explore his particular logic of sensation.

Sensation in Chirbes's Trilogy

As discussed in previous sections, Francis Bacon demonstrated an abiding interest in meat. The painter attempted to utilize in his paintings the colors that he discerned in hanging slices of meat. Additionally, we noted that Chirbes, as well as Deleuze, appreciated Bacon's use of meat to interrupt attempts at hierarchical organization. Chirbes includes scenes in his novels in which meat, or at least human flesh is provocatively displayed. In *Los viejos amigos*, for example, the Salamancan bootblack Pedro del Moral suffers immense economic hardship despite having militated on Franco's side during the Spanish Civil War. The goat that provided milk for his two sons and him suddenly succumbed to disease. José Luis, his enfeebled younger son, asks why they don't butcher and consume the goat instead of hauling it to the trash-dump. His father explains that while it is safe to slaughter and eat healthy animals, it is risky to eat animals that have died due to disease. With this conversation between the desperately poor Del Moral and his son, Chirbes illustrates the intense deprivation that the poorer classes of Spaniards endured during the "Years of Hunger," including many of those who, like Del Moral, fought with the forces of Franco. While he himself later salivates over the thought of the roasted meat of the goat, the famished bootblack feels the

⁹² Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 50.

presence of outside forces that each night topple the little that he has managed to accumulate during the day.

Pensó, mientras miraba los troncos pelados de los chopos de la Quinta [...] en el sabor que tendrían aquellas carnes asadas, y le pareció que era como si en su vida alguien fuera destruyendo cada noche lo que él amasaba cada día [...]⁹³

In *La caída de Madrid* the commissar Maximino Arroyo is notified in the predawn hours that two of his subordinates happened upon three suspects placing explosives in the subway of Madrid. One of the men, Raúl Muñoz Cortés, also known as “el Viejo” was shot dead on the spot. Another, Enrique Roda, was taken into custody by Arroyo’s men. The third man, a Marxist activist named Lucio, a central character in the novel, manages to escape. It appears that the police did not necessarily observe that there were three men involved in the plot and for that reason may not be looking for Lucio, although he remains unaware that he might have escaped notice. The narration ultimately indicates that Lucio either survived the dragnet or that the police simply dropped the matter after Franco’s death; in any event it is a detail that affectively underscores the haphazard system of criminal justice that prevailed during the Franco period. When he is awakened, however, the news of the summary execution of one prisoner and the “off the books” detention of another sparks intense sensation within Arroyo. As he considers how to respond to these occurrences that are taking place during the final hours of Franco’s life, the commissar ponders the trajectory of his own existence from the rural area where he grew up to the torture rooms and forensic labs that he frequents in the course of his work. A constant in all of his life’s circumstances has been meat. He recalls his father

⁹³ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 35.

pointing out the internal organs of a slaughtered pig and teaching him that human beings have the same organs.

[...] su padre se lo iba señalando con el dedo índice-
corazón, hígado, pulmones, todo igual que las personas.⁹⁴

Arroyo's work as a policeman causes him to recall his father's anatomical lessons. The memory of bodies piled up in the State's morgue continuously prolongs this duration. Arroyo haughtily dismisses the bodies, referring to many of the cadavers lying on the tables as having been "worse than animals." This ready rejection provides one of the many examples of a molar character that privileges the human over the animal. The citation that follows includes a zone of indeterminacy between the bodies of pigs and human beings, a zone in which numerous organs are opened up for display.

había visto [...] personas tiroteadas, seres humanos desnudos y abiertos en el canal sobre las mesas del Instituto Anatómico Forense, y esas personas tenían tripas como los cerdos, pulmones, estómago, corazón, y muchas veces se trataba de individuos que eran peores que animales, que tenían instintos peores que animales.⁹⁵

La caída de Madrid also contains a display of flesh in the body of Franco himself. As part of the caudillo's security team, Arroyo reports to José Ricart on the physical condition of Franco's body on the last day of his life, "[...] el Generalísimo ni veía ni oía, y ofrecía una imagen desoladora, acbillado de agujas hipodérmicas y tubos.⁹⁶ Franco's body is linked to forces resisting change. Arroyo, for example, states that with this death

⁹⁴ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 59.

⁹⁵ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, pp. 60-61.

⁹⁶ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 49.

a “whole manner of viewing Spain was dying with Franco.”⁹⁷ Franco’s body is also coupled with State machines. For example, the industrialist Ricart wakes up and hearing classical music playing on the radio and the announcer discussing soccer, realizes that Franco is still alive. Because of his connections with the regime, Ricart is aware that there are precise plans in place for the moment that Franco dies to ensure that control of the media remains firmly in the hands of the regime’s apparatchiks.

[...] según había previsto los ministerios de Gobernación y de Información y Turismo para cuando llegara el momento, todas las emisoras habrían conectado con Radio Nacional y estaría sonando música clásica, la misma en todas ellas.⁹⁸

During the late Franco period, the General had at times reiterated to his closest subordinates that with respect to the continuation of his policies after his death that he “had everything well tied down”⁹⁹ Arroyo, senses that despite Franco’s assurances, the death of the latter would bring significant changes in its wake. He successfully impels the bunkerites under his command to violence by compelling them to watch films of members of the Spanish Civil Guard being beaten by groups of students and workers.¹⁰⁰ Arroyo swears that after Franco’s death they will send a clear message through the use of force that they will not tolerate change:

⁹⁷ “[...] se moría también toda una forma de entender España [...], Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 49.

⁹⁸ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 6.

⁹⁹ “[...] todo atado y bien atado,” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 49. Franco’s phrase was often turned against him as a line of ridicule as evidenced in Julio Gil Pecharromán use of it for the title of a chapter in his *Con permiso de la autoridad: La España de Franco (1939-1975)*.

¹⁰⁰ In his essay about Juan Marsé included in *El novelista perplejo*, Chirbes that the time immediately preceding Franco’s death was one of tremendous discouragement due to the increased activity of security forces, “[...] un momento de tremendo desánimo,” p. 91.

Somos unos cuantos, somos unos cuantos los que estamos de acuerdo, [...] y que se enteren [...] de que no estamos dispuestos a que Franco se vaya solo.¹⁰¹

Chirbes includes an example of authoritative force itself being put on display through the depiction of human flesh. Arroyo remembers images of Portuguese security forces being attacked by protesters in an uprising that occurred a few years before Franco's death. One of the policemen had his pants ripped off and Arroyo noted his "ridiculously hairy ass." In any event, the filmed images that the commissar used to stoke the resentment of his subordinates into violence has the unintended consequence of fueling his own anxiety.

Veía imágenes de *pides* portugueses perseguidos por la multitud; a uno de ellos le habían bajado los pantalones y enseñaba unas nalgas ridículamente peludas.¹⁰²

In the examples cited in this section we have seen that Chirbes includes depictions of meat or of exposed human flesh to punctuate his portrayal of the plight of the lower classes during the early years of the Franco regime; to illustrate the uneasiness of the upper classes at the approach of Franco's death; and to demonstrate the violence visited upon those out of favor with elements of the regime. Chirbes also uses meat in his depiction of the flows of desire. Throughout the remainder of this study we will point out other portrayals of parts of the human body that Chirbes includes in his attempt to render visible invisible forces.

Deleuze takes note of Bacon's efforts to present the scream and not the terror purportedly behind it. As discussed above, Chirbes also makes reference to Bacon's

¹⁰¹ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, pp. 272-273.

¹⁰² Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 74.

emphasis on the scream. In *Larga marcha* and the *La caída de Madrid* he includes multiple scenes that involve screams or convulsive cries, and in each instance pervasive forces are at work. In *La larga marcha*, for example, Dr. Vicente Tabarca is terrified when he learns that his daughter Helena has become involved with Marxist groups at university. Tabarca, who served on the losing side of the Civil War, realizes that the Franco machine that subjected him to torture and imprisonment is, some twenty years later, still very much at work. In a stunning example of minor writing, Chirbes's narrator casually mentions the name of the very street in Madrid where the sounds of blows and screams emanate from underground cells and reach the ears of pedestrians going about their daily affairs. No narration is dedicated to the physical scene of torture. Only the sounds are made palpable. This is an example of "making language tremble" in that the beatings administered by security forces are taking place in the Spain of the late 1960s, thirty years after the end of the Spanish Civil War. The narration records Tabarca's realization that the machinery of torture continued functioning without rest.

[...] que la maquinaria continuaba funcionando implacable
 [...] y en los sótanos de la Puerta del Sol seguían sonando
 golpes y gritos que a veces llegaban hasta las aceras de la
 calle Carretas.¹⁰³

After the war, Tabarca is reduced to operating a clinic out of his home because of his affiliation with the defeated government. He treats simple cases of influenza and minor illnesses despite having been a brilliant medical researcher. Eventually a woman seeks his counsel because she wishes to terminate a pregnancy. To gain access to Tabarca she tells Tabarca's wife, a companion at the sewing factory where she works, that she has been spitting up blood. Once inside Tabarca's dilapidated office, however, she confesses

¹⁰³ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 275.

that the story was a ruse. The woman suspects that she is pregnant, and after Tabarca confirms this suspicion she begs him to perform an abortion because she and her husband cannot provide for the two children that they already have. Needless to say, abortion was illegal in Franco's Spain, and the marginalized Tabarca's providing the woman with the service involved legal risks for both doctor and patient. In a description very similar to Bacon or Deleuze's comments regarding the cry, Chirbes's narrator focuses on the woman's convulsive sobbing, reporting that sobs and cries follow their "own logic" and that they are a force attempting an escape from the subjectivity temporarily containing them. The cry is thus linked to an impersonal, pre-subjective collective force of other bodies crying for indecipherable reasons.

[...] y ella siguió llorando, en silencio, como si el llanto tuviera sus propias reglas y buscara escaparse por su cuenta, porque fuera ajeno, de otra mujer que lloraba por otros motivos [...]¹⁰⁴

A similar scene takes place in *La caída de Madrid*. José Ricart's son Tomás recalls a particular morning while he was a young boy and his father left home to spend time with a mistress that he had set up with an apartment so as to enjoy easy access to her. Ricart's manipulation of women was at least two-fold. First he used his wife's fortune and properties to establish himself in the business of exporting oranges. As noted in our introduction, a woman's property in Franco's Spain passed to the control of her husband upon marriage. Ricart also used his position of power to have his mistress fired from the juice factory that he owned so that she would remain economically dependent upon him. The young Tomás became aware of his father's treachery when his mother

¹⁰⁴ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 149.

disclosed it to her maid in his presence. Again, Chirbes focuses on the cry itself as the woman collapses in grief before the astonished child.

El niño la contemplaba con creciente curiosidad desde el fondo del pasillo, porque aquel cuerpo que le había parecido sereno hasta entonces, empezó a respirar de un modo extraño y cada vez más ruidoso, luego se agitó con movimientos que eran a la vez convulsos y sincopados y, finalmente, se rompió en un sonoro y desolado llanto.¹⁰⁵

In these episodes Chirbes's narrator moves aside so that the focus is directly on the convulsive cry or screams in a manner very much akin to what Bacon attempted to portray with his screaming pope. Chirbes thus succeeds at rendering visible invisible forces. In the three examples that we discussed the scream is used to portray the *differend* that resulted from the "pact of silence" that came into being during the transition to democracy. Chirbes scoffs at the notion that the transition brought about positive change because the actors themselves did not change. He robustly rejects the tendency of other leftists to silence the revolutionary actions that they participated in during earlier years. Above all else, Chirbes refuses to meekly allow conservative forces to gain dominion over Spain's past and thus to control the future. His depictions of the cry or scream are an integral part of his strategy toward reaching those goals.

The earlier discussion of the respective approaches by Deleuze's and Chirbes's approaches to Bacon's paintings also made clear that both the philosopher and the novelist were aware of Bacon's attempts to upset organized narration by way of the mutilation or smearing of the face. Chirbes presents uncannily similar distortions of faces in *La larga marcha*, a few of which we will now consider.

¹⁰⁵ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, pp. 207-208.

Gregorio Pulido is a laborer who works on the estate of doña Sole Beleta in the arid region of Extremadura. He has separated himself from his family after discovering that his father and mother colluded with the village baker, allowing the latter sexual access to Gregorio's mother in exchange for bread. One result of this arrangement is that nearly everybody in town refers to Gregorio as "El Panaderino" (the little baker boy). The scenes in which Gregorio realizes the reason why he has obtained this nickname and his subsequent confirming the truth of his parents' arrangement are awash in sensation.¹⁰⁶ On Sole's estate, the handsome Gregorio soon catches the eye of the proprietress who orders that he be cleaned up and given proper clothing to wear.¹⁰⁷ He is soon removed from field work altogether and assigned to domestic chores. Sole fancies that he will be a suitable escort for social occasions.¹⁰⁸ Gregorio, however, feels no sexual desire for Sole and is still coming to grips with the relationship between his mother and the baker. As we discussed in the first chapter, the ranch hand takes to borrowing Sole's bicycle without permission and pedaling it to a bar on the outskirts of town. Workers, all males, from the village straddle up to Gregorio. They continue to call him by his nickname, but the narrator reports that they do so in a manner that does not hurt him: "[...] y le llamaban Panaderino, pero de una forma suave, que no le dolía."¹⁰⁹ Gregorio has entered into, become a part of a "space of affect." The camaraderie is instantaneous. One man begins

¹⁰⁶ For example, the first time that Gregorio spies the baker leaving the family home he is lying face down on the ground, animal-like outside the house and breaks down crying, "[...] y se echó a llorar, allí en el suelo, mordiéndose los puños." Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 156.

¹⁰⁷ "Ordenó que se le dieran un par de camisas blancas, ropa interior y unos pantalones negros de pana, y que se le preparara un baño." Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 199.

¹⁰⁸ "Es que si te quito a ti, José, y a este chico, los otros son impresentables [...] A ver a cuál de ellos me llevo yo a la feria este año [...]" Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 199.

¹⁰⁹ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 201.

to sing directly into Gregorio's ear. The newcomer reports being upset with himself for not having previously entered the bar, "sintió tristeza por no haber entrado antes en aquel sitio."¹¹⁰

Gregorio becomes aware of the long mirror running behind the bar. He notices his reflection in it, but reports that the image of his face is highly disfigured because of the dirt and the dead flies smashed into the surface. Creating further distortion are the reflections from electric bulbs, candles and the billowing smoke from cigarettes. Gregorio's appreciation of the contorted reflection in the mirror is a step in his becoming imperceptible. The narrator, using free indirect style, reports how the reflection soothes the young man's troubled spirits.

Le resultó agradable ver cómo la imagen se volvía lejana, borrosa, como parecía marcharse a un lugar remoto envuelto en nubes, nubes alargadas que algunas veces parecían casi sólidas por su inmovilidad, pero que eran nada más que aire. En aquel espejo, al tiempo que se alejaba su cara, se alejaba también el sufrimiento.¹¹¹

Gregorio's entrance into the bar and the affective sensations that he experiences there allow him, as the above citation indicates, to put aside nostalgia and nonproductive memory. As we will see in the last chapter of this study, the bar also serves as a point of departure for Gregorio. In short order he moves to Madrid and becomes involved with the worker's movement and engages in strikes. At the end of *La larga marcha* he is arrested along with other rhizomatic characters. Critics have focused on the apparent lack of hope that Chirbes portrays in *La larga marcha*.¹¹² A Deleuzian perspective, however, would

¹¹⁰ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, pp. 201-202.

¹¹¹ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 202.

¹¹² One example of this is Pedro Alonso's comment that the theme around which Chirbes's fictional world rotates is the fight for survival. "El eje sobre el que gira el mundo ficcional del escritor valenciano es la

focus on the positive, liberating directions taken by characters such as Gregorio. Thousands of Spaniards did participate in union activities despite their being declared illegal by the Franco government. These actions were part of an overall “pack” or “band” approach shared by Spaniards from many walks of life that helped to ensure that the dictatorship, at least in its most nefarious elements, did not survive General Franco.

At the conclusion of *La larga marcha* the two sons of the bootblack Pedro del Moral meet upon the streets of Madrid. It is a meeting freighted with danger for the younger brother, José Luis. He carries Marxist pamphlets hidden upon his person. The elder brother Ángel is surrounded by friends, a group of right-wing thugs that begin to rough up José Luis. The latter is saved, however, when Ángel recognizes him. Ángel, an ex-boxer, introduces his younger brother to his companions. After obliging him to have a few drinks with them, Ángel insists that his brother spend the night at his dingy apartment. José Luis, a gay, physically feeble university student has suffered immensely throughout his young life, but nevertheless remains an “indomitable character,” as we will examine in closer detail in the next two chapters.¹¹³ Ángel, tossed aside by his handlers after an injury,¹¹⁴ is mired in a bog of zero-intensity. He harangues his younger brother with a self-serving diatribe about how José Luis, being nothing more than a bookworm, knows nothing about action. José Luis, who has faced much more fearsome obstacles than the braggart presently in front of him, makes no comment. He simply notes to himself about Ángel is that the, “only thing that you ever managed to do was to leave.”

lucha por la supervivencia,” in “Contra el ruido y silencio: los espacios narrativos de la memoria de la posguerra española,” p. 24.

¹¹³ See Deleuze’s essay about Herman Melville’s “indomitable character” in “Bartleby; or. The Formula,” in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, p. 83.

¹¹⁴ For a discussion of the role of sport in Franco’s Spain to distract the masses, see John London’s “The Ideology and Practice of Sport,” in Helen Graham and Jo Labanyi, (eds.), *Spanish Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, pp. 204-207.

¹¹⁵ He also takes note of Ángel's feet, chest, and neck and the untreated hernia bulging from his waist. Conspicuously missing in Chirbes's depiction of Ángel is any mention of the boxer's face. The "dudoso color blanco" of his socks suggests haptic shades of gray. José Luis, in an observation very similar to Deleuze's comments about Bacon's privileging of the head over the face, notes that even Ángel's feet were strong. The following scene reveals the influence of Bacon's paintings as feet and neck seem to want to spring out of the clothing that encases them.

[...] le miraba los pies envueltos en gastados calcetines de un dudoso color blanco. Hasta los pies eran fuertes en él, y también ellos parecían mostrar el cansancio del uso [...] igual que la piel que asomaba blanquecina prolongando el cuello en el escote de la camiseta. José Luis miraba aquel pedazo del cuerpo de su hermano, la parte superior de su pecho, y pensaba en acción y en saber, en el cansancio de saber y actuar.¹¹⁶

In the citation above the narration reveals that José Luis feels compassion for his brother. The latter has been crushed by a deadfall of arborescent arrangements. José Luis' thinking about the "weariness of thinking and acting," (el cansancio de saber y actuar) correlates with an article by Deleuze, "The Exhausted," which appears in *Essays Critical and Clinical*. As Deleuze indicates in this article, there is a high cost to be paid for inextricably linking thought to stultified formulas. He writes:

It is not only that words lie; they are also so burdened with calculations and significations, with intentions and personal memories, with old habits that cement them together, that one scarcely bore into the surface again before it closes up again. It sticks together. It imprisons and suffocates us¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 359.

¹¹⁶ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 359.

¹¹⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, p. 173.

José Luis indictates that he is aware of the cost of shackeling thought exclusively to logic, reason and judgements while the spent boxer possesses no such awareness. The two episodes of the smearing, dismantling or the erasure of the face that Chirbes includes in *La larga marcha* therefore involve two characters, Gregorio and José Luis, who are both intent on embarking on creative lines of flight and another character, Ángel, who is given to mindlessly obeying transcendental ideals.

Deleuze commented that Bacon's works are marked by bizarre spastics and paralytics rendered in violent movement. Chirbes also takes note of the violent movements of Bacon's figures. Not surprisingly, his narrative production is replete with mutilated, diseased, broken and shattered bodies on the move. Often these bodies are rendered in the midst of a fall from which "an indomitable figure" such as José Luis del Moral might arise. More often, however, characters remain mired in arborescent set-ups, as we shall see in the next chapter. Deleuze cautions time and again that force or life results in bodies that make life-denying as well as life-enhancing choices. Claire Colebrook states that for Deleuze, "In addition to the clear and everyday world of positive things there is also the necessary world of zero intensities [...]." ¹¹⁸ We will consider some of the broken bodies in Chirbes's fiction. It bears repeating that Chirbes, in Baconian fashion, attempts to short-circuit any logical narration in order to upset hierarchical arrangements that seek to root out difference. The paralytics and other disfigured bodies heighten sensation because they invariably reveal invisible forces at work upon bodies that Deleuze discusses in *The Logic of Sensation*. Chirbes attempts to present the tremendous cost that resulted from the transcendent denial of desire during

¹¹⁸ Claire Colebrook, *Deleuze: A Guide for the Perplexed*, p. 3.

the Franco era and that continues to plague Spanish society today due to global capital's demand for the paying of an infinite debt.

In *La larga marcha* the bootblack Pedro del Moral feels cheated because although he had fought on “the right side” during the Civil War, he has nonetheless come to grief. He and his two sons, the Ángel and the José Luis discussed above, suffer intense financial deprivation, like millions of other Spaniards from the lower classes during the 1940s and 1950s. A second intensity that causes Del Moral mental anguish is the untimely loss of his wife Asunción who died giving birth to José Luis. Finally, he is haunted by the actions he himself took during the war. He participated in the razing of a village and the brutalizing of three female villagers after the destruction of their home. His commanding officer ordered him to shave the heads of these “reds” despite one of them being an elderly woman and the other a young girl. The officer repeats his order several times before Del Moral is able to comply. It is clear when the narration focuses on him that this act of cruelty has deeply affected him. He wonders if his war crime is the cause of his “losing the young man that he had been.”¹¹⁹ In Salamanca he turns to alcohol in a fruitless attempt to drown out memories and to deal with his financial hardships. He is also physically abusive with his sons. Despite his pain and sense of betrayal, Del Moral frequently mouths arborescent shibboleths to church, nation and other fixed identities. He dreams that the boxer Ángel will make a triumphant entrance in the Stadium of Gas in Madrid or that the studious José Luis will earn renown as a great scholar. As he walks to and from his bootblack stand or the local taverns he espies the many statues dedicated to learned men that are ubiquitous in Salamanca. In an astonishing section of his travelogue,

¹¹⁹ “¿Ahí murió el muchacho que Pedro fue?” *Chirbes, La larga marcha*, p. 102.

El viajero sedentario, Chirbes explains how Salamanca offers a (molar) “mirror of stone” which records the tensions about thought and society throughout Western history.¹²⁰ Del Moral envisions a statue erected one day in honor of his physically weak son José Luis. A character more oriented toward molar set-ups than Pedro del Moral could scarcely be imagined. However, as we will discuss in the fourth chapter, this character laden with molar concerns proves capable of increasing his active power as he gradually rejects arborescent dogma, or his “standards of measure.”

As Ángel moves up in the ranks of local pugilists, he is scheduled to fight in an important match. Del Moral becomes more jubilant each day as his son’s match draws near. On the appointed day he closes his stand early, and with José Luis in tow, visits several bars on the way to the arena. Once at the match, the liquored-up Del Moral gives full reign to his pent up frustration, screaming for his son to destroy his opponent. He notices that José Luis has moved away from him and that the fans seated nearby are glaring at him. After Ángel’s victory they make sarcastic remarks about Del Moral’s inappropriate behavior. The humiliated bootblack orders José Luis to walk home alone so that he can visit a nearby tavern. He happens upon the bar in which Ángel and his handlers are celebrating their victory. The boxer, however, publicly refuses to acknowledge his father. This proves to be the last straw for the father’s crumbling psyche. Del Moral stumbles out of the bar and hurtles himself in front of an oncoming train. Yet even here he fails –his legs are severed but he survives the attempted suicide. Ironically, this fall serves to liberate Del Moral to a certain extent, as we note in the

¹²⁰ With respect to the many monuments in Salamanca, Chirbes writes that they [...] compone un espejo de piedra de las tensiones del pensamiento y de la sociedad durante algunos siglos. Chirbes, *El viajero sedentario: Ciudades*, p. 251.

fourth chapter. His mutilated body, however, remains on display in two subsequent chapters in the first part of the novel. It also functions to introduce haptic senses into the text that bypass cognition.

After the suicide attempt, del Moral, “un camisa vieja,” (literally, an “old shirt,” i.e. an original member of the Spanish Falange) is forced to move about in a wheelchair. He makes reference to when he was a “complete” man.¹²¹ In the capacity of a man who had possession of both of his legs, Del Moral’s machinic vision focused on the many statues and stonework for which Salamanca was and is well known. With the use of the wheelchair, however, his field of vision is forcibly changed.¹²² Placing the character in this position is a technique that is akin to what Deleuze accomplishes in his volumes on cinema. With the movement-image, Deleuze explains how cinema teaches us to look from a perspective of the human being engaged in movement from one point to another. With the concept of the unfolding of time that Deleuze develops in his second volume on cinema, we learn to appreciate more fully difference as such. Felicity J. Colman, for example, states that, “Deleuze reads movement through thought sublimes: mathematical, dynamic and dialectic sublimes where the “crystalline narration” has arrested and “fractured” movement.”¹²³ Chirbes records del Moral’s altered field of vision from the wheelchair. The character’s mutilated body also allows Chirbes to present a tactile sense of smell and hearing. The narrator records José Luis being forced to rest his head in Pedro’s lap at night while his father caressed his hair, and becoming lost in overlapping

¹²¹ “[...] un hombre de una pieza,” Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 161.

¹²² “La ciudad era distinta si uno la veía desde la silla de ruedas.” Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 143.

¹²³ Felicity J. Colman, “Cinema: Movement-Image-Recognition-Time,” in Charles J. Stivale (ed.), *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, p. 167.

durations, calls the boy by his dead mother's name. José Luis notes the rancid smells of alcohol, tobacco and urine emanating from his father's pantlegs. Chirbes artistically calls forth the sounds of a drunken person crashing his wheelchair into furniture when the intoxicated Pedro arrives home each night. The following citation is an example of minor writing because Chirbes makes language tremble by boring holes within it. The sensational creation of Pedro del Moral correlates with what Ian Buchanan conceives of as Deleuze's charge to literature, "Literature must attempt [...] to drill holes in language in order to see and hear what lies behind, and to create new colours and sonorities."¹²⁴ He creates an image of a terrified young boy cowering under covers at the sound of his drunken, mutilated and desperate father's key turning in the door. The scene is similar to the beginning of Deleuze and Guattari's moving discussion "Of the Refrain" in *A Thousand Plateaus* in that it involves a terrified child in the dark comforting himself as best he can.

José Luis se quedaba allí, notando que hasta las perneas de los pantalones olían a tabaco y vino, y también a orín. Por eso, para evitar esa situación, en cuanto su padre empezaba a retrasarse, se metía en la cama, apagaba la luz y se tapaba bien con las mantas, y se acurrucaba a la espera de que sonara la llave en la puerta y el crujido metálico de las ruedas chocando contra la sillas.¹²⁵

José Luis himself is another example of the "spastic" or "paralytic" bodies in Chirbes's fiction. His physically frail body is the site of wonder, desire and abuse, and ultimately, becoming. When his son was an infant, Pedro realized that by simply closing his fist he could, if he chose to do so, crush the life out of him. After Pedro's suicide

¹²⁴ Ian Buchanan, *Deleuze and Literature*, p. 1.

¹²⁵ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 160.

attempt, the boy is sent to an orphanage where other boys bully him relentlessly. He attracts the attention of the robust Raúl when the latter sees him in the lavatory with his underpants pulled down after being attacked by other classmates. Raúl intervenes, telling the other students that if anybody else picked on José Luis he would have to deal with him. The two boys begin to spend time together. José Luis sits quietly in the courtyard during recess, watching as Raúl dominates soccer games. Eventually they sleep in adjoining beds in the dormitory. As we shall see in the next chapter, José Luis falls deeply in love with Raúl. He feels no compunction or guilt for this flow of homosexual desire that manifests itself within him. Raúl, on the other hand, is attracted to José Luis but is so bogged down by society's disapproval of gay desire that he represses his feelings. We return to these characters in the next two chapters. For now we simply stress that José Luis' feeble body is regularly on display throughout *La larga marcha* as the following example indicates. Chirbes's narrator mentions in passing José Luis' face, focusing on the veins crossing his cheeks and foreheads, before quickly moving on to his reddish hands and then to his thin and feeble legs, which are covered with scabs:

Raúl lo veía, con una piel descolorida bajo cuya transparencia discurrían las diminutas venas que le subían desde la mejilla y le cruzaban la frente, con las manos siempre enrojecidas por el frío [...] con unas botas que seguramente serían de su número, pero que parecía que le quedaban grandes, porque de ellas surgían unas piernas frágiles y llenas de sabañones que no se sabía cómo conseguían levantarlas.¹²⁶

La larga marcha contains other spasmodic bodies that are linked to invisible forces acting upon a body. For example the peasant José Pulido is forced to take his then eleven-year old son Gregorio to the rice fields of Andalusia. In the bed of the truck some

¹²⁶ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 255.

of the peasants suffer from a disease that the peasants simply call “las tercianas” (the three-day sickness). During the course of the malady, probably malaria, the afflicted person is subjected to intense sweating, chattering of teeth and delusions in which people long dead appear to him. Gregorio’s father curses the poverty that has forced him to subject his child to such a risk. Again, Chirbes links a damaged body to invisible forces impacting it. It is an easy task to find histories that cite statistics about the impoverished Spanish masses during Franco’s failed attempt at autarky and the subsequent “Years of Hunger.” An artist such as Chirbes, however, utilizes sensation to create direct links between the purported subject, the contemporary reader and the purported object, the depiction of Franco’s victims so that, like the link between the viewer and Cézanne’s apples or Bacon’s figures, subject and object become a machinic production and a site of indeterminacy. Chirbes heightens the sensation in this scene in which the ravages of malaria are mentioned by depicting its victims so burdened by poverty and ignorance that they do not know the technical name for the illness.

La caída de Madrid includes another malformed body, that of Lucas, an impoverished but brilliant student of history attending university in Madrid. Lucas is from the province of León but now lives in an overcrowded tenement house in a neighborhood filled with thousands of similar students newly arrived at the capital. The narrator describes the collective and rhizomatic force of the neighborhood in the society, marked by rapid change. The narrator mentions that it is a “sordid democracy.”¹²⁷ Lucas’ body is disfigured because he suffers from phimosis, a deformation in which the foreskin does not retract from the head of the penis. Chirbes presents the image of Lucas’ penis,

¹²⁷ “La democracia de la sordidez. El igualitarismo de la suciedad.” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 116.

post-operation, from the vantage point of his friend Pedro. The bandaged organ is referred to as “timid” and similar to a small animal abandoned in a nest.

Lo sabía, porque había ayudado a curarse a Lucas cuando lo operaron de fimosis y había visto aquel minúsculo capullo rojizo y tímido rodeado de vendas, como un animalito abandonado en un nido.¹²⁸

Such was the extent of Lucas’ poverty that he had never heard of this ailment nor was he ever in a position to consult a doctor about it. He learned about his condition because the owner of the tenement house occasionally rented a portion of his room to truck drivers from the coastal city of Vigo who delivered fish to a local market. Lucas recognizes the symptoms described by one of these men, and learns that his condition is treatable. We will discuss the relationship between Lucas and Pedro in the next chapter where we consider the repression of gay desire in more detail. The narration also focuses for a time on Lucas’ hands, which are described derisively as “leaden” by Margarita the young woman with whom he has fallen in love.¹²⁹ As noted above, Margarita fancies the married history professor Juan Bartos. She notes the photograph of King Kong that Bartos has on his message board and fantasizes that she is the young woman in the palm of the great ape’s hand and that Bartos (King Kong) makes every effort to ensure that no harm befalls her.¹³⁰ Margarita has for the most part succumbed to the molar strictures that constituted Spanish society during the last 1960s. Her reference to King Kong’s paw is one of the many examples that Chirbes provides of a character clinging to molar

¹²⁸ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 119.

¹²⁹ “[...] sus chistes torpes, sus manos pesados; a veces soñaba con ellas, con que las manos caían plúmbeas sobre sus rodillas [...] pero se trataba de sueños bobos [...]” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 227.

¹³⁰ “[...] el gran gorilla sabía distinguir entre vosotros y tú, entre la multitud y la muchacha a la que envolvía dulcemente con la palma de su mano, procurando no hacerle daño [...], Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 229.

structures who remains disdainful of the animalistic or who believes the animalistic should be tethered to the service of molar structures.

In *Los viejos amigos* there are numerous broken bodies. As noted in the introduction, the novel is centered on a reunion dinner given at an upscale restaurant in Madrid for the purpose of celebrating the anniversary of the death of Franco. All of the central characters are in their late fifties or early sixties. Tellingly, none of the characters is sure exactly how many years have passed since the dictator's death. This is one of the first indications in the novel of the loss of a collective purpose. The narration discloses that two of the members of the cell have died. Others have severed relations with their ex-comrades. Most of the characters that do attend the dinner are physically or emotionally ill. The obese businessman Guzmán, who enjoys close relations with the Spanish Socialist Party, suffers from high cholesterol. The painter Demetrio Ruell is HIV positive. His partner Jorge is in the final stages of AIDS. Amalia suffers from depression and drug and alcohol addictions. The failed writer Carlos has what may be malignant melanoma. Of all of the characters in the novel, only Carlos embarks on a truly deterritorializing line on flight. He refuses to bow to the trepidations of global capitalism. He remains open to glorious expenditure and resists the anti-production that the neo-liberal order demands. Each of the characters in *Los viejos amigos* is, however, wracked by invisible forces acting upon them. Chirbes succeeds at rendering these forces visible through the depiction of exhausted, broken or even expired bodies. The betrayal of the revolutionary ideals of their youth and their reterritorialization by advanced capitalism has reduced most of them to arborescent stagnation.

As noted, strolling figures are ubiquitous in Chirbes's trilogy. Constant movement is announced on the cover of *La larga marcha*, which features, as noted in the first chapter, a reproduction of Juan Genovés's mass of scurrying figures. The views of fleeing bodies in the novels, however, are of individual bodies. It can be said that some of Chirbes's characters "grab a weapon" before beginning their lines of flight while others amble aimlessly in bogs of zero intensity. In any event, strange strolls enhance the feelings of impotence or determination that a particular body is capable of expressing.

In *Los viejos amigos* Demetrio Rull abruptly leaves Pedrito's absurd reunion dinner when he feels that the conversation is going nowhere and that Pedro has convened the dinner simply to connect with the long dead Elisa. Demetrio is also overwhelmed by his seemingly hopeless desire for Pablo, a much younger man whom he met at a karate studio. Demetrio has placed all of his chips on the unlikely chance of forming a sentimental liaison with him. The chance of Pablo and Demetrio forming a romantic liaison is improbable despite Pablo's apparent reciprocal interest in Demetrio. The former, for instance, waits for him outside of the training hall after practice to invite Demetrio out for drinks. Demetrio remains unsure, however, whether Pablo is simply interested in a friendship or in becoming a lover. He feels overwhelmed by the multiple obstacles that he must overcome before attempting to expand this connection. Pablo is married to a woman and the father of three children. Demetrio must also find a way to explain that his partner and former lover Jorge is in the final stages of AIDS and that he himself is HIV-positive.

The biggest obstacle he faces, however, is that global capitalism has radically altered the duration that gay people in Spain and elsewhere experienced in previous eras,

getting to know one another well on a personal level before moving on to sexual encounters. A bewildered Demetrio, who is 59 years old, bemoans the reality that in the Spain of 2003 straight-acting males are immediately warned off by the plethora of television talk shows and other media outlets which turn viewers into “instant experts” on any number of topics, including gay desire and relationships. Jussi Vähämäki and Akseli Virtanen have noted Deleuze’s suggestion that there is an immediate need to create “vacuoles of non-communication” because capitalism has subsumed language in order to realize additional profits by airing shocking or titillating opinions on talk shows.¹³¹ Demetrio’s distress during his drunken stroll is an affective example of a body whose power is reduced by the control that capitalism has exerted in taking over established systems of communication. He refers to the shattered duration as “innocence” (inocencia).

pero es que, además ya no hay inocencia, todo el mundo ha visto películas, vídeos, la televisión, programas de variedades y de debate, ahora ya no puedes ir tejiendo una relación larga, tranquila, que poco a poco va tomando un cariz: ahora, al tercer día, el tipo te pregunta, “¿tú de qué vas?, ¿eres maricón o qué?”¹³²

To avoid the sort of circumstance that Demetrio has fallen into, Vähämäki and Virtanen argue that Deleuze insists that “resistance must surpass the horizon of communication and history.”¹³³ Deleuze himself wrote that it is necessary to fashion ways of “hijacking” speech in order to evade control.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Jussi Vähämäki and Akseli Virtanen, “Deleuze, Change and History,” in Martin Fugslang and Bent Meier Sørensen, (eds.), *Deleuze and the Social*, p. 222.

¹³² Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 37.

¹³³ Jussi Vähämäki and Akseli Virtanen, “Deleuze, Change and History,” in Martin Fugslang and Bent Meier Sørensen, (eds.), *Deleuze and the Social*, p. 222.

¹³⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*, p. 175.

In *La caída de Madrid*, the first glimpse of the revolutionary Lucio is that of his fleeing from security forces. Each time that the narration focuses on him, he is in a different section of the capital, attempting to remain free. Lucio's accomplice, the murdered Muñoz Cortés, provides another example of forces at work upon a body, although in the second case the force is clearly not invisible. Police officers descend upon the hovel where the dead man lived with his wife and son. They produce his body only after compelling the terrified woman to go along with their story that Muñoz Cortés succumbed to a heart attack on the sidewalk. The bullet hole behind his ear is quickly and expertly covered up with cosmetics applied by State personnel, and officers posing as "nephews" remain in the home throughout the wake. The officers later laugh among themselves because the woman sobbed convulsively upon the shoulder of her husband's killer, yet another example of Chirbes's focus on the cry. As Lucio walks through the different sections of Madrid, seeking refuge, he recounts his dealings with various leftist organizations. He recalls his dealings with probable double agents during his stints in jail including the lawyer Taboada, a character that reappears in *Los viejos amigos*. These commentaries demonstrate the constant danger of progressive movements moving into striated space that Deleuze and Guattari continuously warn against.¹³⁵ By the conclusion of *La caída de Madrid*, Lucio has lost all illusions about the "purity" of the Spanish left although he continues to take inspiration from Marxist thought. He begins to envision other assemblages that will increase his capabilities for action and experimentation.

Lucio's reflections indicate that he has had previous encounters with the sadistic Arroyo. Chirbes includes a recollection of an interrogation session between him and the

¹³⁵ See for example Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 474-475.

security chief. Playing “good-cop-bad-cop” during the course of an interrogation, Arroyo left the room now and then, giving way to underlings who entered and beat Lucio. Arroyo would return and demand that the prisoner provide names and details. Unable to break him, the commissar eventually turned on Lucio in a fury, punching and kicking him to the point that he would have been unable to speak even had he wanted to do so. The beating that Arroyo personally administers ends with weak moans.

[...] pero el tipo pateaba su cuerpo, y gritaba, y había más gente allí. Y él ya no había podido hablar más, quejidos sí, pero no hablar.¹³⁶

La larga marcha features, as its title might suggest, several more ambulatory characters than the other two works. The character of the bourgeois Gloria de Giner is introduced storming out of her mansion after learning that her spendthrift brother squandered the family’s fortune to the point that even their home has been lost to his gambling debts. Chirbes tellingly directs her steps to the Gran Vía, Madrid’s principal commercial avenue. As we will discuss in the next chapter, Gloria is thoroughly enmeshed in molar restrictions and does little to break free. Other strolls abound. As we noted earlier Gregorio begins his chain of becoming by pilfering a bicycle from Sole and peddling it to the bar that becomes his “space of affect.” Carmelo Amado, new to the capital, thoroughly enjoys losing himself on the streets of Madrid. And the itinerant salesman Luis Coronado, another molar character, hawks his goods on the thoroughfares of the capital, outside of public restrooms and in public parks. Coronado, it must be added, is another of the many twisted and sickly bodies that populate Chirbes’s oeuvre. When Carmelo visits the Coronado home to give the younger Luis his homework, he

¹³⁶ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 315.

notices the sound of the father's hacking from the next room, "[...] y también a través del tabique, además del ruido de un televisor, podían oírse las toses y la respiración de un hombre."¹³⁷

Chirbes does not limit himself to human beings in his depictions of strolling characters. In the very first chapter of *La larga marcha* the narrator mentions the fury of a thunderstorm. The narrator states that the storm is so fierce that "even the animals without owners would not be out that night."¹³⁸ In so doing Chirbes immediately introduces a non-human, unbound view of events into his work, much as Deleuze does in his books on cinema. In addition, between the first and second parts of *La larga marcha*, the narrator follows the confused meanderings of a dog in a village, left behind after the human inhabitants were forced to move after the new government condemned the village to make room for a dam. The narrator records that the dog suffers hunger, injures a paw, and at one point barely escapes the jaws of a mastiff, also left behind. Like Deleuze and Guattari, Chirbes refuses to look at life strictly from the vantage point of the human subject. The dog's suffering also coincides with Bacon and Deleuze's insights that we are all potential victims, potential hanging slices of flesh. As noted, Chirbes' characters that are actively involved in a becoming-other hold a positive or sympathetic view of becoming-animal while his characters mired in arborescence fear or abhor their presence. By narrating a section of his novel through a dog, Chirbes calls into question hierarchical arrangements that place the human over the animal.

¹³⁷ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 217.

¹³⁸ "Y ni siquiera los animales sin dueño debían de recorrer esa noche las calles batidas por el viento del invierno [...]. Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 11.

Deleuze elaborates on Bacon's caution to beware of the prevalence of the cliché throughout the mass media. The painter was especially cautious about the artistic pretensions of photography. He held that the photograph adheres to probability while painting by its very essence holds forth the possibility of chance. Deleuze's insights into Bacon's mistrust of the photograph finds an echo in Demetrio Rull. Demetrio dedicates time and effort to the use of color in his paintings. One recalls that on Deleuze's account, Bacon found color to be the summit of his many rubrics. Much like Bacon, Demetrio eschews abstract art. Despite his skillful use of color, however, his works mostly go unsold. He relies on his friendship with the Ana Malta de Thalit, an upper class woman who owns *Esquema*, a prestigious art gallery in Madrid. Ana occasionally sells one of Demetrio's paintings for its "charm." The narrator notes that these works are destined for a client's yacht or second home. We have seen that despite Demetrio having had formal training, for marketing reasons Ana refers to him as a "self-taught painter."¹³⁹ Adding insult to injury, Ana regularly features the photographic work of Román Acollar, a former lover of Demetrio who, like Ana, comes from a very wealthy family. For his part Demetrio fails to embark on a line of flight because he does little besides relying on Ana to show or sell his art. As we have indicated, he wagers his happiness on the remote possibility of connecting with a man who is in all likelihood unavailable to him. Furthermore, Demetrio remains mired in his individual subjectivity as we examine more closely in the next chapter.

Deleuze makes clear that painters are not the only artists capable of producing art that subverts reason and goes straight to the nervous system. Chirbes includes several

¹³⁹ [...] pero eso quería decir que estaba condenado a no subir arriba, a ser autodidacta, a pesar de que no lo fuese." Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 25.

scenes in his novels that seem to accomplish this sort of short-circuiting. In *La caída de Madrid* the security officer Guillermo Majón has received orders to execute Enrique Roda, who remains locked up in a non-descript cell. Roda naively believes that he will be imprisoned for several years, but that he will eventually obtain his release. He remains completely unaware that Maximiliano Arroyo is intent on carrying out some perverse religious drama by “giving” Franco two companions to accompany him in death (the already murdered Muñoz Cortés being the other) like the two thieves who died with Christ. Arroyo barked out an oblique message to his subordinate Guillermo that Roda was to be killed that night.¹⁴⁰ The narration focuses from time to time on the prisoner who is vexed about the silence in his cell and the absence of any company.¹⁴¹ The narration also focuses on Guillermo’s point of view. No counter-order from Arroyo is received and thus the reader agonizingly understands that Roda’s fate is sealed.

In *La larga marcha* Raúl Vidal fought against Franco’s forces during the Civil War. As a member of the defeated, *los vencidos*, Raúl is forced to perform the most labor-intensive and dangerous work in the northern city of Bovra’s subway system. At the end of each shift he is covered from head to toe in soot. His workmates simply walk home after work, plastered in filth, but Raúl insists on taking a shower and returning home in clean clothes. He refuses to pass through the streets in the “uniform” of a defeated Republican (un *vencido*). This is an example of the “small step” similar to Cézanne’s intensive use of color in provoking affect or the heroic attempts at what

¹⁴⁰ “Se lo había contado [...] “Que no existe, que no consta [...],” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 272.

¹⁴¹ “Tantas horas solo. Ni siquiera se oía ya la radio. Todo estaba en silencio,” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 241.

Deleuze and Guattari refer to as stammering or stuttering¹⁴² when a ready response remains unavailable.

Chirbes illustrates convincingly how difficult such a first step must have been in the Spain of the 1950s. Raúl's wife and daughter spend hours each day sewing clothes to help make ends meet. He grows vegetables on a rented plot next to his house. Worse for Raúl, however, is the humiliation and ingratitude that he suffers at the hands of his brother Antonio. After the war Antonio was sentenced to several years in jail for his activities as a local leader of the fallen Republic. Raúl and his family suffered deprivation because each day they reserved for him portions of desperately needed food. Once per week either Raúl or his wife took an arduous journey by train and foot to visit him and to share provisions. Antonio is eventually released from prison, and almost immediately switches his allegiance to Franco's Movement. He visits the local cinema and stands for the Nationalist anthem *Cara al sol*, enthusiastically giving the fascist salute before the showing of the film. Antonio insensitively tells his brother that the latter could not possibly understand what he has sacrificed, and that "he has done enough already."¹⁴³ He dismisses the many deprivations that Raúl and his family endured while he was imprisoned. Antonio eventually marries the sister of the richest and the most well connected man in town, and fails to invite his brother to the ceremony. Antonio's ingratitude and complete abandonment of the progressive politics that he and Raúl shared creates an insurmountable rift between the brothers.

¹⁴² Meaghan Morris refers to this "heroic" nature of Deleuze's concept of stuttering in "On the Beach," an article appearing in Grossberg, Nelson, and Treichler, *Cultural Studies*, p. 452.

¹⁴³ "Yo ya he hecho bastante. Tú no sabes lo que yo he pasado." Raúl pensaba que sabía lo suficiente. Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 28.

Chirbes's depiction of Raúl shows a man increasingly isolated and threatened.¹⁴⁴ He misses Antonio, especially on Sundays, the day the brothers used to attend soccer matches together. When he goes to the games, Raúl sits in general admission while Antonio congregates with the most powerful men of the town in the V.I.P. section directly across the field. When Raúl's son is born, a boy that he and his wife also name Raúl, the future classmate of José Luis del Moral, he feels depressed because he cannot share the news with his brother. As their relations grow more distant, Raúl's reputation as an unrepentant "Red" grows.¹⁴⁵ Avoiding such a reputation often meant the difference between life and death in the immediate aftermath of the war. There are indications that Raúl suffers from depression and is considering suicide.¹⁴⁶ When Chirbes suddenly depicts this character's death several chapters later, the reader is left unaware as to precisely how this event has come about. Was it a suicide, an accident or a violent act of reprisal against an "incorrigible red"? The child Raúl is simply summoned from his classroom and told to be brave because he is "now a man." This unsettling depiction of an untimely and unexplained death avoids rationality and goes directly to the nervous system.

La larga marcha also features the character Luis Coronado, a petty thief and a street vendor who sells both legal and illegal goods. Coronado is the husband of the woman that seeks Dr. Vicente Tabarca's assistance in obtaining an abortion. He

¹⁴⁴ Chirbes's narrator mentions, for example, that [...] mientras que él seguía moviéndose en el reducido espacio que separaba la estación de la taberna y de su casa, y sólo de vez en cuando se acercaba a los bares de la plaza [...], *La larga marcha*, p. 26.

¹⁴⁵ "[...] y esa actitud de distanciamiento le había procurado un aura reciente de rojo," Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 27.

¹⁴⁶ "Entonces deseaba liarse una soga alrededor del cuello, igual que se les ata a los perros (¿qué era él?)," Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 30.

endlessly, and mostly unsuccessfully, seeks to move up the economic ladder. He sells ostensibly outlawed products such as prophylactics, but also works for a time as a mule in the narcotics trade. When that position dries up he lands a position as a chauffeur for a newly rich black marketer. On his first day on the job Coronado drives about Madrid with his new employer who points out various buildings where he spent time in his climb to wealth. Coronado begins to understand that although the new position promises to rescue him and his family from the dire straits into which they have fallen, he simply cannot bear to be off the streets. As he contemplates his new horizons, Coronado realizes that what he will be giving up – selling goods outside of theaters, bars and public restrooms, lifting an occasional wallet and working in illicit trades as opportunities arise – means more to him than the financial security that his new job promises. This insight into his desire for mobility, despite his endless repetition of platitudes about dressing for success, finding the right opportunity to move up, and using polite and soft-spoken words overwhelms him.¹⁴⁷ He leaps out of the car at the next traffic light.

In *La larga marcha* Chirbes again gets beyond mere statistics, and by using sensation recreates the struggle that most poor Spaniards waged in order to survive after the Civil War. He succeeds as well at portraying the fear that marked the existence of the defeated. Dr. Tabarca, as we noted above, is limited to operating a small clinic in a working class section of Madrid. The original death sentence that he received was commuted to several years of imprisonment solely because a family member served as one of Franco's generals, and intervened on his behalf. This is another indication by

¹⁴⁷ “[...] –la moneda con la que iba a pagar su vida-, y si en una cara decía eso, miedo a la riqueza, en la otra por fuerza tenía que decir querencia a la miseria, apego a las puertas de los cines de sesión continua, a las salidas de los urinarios públicos [...],” Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 122.

Chirbes of the arbitrary nature of Franco's system for meting out reward and punishment. After his release, Tabarca and his wife selected an apartment with several windows facing the street. At first they appreciate the natural light that the windows allow, but the doctor soon regrets choosing the apartment because there are no interior rooms where he feels that he can read at night without attracting the attention of authorities. Tabarca suffers from unrelenting insomnia due to the brutal torture sessions that he endured while imprisoned as well as the fear that he and his wife, despite a fierce daily struggle, will not have enough to support themselves and their children. He fears that if he discovered reading at night, authorities will believe that he has not "repented" from his leftist leanings, and that new "treatments" would be necessary.¹⁴⁸ The narrator reports that Tabarca spends the nights "thinking, remembering, and being afraid."¹⁴⁹

In a scene remarkable for its ability to "make language tremble," Tabarca examines a small child in the reduced space of his office. As he places the stethoscope on the boy's chest, he remarks to himself that the only malady from which the boy suffers is malnutrition. The doctor imagines the threat of starvation as a sort of winged beast. Chirbes introduces sound into the scene by Tabarca's hearing the fluttering of the beasts' wings and the "breathing of hunger" in the very room where the boy is being examined. Tabarca fears that the beast will be able to reach him and his family through the stethoscope that he places on the boy's sunken chest.

y él ponía el fonendo sobre aquellos pechos frágiles y
escuchaba respirar el hambre que se transmitía a través de

¹⁴⁸ Don Vicente, cada vez que abre un libro, sabe que, con ese gesto, demuestra que la dolorosa cura, no ha sido suficiente, que sigue intoxicado y teme una nueva intervención de esos despiadados cirujanos [...], Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, pp. 46-47.

¹⁴⁹ "Piensa, recuerda y tiene miedo," Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 44.

los cables, que se comunicaba de cuerpo a cuerpo – del ajeno al suyo, y viceversa – a través de los cables, porque él también veía mover sus alas a aquel fantasma que amenazaba a su mujer, a sus hijas, a él mismo.¹⁵⁰

Chirbes uses sensation in his depiction of AIDS in *Los viejos amigos*. As mentioned, Demetrio Rull's partner Jorge is in the last stages of the illness. The narrator discusses the progression of Jorge's illness when the focus returns to Demetrio. When Jorge's face and penis are first speckled with the sarcoma typical of AIDS, he is able to joke about it, "Estoy espantoso. Quién va a querer mirar esta polla con una mancha negra."¹⁵¹ Chirbes, however, compares the irremediable assault of AIDS as progressing from flirtatious contacts between the disease and the victim to the "real marriage," and the "stable relationship" when the disease fully settles in. At this point all worry about aesthetics are surrendered and concern becomes focused on diminishing time.

Fugaces encuentros con la enfermedad, primeras tomas de contacto, aún no era una relación estable [...] El verdadero matrimonio con la enfermedad llegó luego. Ya no cuestión de estética. Cuestión de tiempo que corre contrareloj.¹⁵²

Demetrio also refers to the house that he and Jorge share as being taken over by death, [...] "la muerte ocupa lentamente la casa."¹⁵³

In *La caída de Madrid* Margarita Duran decides to marry José María Ricart, or Josemari, and the depiction of this decision is awash in sensation. She makes her determination suddenly while at a party to celebrate the birthday of Josemari's grandfather. Earlier in the day Margarita had participated in an anti-Franco demonstration

¹⁵⁰ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, pp. 98-99.

¹⁵¹ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 43.

¹⁵² Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 43.

¹⁵³ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 41.

at the university she attends. The speech that she had written was entitled, “Cuando la voz del líder es el silencio del pueblo,” (“When the Voice of the Leader is the Silence of the People.”).¹⁵⁴ Her choice of a husband is unsettling given her political activities. Josemari is a prototypical young Francoist bunkerite. He publishes a newsletter entitled *Salvar España* (“Saving Spain”) and actively participates in the intimidation and beating of leftist students alongside uniformed policeman on university campuses and on the streets of Madrid. The infusion of sensation comes when the process of Margarita’s meditations, which have been years in the making, suddenly coalesce in her decision to exert a measure of control over her life and the fortune that she will inherit by marrying the pliable Josemari (she refers to him as “brainless,” *sin ceso*),¹⁵⁵ a decision that mirrors the one that her father made when he married her mother Elvira. Margarita skips upstairs to Josemari’s bedroom at the end of the party, and placing his head into her lap, pledges to protect him (and herself) from any disturbance. A clearer depiction of coldly protecting one’s financial interests could hardly be imagined.

[...] porque ya corría Marga escaleras arriba, abría la puerta de la habitación donde él dormía y se sentaba en su cama y cogía su cabeza entre las manos y se la ponía en el regazo y se quedaba a la espera de la explosión contemplando la cabeza de aquel inocente en cuyo interior se guardaban recuerdos de ella convertida en princesa caprichosa y cruel. [...] La cabeza de Josemari, así dormido, tenía una belleza serena y sin seso que ella estaba decidida a proteger de cualquier explosión.¹⁵⁶

The last scene of sensation that we will consider is the possible sexual violation of José Luis del Moral by the schoolmaster at the orphanage where he is sent after his

¹⁵⁴ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 107.

¹⁵⁵ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 237.

father's attempted suicide. The boy's classmates were not the only ones who enjoyed picking on him. The schoolmaster found fault in most of José Luis' actions, from the way that he licked his fingers before turning the page of a book to the manner in which he held his forks and knives in the dining hall. The schoolmaster regularly slapped him in front of his peers and once read aloud in assembly the miserable boy's pleas contained in a letter written to his father, begging to be removed from the orphanage. One night, however, the headmaster unexpectedly calls José Luis into his office. He embraced the boy, and inquired as to why he had never asked him for a pardon for any of his many infractions. Chirbes again introduces smell into his narration because the frightened, gay teenager notes the odors of the man's sweat, tobacco and cologne. Chirbes provides as well an example of the presence of the past that lingers alongside the actualized present as José Luis notes that it was years later, in Madrid, when he had come to learn the name of the schoolmaster's cologne, *Álvarez Gómez*. With respect to sensation, the narrator does not reveal whether the schoolmaster was really seeking some sort of reconciliation from the child or whether a scene of molestation is taking place. Note the meat-like reference in José Luis' mentioning of the headmaster's fat body (*el grueso cuerpo*).

El muchacho sintió la presión de aquellos brazos apretándolo contra el grueso cuerpo, y olió el perfume de su chaqueta (años más tarde descubriría, ya en Madrid, ese perfume, que era *Álvarez Gómez*), y el olor de sudor y tobacco del cuello de aquel hombre, que repetía la palabra perdón.¹⁵⁷

In this chapter we noted that Deleuze and Chirbes share an interest in the paintings of Francis Bacon. Both novelist and philosopher have discerned Bacon's ability

¹⁵⁶ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 237.

¹⁵⁷ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 237.

to use color and other rubrics to bypass cognition and go directly to the nervous system. Deleuze wrote a book about Bacon's work, while Chirbes dedicated an important essay to it. The latter admits to being heavily influenced by the uncontrolled movements, force, colors, and the diagram as well as the presence of meat in Bacon's paintings, all elements commented on by Deleuze, and that this influence found its way into his novels. Bacon and Chirbes use affective sensations in different formats to begin to undo the supposed individual subjectivity that remains very dear to the vast majority of human beings that stubbornly subscribe to one arborescent arrangement or another. In *La larga marcha*, Chirbes portrays individuals caught up in Franco's Nationalist Movement and explores the reasons that they came to desire their own oppression.¹⁵⁸ Their ultimate disillusionment is portrayed through numerous displays of flesh or meat as we saw in the example the body of the boxer Ángel. In that first novel as well as in *La caída de Madrid* and *Los viejos amigos*, Chirbes does not fail to include renderings of the facisms that emanated from the Left as well as the Right. In *La caída de Madrid*, for example, Chirbes's utilizes Franco's body itself, crisscrossed by tubes and weighed down by machines, to get at the reactive forces undergirding his regime as well as the numerous lines of flight that grew up in the middle of it. He examines the arborescent moorings of the establishment Left through bizarre strolls and the depiction of deformed as well as beautiful views of flesh. The effusion of wounded, diseased or exhausted bodies continues in *Los viejos amigos*, depictions that correspond with the ubiquitous Death-States that on Deleuze and Guattari's account, have taken hold of Western states under advanced capital. Like Bacon's pictorial art, Chirbes narrative often bypasses cognition and resonates directly with the nervous system. Thus the "two-fold" approach to Bacon

¹⁵⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 215.

demonstrates a creative philosophical and creative engagement with the task of thinking otherwise and calling forth a new people.

Chapter Four: Spain: 1939-2003

Deleuze and Guattari continually oppose history in the official or traditional sense of the word, which usually has a causal or explanatory ambition. For example in *A Thousand Plateaus*, they argue that “All history does is to translate a coexistence of becomings into a succession.”¹ Against history they oppose the event. Indeed, Deleuze allowed that he attempted to discover “the nature of events” in each of his books.² Events are intensive in nature. Deleuze refers to events as emanating from chaos.³ And much of that intensive force of an event is always held in reserve for other potential actualizations. In *The Fold*, for instance, Deleuze explains that the first element of an event is that it is *extensive* in nature. Deleuze states that, “Extension exists when one element is stretched over the following ones [...] Such a connection of whole-parts forms an intensive series that contains neither a final term nor a limit.”⁴ Events often go unnoticed or are simply dismissed by the chroniclers of official history, a phenomenon that Deleuze and Guattari subscribe to the event’s “shadowy and secret part that is continually subtracted from or added to its actualization . . .”⁵ Deleuze and Guattari contend that what matters most are the often hidden and molecular histories that run parallel or beneath a molar history because these hidden histories point to where connections are made and where change, or becoming-other, happens.⁶ Deleuze and Guattari oppose history for its malleability in justifying a certain state’s coming into

¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 430.

² Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*, p. 141.

³ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, p. 156.

⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, p. 77.

⁵ *What Is Philosophy*, p. 156.

⁶ *What Is Philosophy*, p. 158.

being.⁷ However, as evidenced by a comment that Deleuze gave during an interview, they would contend that the time of history and the time of the event often intersect, and that “there are all sorts of correlations and echoes between them.”⁸ In *What Is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari state that the role of history, a role that it does not control, is to provide a milieu for creative becoming-other:

“Becoming” does not belong to history. History today still designates only the set of conditions, however recent they may be, from which one turns away in order to become, that is to say, in order to create something new.⁹

In this chapter we will present “states of affairs” as they materialized in Spain during the years covered in the trilogy, that is 1936-2003, and as they are affectively rendered by Chirbes. The aim of the chapter is to illustrate the molar or arborescent structures that either entrap certain characters or that are avoided or overcome by those characters marked by a more rhizomatic orientation. In other words we will discuss occurrences as they occurred in the time of *chronos*. Ronald Bogue takes a similar approach in *Deleuzian Fabulation* in which he first establishes the circumstances on the ground in the five different locales before examining the becoming-other of various characters in the time of the event, or *aion*.¹⁰

As we noted in our introduction, arborescent or molar systems, according to Deleuze and Guattari, are the foundation of Western philosophy. Based on the model of a tree, the world is depicted as consisting of a unified system where everything is ultimately connected by a root system to a trunk. Bodies and subjects are more or less

⁷ See Jeffrey A. Bell’s article, “Of the Rise and Progress of Philosophical Concepts: Deleuze’s Humean Historiography,” in Jeffrey A. Bell and Claire Colebrook, (eds.), *Deleuze and History*, p. 61.

⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness*, p. 377.

⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, p. 96.

¹⁰ Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 63.

ideal depending on how close they remain to the root system. It is important to note that each of Chirbes's novels includes characters that reveal arborescent *and* molecular attitudes, a portrayal consistent with Deleuze and Guattari's constant admonitions that creative lines of flight run the risk of slipping back into hierarchical stultification. For example in *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari state that "Every society and every individual, are thus plied by both segmentarities simultaneously: one molar, the other *molecular*."¹¹ We will utilize the terms "molar structure" or "molar set-ups" to designate any kind of formation or organization that blocks experimentation or impedes a becoming-other on the part of individual characters or Spanish society as a whole.

The molar structures depicted in Chirbes's works are numerous. He illustrates Franco and the victors of the Spanish Civil War's attempts to enforce the centrality of Castile and the Castilian language on citizens connected to the historical regions and languages of Galicia, the Basque Country, Catalonia and Valencia. Chirbes presents examples of characters subscribing to an unquestioning belief, hardly unique to Spain, in the progress and self-advancement that comes about from "rugged individualism." Other arborescent structures that occurred in Spain and that are reflected in Chirbes's work are the privileging of men over women; heterosexuality over alternative sexual orientations; the human over becoming-animal or becoming-imperceptible; and the denial of death caused by a blind adherence to the axiomatic of the neo-liberal order. We consider each of these arborescent structures in the following sections of this chapter. The result of any one of them is the abnegation of the individual and collective experimentation that Deleuze and Guattari called for.¹² Each of these arborescent structures, in the phrase of

¹¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 213.

¹² See *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 161.

Maurizio Lazzarato, attempts to “confine the outside.”¹³ Confining the outside, Lazzarato writes, “shuts out the virtual, the power of metamorphosis, becoming.”¹⁴ Chirbes proceeds with a depiction of historical state of affairs, but he does so with an eye toward the unhistorical history of the event.¹⁵

The Privileging of Castile and the Castilian Language

Sebastian Balfour states that after Franco’s victory in 1939, the new government instituted laws that targeted “class and regional identities.”¹⁶ Balfour argues that for Franco and his supporters, Spain’s “health lay in a mythologized Castilian countryside.”¹⁷ He records how the new government’s policies affected the defeated left living in the historic regions.

For all those who did not share the aims of the new regime, life was claustrophobic; without freedom of expression, their beliefs, and in Galicia, the Basque Country, and Catalonia – their own language, were confined to private spaces. [...] Language became a tool of the victors. Even footballing terms were renamed to eliminate words with foreign deviations.¹⁸

The Catalan writer Vicenç Navarro describes how the privileging of the Castilian language affected those who spoke the other languages of Spain. When Navarro was seven years old he was slapped full in the face by a member of the national police force merely for speaking Catalan on the streets of Barcelona. The officer screamed at the boy

¹³ Maurizio Lazzarato, “Life and the Living in the Societies of Control,” in Martin Fuglsang and Adrian Parr, (eds.), *Deleuze and the Social*, pp. 175-176.

¹⁴ Maurizio Lazzarato, “Life and the Living in the Societies of Control,” p. 175.

¹⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 96.

¹⁶ Sebastian Balfour, “Spain from 1931 to the Present,” in Raymond Carr, (ed.), *Spain: A History*, p. 265.

¹⁷ Balfour, “Spain from 1931 to the Present,” p. 266.

¹⁸ Balfour, “Spain from 1931 to the Present,” p. 266.

that he “had to speak in the Christian language, (Spanish), and to stop talking like a dog,” (“*gritándome que no hablara como un perro y que tenía que hablar en cristiano.*”)¹⁹

Xelís de Toro, in an article discussing the renaissance of the bagpipe in contemporary Galician life, explains that during the Franco period, the government found the instrument to be innocuous enough, but that even here it attempted to impose Castilian dominance by ordering that the red and yellow colors of the Spanish flag be incorporated into the design of the Galician bagpipe. De Toro explains the importance of this imposition:

While the public use of Galician language and literature were banned, the bagpipe was co-opted into official Francoist culture as a way of incorporating into the nation-state an ambiguous, undefined Galician identity which posed no threat to Spanish hegemony.²⁰

As we noted in the first chapter, Chirbes himself in his essays discusses the importance of language for a minority. In his article “De lugares y lenguas,” He recalls that when speaking in Catalan to a friend on a train years earlier they were interrupted by a man who insisted that they speak in Castilian, because after all “this was Spain.”²¹ In the same article Chirbes voices a stringent objection to a language being imposed on others as a result of a war. He laments that in the case of Spain, the victors went beyond the repression of Galician, Basque and Catalan authors because the best writers of Castilian were killed, jailed or exiled. In the citation that follows Chirbes argues that

¹⁹ Vicenç Navarro, *Bienestar insuficiente, democracia insuficiente: Sobre lo que no se habla en nuestro país*, p. 212.

²⁰ Xelís de Toro, “Bagpipes and Digital Music: The Remixing of Galician Identity,” in Jo Labanyi, (ed.) *Constructing Identity in Contemporary Spain: Theoretical Debates and Cultural Practice*, p. 243.

²¹ “Hace muchos años, en un compartimento de tren, cierto señor malcarado nos increpó a un amigo y a mí, exigiéndonos que hablásemos castellano. “Esto es España,” djo, Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 136.

forces at work in history find themselves expressed, albeit to a necessarily insufficient degree, in language.²²

Todos esos avatares de la historia acaban pegándoseles a los idiomas. Y más en ese caso, cuando, de nuevo, un idioma se consideraba vencedor en una guerra sobre los otros: no era verdad, sus más cuidadosos e inteligentes escritores habían sido fusilados, encarcelados o exiliados.²³

In Chirbes's fiction, the narrator as well as numerous characters, echo this privileging of Castilian identity as well as the Spanish language. As we noted in the first chapter, the opening scene of *La larga marcha* is of the birth of Manuel Amado's second son in the Galician village of Fiz. Without consulting his wife Manuel decides to name the baby Carmelo in honor of an elder brother who died in Morocco prior to the Spanish Civil War. The narrator reveals the difficulty that the Galician soldier had understanding orders given to him in Castilian. Manuel eventually moves with his family to Madrid after the government ordered the flooding of the valley in which Fiz is situated in order to construct a reservoir.²⁴ The young Carmelo, now in high school, discovers that classrooms are abuzz with Castilian spoken in multiple accents from the far-flung corners of Spain. This reflects the reality of the massive migration into the Spanish cities taking place at the time. Balfour reports that during the early years of the Franco period and believing "the regime's exaltation of rural life, the countryside was emptied of its inhabitants."²⁵ As we

²² This citation that addresses the compulsory approach to the use of Castilian in Spain finds resonance in Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the "order word" which they define as the "elementary unit of language." See *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 76.

²³ Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 133.

²⁴ Several commentators have noted Franco's fondness for initiating and then publicizing construction projects. See, for example, Sheelagh Elwood, "The Moving Image of the Franco Regime: Noticiarios y Documentales 1943-1975," in Helen Graham and Jo Labanyi, (eds.), *Spanish Cultural Studies: An introduction*, p. 202.

²⁵ Balfour, "Spain from 1931 to the Present", p. 270.

noted in the first chapter, Carmelo quickly learns that the Castilian as it is spoken in Madrid holds the superior position. Those who spoke with a different accent were deemed slow-witted.

This privileging of Castile and the Castilian language goes hand in hand with the by now almost stereotypical notion of the “Two Spains.” Sebastian Balfour notes that the victors during the Civil War formed what was known as a “pact of blood” for governing after the war²⁶ This unwritten concordance resulted in the execution by conservative estimates of at least ten thousand of the vanquished left in the first few months after the active cessation of hostilities. Tens of thousands of other Spaniards were thrown into prison. Many of these political prisoners were permitted to “redeem” a portion of their sentences through physical labor, often being farmed out to Franco’s industrial supporters. Balfour describes the basic outline of Franco’s government that was put together during the war.

Religion and nationalism became intertwined, seen as the defence of religion against the Antichrist, the defence of the true Spain against the anti-Spain of liberals and communists, behind whom lay a conspiracy of historic enemies: Marxists, Jews and freemasons.²⁷

Balfour writes that besides execution and imprisonment, the new regime implemented its values through a mixture of religious and medical rhetoric by way of “education, psychological programming, and media propaganda.” One of the recurring themes was “the spiritual disinfection” of Spain.²⁸ Chirbes presents multiple illustrations of this notion of “The Two Spains,” particularly in the spoken words of Nationalist

²⁶ Balfour, “Spain from 1931 to the Present”, p. 265.

²⁷ Balfour, “Spain from 1931 to the Present,” p. 254.

officers during the Civil War. Such is the case with Captain Varela, the commanding officer of Luis Coronado. As we discussed in the last chapter, after the war Coronado is an impoverished vendor who plies his trade on the streets of Madrid. Coronado cuts a singularly unsympathetic figure in *La larga marcha*. Despite his impoverishment, he is obsessed with his physical appearance. Chirbes introduces him with his focusing on his frayed garments. In the following citation Coronado recalls lessons that he learned from a superior while serving in Franco's army during the Civil War. These lessons include a disdain for the human body as well as a fastidious regard for polite words and maintaining a well-groomed appearance.

Lo importante era el aspecto. La chaqueta, la corbata, la colonia, las palabras bien dichas, el permítame usted y el por favor. “Un hombre es lo que aparenta. Un hombre se distingue de otro hombre por lo que aparenta. En cueros, los dos son iguales, y, por dentro, un saco de mierda que, a cade boquete que le hace apesta.”²⁹

The harangues of Coronado's superiors capture the attitude of those who fancied themselves denizens of the “true Spain.” As he continues to exhort his troops he appeals to numerous transcendent values. There is a denigration of non-human life, in this case a monkey, followed by appeals to God, the vaulted Spanish nation, undefined “ideals” and to Varela's male anatomy as features that distinguish him and those like him from communists and others consigned to the “anti-Spain.” An address more clogged with transcendental values could scarcely be imagined.

Yo no vengo del mono, como los comunistas que dicen que vienen del mono y a veces pienso que tienen razón, que ellos que sí vienen del mono. A mí me hizo Dios, y me hizo

²⁸ Balfour, “Spain from 1931 to the Present,” p. 266

²⁹ Rafael Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 52.

hombre y español, y por eso, además de dos cojones, tengo alma, patria y bandera e ideales.³⁰

After the war Coronado slavishly clings to the lessons learned from officers such as Varela. For this reason he constantly entreats his wife to mend his threadbare clothes. The absorption of his wartime lessons is so complete that he accuses his very garments of “monkeying around” (“a monear, a no parecer humana, sino monil”)³¹ as they invariably wear out. Despite an ever-deepening descent into poverty, Coronado clings to the molar lessons absorbed during the war. As we discussed in the last chapter, he refuses all exits out of his decrepit condition. One of the last glimpses of him in *La larga marcha* is that of a man so racked with emphysema that he is barely able to climb a flight of stairs.³²

We have also considered the Salamancan bootblack Pedro del Moral. Like Coronado, Del Moral fought with Franco’s troops during the war. He also comes from the lowest economic class. Before the war he worked as a farm hand outside a village known as Fuentes de San Sebastian. The harangues of Nationalist officers during the civil war had a profound impact upon Del Moral as well. These harangues linger on in the duration from which his present has emerged. In the following citation, he recalls the promises of the “Beautiful Spain” made to the soldiers that fought with the Nationalists that was sure to materialize once they defeated the “godless hordes of international communism.” The same sort of promise was broadcast endlessly across Spain and reached the ears of everyday Spaniards from ubiquitous radio sets, as the narrator notes. The mention of radio programs is one of the many examples of the many nefarious

³⁰ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 52.

³¹ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 53.

³² “Estaba muy delgado, comía poco y fumaba a todas horas, [...]”, Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 244.

machinic operations that Franco's supporters employed during the Civil War and throughout the subsequent dictatorship to maintain control over the populace.³³

pensaba que la posguerra iba a ser hermosa, y de ellos, de quienes habían servido a la bandera española contra las hordas de la república. Así se lo prometían los altos mandos que visitaban las trincheras y les hablaban después de haberlos puesto en formación (“Vencedores de las hordas sin fe del comunismo internacional), o los que pronunciaban discursos por la radio, cuyas voces se escuchaban a todas horas en la cantina.³⁴

In *El novelista perplejo* Chirbes notes that in today's Spain television and the majoritarian cinema continue to churn out arborescent messages that reduce the effectiveness of alternative communications that point toward difference.³⁵ In any event, rhetoric fashioned about the notion of “The Two Spains” is not limited to *La larga marcha*. Recall that in *La caída de Madrid* Tomás and Olga Ricart are an upper-class couple with close ties to the Franco regime. Tomás' father José Ricart profited from Franco's policy of allowing Republican prisoners to “redeem” part of their sentences through manual labor. He also amassed a fortune in the black market after the war. As we have seen, there is not unanimity of political opinion within the household. Quini, despite his economic advantages, militates against the regime as a member of a Marxist organization at university. Josemari, on the other hand, belongs to a thuggish group that calls itself, “Guerrillas of Christ the King.” Frustrated by the inability of authorities to quell discontent during the late Franco period, Josemarí argues that the time has come for

³³ Balfour, “Spain from 1931 to the Present,” p. 265. For an in-depth discussion of the various methods that the Franco regime used to control editorial houses and the media see Georgina Cisquella, José Luis Erviti and José A. Sorolla's *La represión cultural en el franquismo: Diez años de censura durante la Ley de Prensa (1966-1976)*.

³⁴ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 34.

³⁵ Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, pp. 21-22.

a return to “the dialectics of fists and pistols.”³⁶ Referring to his brother Quini and other leftists as “vultures” (buitres), Josemarí provides an illustration of how the notion of the “Two Spains” continued well into the mid-1970s. The following citation is an example of minor writing because the free-indirect style Chirbes captures the manner of speaking that a young Francoist Bunkerite might employ.

-No es política, papá – decía Josemari -, es que Quini es comunista, y si no viene a comer, es porque está metido en los follones que han montado para hoy en Filosofía. Los buitres se preparan para la insurrección, aprovechando la agonía del Caudillo; y tu hijo es uno de eso buitres. ¿Te enteras? Es que le estás dando de comer a un comunista.³⁷

In *Los viejos amigos* the idea of “The Two Spains” has been modified. Gone are references to an idealized Castile or an enforced kowtowing to a corporate Catholicism. What has taken its place, according to Jo Labanyi is the constant threat of “an ethos of the market in which only the winners count.”³⁸ This threat has continued regardless of whether the Partido Socialista Español (PSOE) or the conservative Partido Popular (PP) has been in power. Santiago Belloch in a vigorous attack on the PP and the return of the first conservative government in Spain since the death of Franco argues that, “the same old witches and the same old surnames” from the Franco period returned to the helm of the Spanish state.³⁹ But Belloch and other progressive observers such as Julia Navarro and Raimundo Castro argue that the PSOE did precious little while it held power besides

³⁶ “[...] había vuelto la hora de esgrimir la dialéctica de los puños y las pistolas,” Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 18.

³⁷ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 167.

³⁸ Labanyi, *Constructing Identity*, p. 8.

³⁹ “En 1996 se inició el retorno de los viejos brujos, y los viejos apellidos, de la política española.” Santiago Belloch, *El asalto a la cultura democrática: El síndrome de Aznar*, pp. 16-17.

carrying water for global capital.⁴⁰ Chirbes himself in *El novelista perplejo* discusses the lack of fundamental change in Spain since the end of the Franco era despite the rise to power of the PSOE in 1977 and its nearly twenty years of tenure because, quoting Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio, a progressive writer who remained in Spain and whose essential anti-Franco works appeared during the 1950s, “If the gods aren’t changed, nothing changes.”⁴¹

In *Los viejos amigos* Chirbes includes as former members of the Marxist cell, *Unidad de Comunistas*, Spaniards from wealthy families, i.e. “those who count” in Labanyi’s expression, as well as characters from the lowest rungs of society. Among the characters from poorer backgrounds, such as Rita, there is a real fear of finding oneself destitute as one approaches his or her sixties. Rita works as an advertising salesperson for a magazine devoted to fine wines. In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari specifically mention advertising as a perversion of expenditure.⁴² Because fewer customers are willing to advertise in speciality magazines, or in magazines at all, Rita begins to worry about simply making ends meet. Seeing a homeless man pushing a shopping cart filled with his belongings down the sidewalk sends her into a panic.

Cada vez que veo a alguien arrastrando un carrito de esos que roban en los supermercados para meter los trastos, cada vez que veo a eso tipos sin afeitar, con los pantalones tiesos y sucios, arrastrando un carrito metálico lleno de mierda, de trapos, de basuras, se me encoge el corazón [...] eso sí que me da miedo [...]⁴³

⁴⁰ Julia Navarro y Raimundo Castro, *La izquierda que viene*, pp. 16-31.

⁴¹ Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 29.

⁴² Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 235.

⁴³ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 57.

The above citation is an example of capitalism's attempt to channel desire into mere survival that Deleuze and Guattari discuss in *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. Rita, her ex-husband Carlos and Demetrio are the members of the former cell who are, in the words of the critics Augusta López Bernasochi and José Manuel López de Abiada, "economic failures or those who consider themselves as such."⁴⁴ Wealthier characters include Narciso, Guzmán, Ada Dutruel, the lawyer Taboada and Ramón Alcóllar. There are throughout *Los viejos amigos* oblique references to the mutual advantages that members of the upper class afford one another, both in their salad days as "revolutionaries" as well as during and after the transition to democracy. For example, when the artist Demetrio takes up the narration, he notes that despite trying unsuccessfully for years to secure a show at Ada Dutruel's prestigious art gallery, the wealthy Alcóllar, a former lover of the painter Demetrio, takes up photography and becomes a celebrated artist in short order due to Ada's machinations. Demetrio bitterly observes, "Everybody knows that the upper class doesn't enter through the service door."⁴⁵ When Amalia takes up the narration she recalls how the family of her wealthy husband Narciso secured his release from jail after he informed the police of all of the details concerning the cell's activities, ("de pe a pe las actividades del grupo").⁴⁶ Also released was Laura, another member from a well-heeled family.

While the pregnant Amalia remained locked up, Narciso and Laura began a sexual relationship, the sort of betrayal that Deleuze refers to in *Essays Critical and*

⁴⁴ "los fracasos o que se consideran tales." Augusta López Bernasocchi and José Manuel Loez de Abiada, "Lo que va de ayer a hoy". Hacia una caracterización de los personajes de *Los viejos amigos*, de Rafael Chirbes, in María-Teresa Ibáñez Ehrlich, (ed.), *Ensayos sobre Rafael Chirbes*, p. 116.

⁴⁵ "Ya se sabe que la alta clase no entra nunca por la puerta de servicio," Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 27.

⁴⁶ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 167.

Clinical as equal to “breaking an implicit and almost unavowable agreement.”⁴⁷ In his volume on Spinoza, Deleuze notes that Spinoza eschews conventional categorizations of good or bad, but notes that “Every object whose relation agrees with mine (*convenientia*) will be called good; every object whose relation decomposes mine, even though it agrees with other relations, will be called bad (*disconvenientia*).”⁴⁸ In the same volume on Spinoza, Deleuze makes reference to the sort of characters guilty of violating “implicit and unavowable agreements” that he discusses in *Essays Critical and Clinical*. He mentions Nero’s matricide, a murder done simply with the intention of ridding himself of Agrippina, and contrasts this crime with Orestes’ killing of Clytemnestra, who murdered his father Agamemnon. Deleuze writes that, “Orestes’ act is precisely and directly associated with the image of Agamemnon as an eternal truth with which the act agrees.”⁴⁹ No such thing can be said for Nero’s impulsive action. On Deleuze’s account this reveals that Nero “is ungrateful, without compassion and disobedient.”⁵⁰ Disobedient to what, precisely? Deleuze answers this question with a statement that goes directly to Spinoza’s concept of “good” versus “bad.”

If, on the contrary, we have always been engaged in destroying or decomposing our own parts and those of others, our intense or eternal part, our essential part, has and cannot help but have only a small number of affections that come from itself.⁵¹)

⁴⁷ Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, p. 81.

⁴⁸ Deleuze, *Spinoza*, p. 33.

⁴⁹ Deleuze, *Spinoza*, p. 36.

⁵⁰ Deleuze, *Spinoza*, p. 36.

⁵¹ Deleuze, *Spinoza*, p. 41.

It could be argued that Narciso and Laura cut off their “intense and eternal part,” and with it the flow that was the cell of the Unidad de Comunistas in its struggle against the Franco regime. The cell’s activities ceased immediately after Narciso’s betrayal. Nearly thirty years after Franco’s death, the feelings of bitterness that Amalia and others feels toward one another remain unhealed. Francisco Javier Higuero underscores the squandered feelings of community that resulted from the dismantling of the cell as distressed characters cling to the frustrations as well as the promises of the past and decline to embark on meaningful lines of liberation.⁵²

Chirbes includes in his novels scenes that illustrate artistically the traditional privileging of Castilian over other languages spoken on the Iberian peninsula. He includes characters that speak Catalán, Galician and Basque. These artistic representations in his novels reinforce Chirbes’s exhortations in his essays and public lectures about the importance of resisting calls for the abandonment of the other languages in Spain. For example, he laments hearing young people in the province of Valencia urge such a rejection of Catalan upon one another for commercial reasons.⁵³ Chirbes counters these utilitarian arguments for jettisoning a language with which women and men express “pain, love, need, exhaustion or happiness.”⁵⁴ The novels that are the subject of this study also consider the notion of the two Spains that an endless number of observers have remarked upon. That Franco and his supporters presented an idealized

⁵² Higuero writes that throughout *Los viejos amigos*, the characters make attempts to “referirse a unos acontecimientos pasados, convertidos en huellas, no desaparecidas por completo, de una presencia quizás irrelevante, pero manifestada, sin embargo, en las ausencias notables insertas en los entornos existenciales tanto del presente como del futuro [...]”, Francisco Javier Higuero, “Horizonte nihilista en *Los Viejos amigos* de Rafael Chirbes” in *Castilla* 28-29, p. 132.

⁵³ See *El novelista perplejo*, p. 166.

⁵⁴ “[...] sonidos que expresan dolor, amor, necesidad, cansancio o felicidad,” Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p.165.

Spain after the Spanish Civil War can hardly be denied. Such an effort at mandating binary unities was, however, bound to fail. We will see in the next chapter that despite the striated spaces that were set up by reactive forces after the war, they were immediately punctured by lines of flight. Chirbes also portrays persuasively the fact that many middle and upper class Spaniards played at revolution during the Franco years only to turn their back on the chance to effectuate real change after Franco's death.

Molar Set-Ups Affecting Women

Deleuze and Guattari have utilized the terms “becoming-girl” and “becoming-woman” in their philosophic project. These terms are linked to becoming, one of the most important concepts in their work. In *What Is Philosophy?*, for example, they designate the diagnosing of becoming as the role of the philosopher in her capacity as “physician of civilization,” or as the creator of new forms of living.⁵⁵ Paul Patton states that one of the ways that a body increases its powers is by entering into relation with another body or bodies “that serve to reinforce or enhance their own powers.”⁵⁶ Deleuze and Guattari have designated becoming-woman as the starting point for all becomings-other.⁵⁷ Furthermore, they point to the girl as being the first entity that has her becoming stolen as well as the first to have an organism set upon her.⁵⁸ All becoming passes through becoming-girl as it is this becoming, according to Deleuze and Guattari, that points out ways of evading the myriad dualisms that plague Western societies.⁵⁹

The concept of becoming-woman and its position of prominence have provoked much criticism, especially from feminist scholars. Tamsin Lorraine, for example, finds

⁵⁵ *What Is Philosophy?*, p. 113.

⁵⁶ Paul Patton, *Deleuze and the Political*, p. 79.

⁵⁷ *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 277.

⁵⁸ *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 276.

Deleuze and Guattari's view to be inferior to Luce Irigaray's ideas regarding female subjectivity because Irigaray, "provides a model that conceives of personal identity as mutually constitutive and continually transforming in interdependent relationship with others."⁶⁰ Lorraine, then, questions the desirability or the utility of such a complete escape from personal identity. She also argues that the mere category of a becoming-woman is "already to trade in stereotypes that the move from identity politics to micropolitics was meant to counter [...]."⁶¹ On the other hand, Claire Colebrook and Patty Sotirin voice at least qualified support for Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming-woman. Colebrook states:

Against thought as the extension or evolution of a life oriented towards good sense and self-recognition, Deleuze and Guattari create the concept of becoming-woman to at least *demoralise thinking*; both thought without a morality, and a thought that confronts its breakdown and absence of guarantee.⁶²

For her part, Sotirin examined prevailing approaches to the concept and found that, "Becoming woman disrupts the rigid hierarchies of sexual binaries such as male/female, heterosexuality/homosexuality, masculinity/femininity that organize our bodies, our experiences, our institutions and our histories."⁶³

Attitudes about women are a recurring theme in any novel by Rafael Chirbes. Despite this focus, Chirbes the essayist makes no explicit references to a strictly feminist identity or with any other perceivable minoritarian politics. This omission is consistent with Deleuze and Guattari's resistance to being limited to or identified with a particular

⁵⁹ *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 276-277.

⁶⁰ Tamsin Lorraine, *Irigaray and Deleuze: Experiments in Visceral Philosophy*, pp. 187-188.

⁶¹ Tamsin Lorraine, *Irigaray and Deleuze: Experiments in Visceral Philosophy*, p. 187.

⁶² Claire Colebrook, "Introduction Part I," in Claire Colebrook and Jami Weinstein, (eds.), *Deleuze and Gender*, p. 7.

⁶³ Patty Sotirin, "Becoming Woman," in Charles J. Stivale, (ed.), *Deleuze: Key Concepts*, p. 121.

politics of identity. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, they declare it “dangerous to confine oneself to such a subject.”⁶⁴ Eugene W. Holland, however, argues, “It would be foolish to refuse on principle to use any weapons the State offers (e.g., rights, labor contracts) to resist political oppression and economic exploitation [...]”.⁶⁵ It is important to note that Holland recommends going far beyond any notion of normative politics in the formation of concepts called free-market communism and affirmative nomadology that would loosen communism from its connection to the State and free markets from the axiomatics of capitalism.⁶⁶ Paul Patton finds a role for Deleuze and Guattari in a greatly expanded normative politics, especially in light of their comment about a “‘becoming-democratic’ as a form of resistance to present-day liberal capitalistic democracies.”⁶⁷ In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari write that there is room for expanding axiomatics under capitalism that results in more favorable for minority populations, but that the ultimate solution lies beyond such an expansion of axiomatics under capitalism.⁶⁸

With respect to Chirbes, in each of his novels arborescent lines of sexism are exposed. Several female characters actively seek to evade the double standards and traps designed to ensnare them within these lines. Others, however, remain mired in such structures; indeed we have noted with the example of Margarita Durán’s mother Elvira that some of the most stringent enforcers of misogynist ideology in Chirbes’s novels are themselves female characters. We will now consider other examples of arborescent

⁶⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 276.

⁶⁵ Eugene W. Holland, *Nomad Citizenship: Free-Market Communism and the Slow-Motion General Strike*, p. xi.

⁶⁶ Eugene W. Holland, *Nomad Citizenship: Free-Market Communism and the Slow-Motion General Strike*, p. 140.

⁶⁷ Paul Patton, *Deleuzian Concepts: Philosophy, Colonization, Politics*, p. 2.

⁶⁸ *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 463-464.

attitudes portrayed in Chirbes's narrative work with respect to women and how these attitudes reflect the realities of Spanish cultures during the years covered in his trilogy. Again, as an essayist, Chirbes makes no overtly feminist stance. His artistic productions, however, are replete with female characters the expand their territories, joining "with the forces of the future, cosmic forces."⁶⁹

In *La larga marcha*, Manuel Amado's thoughts while he awaits the birth of his second son reveal that he does not even deign to include women as adult persons. When he recalls the reaction of the citizens of Fiz to the bright clothing of the rich *indianos*, Spaniards who returned to Spain after amassing fortunes in the Americas, he places women in a separate category. The citation that follows also demonstrates the stifling atmosphere of rural Fiz where the *indianos* are viewed with "a mixture of envy and fear of the unknown."

Él había visto en las romerías a los tres indianos de la comarca – uno de ellos vivía en la casona de la plaza de Fiz – que charlaban en corro vestido de blanco, con las chalinas colgadas del cuello y sus llamativos panamás. Los niños los miraban con curiosidad y daban vueltas en torno a ellos, mientras que *las mujeres y los adultos* cuchicheaban y les lanzaban unas miradas de refilón en las que se mexclaban la envidia y el temor a lo desconocido.⁷⁰ (my emphasis.)

Manuel's attitude toward his sister Eloisa is also rife with sexism. When she enters the kitchen for a pot of boiling water during Carmelo's birth, Manuel dismisses her as an "old maid" (*solterona*), and reveals that his mania for control, as the sole surviving male sibling in the family, extends even to his sister's sexuality. He assumes that Eloisa

⁶⁹ *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 311.

⁷⁰ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 15.

is ignorant of sexual pleasure. Motherhood itself is cloaked in sensual mystery in Manuel's mind.

La entrada de Eloísa en busca de una nueva cacerola de agua caliente interrumpió los pensamientos de Manuel. Cruzaron algunas palabras – “ya viene, viene bien”, dijo la solterona, que aprendía una vez más los misterios dolorosos de la maternidad, sin tener acceso a los gozos [...] ⁷¹

Other characters provide different views of Eloísa. Later in the novel, Carmelo, now a pre-adolescent boy, spies his aunt flirting with a member of the Guardia Civil, a man ten years her junior. Carmelo is shocked to see that the officer has hung the iconic tri-cornered hat on the branch of an ash tree. His astonishment at this perceived lack of protocol is itself a study in how arborescent ideologies are absorbed by the young. It is also an excellent example of affect because the sight of the tri-cornered hat, long a symbol of authority in Spain, hanging from the branch sends the boy's thoughts in heretofore-unknown directions. In any event, this scene is one of several in which Eloísa demonstrates that she is not the passive actor that her brother imagines her to be.

Una tarde descubrió a la tía Eloísa charlando con uno de aquellos hombres en el lavadero. Estaba sentada en el suelo, con las piernas encogidas, junto a la palangana llena de ropa mojada, y el guardia permanecía de pie a su lado. Iba con la cabeza descubierta – algo que pareció insólito a Carmelo, y que lo llevó a pensamientos aún más inexplicables -, había dejado el tricornio colgado de una de las ramas del fresno [...] ⁷²

Eloísa and the young man are soon married. She proves to be more than a match for Manuel in the division of the family's property, convincing their father to equally divide the remaining goods as well as the government's compensation for the condemned

⁷¹ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 21.

⁷² Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, pp. 135-136.

property. The decision to flood the valley in which Fiz is located, while not of Eloísa's choosing, nonetheless offers a chance at deterritorialization that leads to new becomings for her. As *La larga marcha* progresses, Eloísa suffers other setbacks, such as the breakdown of her marriage due to the infidelity of her husband. Yet each time she opts for lines of flight toward multiplicity and becoming.⁷³ Eloísa's vigor and resourcefulness defy the image of women that the Franco regime was attempting to foist on the Spanish public, which Helen Graham describes in the following manner:

The regime promoted an 'ideal' image of woman as 'eternal', passive, pious, pure, submissive woman-as-mother for whom self-denial was the only road to real fulfillment [...] Church teaching on the irreducible nature of male and female, and the latter's exclusive fittedness for the home, received tendentious justification via pronouncements of the medical establishment which represented women as weak and emotional creatures, a wiry mess of hormonally inspired conditions.⁷⁴

Chirbes presents several female characters that accept the type of molar image that Graham describes above, particularly in *La larga marcha* and *La caída de Madrid*. He also portrays women who publicly subscribe to such images, but who nonetheless privately work against them or who attempt to free its grips. Depicted as well are progressive male figures that still harbor sexist attitudes. We will now examine examples of these scenes.

In *La larga marcha* the bourgeois Gloria Sisner survived much of the civil war alone in Madrid after her feckless brother Roberto abandons her and flees to San

⁷³ Rosa Moure, Manuel's wife, observes the following about her sister-in-law, Eloísa's fierce spirit, "[...] descubrió [...] que la espalda de esa virtud era igual de vigorosa que su rostro," Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 168.

⁷⁴ Helen Graham, "Gender and the State: Women in the 1940s," in Graham and Labanyi, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, p. 184.

Sebastian, a safe area secured by Franco's troops. Gloria is eventually spirited out of the capital, also to San Sebastian by Ángel, the family's servant who risks his life to save hers. Once settled in Nationalist-controlled territory, Ángel and Gloria begin a torrid affair. He maintains her in the quality of life to which she is accustomed, leaving wads of pesetas on her dresser after their lovemaking. Ángel eventually returns to his military unit and is killed. Reflecting on the relationship that she shared with him, Gloria reveals a total capitulation on her part to the patriarchal norms that Graham outlined above. She states that Ángel was the first man that "called her a saint yet treated her like a whore," in her opinion, "the only way that a man is capable of treating a woman."

Fue el primer hombre que le dijo que era una santa y luego sin mediar palabra, empezó a tratarla como a una puta, *o a lo mejor sólo como un hombre tiene que tratar a una mujer.* (my emphasis.)⁷⁵

After the Civil War Gloria discovers that most of her family's fortune including the family home has been gambled away by her brother Roberto. In desperation she turns to another former servant, the ambitious Ramón Giner who has utilized his talents as well as his contacts as an employee of Roberto to draw near to important members of the Franco regime. He involves himself in the increasingly important black market. Carolyn P. Boyd states that the black market in post Civil War Spain "allocated scarce resources to those with cash, extra ration coupons, and connections – commodities reserved for the victors."⁷⁶ As his wealth and power grow Ramón's attitude toward Gloria becomes in her eyes more flippant. In an example of minor writing because it skillfully renders the

⁷⁵ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 68.

⁷⁶ Carolyn P. Boyd, "History, politics and culture, 1936-1975," in David T. Gies, *Modern Spanish Culture*, p. 95.

manner in which a bourgeois woman might express herself in the Madrid of the 1940s, Chirbes's narrator focuses on Gloria's obsession with her pedicure as Ramón brusquely takes her hand. Note the reference to her intimate knowledge of written manuals about the "proper" feminine cutis:

Su mano ancha apretó la de ella – que no era frágil, pero sí cuidada y femenina en su dibujo – un poco más de lo que las reglas de los manuales de urbanidad marcaban.⁷⁷

After learning that they have lost their mansion, Gloria walks hurriedly to Ramón's home. He agrees to liquidate some of Roberto's debts, thus resolving the crisis. Gloria, ever dramatic, states that if her home is to become the property of Ramón Giner, than "Ramón Giner is to become the property of Gloria Sisner." ("[...] que sí que la casa sería propiedad de Ramón Giner, pero que Ramón Giner sería propiedad de ella.")⁷⁸ The calculating Ramón agrees to this proposal for financial reasons. He telephones Roberto and tells him to "go and live in the asshole of Madrid." ("*Vete a vivir en el culo de Madrid*").⁷⁹ Gloria revels in her upcoming nuptials with Ramón, spending hours picking out invitations, and making sure that they are addressed exactly as the rules of etiquette call for, "Las tarjetas tienen que ir firmadas por los dos, y los sobres escritos a mano, son las reglas, Ramón."⁸⁰ She also throws herself into the refurbishing of her home. After their wedding, however, Ramón increasingly distances himself from the domestic scene while Gloria resorts to smelling his shirts in an attempt to discover if he is spending time with other women. She fancies that she is showing independence and style by such

⁷⁷ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 72.

⁷⁸ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 112.

⁷⁹ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 111.

⁸⁰ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 108.

window-dressing as smoking in public or driving her own car. Gloria eventually realizes, however, that her submission to the patriarchal order threatens to drown her in a swamp of zero intensity. She begins to envy Roberto's self-exile in Rome, a place where she believes that intelligent women live freer lives. In the following citation Gloria voices her complaint about the stifling atmosphere in which Spanish women of the upper classes find themselves in the post-war years. The citation also reveals the power of affect because Gloria confesses to being overcome by a feeling that she can't quite identify.

[...] en algún lugar de sí misma, quizá muy en el fondo, al tiempo que celebraba su ausencia, los envidiaba un poco, por no tener que soportar el pesado ambiente de control que hacía tan asfixiante y mustia la vida de las mujeres [...] siempre condenadas a mantenerse alejadas de cualquier lugar en que floreciera a la inteligencia.⁸¹

Unlike Eloísa Amado, Gloria Sisner remains mired in a black hole. Although she longs for freedom, she does nothing to cultivate her own "plot of land," an activity that Deleuze and Guattari recommend to each of us. Indeed, Chirbes gives every indication that it is Gloria herself who turns in the Marxist cell that her daughter, also named Gloria, Carmelo, Gregorio and other students and laborers belong to, after first securing free passage for her progeny. As the members of the cell are tortured at the conclusion of *La larga marcha*, the narration accounts for all of them except for Gloria and a male student, also from a well-connected family.

The elder Gloria's relief at the restoration of her fortune after the Civil War offers an affective example of how upper class Spanish women felt about the outcome of the conflict, despite a later disillusionment for some of them. Helen Graham states that these

⁸¹ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 130.

women enjoyed a resumption of their charmed lives. Women from the lower classes had a quite different view:

Spain in the 1940s contained frighteningly separate worlds. Alongside the savage poverty and the widespread terror of the post-war repression unleashed against the defeated, there coexisted an upper middle-class milieu of ease, security, and order regained. As Republican women were being shaved and dosed with castor oil by the “victors” of their villages, or transported with their children across Spain in cattle trucks in scenes of Dantesque horror, women in the Sevillian aristocracy or Salamancan bourgeoisie celebrated the ‘redemption’ of their private family sphere [...] ⁸²

As Graham points out, women who supported the defeated government’s cause found themselves with the pressing issue of survival. Chirbes presents numerous “scenes of Dantesque horror” visited upon the bodies of progressive Spanish women after the Civil War and continuing into the late Franco period. When the progressive Rita takes up the narration in *Los viejos amigos*, she recalls that despite being visibly pregnant, she was savagely beaten by a member of the Civil Guard during the late 1960s who interrupted her cell’s May Day activities and continued beating her even after she lay helpless on the ground:

[...] el terror que sentimos el uno de mayo, cuando ya se notaba perfectamente la hinchazón del embarazo, y me golpeó con saña un guardia, yo tendida en el suelo, y Carlos y Demetrio intentando apartar de mí a aquel guardia que golpeaba a ciegas, furioso como si hubiese ingerido una droga. ⁸³

Helen Graham argues that both the Republican and the Nationalist sides attempted to foist the idea of large families on women. After Franco’s victory, however,

⁸² Graham, “Gender and the State: Women in the 1940s,” p. 183.

⁸³ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 148.

certain rights granted by the ousted government were nullified. Divorce was again outlawed and women, as we have demonstrated, were not allowed to enter into legal contracts or to even work outside of the home without the written permission of their husbands. Reproductive rights were denied to Spanish women during the Franco years. Graham states that the denial of these rights resulted “in a whole pathology of modernity ...written on women’s bodies via repressive state legislation – in particular with regard to protonatalism.”⁸⁴

As we saw in the second chapter, Chirbes presents a female character in *La larga marcha* who faces an unwanted pregnancy that Vicente Tabarca assists in terminating. Despite his overall progressive views, Tabarca at times harbors sexist sentiments. The doctor is the father of two daughters. The narrator records his disappointment when the second one, Helena, is born. He describes the baby’s vagina as “the wound of her sex” (“*la pequeña herida del sexo*”).⁸⁵ In this scene Chirbes makes an artistic connection to an image common in traditional psychoanalysis of “lack” with respect to the phallus. In their privileging of desire through the elaboration of schizoanalysis and other liberating concepts, Deleuze and Guattari seek to do away with any links between desire and lack. Through the use of the free indirect style Chirbes’s narrator continues to record Tabarca’s thoughts. At one point he mentally compiles a list of accomplished women who had a “masculine brain in a female body” (*cerebros masculinos en cuerpos de mujer*).⁸⁶ Helen Graham, as noted, argues that most male supporters of the defeated Republic, as well as

⁸⁴ Graham, “Gender and the State: Women in the 1940s,” p. 184.

⁸⁵ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 50.

⁸⁶ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 51.

Franco's *vencedores*, believed that the proper role for women was attending to domestic life. Graham writes that, "Women's otherness was as encoded into the programs of socialist oppositional groups as it was into the policies of the capitalist regimes they opposed."⁸⁷ Returning to Chirbes's treatment of Tabarca and his daughters, which is an artistic rendering of the important theme that Graham discusses in her essay, the doctor dreams of the smooth spaces that will eventually be created in Spain's intellectual and cultural life. He wishes that he and his wife had had a male child so that he could share his ideas with him. Tabarca reflexively excludes his daughters from these smooth spaces. Despite his limitations, Tabarca recognizes that "ways out" (he calls them trenches, "trincheras") can be made through any number of fields (art, science, or politics, for example). He also expresses confidence that ruptures within the Franco regime will occur.

Hubiera querido un hijo, cuando cambiaran los tiempos, y las ideas volvieran a salir de sus madrigueras, acabara poniéndose de su parte, defendiéndolas también él, el hijo desde cualquier trinchera: el arte, la ciencia, la política; las trincheras que algún día tendrían que volver a abrirse en el país.⁸⁸

In *La caída de Madrid* Margarita's mother Elvira, the daughter of Franco's chief financier, expresses no disagreement with the patriarchal shoals around which she and other women must navigate. Instead she parrots traditional values, especially when she gives advice to her daughter Margarita. Elvira tells her that she should focus on finding a suitable husband. She warns her of the necessity of finding a "solid man," to not wait too long and find herself being the one stuck with an effeminate man that her more sensible

⁸⁷ Graham, "Women and Social Change," in Graham and Labanyi, (eds.), *Spanish Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, pp. 101-102.

⁸⁸ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 49.

girlfriends passed on: the boys who may be the “life of the party,” but who are incapable of shouldering “manly responsibilities.” For a woman to be stuck with such a man amounts to being left “without a future.”

[...] y cuando os dais cuenta os habéis quedado tres tontas, aguantando a los chicos a quienes nadie querría, porque son muy activos para organizar tonterías...pero no tienen fuste para las cosas serias, para afrontar el trabajo, el matrimonio, a la mejor ni la paternidad, chicos como de seminario, sacristans, maricas...pero nada serio, y sin darte cuenta, te has quedado sin futuro [...]⁸⁹

With respect to Margarita, this character provides Chirbes with an opportunity to get at some of the realities lying beneath the surface of Spanish life during the late Franco period. Marga has come to believe that her mother is correct when she states that in the Spanish society of the mid 1970s, a woman unconnected to a man appears to be a woman “without a future.” She considers the unwritten rules about how a Spanish woman’s very body is tied to men. Marga reports that a woman can’t go alone to a library, live alone in an apartment, or even have a drink by herself in a café. She chafes at the idea that “*for millenniums* women have had the image of a man seared into their very being.”

[...] no bastaba con decir que tú querías ser historiadora, vivir en un apartamento, ir a la biblioteca, tomar un vermut en una cafetería, sino que, en el corazón de la mujer, una educación milenaria había grabado a fuego la imagen del hombre, su código, sus leyes y siempre, en su vida, presidiendo cada uno de sus actos, tenía que estar la imagen de un hombre.⁹⁰

Maneuverability under such a system is difficult to imagine. It is perhaps for this reason that Marga decides, with apparent suddenness, to marry the reactionary Josemari.

⁸⁹ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, pp. 222-223.

⁹⁰ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 225.

In Chirbes's trilogy there are numerous examples of less financially advantaged men seducing and marrying richer women for financial gain. Ramón Giner, for example, marries Gloria in *La larga marcha* to put a shine of respectability on the fortune that he accrues in the black market. In *La caída de Madrid* Marga's father Prudencio dated both Elvira and Olga before choosing to pursue more earnestly the more pliable, and far wealthier Evira. Years later the two women freely acknowledge the role that money played in Prudencio's pursuing them. When the latter begins to lose himself in his work and more or less abandons Elvira, Olga cannot resist the temptation to ridicule her. Elvira merely replies that when all is said and done, Prudencio chose *her* money and not Olga's.

-Siempre te he dicho que de lo que ese hombre estaba enamorado era de tu dinero, no de ti.

-En todo caso, se decidió por mi dinero, y no por el tuyo - le respondió Elvira con las palabras que usaba la protagonista de un viejo folletín que había leído mucho tiempo atrás.⁹¹

Olga's father-in-law José Ricart married his wife Amelia in part due to the lands that she would inherit. His son Tomás considers how his father took advantage of his mother's wealth, comparing the elder Ricart to a ravenous insect. This is another example of a character in Chirbes's works that considers becoming-animal in an entirely negative light. In the citation that follows, the mental dementia and weakening that plague Amelia's body are compared to the crumbs left over from the banquet that the "insect" had devoured throughout a lifetime:

Al final de la ceremonia del insecto, concluido el banquete quedaba un pedazo de piel manchada, resto de merienda. Había puesto el insecto las patas sobre la muchacha de la calle de La Paz de Valencia, la inconsciente heredera de

⁹¹ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 128.

huertos y de una empresa exportadora del Grao, la chica que sólo pensaba en vestidos y disfraces, fallas y batallas de flores, y seguramente en un amor que la envolviera con sus brazos y le diera muchas vueltas en la pista bailando el vals: el insecto la había atrapado y la había convertido en una mujer cuya sonrisa se helaba al cerrar la puerta [...]⁹²

In the above passage Tomás Ricart notes that because of her upbringing, at the time of her marriage his mother was an “unconscious heiress,” (inconsciente heredera) and given to superficial pursuits. Two generations later, Margarita is witness to the abandonment that her mother, a far wealthier heiress, suffers at the hands of the opportunistic Prudencio. Marga’s decision to marry the fascist Josemari, for what it’s worth, at least turns tables on the heretofore-male practice of marrying for personal gain. She may have moved too quickly. Laws delegating women to a minor status were abolished a mere two years after Franco’s death. Since that time women have made significant strides in Spain, a fact attested to by Rosa Montero.

If in 1988 only 5 per cent of architects and engineers were women, four years later in 1992 the figure had risen to 9 per cent. Over the same period, in business, the number of women directors went up from 6 per cent to 9 per cent, and the number of women managers from 8 per cent to 13 per cent. The number of women economists and lawyers went up from 20 per cent to 30 per cent, the number of women chemists and physicists from 26 per cent to 38 per cent.⁹³

Despite this progress, Spanish women continue to be saddled with the “double burden” of attending to unpaid domestic chores as well as caring for the family at the conclusion of the working day.⁹⁴ Montero states that Spanish men score lowest among

⁹² Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 218.

⁹³ Rosa Montero, “The Silent Revolution: The Social and Cultural Advances of Women in Democratic Spain,” in Graham and Labanyi, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, p. 385.

⁹⁴ See Anny Brooksbank Jones’s article “Work, Women, and the Family: A Critical Perspective,” in Graham and Labanyi, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, pp. 386-392 for a discussion of the “double burden” of outside work and domestic chores.

male Europeans with respect to helping with household chores. Spanish women themselves, according to Montero, are lagging behind with respect to producing feminist analysis and critical theory. On the other hand they have leveled the field in the media industry. Montero reports for example that the executive director of the largest Spanish newspaper, *El País*, is a woman. Women have also excelled in the field of literary production, which “soon started to branch out into different thematic areas, becoming as eclectic and diversified as that of their male counterparts.”⁹⁵

Chirbes indicates that sexist attitudes continue in today’s Spain. At the beginning of *Los viejos amigos* Carlos, the first of several narrators, observes that Pedrito is leaning slightly at the table to get a better view of Amalia’s cleavage (“Pedrito...ha girado ligeramente la cabeza para poder contemplar mejor el escote de Amalia”).⁹⁶ In this work, Chirbes shows sensitivity to the insights of Montero’s study. *Los viejos amigos* is the only volume of the trilogy that directly treats the post-Franco period. In the novel only women are burdened with domestic chores or caring for the next generation, as demonstrated by the case of Rita and her son, Josian.⁹⁷ Throughout Chirbes’s trilogy he depicts molar structures that have affected women. As discussed above, he includes female characters that succumb to the pressure exerted by societal norms. In the next chapter we will discuss a few of the characters that successfully manage to evade molar obstacles to one degree or another. As Rosa Montero noted, Spaniards have made

⁹⁵ Montero, “The Silent Revolution,” p. 384.

⁹⁶ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 8.

⁹⁷ Rita notes that her son has left a note demanding new athletic shoes and has placed his old shoes on the kitchen table in order to verify that he requires a new pair and that he expects his mother to buy them for him. [...] para demostrarlo, las ha dejado, fétidas, sucias y desventradas, sobre la mesa de la cocina,” Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 48.

advances in eliminating these types of molar obstacles, but there is still much progress to be made.

As noted, Chirbes makes no overt statements about feminist politics in the essays included in *El novelista perplejo*. He does, however, portray numerous scenes of discrimination against women in the pages of his novels. Chirbes lends credence to the Deleuzian nature of his work in that he avoids being categorized under a specific identity politics, opting instead to assist in dismantling fascist tendencies in whichever guise through what Patty Sotirin refers to as “the unleashing of desire, the opening of a life, and the threshold to imperceptibility.”⁹⁸

Alternative Sexualities

As we stated at the beginning of the preceding section, Patty Sotirin argues that becoming-woman breaks up the rigid binaries that fetter creative experimentation. Tamsin Lorraine notes Deleuze and Guattari’s scorn for what she refers to as “family totalization,” a situation wherein each human being is reduced to a family function “on the basis of universals that cannot capture them in their singularity.”⁹⁹ In *Essays Critical and Clinical*, Deleuze advocates a connectivity in society that is free of molar judgements, and “a pure and simple sexuality, yes if what one means by that is the individual and social physics of relations as opposed to asexual logic.”¹⁰⁰ In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari specifically refer to the force of sexuality as a portal to becoming.¹⁰¹ They categorically dismiss attempts to pin sexuality on some molar chart, stating that, “Sexuality brings into play too great a diversity of conjugated becomings:

⁹⁸ Patty Sotirin, “Becoming-Woman,” in Charles J. Stivale, *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, p. 121.

⁹⁹ Tasmin Lorraine, *Irigaray and Deleuze: Experimenting in Visceral Philosophy*, p. 235,

¹⁰⁰ *Essays Critical and Clinical*, p. 52.

¹⁰¹ *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 278.

these are like *n* sexes, an entire war machine through which love passes.”¹⁰² Maurizio Lazzarato argues that Deleuze and Guattari would oppose attempts to unify “irreducible singularities [...] crystallizing them in the dualism of the heterosexual norm.”¹⁰³ And in *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari, as noted in the previous section, recognized the necessity of engaging in molar politics without allowing themselves to be identified with a specific politics of identity.¹⁰⁴

Regarding the state of affairs concerning gay Spaniards during the decades of Franco’s rule and beyond, the inequality that Helen Graham and other commentators refer to with respect to women also affected Spanish men and women possessing sexual orientations outside the heterosexual mainstream. The Franco regime turned a blind eye to homosexual lifestyles as long as gay Spaniards kept a low profile. Chris Perriam states that the government attempted to control gay and lesbian presence through caricature. Exiled Spaniards, however, continued to give testimony to the existence of gay desire from outside the country. And resort towns such as Sitges and Ibiza maintained a space for gays within Spain throughout the years of dictatorship.¹⁰⁵

The visible gay culture in Spain after the death of Franco was more of an “accelerated continuum than a sudden emergence”, according to Perriam. Magazines geared toward homosexuals such as *Ajoblanco* and *Bicicleta* began to appear in the mid 1970s. On many accounts the reality of gay men and women is an accepted fact in today’s Spain. There remains, however, much room for improvement if gays are to enjoy

¹⁰² *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 278.

¹⁰³ Maurizio Lazzarato, “Life and the Living in the Societies of Control” in Martin Fuglsang and Brent Meier Sørensen, (eds.), *Deleuze and the Social*, pp. 174-175.

¹⁰⁴ *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 461-462.

¹⁰⁵ Chris Perriam, “Gay and Lesbian Culture,” in Graham and Labanyi, (eds.), *Spanish Cultural Studies*, pp. 393-395.

the level of acceptance taken for granted by heterosexuals. Perriam states that lesbian voices are especially marginalized.¹⁰⁶ He argues in effect that the mainstream media today mirror the Franco regime in that they allow the subversion of the old regime's sexual mores, yet they continue to deny a safe space for gays and lesbians. The media revert to familiar caricatures instead of seriously confronting homophobic attitudes. This point coincides with Chirbes's observation that changes in today's Spain have been superficial at best.¹⁰⁷ Alberto Mira indicates that the strange silence still imposed on gays and lesbians remains in large part a result of the Franco regime's marginalization of alternative sexualities.¹⁰⁸ He agrees with Perriam that the end of authoritarian rule in Spain did not result in an increased readiness to confront homophobic attitudes:

From the 1940s onwards an all-pervading censorship and keen mistrust for any kind of marginality (particularly where sexual dissidence was concerned) made the construction of homosexual identities virtually impossible. In Spain, however, the end of repression did not bring about – as it did in Germany or the United States – a coordinated (if slow) reconstruction of homosexuality as a politically relevant movement with important roots in cultural history.¹⁰⁹

Mira states that when gay activists such as Armand de Fluvia were asked to list the precursors to the gay movement in Spain, they replied, “none.”¹¹⁰ Mira writes that important writers such as Juan Goytisolo and Alberto Cardín eschewed a strictly gay identity, with Goytisolo “arguing that he has nothing in common with other people with

¹⁰⁶ Perriam, “Gay and Lesbian Culture”, in Graham and Labanyi, *Spanish Cultural Studies*, p. 393.

¹⁰⁷ Toward that end in *El novelista perplejo*, Chirbes discusses the role of literature. He states that at its best, literature attempts to show what society tries to avoid. “[...] literatura es el intento de una sociedad por seguir contándose [...] el que evitemos [...]” p. 195. He also states that “Y, sobre todo, de qué es lo que no nos queremos contar.” Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 195.

¹⁰⁸ Alberto Mira, “Laws of silence: homosexual identity and visibility in contemporary Spanish culture,” in Barry Jordan and Rikki Morgan-Tamosunas, (eds.) *Contemporary Spanish Cultural Studies*, (243)

¹⁰⁹ Mira, “Laws of silence,” in Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas, *Contemporary Spanish Cultural Studies*, p. 244.

similar sexual practices.”¹¹¹ Mira states that in the main Spaniards subscribe to a so-called “Mediterranean sexuality” wherein homosexual acts may be engaged in but are not to be discussed publicly. He notes that in the immediate post-Franco period gay and lesbian Spaniards participated in the overall struggle to recuperate liberties denied under authoritarian rule. Freedom for alternative sexualities was considered to be just one repressed liberty among several others.¹¹²

For some observers, the advantage of the Mediterranean model is that it stays clear of reductionism. Mira explains that for its proponents the gender of one’s sexual partners does not reduce a person to a particular identity. What has actually occurred in Spain, however, is a sort of “omnisexuality that fails to be transgressive.”¹¹³ Members of the famous *La movida* strengthened this attitude, according to Mira, because they presented an ambiguous sexuality during the 1990s. Mira details other shortcomings of Mediterranean sexuality. First, it subordinates male homosexuality to heterosexuality because the former is deemed to be justifiable in the absence of women. Homosexual encounters are understandable as long as the “active” male role is followed. Mira argues, however, that “effeminate” gay males and those who fail to hide their sexuality continue to be marginalized. A similar approach is reflected in mainstream entertainment in which TV producers congratulate themselves for merely including a gay character or two in

¹¹⁰ Mira, “Laws of silence,” in Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas, *Contemporary Spanish Cultural Studies*, p. 242.

¹¹¹ Mira, “Laws of silence,” in Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas, *Contemporary Spanish Cultural Studies*, p. 242.

¹¹² Mira, “Laws of silence,” in Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas, *Contemporary Spanish Cultural Studies*, pp. 242-244.

¹¹³ Mira, “Laws of silence,” in Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas, *Contemporary Spanish Cultural Studies*, p. 249.

their programs. Mira argues, however, that any in-depth look at lingering homophobic attitudes in Spain is rejected out of hand.¹¹⁴

The most nefarious drawback of the Mediterranean model of sexuality, according to Mira, is that it fails to promote needed solidarity in the face of dire threats such as HIV and AIDS. Mira describes the dilemma of HIV-positive Spaniards in the 1980s.

On the one hand there was reluctance to speak out for homosexuals; after all they were people like everybody else and therefore tolerated. On the other hand there was ignorance on the issues in question: the fact that many people would resist association with a gay-identified disease, the misunderstanding of the way infection occurred played up homophobia and that implementation of safe sex would be difficult in an atmosphere where sexual practices were never publicly discussed.¹¹⁵

Mira demonstrates that as a result of the Mediterranean approach, HIV-AIDS educational campaigns were directed in the main towards adolescent heterosexuals. Information aimed at gay men was limited to a small number of gay bars. News commentators then as now studiously attempted to “steer away from the dreaded ‘h’ word.”¹¹⁶ The result of ignoring the need to make difficult choices meant that by 1992 Spain had the fastest growing rate of HIV infection in Western Europe as well as ranking among the countries with the highest number of AIDS cases on the Continent. This disastrous result occurred “in an atmosphere where a vaunted tolerance was never seriously tested.”¹¹⁷ Mira argues that as things now stand the Mediterranean model is for the most part a conservative, perhaps even homophobic, approach to sexuality because it

¹¹⁴ Mira, “Laws of silence”, in Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas, *Contemporary Spanish Cultural Studies*, p. 246.

¹¹⁵ Mira, “Laws of silence”, in Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas, *Contemporary Spanish Cultural Studies*, p. 247.

¹¹⁶ Mira, “Laws of silence”, in Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas, *Contemporary Spanish Cultural Studies*, p. 248.

fails to establish “a framework within which homosexuality can be discussed.”¹¹⁸ On the other hand, Mira cites the acceptance of a “non-activist” homosexual on the part of the majority of the Spanish populace as a positive initial step. He does, however, call for an imaginative activism that is wary of “freedom achieved through silence” and that is more willing to be transgressive of societal mores.¹¹⁹

The flow of gay desire is an integral part of each of the novels included in Chirbes’s trilogy. We have discussed José Luis del Moral in the previous chapter with respect to sensation. The young boy is sent to an orphanage in the province of León. In that institution José Luis slowly comes to grips with his attraction for his athletic classmate Raúl. As noted, José Luis accepts his love for Raúl without self-condemnation. The latter, however, represses his desire. Raúl does, however, admit to a fascination with the feebleness of his classmate. One notes in the following citation that Raul is gripped by affective feelings that defy representation and come from some “unknown place.”

Le fascinaban la incapacidad y el desvalamiento del otro,
como si obedecieran a un desprecio por parte de su
naturaleza de cuanto podía pesarse y medirse, y supusieran
la existencia de algo inmaterial y misterioso que sólo podía
capturarse desde un lugar que él desconocía.¹²⁰

After their years in the orphanage Raúl and José both move to Madrid to pursue their university studies. During their first meeting in the capital, Raúl is openly cool to José Luis. He necks with a girlfriend in the latter’s presence. One night, however, when the two are alone, Raúl brusquely removes José Luis’ clothes and has sex with him.

¹¹⁷ Mira, “Laws of silence”, in Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas, *Contemporary Spanish Cultural Studies*, p. 248.

¹¹⁸ Mira, “Laws of silence,” in Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas, *Contemporary Spanish Cultural Studies*, p. 248.

¹¹⁹ Mira, “Laws of silence,” in Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas, *Contemporary Spanish Cultural Studies*, p. 249.

¹²⁰ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 256.

When the moment of passion subsides, however, he again dismisses his friend, coldly saying, “No vamos por el mismo camino. Tú buscas algo que a mí no me interesa. Es mejor que no vuelvas.”¹²¹ Brokenhearted, José Luis takes Raúl at his word and refuses to accept his calls when the latter has second thoughts and again attempts to see him. As we shall discuss in further detail in the next chapter, José Luis attempts to seek connections as desire directs him while Raúl remains beholden to the supposed superiority of heterosexuality at the expense of the intense desire that he feels for José Luis.

The same sort of shame and secrecy with respect to gay desire is on full display in *La caída de Madrid*. As we discussed in the last chapter, the brilliant history student Lucas Álvarez suffers from a deformed penis. He eventually becomes aware of the name of the condition that affects him and that an operation can cure him. Lucas loves Margarita Duran, the young woman who plays at revolution and decides to marry the reactionary Josemari in order to protect her financial interests. Lucas’ friend Pedro listens attentively to his laments of unrequited passion for Margarita. He nurses Lucas after the latter undergoes his corrective operation and is attentive to the point of helping to change his friend’s bandages. Pedro is deeply in love with Lucas and Chirbes utilizes the latter’s body to recreate the silence imposed on gay Spaniards during the Franco era. He employs a “misunderstanding” between them to illustrate that sexual desire is in flux. One night after his friend’s recuperation was complete, Pedro kneels before Lucas and attempts to fellate him after they stopped to urinate in an alley. The surprised Lucas rejects his friend’s advances, but he does not do so in an overly cruel manner. However, he becomes angry later that night when he notes desire alternating between images of Margarita’s body and Pedro’s mouth. Lucas likens the affective sensation that his friend’s overture

¹²¹ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 288.

provokes as resulting from the actions of “an uninvited guest with whom he must now share his room.”

[...] pero pensaba mierda. Pensaba que aquella noche el cuerpo de ella y la boca del otro iban a luchar en la cama por apropiarse de su voluntad. Mierda. De repente, se encontraba compartiendo su cuarto con un intruso al que nadie había invitado.¹²²

Lucas’ realizing that he is tempted by Pedro’s advances at least indicates a willingness to avoid passing judgment in a wholly arborescent manner. On the other hand he reports months later that tension continues to exist between them. He admits to the continuation of affective feelings and he fears that it will be Pedro and not Margarita with whom he will eventually establish a lasting relationship.¹²³ Finally, Lucas and Pedro collaborate with other students and with each other in putting together the anti-Franco demonstration disguised as a “literary marathon.”

The privileging of heterosexual desire that Mira discusses is also reflected in *Los viejos amigos*. In his youth the character Guzmán was a burly man with bushy eyebrows whose appearance frightened Pau, the young son of his comrades Carlos and Rita. The little boy referred to Guzmán as “the ogre” (el ogro) and worried aloud that Guzmán might eat him (“¿me puede comer a mí?”).¹²⁴ Later out of earshot of Rita and Carlos, the supposedly progressive Guzmán ridiculed the boy, suggesting that the young Pau was fearful because he was homosexual, and for that reason alone he would not allow his children to play with him.

“¿Tú no crees que el hijo de éstos es un poco así, raro? Y Narciso: “No, Guzmán, es pequeño, eso es todo.” “Ya, ya”,

¹²² Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 121.

¹²³ [...] aunque convencido de que, a lo peor, ese alguien acabaría siendo una vez más Pedro y no Marga [...], Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 111.

¹²⁴ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 197.

insistía él, “pero yo he visto niños pequeños de otra clase. Los míos, sin ir más lejos. A éste no le dejaría yo jugar con los míos, fíjate.”¹²⁵

The only reproach that Narciso, eventually a politician from the Spanish Socialist Party, can manage in response to this bigotry is to tell Guzmán not to be so crude (“*Pero no seas bestia, Guzmán*”).¹²⁶ Guzmán later shows the same sort of intolerance and insensitivity in the bar *Violette* when his comrade Magda ends her relationship with her long-time girlfriend Lola. Displaying a complete disregard for Magda’s traumatizing loss, Guzmán crudely volunteers to tutor Magda in “how things operate” between a man and a woman. He refers to heterosexual coupling as the truly “normal” experience and that curiosity about straight lovemaking is universal. Later when speaking with Amalia, Magda ridicules Guzmán’s crude bigotry.

él se ofreció para encauzar sus sentimientos, “es una oportunidad para que tengas experiencias normales, experiencias de una mujer con un hombre. No me digas que no te intriga saber cómo funciona eso, aunque no sea más que la mecánica de eso. Probar ese misterio de un cuerpo entrando en otro. Esa curiosidad morbosa es universal. ¿Por qué vas a negartela?”¹²⁷

Guzmán is not the only member of the former Marxist cell determined to cut off flows of gay desire. When Amalia takes up the narration of *Los viejos amigos*, she recalls the many gestures of friendship that Magda had made toward her, gestures that Amalia interpreted as sexual advances. On one occasion Magda simply wishes to share with her friend insights regarding love that are replete with loyalty, generosity and kindness, quite apart from any physical contact. After listening to Magda’s ideas, however, Amalia

¹²⁵ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, pp. 197-198.

¹²⁶ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 198.

¹²⁷ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 123.

coolly dismisses her with a single word, “machista” (dyke).¹²⁸ Magda eventually breaks all contact with her comrades, including Amalia, and returns to her native Vigo. The reunion dinner causes Amalia to reminisce about her. She realizes that her homophobic attitude cost her an important friendship.

Memoria de Magda, de quien tanto desconfié, pensando que quería pedirme algo que en verdad nunca me pidió, y a la que no he sido capaz de localizar (¿quiso que fuera a vivir con ella? Ahora pienso que fue un tipo de fobia que inventé), Magda, que se ha perdido como invisible polvo de estrella en algún lugar del infinito.¹²⁹

Amalia’s recognition that she mistakenly assumed conversation and sharing to be a sexual advance represents the type of “small step” toward becoming that Deleuze discussed in *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*. Unfortunately the narration of *Los viejos amigos* reports no more progress on the part of Amalia. The narration notes her continued abuse of cocaine and alcohol. As the work ends, Amalia considers sleeping with the reptilian Pedro.¹³⁰ The possibility of her committing suicide is indicated by some of the other characters when they discuss her circumstances.¹³¹ Amalia could be considered an example of a botching of the Body Without Organs that Deleuze and Guattari discuss in *A Thousand Plateaus*. In that work the Body Without Organs is an incorporeal site of indeterminacy where experimentation is allowed full reign by moving away from the organism or other hierarchical arrangements. Deleuze and Guattari exhort us to “Substitute forgetting for anamnesis, experimentation for interpretation. Find

¹²⁸ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 121.

¹²⁹ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 170.

¹³⁰ “Mientras lo oigo, me pregunto qué podríamos llegar a hacer los dos juntos esta noche [...]” Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 127.

¹³¹ One notes the degree of zero intensity within which Amalia remains ensconced in the conversation that Demetrio reports having had with her. He indicates that he fears that she may harm herself. “¿Has bebido?” Responde: “Sí.” “¿Mucho?” “Sí.” [...] “¿Estás metiéndote coca?” “También [...]” Le pregunto, “¿Dónde estás?, ¿qué quieres hacer contigo?” p. 154.

your body without organs. Find out how to make it. It's a question of life and death [...].”¹³² They also caution against moving too quickly in fashioning your body without organs. Enlisting the aid of supportive allies (perhaps a bit of irony on Chirbes's part in surrounding Amalia with “old friends”) is a crucial step in moving ahead with careful experimentation, as is securing a bit of safe territory and maintaining a reasonable amount of stratification.¹³³ It appears that Amalia has moved too quickly and is experiencing “the worst that can happen;” being lost in a “demented or suicidal collapse.”

134

In this section we discussed the difficulties that gay and lesbian Spaniards endured during the Franco era and that continue to a lesser degree at the beginning of the 21st century. Chirbes includes gay characters prominently in each of the novels that are considered in this study. Some accept their orientation as one of several forces that constitute their actualized subjectivity. Others, bowing to the attempts of conservative elements within Spanish society determined to cut off the force of gay desire, repress their feelings and try to persuade others to deny their orientation. As noted, Deleuze and Guattari avoided normative identity politics. They did, however, note the critical importance of fashioning new tools or weapons and bringing battle to the “subjections and submissions” in which we find ourselves.¹³⁵

Anti-production in the works of Chirbes

In *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari provide an account of the development of capitalism. They argue that anti-production, that is the

¹³² *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 151

¹³³ *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 160-161.

¹³⁴ *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 159.

¹³⁵ *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 189.

expenditure of a society's excess without linking that cost to a particular objective, is woven into the very make-up of advanced capitalism. Deleuze and Guattari state that,

The apparatus of antiproduction is no longer a transcendent instance that opposes production, limits it, or checks it; on the contrary, it insinuates itself everywhere in the productive machine and becomes fully wedded to it in order to regulate its productivity and realize surplus value [...]¹³⁶

The principle role of anti-production is to produce lack in an environment of superabundance, which Deleuze and Guattari refer to as the supreme goal of capitalism.¹³⁷ Lack is created by the untold amounts of money dedicated to military expenditures, advertising or the constant churning out of machineries such as televisions, new automotive models and various other goods and services that, on Deleuze and Guattari's account, no one needs.¹³⁸ All societies within the capitalistic orbit resort to force to enforce this production of lack, and whereas socialist societies might apply violence directly and crudely while wealthier regimes have a power that is more extensive and suffocating although in appearance it is less crude.¹³⁹ In either case, nobody escapes because citizens can be abruptly reduced "to the great fear of not having one's needs satisfied [...]."¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, capitalism has eliminated glorious expenditure, that is, outlays for feasts, sacrifices, celebrations and other costs not linked to accumulation.¹⁴¹

In their *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project, Deleuze and Guattari argue that the capitalism replaces the codes of earlier economic eras, that is the customs that governed

¹³⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 235.

¹³⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 235.

¹³⁸ *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 236.

¹³⁹ *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 236.

¹⁴⁰ *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 28.

¹⁴¹ Eugene W. Holland, *Free-Market Communism and the Slow-Motion General Strike*, p. 45.

the relations of particular cultures, with an axiomatic that attempts to gather all of the flows and forces of a society within the capitalistic order. This order has shown a remarkable ability to add seemingly endless additional axioms as it encounters limits to its reterritorializing work.¹⁴² Capitalism's trepidations have likewise had a thoroughgoing impact on the notion of death in societies. In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari argue that capitalism creates a death instinct within its subjects that represses desire and eliminates "the seeds of a new life."¹⁴³ Eugene W. Holland explains the profound significance of this embedding of a death instinct:

Unlike all other social formations that subordinate production to the reproduction of existing power relations, capital does the reverse: it elevates production over social reproduction and systematically sacrifices social expenditure in favor of private accumulation so that the risk of death becomes subordinate to the overproduction and accumulation of means of life.¹⁴⁴

Holland analyzed two novels by Nizan *Bloyé* and *The Trojan Horse* that include anti-production and the rise of the death instinct under capitalism as prominent themes. The first features a bureaucrat who coldly thrusts aside all that is dear to him in order to climb up the economic ladder. The second focuses on the ennobling of death through collective action. Deleuze and Guattari place a positive emphasis on death, saying that "Death is not desired, there is only death that desires."¹⁴⁵ Claire Colebrook posits this statement by Deleuze and Guattari as an invitation to take death as an experience rather than a model, and to carefully distance oneself from whatever strata blocking one's becoming-other. Colebrook asks us in the experience of death to look beyond the

¹⁴² *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. 235-236.

¹⁴³ *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 223.

¹⁴⁴ Eugene W. Holland, *Free-Market Communism and the Slow-Motion General Strike*, p. 45.

¹⁴⁵ *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 329.

“properly” human. She asks, “What would it be not to imagine oneself as man, the speaking and labouring individual possessed with so much life, and instead regard oneself as composed of forces that can be varied?”¹⁴⁶

Each of Chirbes’s works includes anti-production and the perversion of the death experience as prominent themes. This is especially true in *Los viejos amigos*, a novel whose action takes place in a Spain almost wholly given over to global capital. The sense of squandered opportunities for glorious expenditure as well as collective action to further progressive politics is another important theme of that work. Chirbes’s theme corresponds to the question that Colebrook posits: “What can past modes of seeing, labouring, feeling or creating tell us about the variability of a humanity effected from a series of historical stratifications.”¹⁴⁷ The restrictive model of death is a constant in the characters’ conversations and memories, particularly those not given to making productive connections. There are frequent references to the deceased members of the revolutionary cell or to Pau, Rita and Carlos’ son who succumbed to a drug overdose. Sickness is also a cause of concern for several characters. The molar characters that attend the dinner are preoccupied with the ends of their lives. The characters given to connectivity, as we will explain in the next chapter, do not feel the same dread about death.

As mentioned in the first chapter, Pedro Vidal is the character who concocted the idea of holding the reunion dinner. He put the plan into action in an attempt to feel closer to the deceased Elisa. Other characters make continuous references to the fortune that Pedro has amassed in the construction business. In their youth, Pedro was the self-styled

¹⁴⁶ Claire Colebrook, “Introduction,” in Jeffrey A. Bell and Claire Colebrook, *Deleuze and History*, pp. 29-30.

leader of the Marxist cell, and probably its most violent member. Despite his financial success he has never gotten over Elisa. His obsession with her may owe more to the fact that she threw him over for another man. Although he has a wife whom he admits to loving, or at least needing,¹⁴⁸ and an intelligent and studious daughter of whom he is proud,¹⁴⁹ Pedro dedicates almost all of his time to work, building homes for foreign tourists in Southern Spain, in Benidorm and la Costa Blanca.¹⁵⁰ The British writer Gilles Tremlett, a correspondent based in Madrid, describes in *España ante sus fantasmas: un recorrido por un país en transición*, the sort of foreigners who would make up Pedro's clientel. They form part of the massive influx of British and German expatriates in Spain who wall themselves up in their gated communities, doing little to form assemblages with their new surroundings:

Los británicos venían a España para alejarse de un país que consideraban podrido por el crimen, la inmigración, las comunidades desestructuradas y un deficiente servicio de salud. Se engañaban pensando que vivían al estilo español, pero con los españoles se comunicaban poco o nada y se quedaban en sus guetos.¹⁵¹

During the course of the dinner Pedro explains that he dedicates so much time to work merely because "working is less tiresome than enjoying oneself."¹⁵² The writer Carlos immediately recognizes Pedro's statement as a quotation that the latter cribbed

¹⁴⁷ Claire Colebrook, "Introduction," in Jeffrey A. Bell and Claire Colebrook, *Deleuze and History*, p. 29.

¹⁴⁸ Pedrito says to Carlos in the car on the way to Madrid, "A mi mujer la quiero, o no sé si la quiero, pero la necesito," Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 18.

¹⁴⁹ Pedrito says of his daughter, "[...] ésa no dejará la carrera como nosotros [...]," Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 17.

¹⁵⁰ Pedrito admits to himself during the course of the dinner or afterwards that he works in a vain effort to overcome a sense of loss and desperation, "Trabajar, si no por gusto, al menos por desesperación. El trabajo, una lucha contra el espíritu; el trabajo como forma de olvido, un combate contra los repliegues del alma," Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 94.

¹⁵¹ Gilles Tremlett, *España ante sus fantasmas: Un recorrido por un país en transición*, p. 122.

¹⁵² "Trabajo porque trabajar es lo menos aburrido, bastante menos aburrido que divertirse." Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 94.

from Baudelaire or some other thinker.¹⁵³ As the wearisome dinner winds on, and as Pedro becomes more intoxicated, he reveals his fear of growing old, incapacitated and eventually dying. He refers to the process of aging and dying as the “undertow” (la resaca). His obsession with nursing homes and hospitals for the aged correlates to the tendency of capital to increase the lives of subjects solely for the purpose of increasing consumption. In the citation that follows Pedro talks about the tubes, adult diapers and other paraphernalia used in the care of elderly patients.

¿Qué me queda? ¿qué nos queda?, ¿la resaca? ¿la lucidez
alucinada de la resaca? El hospital y el asilo que se lo
ahorren conmigo, los tubos, los pañales, las jeringuillas,
todo eso es muy caro, se lo regalo al sistema para que lo
emplee con otros.¹⁵⁴

As noted earlier capitalism endeavors to ensure that its subjects live so as to contribute to the fullest extent possible to its ends. Through the stammering of a series of words ending with *ada*, Chirbes reveals an awareness of this phenomenon being inherent to civilized society when Pedro recalls the machinic process of Elisa’s cancer treatment and death. She underwent numerous procedures until she finally said “enough” (“basta”) and was allowed to die.

Elisa auscultada, biopsizada, analizada, sajada,
quimioterapeutizada, recibiendo veneno por todos los poros
hasta que dice basta y luego arde y se vuelve ceniza, polvo,
humo, nada [...] ¹⁵⁵

Demetrio Rull is another character in *Los viejos amigos* for whom death presents extremely unsettling feelings. Demetrio’s reaction to being invited to Pedro’s absurd dinner reveals his concern with illness and death. He refers to his former comrades, and

¹⁵³ “[...] y así está, tal cual, la frase subrayada en el libro que guardo en mi biblioteca, marcada por él con pulso inseguro y un bolígrafo rojo hace más de un cuarto de siglo,” Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 95.

¹⁵⁴ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, pp. 126-127.

himself, as “the old carrion” (“la vieja carroña”).¹⁵⁶ Despite his jokes, Demetrio clings to *his* life, as opposed to the rhizomatic “a life” that Deleuze and Guattari propose in their discussion of subjectivity. Whenever Demetrio takes up the narration he continuously mentions death, “Los viejos elefantes olemos el fin, buscamos el cementerio;”¹⁵⁷ “la muerte ocupa lentamente la casa.”¹⁵⁸ Demetrio refuses to seek any sort of connection beyond the apparently hopeless one he hopes to form with Pablo, the man that he met at his karate school. He wishes to experience with Pablo what he can no longer be – a young man in the bloom of health. In the following citation Demetrio refers to him as the mirage in which he might be able to lose himself. This is not a becoming-imperceptible because there is no assemblage involved. It is on the other other hand a lurching into a bog of zero intensity in which Demetrio vainly fights to hold on to his subjectivity.

Pablo, tu eres el último espejo en el que vuelvo a mirarme
para no verme, para creerme que soy la juventud tuya, el
último espejismo en el que me pierdo.¹⁵⁹

The theme of anti-production is also evident in *La larga marcha* and *La caída de Madrid*. In the first work, Gloria Sisner, as we have seen, married the newly rich Ramón, formerly one of her family’s servants. Gloria believes that the future of Spain to be decidedly masculine and entrepreneurial, “El futuro era un hombre fuerte, guapo (porque Ramón era ambas cosas), emprendedor, a cuyos gestos se levantaban edificios, se abrían carreteras [...]”¹⁶⁰ The citation above indicates a fascination with capitalism’s illusions in which progress ceaselessly continues. She reports on the scene of the wedding reception, an event attended by members of the bourgeois old guard such as herself and her friends

¹⁵⁵ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 215.

¹⁵⁶ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 20.

¹⁵⁷ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 35.

¹⁵⁸ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 41.

on one hand, and on the other the rancorous newly rich men surrounding her husband. Gloria admits to fascination with their immense wealth (“muy, muy ricos”). In an excellent use of the free indirect style, she risibly credits herself with making possible the future of Spain by being the vehicle that joins the old guard and the black marketers.

Ella, Gloria Seseña. Y él, Ramón Giner. Sus viejas y rancias amigas de toda la vida, y los vigorosos y atrevidos amigos de él, ruidosos, vulgares, pero muy, muy ricos. El ayer y el mañana reunido en el urgente hoy que ella posibilita.¹⁶¹

As we have seen Ramón spends most of his time accumulating more money and more power. Despite the emptiness that Gloria feels because of the limited space allotted to women in Franco’s Spain, she makes no effort to follow lines of escape. Remaining focused on maintaining her economic position causes her to disappear into a black hole of zero-intensity. Her expenditures are limited to what Eugene Holland describes as “a pale, privatised form, having lost their erstwhile social functions, [...]”¹⁶² A similar situation is presented in *La caída de Madrid*. Tomás Ricart approached his father in the latter’s office after completing his university studies, and suggested that he might like to take a little time to travel and see a bit of the world and to think about what he would like to do with his life. José Ricart limited his reaction to looking his son up and down and calling him “imbécil,”¹⁶³ before immediately going back to work. At home that evening he summons his son and berates him without measure, asking him if the “doll” that has him so enthralled wants him to wander about. The elder Ricart is of course referring to Tomás’ girlfriend Olga. He makes it clear to his son that they are buying “his doll” in installments

¹⁵⁹ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 160.

¹⁶⁰ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 128.

¹⁶¹ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, pp. 129-130.

¹⁶² Holland, “Nizan’s Diagnosis of Existentialism,” p. 257.

and that he might lose her if he succumbs to wanderlust. Thus Chirbes gives another indication of Olga's mostly arborescent makeup as well as that of the Ricarts, father and son. He sums up in a few lines the next twenty-five years of Tomás' existence, an existence dedicated completely to work and competition and so devoid of glorious expenditure that he even refuses to leave Madrid to attend family vacations. The following citation captures the molar nature of Tomás because he limits himself to holding a grudge against his father instead of acting on the desire to pursue liberating lines of flight away from molar set-ups. Instead he dutifully reports to work, competing with other ambitious men in the company.

Y eso fue lo malo, que se limitó a odiarlo, y se quedó a su lado, compitiendo por el poder con Julio Ramírez, intentando encontrar antes que él las carpetas, escrutando el rostro de los clientes con más atención que él, para poder decir sin equivocarse “A ése no le sirve”; diciendo en voz baja, pero suficiente como para quien tiene que enterarse se entere [...] ¹⁶⁴

Tomás reproduces his father's lesson a generation later when he speaks to his own sons about money, telling Quini that if at twenty-one years of age he still did not understand the close relationship between love and money then he was condemned to remain an idiot for the rest of his life.¹⁶⁵ Elvira's husband Prudencio also displays an all-encompassing fascination with the machinations of capital. He works endless hours despite already being in possession of a vast fortune. Elvira quotes Franco's public praise of her father, Sebastián Barca, the chief financier of the dictator's insurrection that while the general had won half of a war, Barca, because of his money, had won the other half

¹⁶³ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 216.

¹⁶⁴ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 217.

¹⁶⁵ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 176.

(“Sebastián, yo he ganado media Guerra, la otra mitad me la ganaste tú.”).¹⁶⁶ Elvira refers to the contacts of her late father as the size of a telephone book.¹⁶⁷ Prudencio, however, refuses to spend money unless absolutely necessary. Elvira compares her husband to a voyeur because he spends hours lustily following the mechanisms of the market. In the citation that follows, the narrator/Elvira mixes references with machines and animals in disapproving of Prudencio’s obsession with money. Money emanating from capitalism’s machines is compared with a cow birthing a calf or a cat delivering kittens, yet another example of a molar character looking askance at animals. She also records his fascination with “sneaking up” (sorprender) on money in its “magical” act of reproduction.

[...] era con el dinero como un niño curioso que se agazapa para vigilar el parto de un animal: cómo caen los gatitos como pelotas de pimpón desde el interior de la gata, y cómo la gata los va lamiendo para limpiarlos. A Pruden le gustaba *sorprender el mecanismo* por el que el dinero se reproduce; [...] era un pervitido económico, un voyeur [...] (my emphasis)¹⁶⁸

The above citation is very similar to Deleuze and Guattari’s remarks in *Anti-Oedipus* about the point at which the capitalist machine begins its incessant expansion. They write that “Capital becomes filiative when money begets money, or value a surplus value [...]”¹⁶⁹ Despite recognizing that her husband’s priorities are unbalanced, that he favors accumulation and disparages any sense of glorious expenditure, Elvira does nothing to change her situation or to form common cause with others. To the contrary, as we have seen with the advice that she gives to her daughter Margarita, she fully endorses a system that has left her lonely and unfulfilled. Elvira offers a compelling literary

¹⁶⁶ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 135.

¹⁶⁷ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 135.

¹⁶⁸ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, pp. 129-130.

example of a “micro-black hole that stands on its own and communicates with the others, before resonating in a great, generalized central black hole.”¹⁷⁰

In this section we have seen that Chirbes presents several examples in his novels of the growth of the anti-production that has seized Spanish society and culture, and its attendant consequences. Chirbes, like Deleuze and Guattari, is aware of the deterritorializing aspects of capitalism. In *Los viejos amigos* many of the central characters in the work have come to Madrid from the small city of Denia and are delighted by the possibilities the capital offers.¹⁷¹ In time, however, they are all reterritorialized by the demands of capital and their earlier collective ideals are forgotten or betrayed. Examples of similar reterritorializations by capital and surrender to the perverse requirements of anti-production also occur in the other two novels of Chirbes’s trilogy.

Privileging Human Subjectivity

While discussing Deleuze and Guattari’s insight regarding becoming-machine and becoming-animal, Philip Goodchild wrote the following:

Presuppositions can striate the space of the unconscious as a set of axioms, or else they can sketch a smooth space as lines of flight and experimentation, changing direction at every move.¹⁷²

In this section we consider in more detail the concept of becoming-animal or becoming-machine as Deleuze and Guattari formulated them, and consider examples of characters in Chirbes’s fiction that denigrate becoming animal. Cliff Stagoll identifies

¹⁶⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 227.

¹⁷⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 214.

¹⁷¹ Demetrio’s recollection of his first days in Madrid is similar to the other characters. “La verdad es me vino bien salir de Denia. ¿Qué hubiera hecho allí, agazapado, culpable? Me acostomé enseguida a la ciudad, al vertigo de subir y bajar” Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, pp. 22-23.

¹⁷² Philip Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari: An Introduction to the Politics of Desire*, p. 171.

becoming, along with difference as a “key theme of Deleuze’s corpus.”¹⁷³ Stagoll and other writers have noted that for Deleuze and Guattari becoming counters the Western obsession with being, identity and representation. Patty Sotirin underscores the relevance of this important concept:

Becoming explodes the ideas about what we are and what we can be beyond the categories that seem to contain us: beyond the boundaries separating human being from animal, man from woman, child from adult, micro from macro, and even perceptible and understandable from imperceptible and incomprehensible.¹⁷⁴

In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari use the example of the wasp and the orchid to illustrate their concept of becoming. The wasp and the orchid temporarily meld identities and something new results.¹⁷⁵ Deleuze and Guattari hone in on the heterogeneity of and “alliance” of becoming.¹⁷⁶ The wasp and the orchid, or other combinations for that matter, become, as Mark Bonta and John Protevi explain “the new assemblage, the symbiosis, which is marked by emergent properties above and beyond the sum of the parts.”¹⁷⁷ Goodchild states that for Deleuze and Guattari, becoming animal can take place in the very work of a writer. They cite specifically the case of Kafka. Goodchild explains that what is true for literature is also true for art in general.

All art is haunted by a becoming-animal that enhances rather than diminishes the possibilities of life, for it awakens a sensitivity to intensities.¹⁷⁸

In each of his novels Chirbes includes passages that show wasp-orchid like combinations and an affirmative, productive becoming-animal. A few characters accept

¹⁷³ Cliff Stagoll, “Becoming” in Adrian Parr (ed.), *The Deleuze Dictionary*, p. 21.

¹⁷⁴ Patty Sotirin, “Becoming-woman,” in Charles J. Stivale, *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, p. 116.

¹⁷⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 10.

¹⁷⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 238

¹⁷⁷ Mark Bonta and John Protevi, *Deleuze and Geophilosophy: A Guide and Glossary*, p. 59.

¹⁷⁸ Philip Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari: An Introduction to the Politics of Desire*, p. 190.

these intense becomings while molar characters, that is those adverse to becoming-other, the focus of the present chapter, reject such assemblages. We have seen in *La larga marcha*, for example that the impoverished Luis Coronado accused his frayed clothing as “monkeying around.” We also introduced the character of Guillermo Majón, the police officer that Maximino Arroyo orders to kill the arrested suspect Enrique Roda in *La caída de Madrid*. While he waits for the established time to carry out his grisly assignment, Guillermo alternates passing time between the wake of Muñoz Cortés, where he pretends that he is a nephew of the slain man, and the apartment that he shares with his girlfriend Carmen. Guillermo becomes upset because he has nobody to talk to. His former friend and fellow officer Leonardo Carracedo recently moved involuntarily out of the apartment when Carmen took up residence. This eviction has caused a rift between the two policemen. Normally, Guillermo would have had his spirits lifted by his braggadocio to Leonardo about how enjoyable such an assignment would be, “Hablar sin parar con él le hubiera dado fuerzas.”¹⁷⁹ Without his friend’s presence, however, he is overcome with affect, to the point that he envies Roda’s fate.

y era como si también a él pudieran dejarlo tumbado entre las basuras que se amontonaban a la orilla del Manzanares, de espaldas a las chabolas de San Fermín. Allí tumbado, con un tiro en la nuca y tres letras pintadas con spray sobre la espalda.¹⁸⁰

The last thoughts of Guillermo that are noted in *La caída de Madrid* arise from his desire not to have to see Carmen’s cat again. He becomes enraged with the animal after he espied it from the balcony of their apartment playing with the carcass of a bird that it had killed in the patio. The bird’s mutilated body provokes an affective shift in duration

¹⁷⁹ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 271.

to earlier in the day when Guillermo pushed the prisoner Roda down the hallway at a secret prison known only as *la granja*. Majón admits to feeling physically sick in this combination of past, present and future violence. There is also a collapse of determinancy between the identities of the bird and the condemned prisoner.

Las alas mutiladas, las plumas le habían traído el nombre
del preso, Enrique Roda, y había sentido deseos de vomitar.
Los ojos desencajados, los gestos de resignación mientras
caminaban por el pasillo.¹⁸¹

The relationship between Carmen and Guillermo has deteriorated to the point that he refers to both her and the cat as a silent cancer, (“un silencioso cancer”).¹⁸² Guillermo has come to resent the rules regarding order and cleanliness in the house that she insists that he abide by. The misogynist Guillermo refers to the slovenliness that used to reign in the apartment as “a manly orderliness,” (“un orden de hombre”).¹⁸³ As he furiously contemplates the cat playing with the dead bird, he recalls an impromptu ritual that Arroyo had staged for him earlier that day. The commissar ordered him to unholster his revolver. As the older man caressed the weapon he asked Guillermo to contemplate what a shame it was that the shiny killing machine might never be used for the purpose for which it was designed. Later Guillermo repeated the ritual and the same speech to Leandro, pretending that the words and the ritual were of his own invention. The citation provides an example of a becoming-machine in the service of fascism.

¿No es una pena que se haya derrochado tanta técnica en
ella para que no cumpla la misión para que la fabricaron?
Esto es como las artistas del cine. Las educan para que

¹⁸⁰ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 275.

¹⁸¹ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 264.

¹⁸² Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 266.

¹⁸³ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 266.

actúen. La quiero impecable. Hoy será noche de estreno para ella.¹⁸⁴

Despite his bravado Majón is completely lost in a black hole of zero intensity. We have seen that he wishes that he could trade places with the doomed Roda. Arroyo finds himself in similar straits. Moments after ordering the murder of Roda, as he waits at a communion rail in his private chapel to receive the host, the commissar recalls his years of unquestioning loyalty to Franco and his Movement and realizes that he unflinchingly carried out every order, even the most horrific ones. In the following citation Arroyo reveals that, like Majón, he cannot escape the negative intensities resulting from his gruesome trade. He refers to the repressing of the affective feelings that his work engenders as “fighting with the animal.”

[...] había ejecutado sin reticencias cualquier trabajo, incluso los más pesados y desagradables que se le había encomendado, nada fallaba en su vida, y, sin embargo, también él tenía que luchar con el animal [...]¹⁸⁵

In *Los viejos amigos* Demetrio Rull, as we have seen, placed all of his hopes of happiness on the whims of the younger Pablo. During his drunken stroll after leaving Pedro’s absurd dinner, Demetrio recalls the kitten that he and Jorge recently took in. For some time Demetrio has tried to win the cat over by offering it food and protecting it from their dog, an animal that Demetrio describes as “un pequeño dictador” (a little dictator).¹⁸⁶ He compares his uneven attempts to attract Pablo with the kitten, calling both himself and the animal “pathetic,” (“patético”).¹⁸⁷ Pablo’s superior position as a human is identified by Demetrio as being exalted vis-à-vis that of an animal, (tu altura

¹⁸⁴ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 273.

¹⁸⁵ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 62.

¹⁸⁶ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 161.

¹⁸⁷ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, pp. 161-162.

humana). He admits that this image of himself as a pathetic kitten is “devastating” (“demoledora”).¹⁸⁸ This is an identifying with an animal that remains squarely in the realm of identity and subjectivity, not to mention in an inferior position, and it is far removed from the intensely positive beoming-animal that Deleuze and Guattari suggest as a way out of hierarchical set-ups. One of the last views of Demetrio is an admission to himself that his suffering stems from his belief that he will not leave any work for which he will be remembered, an admission couched in his comparing himself to a helpless animal begging for the scraps of a human’ attention.

Tú eres el centro de mis estrategias y tengo que llamar tu atención, que me hagas caso, que te conmuevan los ojos del gato, que tiene frío, hambre o sed, cosas que tú, desde tu altura humana, puede saciar. *Sufro sin esperanzas de dejar nada duradero.*¹⁸⁹ (my emphasis)

Critics have noted that Chirbes’s novels are replete with the presence of animals. To date they have seen this presence as a metaphor for the human condition. They tend to focus on the pessimistic air that the animalistic presence engenders in Chirbes’s narrative. Pedro Alonso, for example, finds that the absence of dogs in the narrative space equates to life and security while their presence signals death or hardship. A Deleuzian approach to Chirbes’s literature, on the other hand, reveals that the characters that are open to difference and life’s continuous unfoldings are also receptive to a becoming-animal.

The arborescent characters referred to in this chapter are examples of Nietzsche’s allegories of resentment and the bad player of dice. The resentful, according to Nietzsche, issue a false and sullen yes.¹⁹⁰ On Nietzsche’s account, they are dedicated to the established order and never reject an additional load despite the increasingly painful

¹⁸⁸ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 162.

¹⁸⁹ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 162.

burden of life-denying values. Demetrio, the brutal Arroyo, his sadistic henchmen and Chirbes's other arborescent characters are prime examples of Nietzsche's aggrieved and resentful actors. They are bad players of dice because they wrongly assume that they will have unlimited throws. Skillful players, on the other hand, understand that each of us has a finite number of opportunities. The good player affirms chance while the bad player depends on probability, expecting specific outcomes. Against the resentful bad players, Nietzsche and Deleuze argue for the importance of creating new values,¹⁹¹ and Chirbes in similar fashion brings forth characters that attempt to bring into being new values.

Concluding Thoughts

In this chapter we have discussed certain arborescent or hierarchical snares that Chirbes's characters confront, and in some cases upon which they become entrapped. These snares include the privileging of the Castilian language over the languages of millions of other Spaniards, who speak the various languages of Spain, including Basque, Catalan, and Galician; the majoritarian position of men vis-à-vis women and the double standards that women have faced for generations; the challenges faced by gay and lesbian citizens within Spain; the anti-production and the perversion of death under capitalism as well as the tendency by several characters to look askance at the presence of animals. The characters that were studied in this chapter have, in the main, failed to embark on liberating lines of flight. One or two have botched the Body without Organs and stagger toward self-destruction. Several other characters have simply remained

¹⁹⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 93.

¹⁹¹ Deleuze, *Nietzsche & Philosophy*, p. 85.

stratified, which Deleuze and Guattari state is not the worst thing that could happen.¹⁹² As we explained at the beginning of this chapter, Deleuze and Guattari do not embrace a particular politics of identity. They do note, however, that no hierarchical form exists that does not have its leaks, leaks that usually begin at the form's inception. They also recognized that the uneasiness and agitations that lead to change within a society are often manifested through molar or normative politics.¹⁹³ Chirbes, like Deleuze and Guattari, would not pinpoint the reason for changes within Spanish society on the success of a given molar politics. The causes for change are often unknowable, or nonexistent, but change does result from desire's insistent connectivity that results from forming multiplicities.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 159.

¹⁹³ *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 216.

¹⁹⁴ Jussi Vähämäki and Akseli Virtanen, "Deleuze, Change, History," in Martin Fugslang and Brent Meier Sørensen (eds.), *Deleuze and the Social*, pp. 208-209.

Chapter 4: Chirbes's Schizos, Rhizomes, and Nomads

In this chapter we discuss the liberating concepts in Deleuze and Guattari's work that lead away from the sort of arborescent arrangements discussed in the last chapter. As we noted in the introduction, these concepts are known by many names in their philosophical works. We present an overview of the schizo, the rhizome and the nomad as well as Deleuze and Guattari's insights into lines of flight. After providing these summaries, we will focus on each of the novels in turn, and analyze the characters in each work that evade patriarchal set-ups, often at great personal cost. This cost indicates that Chirbes is aware of the sort of danger that premature deterritorializing entails and that "stammering" when no other response is readily available requires no small measure of courage. Chirbes's schizos include characters that live in seemingly privileged circumstances, but who nevertheless chafe at limitations imposed upon them and who work to undermine those strictures by forming assemblies with other bodies. Others live in squalid conditions and still others are somewhere in between. We seek to demonstrate that Chirbes is Deleuzian in that he affectively points to careful experimentation in fashioning ways out of the neo-liberal order. Chirbes, through his narrative production, joins forces with numerous other artists and thinkers in rejecting the emphasis on production and accumulation.¹ He remains open to the sort of robust "thinking otherwise" that Deleuze and Guattari continually call for in their works.

¹ See for example the philosopher Emilio Lledó Íñigo's reflection in Julia Navarro and Raimundo Castro's invaluable collection, *La izquierda que viene*. Lledó Íñigo lambasts Spanish universities for being so closely linked to the needs of the economy. He characterizes Spanish society for its emphasis on earning money as quickly and without regard to the legitimacy to the source. Lledó Íñigo states that Spaniards live in "una época tan machacada por la utilidad y tan orientada por el dinero, por la ganancia más o menos rápida, más o menos lícita [...], p. 241. The emphasis of Spanish society on economic utility and efficiency over becoming is certainly emphasized in Chirbes's narrative.

In *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari introduced the schizo. The schizo is a reply to the attempts by striated systems of thought such as an overly orthodox Marxism and psychoanalysis to cage desire within a particular framework. In the case of psychoanalysis, desire is deemed to emanate entirely within the family and to be related exclusively to familiar roles. This attempt to reduce desire to the family led to Deleuze and Guattari's charge that psychoanalysis remains fixed within a framework that never ceases to require that we "Answer daddy-and-mommy when I speak to you."² They argue persuasively, however, that from a very early age a child attempts to come to terms with his world in ways that have nothing to do with his parents.

The small child lives with his family around the clock; but within the bosom of this family, and from the very first days of his life, he immediately begins having an amazing nonfamilial experience that psychoanalysis has completely failed to take into account.³

Deleuze and Guattari's disdain for the zeal of psychoanalysis to capture all of desire within Oedipus finds echo in their refusal to endorse Marxism's attempt to explain the multitudinous flows of desire strictly within materialism and economic production. For Deleuze and Guattari, desire precedes and continues after the collapse or mutations of its various guises of which Marxism and psychoanalysis are merely two formations among many others. The schizo rejects molar efforts to keep him plugged into organizing efforts. He or she avails him or herself of the Body Without Organs which, as we have seen, is a sort of incorporeal field or zone that allow intensities to form assemblages outside of the organizing zeal of the organism.

² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 45.

³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 47.

Deleuze and Guattari discuss the rhizome and the nomad in *A Thousand Plateaus*.⁴ As we have seen, on their account Western thought has privileged the notion of the tree as a model for thought. A transcendent ideal is reflected by simulacrum that are deemed worthwhile the more closely that they resemble the original model. In the example of the tree, transcendent ideals make up the trunk and extend by way of roots and branches in an organizing totality. The rhizome endeavors to evade this totality. Rhizomes form underground shoots capable of connecting at any point. The stress on the rhizome is precisely this capacity to form assemblages that evade hierarchical structures. The nomad is the body who remains in place but without becoming ensnared within a given society's organizing schemes. The nomad avoids striated spaces with its excessive regulations and hierarchies. Instead it creates space as it goes along. The nomad is linked to the "war machine" in the twelfth plateau situated in *A Thousand Plateaus*, but this is an option that the nomad resorts to only when other forms of resistance have not been successful.⁵ Deleuze and Guattari provide as one of many examples in explaining nomadism the honored sense of discipline. They write about bands of nomads that, "animate a certain indiscipline of the warrior, a questioning of hierarchy, perpetual blackmail by abandonment or betrayal, and a very volatile sense of honor, all of which once again, impedes the formation of the State."⁶ Deleuze and Guattari also refer to the flexibility inherent to the game Go as opposed to chess, or to the improvisation of jazz compared to the rules associated with the performance of a symphony orchestra. In short,

⁴ The concept of the rhizome was introduced in the first pages of *A Thousand Plateaus* while the concept of the nomad first appears in Deleuze's "Nomadic Thought," an article that is included in *Desert Islands and Other Texts: 1953-1974*, pp. 252-261.

⁵ See Eugene W. Holland's *Nomad Citizenship: Free-Market Communism and the Slow-Motion General Strike*, p. 24.

⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 385.

nomadicism is an intense existence that remains outside of State control or other excessively rule-bound spaces. Holland states that the point of engaging with Deleuze and Guattari's concept of nomadism is "to adapt them to diverse circumstances."⁷

With respect to lines of flight, Deleuze and Guattari state that there are at least three types of lines and that they are often if not usually intertwined. The molar lines keep bodies tied to arborescent power structures. Molecular lines allow a body to make a limited withdraw from these structures. Only the full line of flight, the line of the nomad, allows for the necessary deterritorialization that opens up to creative assemblage. In *Dialogues*, Deleuze with Claire Parnet argue that "[...] what is primary in a society are the lines, the movements of flight."⁸ They also state the importance of considering individual and collective lines that we encounter, discerning the opportunities as well as the dangers that come with them.⁹ As we have seen, the idea of territory is crucial in Deleuze and Guattari's oeuvre. Schizos, rhizomes or nomads seek to establish a territory, no matter how small or temporary, in order to find affective security before heading out to engage in creative deterritorialization.¹⁰ We will discuss each of the novels in Chirbes's trilogy and the depictions of schizos, rhizomes and nomads therein.

La larga marcha

As noted in the first chapter, this novel begins with a depiction of the birth of Carmelo Amado in the northern province of Galicia. The work concludes with scenes of the torture of Carmelo, now a university student, and of other members of his clandestine Marxist cell at the hands of Franco's security forces. In jail Carmelo leads the other

⁷ Holland, *Nomad Citizenship*, p. 27.

⁸ Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 135.

⁹ Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 135.

prisoners in the singing of *The International* to the consternation of the guards. Throughout *La larga marcha* he demonstrates an unwillingness to conform to any pre-given restrictions on how to think or live. The mere presence of this character contrasts with molar order. For example, Chirbes's narrator toys with the Western mania for hierarchical control by juxtaposing the profiles of Carmelo's father, grandfather and elder brother in the kitchen of the family's ranch on the very night that Carmelo enters the world and mockingly compares them to a Baroque morality play, "The Three Ages of Man."¹¹

As Carmelo grows up he demonstrates disdain for oedipal restrictions by spying on his aunt Eloísa as she undresses or uses the bathroom. He demonstrates during his childhood openness to many experiences removed from the family. In Madrid, during his time at university, Carmelo slowly becomes aware that the unrelenting zeal of doctrinaire Marxists such as Luis Coronado serves above all to squelch desire. The relationship between Carmelo and Luis serves as the backdrop as well as an obstacle to the former's becoming-other. It is in high school that Carmelo makes the acquaintance of Luis, a native of Madrid, shortly after his own arrival at the capital. His new companion shows him around the neighborhood and points out the shortcuts from one street to another. Carmelo intuits almost immediately that the two do not really suit one another, but that Luis is the friend that Madrid had sent his way and for that reason he would be loyal to him.¹² This early recognition by Carmelo that he has to play the dice as they turn up in his life is an indication of his adherence to what Deleuze defined as a plane of

¹⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A thousand Plateaus*, pp. 311-312.

¹¹ "Su aparición había servido para completar el grabado sobre el paso del tiempo. Era el mismo rostro de los dos hombres visto muchos años antes. Las tres edades." Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 10.

immanence or a pance of consistency in as much as Carmelo does not insist on a particular outcome.¹³ He takes what he can from this relationship. For a short while the two spend time together, exploring Madrid from one end to another. They visit museums and galleries. Eventually they experiment with tobacco, alcohol, marijuana and participate in erotic activity with girls that they encounter, Luis as a participant and Carmelo as an occasional, almost unwitting observer. As they grow older they attend dances where the much more confident Luis demonstrates a mania for “hooking up” (ligar) with girls. Their friendship comes to an end at one of the dances after Luis cruelly pokes fun of the sweaters that Carmelo’s mother knits for him. He tells him that the sweaters scream “provincial” from far off and it is for this reason that he is unsuccessful with girls.¹⁴

After the rupture of this friendship Carmelo seeks affective security within the boarding house that his family owns. He reads the newspapers and novels that tenants leave behind. Carmelo composes essays that he keeps to himself. Eventually he takes to exploring Madrid again, this time on his own. The paintings within museums such as El Prado create affective sensations within him, feelings that help him to begin mapping out a more intensive future.¹⁵ He connects with the lyrics of The Beatle’s *Eleanor Rigby*, feeling that the song was written especially for him. Even more important is Carmelo’s discovery of a cineclub at a nearby university. He frequents sessions of the club and is relieved to discover that nobody appears to be concerned about his sweaters or the fact

¹² “La verdad es que no era el amigo que él hubiese elegido, pero fue el que Madrid le dio en aquellos primeros meses, y lo aceptó con lealtad,” Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 210.

¹³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 266-267.

¹⁴ “Y, además, cómo puede ligar alguien a tu lado, con esos jerseys que te hace tu madre, que se nota a cien kilómetros que son de pueblo,” Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 213.

¹⁵ “[...] con toda aquella luz que salía de los cuadros y que le hacía pensar en que algún día se iría de Madrid [...], Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 214.

that he is still in high school. The affective security that Carmelo feels within the family's boarding house and places such as art museums and the cineclub results in a determination that the immature horseplay and the rote learning at school were already a part of his past although he was still physically present.¹⁶

This is a splendid example of a rhizomatic character as he considers and acts upon deterritorializing strategies based on affective security. Carmelo often finds himself in Madrid's Retiro Park and in other sections of the capital where he observes the comings and goings of elderly people, young couples, indigents, businessmen, prostitutes and immigrants from other parts of Spain. Carmelo understands that he is part of these groupings of people, but that he is at the same time separate, attending to his slowly expanding territory. His observations and the determinations that he makes based upon them are similar to Deleuze and Guattari's observations in *A Thousand Plateaus* that wolves travel together but all the while remain necessarily separate, "each takes care of himself at the same time as participating in the band."¹⁷

A short while later Carmelo, now at university, gives literacy lessons in a working neighborhood. He and his friend José Luis del Moral start their own cineclub where they show movies proscribed by the regime. Their efforts prove successful as more and more workers and students collaborate with them. At university Carmelo becomes increasingly radicalized in his political views and joins a clandestine Marxist organization known as *Alternativa Comunista* (The Communist Alternative). It is through this organization that he again encounters Luis Coronado. One day he is instructed to meet with his superior who turns out to be none other than his former friend. Members of the group are required

¹⁶ "Para él, todo eso, aunque aún no había formalmente concluido, formaba parte de su pasado [...]," Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, pp. 215-216.

to call each by “war names” (nombres de guerra). At their first meeting Carmelo forgets the rule and calls his associate by his real name, a slip that infuriates the doctrinaire Coronado¹⁸,

Métete en la cabeza que ese tal Coronado es otro que nada tiene que ver conmigo. Métetelo en la cabeza. Tu contacto, que soy yo se llama, y se ha llamado toda la vida, Carlos.¹⁹

The choice of names that the respective comrades make corresponds to their respective molar or rhizomatic approach to life. Coronado opts for “Carlos” while Carmelo selects “Pedro.” Coronado selects Carlos in honor of Karl Marx, perhaps a fitting name for the member of Alternativa Comunista charged with composing its theoretical positions as well as enforcing discipline among its members.²⁰ Carmelo opts for Pedro in honor of a worker, Pedro Ramos, who was slain by police during a recent construction strike. Carmelo’s connection to the murdered worker is a more concrete link as opposed to the abstract choice of Carlos by Coronado. The fact that Carmelo knows about Ramos is itself the result of a rhizomatic assemblage between himself and the construction worker Gregorio. The latter had participated in the strike with Ramos and was an eyewitness to his murder. He later related the story to Carmelo and others.²¹ Carmelo’s activities within the neighborhood to deterritorialize illiterate workers and Coronado’s efforts to reterritorialize them by bringing them under the party’s control reflect their respective rhizomatic or molar orientations. Prior to Coronado/Carlos’

¹⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 33.

¹⁸ Carmelo reports his feelings about the return of Coronado to his life “[...] Luis Coronado, en forma de riguroso camarada Carlos, que le molestaba y que . . . volvía a hacerlo sentirse inferior,” Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 345.

¹⁹ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, pp. 337-338.

²⁰ “...ya que tenía a su cargo la elaboración de buena parte de los documentos teóricos del grupo,” Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 338.

arrival, Carmelo and José Luis, who refuses to officially join Alternativa Comunista, had worked side by side in the literacy classes as well as at the cineclub. After the arrival of Coronado, however, their activities became the “property” of the molar party structure. The following citation reveals that Carmelo’s lines are molecular at this point but not yet full lines of flight because he decides to obey the dictates of the party. He states that it is the organization that would now decide his course of action:

Carmelo había decidido que aquellas clases de alfabetización obrera que tantas horas de su vida ocupaban y el cineclub que había empezado a funcionar ya no les pertenecían, porque él, Carmelo-Pedro, los había entregado a la organización, que era la que iba a marcar en adelante sus ritmos, sus avances y retrocesos [. . .]²²

Carmelo allows himself to become Coronado’s instrument in expelling José Luis del Moral from the apartment that they share with Ignacio Mendieta, a leftist student from a powerful family who goes by the “war-name” of Antonio. The eviction is due to José Luis’ resolute refusal to officially join Alternativa Comunista. Despite this unwillingness and before his expulsion, José Luis eagerly participated in the group’s anti-Franco activities, often at great personal risk. He scattered pamphlets in the metro and at bus stops. He carried posters on his person, walking through entry points manned by governmental security forces and their affiliated thugs, to affix them on walls at Madrid’s universities. Dismissing this risk-taking Coronado/Carlos orders him removed from the apartment because he regards him as untrustworthy. Carmelo again reveals himself as still tied to molar set-ups to a degree because he also considers José Luis to be unreasonably stubborn in his refusal to affiliate officially with Marxist dogma. Carmelo

²¹ “...lo hizo como homenaje a un albañil – Pedro Ramos – que la policia mató de un disparo durante la huelga de la construcción de la que tanto le había hablado Gregorio,” Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, pp. 338-339.

believes that militancy in the name of Marxism gives him a certainty that his friend cannot appreciate. He attempts to introduce lack into his José Luis' desire, something that Deleuze and Guattari abhorred, and that the indomitable José Luis refuses to accept.²³ For his part José Luis runs in a different sort of pack, the kind that Deleuze and Guattari discuss in *A Thousand Plateaus*, that of the mass subject, “with all the identifications of the individual with the group, the group with the leader, and the leader with the group; be securely embedded in the mass [...] never be at the edge except in the line of duty.”²⁴

Eventually Carmelo embarks on a more intensive line of flight after the cell is broken up and all of its poorer members are imprisoned. In each of his novels, as we have noted, Chirbes includes scenes in which militants from richer families are spared torture and imprisonment. In jail, however, the less economically positioned Carmelo finds a reflection of his own face in the battered visage of Helena when she is dragged back to her cell after interrogation. He whistles *The International* and other prisoners begin singing in the darkness. As Carmelo himself is later dragged by his ankles to an interrogation room he passes the cell where the doctrinaire Coronado begs for mercy and attempts to use his brother's position as a member of the Civil Guard to obtain safe passage.²⁵

The illiterate worker Gregorio Pulido is another character that appears in *La larga marcha*, and attempts to form assemblages to break free from striated space. As mentioned in the first chapter, Gregorio is from the rural southern area of Extremadura. This character is introduced in *La larga marcha* as a teenager in a state of perplexity

²² Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 340.

²³ “...José Luis ...daba golpes de ciego porque carecía de la certeza de adónde conducían sus actos...” Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 341.

²⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 34.

because nearly everybody in his village calls him “Panaderino,” (little baker boy). With the character of Gregorio, Chirbes illustrates a common occurrence in the rural provinces of Spain before the 1960s; namely that some poor women sought accommodation with wealthy or well-connected men to ensure the survival of their families. For Gregorio, the shock of learning that his mother sleeps with the baker is overwhelming. He doubts the solidarity that he had imagined as surrounding his family. He begins to examine the faces of his younger brothers and sisters, believing that he sees the hateful features of the baker in each one of them. The jokes and insults that he frequently hears from groups of other men also hurt him to the quick. These barbs are intertwined with economic structures in that they refer to Gregorio’s father’s seasonal work as a laborer in the Andalusian ricefields.²⁶

After leaving his family, Gregorio finds work at a nearby ranch owned by the industrious Sole Beleta. Beleta is familiar with every inch of her ranch and with each animal upon it. She keenly observes the workers, mentally taking note of the type of work that each man likes to do. Beleta assigns particularly good-looking men with the additional assignment of being her escorts at social functions. The rancher decides that Gregorio will be her escort at an upcoming event. She becomes smitten with him and soon orders that he be relieved of outdoor work altogether. Beleta’s treatment of Gregorio mirrors the treatment that she has received at the hands of men. Beleta is a close friend of Gloria de Sisner who convinces her to buy an estate near San Sebastian in the more temperate Basque region of Northern Spain. Once installed in her new property Beleta is

²⁵ “Es que mi hermano es guardia [...]” Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 390.

²⁶ “Entendió las frases dispersas que había escuchado en algunas ocasiones al pasar entre los corros de los hombres en la plaza como “los hornos del arroz cuecen mejor el pan de trigo” o “más se le saca a un novio panadero que a cien maridos arrocros” Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 156.

besieged by male contractors who kiss her hand and speak to her in sweet tones while they write up contracts only to be brusque and business-like with her once the checks clear. When she returns to Extremadura, Beleta takes a similar approach to Gregorio, keeping him close by and parading him whenever she has a social engagement.

As we discussed in the second chapter, Gregorio soon chafes at this unwanted attention. He escapes in part by borrowing Beleta's bicycle and finds himself at a tavern on the outskirts of his village. As we mentioned, when Gregorio finally visits the bar, several of the men from the village approach and warmly greet him. One man in particular, Julian, sings a song being played on the radio directly in Gregorio's ear. The two men quickly strike up a friendship. They begin to meet nightly in the bar, talk, play checkers, and drink. Gregorio becomes aware that he enjoys knowing that someone is waiting for him.²⁷ One night, however, Julian begins to tease Gregorio about working as a "houseboy for that old maid." The teasing wounds Gregorio and he storms out of the bar. Julian follows him outside and attempts to impede his friend from leaving, but is brusquely pushed aside. Julian then tells him that he must realize that if he was joking with him it was only because Gregorio is his friend and that he loves him. Back in his bunk at Sole's ranch, Gregorio realizes that it was the first time in his life that another human being had spoken the words, "I love you" to him. He is overwhelmed with affect and cries himself to sleep.²⁸

²⁷ "A Gregorio le gustaba que alguien estuviera esperándolo cuando llegaba, y también que el dueño del bar o los otros clientes dijeran adónde vais o qué hacéis," Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 204.

²⁸ "Lloraba porque tenía frío, porque estaba solo y porque había tenido miedo de quemarse al calor de ciertas palabras escuchadas en la oscuridad de la noche a la puerta del bar." Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 205.

The following morning the jealous Sole Beleta confronts him about his illicit use of her bicycle. He rebuffs her with a stern “déjeme en paz” (Leave me alone), and pushes her aside. Gregorio moves in with Julian, becoming his lover as well as drinking companion. He assists him with his business as a guide for hunters. This job involves maintaining a pack of dogs. In a scene that portrays Gregorio’s “becoming animal,” the narrator describes how simply by being close to the pack on a daily basis, Gregorio became more and more sensitive to the distinct personalities of each animal. Every bark or growl meant something different. In the citation that follows, the narrator blurs distinctions between the animal and the human.

los ladridos de los perros que ahora ya sabía que siempre querían decir algo. Decían como los demás. Decían: estoy solo, tengo miedo, o estoy contento, o tengo hambre, o ya veo que te acercas a mí.²⁹

The positive references to the presence of dogs or other animals by a character setting out on an affirmative becoming-other have not been commented on by scholars who have considered Chirbes’s fiction. They have instead focused on scenes in which an animal’s presence, most notably that of a dog represent “death or misfortune” (muerte o desgracia) as Pedro Alonso writes.³⁰ Gregorio and Julian spend several months together, but Gregorio eventually grows restless with the nightly routine of checkers and drinking. One evening a man and a woman arrive at the bar asking for him. The man is his uncle Martín the former member of the Guardia Civil sent to Fiz to oversee the evacuation of the village after its condemnation. His wife is Eloísa, the resilient sister of Manuel Amado and the aunt of Carmelo. The couple is driving to Madrid because Martín has

²⁹ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 238.

found work in the capital. They stopped to encourage Gregorio to also try his luck there. From that moment Gregorio begins to dream of moving to Madrid. In a citation remarkable for its Bergsonian sense of colliding durations as well as its depiction of becoming-other, the narrator reports that Gregorio already misses the streets and buildings of Madrid that appear on the screen of the bar's television set, despite his never having left his native Extremadura except to work in the rice fields of nearby Andalusia. In this scene, Chirbes records the accumulation of material goods by working-class Spaniards by inserting an apparatus, this time a television, into a place where it had not been previously. Gregorio quickly decides to move to the capital. Scenes that include a new appliance or apparatus are multiple in Chirbes's trilogy.³¹ In an essay on the work of Boris Pilniak, Chirbes admires that writer's ability to express immeasurable forces flowing out of the minimum number of words.³² He demonstrates the capacity to do the same in the scene of Gregorio's departure. Chirbes shows the ability to render in an affective manner invisible forces acting upon a body. Chirbes movingly depicts part of the devastating sense of loss that Julian experiences as his friend's train rolls out of sight.

Y cuando el tren se puso en marcha, salió al andén y se quedó en medio, quieto, con los brazos caídos a lo largo del cuerpo, cada vez más lejano, hasta que se perdió de vista.³³

Gregorio continues to form assemblages after arriving in Madrid. For several months he lives with Martín and Eloísa. He quickly finds work as part of a construction

³⁰ "Así pues, la ausencia de perros [...] expresa vida, seguridad, y arraigo. Su presencia, por el contrario, indica muerte o desgracia," Alonso, "Contra el ruido y el silencio: los espacios narrativos de la memoria de la posguerra española", p. 21.

³¹ See for example the description in *La caída de Madrid* of Quini's room and his collection of jazz records, p. 116 or the annoyance caused by the sounding of Pedro's cell phone during the meal in *Los viejos amigos*, p. 139.

³² "Pilniak [...] sabe contar lo desmesurado deteniéndose en lo mínimo [...], Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 43.

³³ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 272.

crew and eventually participates in illegal union activities. With this character Chirbes shows an affiliation with a concept of Deleuze and Guattari that is similar in some respects to the rhizome: that subjectivity consists of “folds and unfolding.” This applies as much to human sexuality as other facets of existence. With respect to the concept of folding, Tom Conley writes, “The fold grants a decisive opening for the soul and its subjectivation.”³⁴ Conley also states, “[...] in Deleuze’s world everything is folded, and folds, in and out of everything else.”³⁵ Gregorio was seduced in his native village by Julian, but in Madrid he is surprised to find himself growing more attracted to Eloísa, whom Martín all but abandons after beginning work as a sales agent. In time Gregorio and Eloísa begin an affair. It is, however, his relationship with Carmelo and other students that truly mark him as rhizomatic. He meets Carmelo after he moves to the boarding house operated by the latter’s parents. At this point Gregorio is already a veteran of several strikes and pickets. Carmelo is astounded at his concrete history of hard work and deprivation beginning in early childhood. Following Marxist dogma, he even tells Gregorio that workers like him are the ones destined to lead the world. This opinion greatly amuses the illiterate Gregorio, but he listens seriously to Carmelo’s explanations of Marxism and joins Alternativa Comunista. He signs up for Carmelo’s literacy classes as well. To affectively express the Franco government’s fury with Spain’s growing labor movement during the 1970s, Chirbes’s narrator reveals that Gregorio receives the most savage beatings from governmental security forces when Alternativa Comunista is eventually broken up.³⁶

³⁴ Tom Conley, “Folds and Folding,” in Charles J. Stivale, (ed.), *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, p. 199.

³⁵ Tom Conley, “Folds and Folding,” in Charles J. Stivale, (ed.), *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, p. 202.

³⁶ “Los esposaron a los seis, formando dos grupos de a tres y, mientras bajaban la escalera, a Gregorio ya le habían roto una ceja y le caía la sangre tapándole un ojo.” Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, pp. 386-387.

Gregorio demonstrates for a second time his capacity for “becoming-animal.” He discovers that no matter how neatly he dresses or how urbanely he comports himself, he is unable to hide his humble background from members of the reactive bourgeois. He notes that the wealthy doña Gloria hesitates slightly when she meets him, taking an imperceptible, to everyone except Gregorio, amount of time to look him over from head to toe. Gregorio says that he hears a “click” during her hesitation and visual inspection of him at their first meeting and during each subsequent encounter (Alternativa Comunista held meetings in the spacious Sisner home.). He attributes his ability to sense this click and threat to a “bat-like” or “rat-like” nature that he possesses but that his student comrades do not possess.

[...] pero Gregorio había advertido que había sonado un chasquido en una frecuencia que los oídos de los demás no estaban capacitados para escuchar, pero que él sí que había oído claramente, como dicen que los murciélagos o las ratas oyen sonidos que el oído humano no percibe.³⁷

In the two scenes in which Gregorio begins to incorporate certain characteristics of Julian’s dogs or in sensing his own rat-like sensitivity to the dangers of being in the presence of the bourgeois Gloria, it is not the case of his imitating a dog or a rat. It is an entering into a connection with these animals in order to increase his own power.³⁸ Deleuze and Guattari explain a similar case in *A Thousand Plateaus*, that of little Hans who witnesses the collapse of a horse in the street. Deleuze and Guattari note that psychoanalysis failed to take into account the assemblage that was associated with the horse in the boy’s experience – “his mother’s bed, the paternal element, [...] the café

³⁷ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 374.

³⁸ *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 258.

across the street,” etc.³⁹ In Gregorio’s case, Julian’s dogs were part of an assembly that included in part the affective space of the bar, his mother’s betrayal, the unwanted attention of Sole, and the television set that provoked a desire for Madrid. The rat-like sensitivity forms part of an assembly that includes a new place of residence, Madrid, meeting politically committed university friends who welcomed him, participating in illegal strikes, sleeping with his uncle’s wife, and attending Carmelo’s literacy classes. For a while he has negotiated the capital in relative safety despite the danger of participating in some of those activities, due in part to his becoming animal, or entering into a zone of indeterminacy with dogs or rats.

Gregorio wrongly believes, however, that by moving he has rid himself of the nettlesome Sole Beleta. As we have seen, however, Beleta is an intimate friend of Gloria de Sisner. One afternoon the members of Alternativa Comunista hold a meeting at the Sisner residence. Gregorio is horrified to discover that Beleta is present. The narrator states that she walked up in machine-like fashion to Gregorio and demanded to know what he was doing there. She poked a finger in his chest and ordered him to leave. Chirbes compares Sole’s poke to Michelangelo’s painting of God providing Adam with the spark of life by touching his hand with the divine finger.⁴⁰ In both instances the object of the touch was aroused from some sort of slumber. In Gregorio’s case, his former employer’s touch caused his cheeks to flush, his chest to swell and his lips to utter, “Go fuck yourself.”⁴¹

³⁹ *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 257.

⁴⁰ “[...] como si reprodujera en él aquel fresco de la Capilla Sixtina en el que Dios infunde su vida a Adán con la punta del dedo [...]” Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 378.

⁴¹ “Vete a la mierda.” Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 378.

Gloria de Sisner attempts to calm her distraught friend who breaks down in sobs after Gregorio's retort. Beleta's crying and accusatory entreaties, "Your daughter with him!"⁴² result in Gloria searching her daughter's room. She discovers hidden books about Marxist doctrine as well as information about how to fabricate Molotov cocktails. The elder Gloria is overcome with fear as she contemplates what she has discovered, and is instantly transported back to the Civil War when Republican soldiers stormed into her house and rifled through her belongings. She again hears the warnings that preceded an aerial attack by Nationalist forces. Her focus quickly returns, however, to the present. She likens social forces that threaten her restored existence of comfort to a vicious animal with a monstrous face. She realizes that her minor acts of rebellion such as driving her daughter to school and smoking in public were just so much show. This is another example of a molar character expressing fear or repugnance with a becoming animal. In the following citation the narrator reports that Gloria felt sorrow and rage but mostly terror as a result of her close encounter with the "beast."

Doña Gloria Seseña de Giner lloró de pena y rabia, pero sobre todo de miedo. Tenía delante la boca del animal que había querido ver de cerca y ahora sabía que el aliento que salía de aquellas fauces la abrasaba.⁴³

In *La caída de Madrid* Chirbes includes a scene in which the extremely wealthy and well-connected Margarita Duran states that merely a suspicion of leftist sympathies was enough to ruin someone during Franco's reign, a detail that explains the great fear that the elder Gloria experiences when she uncovers her daughter's materials. In any event, shortly after this incident the police raid the apartment where several members of Alternativa Comunista live and arrest all of its members. The children from wealthier

⁴² "Y tu hija con él, de su parte." Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 385.

families such as the young Gloria are allowed to leave while the poorer members, most especially Gregorio are subjected to severe beatings. Chirbes's portrayal of an assemblage between workers and the student movement allows him to invoke a semblance of the force that helped ensure that Franco's movement did not survive him.

Helena Tabarca is the daughter of Dr. Vicente Tabarca. Tabarca, as we have seen, served in the Republican medical corps during the Civil War. After the war the doctor is confined to the reduced space of the defeated, after having narrowly escaped capital punishment. He lives in constant fear that authorities might suspect that he is an unrepentant "red," and he will again be forced to undergo torture. As we have seen, Tabarca dreamt of having a son so that he can cultivate his own ideals within him. The doctor does not believe his two daughters to be capable of rebellious behavior or even progressive ideals. Thus Chirbes illustrates that sexist attitudes were prevalent on the left as well as the right during the Civil War and Franco period. The choice of the name Helena is another indication of this mostly progressive character's partial adherence to molar set-ups. As he contemplates the conditions in the "new Spain" after the war, Tabarca chafes that his daughters will be "enjoyed" sexually by "beasts" loyal to Franco. Hoping for revenge he names his second daughter "Helena" after Helen of Troy, who because of her beauty, supposedly brought an entire nation to ruin. Tabarca apparently believes that thinking and action are beyond a woman's capabilities.

Despite her father's mistaken notions, Helena applies herself assiduously to her studies. Tabarca feels a mixture of pride and concern when he realizes that she shares his intolerance for being pushed around. But he admits to feeling dread when she begins to openly espouse anti-Franco sentiments. Helena stands in opposition to her sister Alicia

⁴³ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 385.

who mocks her interest in politics. As we noted in the introduction, Chirbes provides an example of making language tremble by Alicia's mentioning of the street in Madrid where the screams of prisoners can be heard emanating from some basement lockup. She states that she has no intention of being another of Franco's victims. Alicia prides herself on her "practical" nature, her choice of business as her major at university, and the part-time job that permits her to buy cosmetics and other comforts. Tabarca becomes alarmed when he notes that Helena openly carries books written by "suspect" writers such as Pío Baroja. The doctor is terrified when evidence of Helena's active militancy becomes undeniable. When she returns home later than usual after distributing leaflets or participating in a demonstration he accuses her of being a whore, revealing again his sexist tendencies.⁴⁴ When Helena announces that she and her friends have regularly held meetings at the home of Gloria, who she refers to as coming from a "fascist" family, Tabarca is beside himself with fear and anguish and searches his daughter's room where he finds a copy of the *Communist Manifesto*, other revolutionary texts and her own writings about the need to bring an end to Franco's regime, through violent measures if necessary. He takes all that he finds and burns it. Despite her father's curses and admonitions, Helena continues in her militancy. She is the hardest working member of Alternativa Comunista, constantly creating revolutionary tracts and precariously putting herself at risk to disseminate them. She is also the first to learn how to use Molotov cocktails. Physically striking, according to her male comrades, she takes sexual pleasure from Gloria's cousin, the irretrievably bourgeois Roberto, but refuses any further connection with him. Helena is caught up in the dragnet at the conclusion of *La larga*

⁴⁴ "[...] además de hacerle imposible a toda la familia, ahora se dedicaba a puta," Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 319.

marcha and her beaten, swollen face is one of the last views that Chirbes presents in the novel. It is this sight that induces Carmelo to defiantly whistle *The International* and for other prisoners to sing along. The narration clearly indicates that the events depicted in *La larga marcha* took place much earlier and that Gregorio, Carmelo and Helena survived the ordeal.⁴⁵ In their confronting the Franco regime, these characters present a model for defiance as well as an illustration of the portability of their territory or space of affect.

Chirbes utilizes this character to present another important space of affective security. Each day Helena, Gloria, Carmelo and several other students meet at a coffeehouse known as El Laurel to discuss politics and current events. Students from every economic group attend these gatherings. The students violated the stringent censorship rules that remained in force, despite cosmetic changes, throughout the nearly forty years of Franco's rule.⁴⁶ In the following citation, Chirbes depicts the introduction of a copy of Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, later discovered by Helena's father, into the group. The book is wrapped like a Christmas present to evade detection. After its unwrapping the book is passed from one hand to another with "a mixture of veneration and fear." Chirbes again "makes language tremble" by using a limited number of words to depict the fear prevalent in the watched society that was Spain in the late 1960s.

Pero no fue hasta tres meses más tarde cuando sacó de la cartera un librito muy delgado, forrado con papel de regalo navideño, con sus bolas de acebo y sus abetos, que circuló

⁴⁵ See *La larga marcha*, pp. 300-301 where José Luis del Moral and one of Helena's boyfriends travel together on a train years after the events depicted in the novel. Their references to Helena indicate that she is alive.

⁴⁶ See Georgina Cisquella, José Luis Erviti and José A. Sorolla, *La represión cultural en el franquismo: Diez años de censura de libros durante la Ley de Prensa (1966-1976)* for a discussion of the supposed lifting of censorship during the late Franco period.

con una mezcla de veneración y temor entre los componentes del grupo. Era el Manifiesto comunista.⁴⁷

With respect to affective security, the coming together of friends in the coffeehouse provides a safe haven for the children of the defeated left to relate their family's experiences to the children from bourgeois and well-connected families. These revelations were spoken in hushed tones. In the following citation Helena relates to the group that her father had militated against Franco and that he had been imprisoned after the war.

[...] Esperanza fue la primera que contó en público la historia de la prisión de su padre al final de la guerra y todos escuchaban en silencio su relato. Aquel día Helena se atrevió a decir: “El mío también fue republicano y estuvo preso” mientras notaba que Antonio apretaba su mano con mayor intensidad.

In his essays Chirbes repeatedly stresses that the defeated left attempted to bequeath to their children a need for keeping silent about the war, an inheritance that many children refused to accept. Helena is an excellent artistic representation of this refusal, and her forming alliances with students such as Carmelo or even with students such as Gloria, who mostly played at revolution because it was the thing to do at the time, are examples of her rhizomatic nature.

In *La larga marcha* the character of José Luis del Moral is a personage that can be described as nomadic. José Luis grows up, as we have seen, in the Old Castilian city of Salamanca. His father Pedro del Moral, despite being an “Old Shirt” member of the Spanish Falange (un camisa vieja), barely ekes out an existence for himself and his family during the early years of the Franco era. He settles for working as a bootblack in the city's main plaza. Suffering from post-traumatic stress and other difficulties, Pedro

⁴⁷ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, pp. 224-225.

del Moral loses himself in alcoholism. As we have seen, one night after being publicly rebuffed by his son Ángel, he throws himself in front of a train. He survives the attempt at suicide, but loses his legs. No longer able to care for José Luis, he agrees that the boy should be sent to an orphanage in León.

Because of his frail physical condition the other students at the orphanage pick on José Luis. The headmaster also singles him out for harsh treatment. Demonstrating blind allegiance to the human over the non-human the headmaster dismisses José Luis as a “little animal.”⁴⁸ One night the other students drag José Luis to the latrine in order to paint his face with shoe polish to drive home the fact that he is the son of a bootblack. As we have seen, José Luis’ classmate Raúl intervenes and pulls the other boys off their victim. When the other students leave Raúl is faced with the naked José Luis. The narrator reports that he is overcome with affective sensations that avoid logical circuits. Wanting to communicate something, but not sure precisely what, Raúl simply touches the head of José Luis and extends his hand to help him to his feet.

Una vez que los otros se marcharon y lo vio allí tumbado en la penumbra, desnudo sobre las frías baldosas de los retretes, no supo que hacer. Le ordenó que se vistiera porque le molestaba la visión de aquella carne blanquecina rodeada por la luz del piloto como por una segunda piel transparente, y luego le tocó la cabeza porque sentía necesidad de expresarle algo y no sabía cómo, y a continuación le tendió la mano.⁴⁹

Grateful for his newfound protector, José Luis writes home to Salamanca and asks his father to send him a signed photograph of Ángel in pugilistic pose. When the photo arrives, and José Luis gives it to Raúl, the latter quickly retreats to a judgemental posture,

⁴⁸ “Un animalito que parte el bollo de pan con los dientes. Que coge las patatas fritas con las manos. Que se moja el dedo con saliva para pasar las páginas de los libros.” Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 230.

⁴⁹ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 255.

stating that he would have preferred a picture of Kim Novak or Natalie Wood. Nevertheless, Raúl is impressed by the photograph and circulates the rumor that he is a personal friend of the boxer and that he is jotting down the names of anybody that mistreats José Luis. This warning may explain the bizarre behavior of the schoolmaster who called the enfeebled boy into his office late one night, and sobbing, vainly pleads for him to ask for his pardon. Chirbes's narrator, however, never clarifies what happened between them during that encounter and allows the scene to circumvent cognition as we discussed above. In any event, José Luis determinedly refuses to ask for any pardon or to placate the headmaster in any way.

Raúl and José Luis begin to spend most of their free time together. They exchange letters while on summer break with the enamored José Luis sending three or four letters for each one that the repressed Raúl bothers to send in reply. As we discussed in the last chapter, the relationship eventually becomes physical. Raúl, however, coldly rejects his friend after engaging in sex with him. Displaying a clear example of "creative forgetfulness," José Luis rejects all of Raúl's subsequent phone calls after this display of cruelty. He destroys his letters and tears up his photographs. José Luis recognizes that his sincere love for Raúl led to a black hole and that he must avoid such missteps in the future.⁵⁰ He meets Carmelo at the cineclub and collaborates with him in providing literacy classes in the working class neighborhoods of Madrid. Having suffered his entire life, José Luis is leery about officially joining *Alternativa Comunista*. As stated, however, he regularly undertakes personal risk in assisting the group despite his misgivings and as he comes to grips with his sexual orientation. His refusal to officially affiliate with the group or to blindly follow Coronado's doctrinaire bullying is an example of someone

following Deleuze and Guattari's admonition to be cautious in deterritorializing from molar structures too quickly. In the last chapter we discussed a botching of the Body without Organs. Again, Deleuze and Guattari are quite clear about the stakes. On one side the earth is "girded, encompassed, [...], conjugated as the object of a mortuary and suicidal organization [...] or the earth [...] connected with the Cosmos [...] following lines of creations that cut across it as so many becomings."⁵¹ When Coronado orders him expelled from the apartment that he shares with Carmelo and others, Carmelo attempts to soften the blow by offering to place him in his parents' rooming house. José Luis refuses, testily replying that he is not a piece of luggage that others can simply move about as they see fit.⁵² He is dismayed that Carmelo appears not to trust him. He is also aware that his feelings for his friend have become romantic and that he must avoid the missteps that he experienced with Raúl, but he is uncertain how to begin. He moves to an attic apartment and furnishes it with furniture and decorations that he obtains at a flea market and from trash bins. The move to the attic turns out to be a line of flight because for the first time in his life he feels affective security.⁵³ José Luis even uses words about *getting out*, a new escape, with reference to his expulsion, that are quite Deleuzian. He notes that in time, "[...] ni siquiera tenía la sensación de que Carmelo lo hubiese echado del piso, sino que era como si el hubiera emprendido *una nueva escapada* (my emphasis)."⁵⁴ He continues to explore his sexuality and the hidden world in which gay and lesbian Spaniards lived during the Franco period. After a hurried and impersonal encounter with

⁵⁰ "No quería volver a poner los pies en el camino equivocado." Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 289.

⁵¹ *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 510.

⁵² "No soy una maleta que se lleva de un sitio para otro." Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 362.

⁵³ "De alguna manera pensaba que por fin conseguía la libertad de movimientos que su solitario camino le exigía." Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 362.

⁵⁴ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 362.

a man that he meets on the street, José Luis realizes that his clumsy efforts are still those of a novice.⁵⁵

The encounter between José Luis carrying anti-Franco pamphlets on his person and his brother Ángel surrounded by armed thugs demonstrates the sort of unofficial violence practiced by Franco's supporters. As the brothers embrace on the street, José Luis notes the weight of the metal bar that Ángel hides in his sleeve. The latter asks his physically feeble brother about his affiliations at the university, warning him that he better not be mixed up with any "reds." In the citation that follows Ángel threatens violence if his brother is guilty of such "treasonous" activity. There is also a repetition of the hyper-masculinity associated with the early members, *los camisas viejas*, of the original Spanish Falange. Ángel, who suffered greatly at the hands of his drunken father, repeats the same weary formulas from which he had attempted to escape just a few years earlier.

Oye, cabrón, ¿no te juntarás con rojos en la universidad?
Mira que mis amigos se calientan rápido, ¿eh?, Éstos te
pueden aguantar de cobarde, pero de traidor, ni agua. ¿A
que le darías?, ¿eh?, pero cuidado, porque este muchacho
es hijo de un camisa vieja, de un tío con dos cojones [...]"⁵⁶

While setting out lines of cocaine in the run down room where he lives, the ex-boxer subjects his brother to a harangue about the dangers of action – that one destroys oneself through action. Having no idea of or any real interest in the many traumas that José Luis has already experienced and the heroic "stammerings" that he has managed to issue in the face of arborescent snares, Ángel dismisses his brother as a bookworm who knows nothing of action.

⁵⁵ "[...] y pensó que sus esfuerzos eran vanos, o nocivos [...]. Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 364.

⁵⁶ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 355.

Saber no daña. Lo que te pierde es la acción. Uno golpea algo, lo rompe, y lo que se rompe ya no tiene arreglo. La acción.⁵⁷

José Luis rejects the boxer's self-serving recollections. He listens silently and stifles the urge to throw in his face that "the only thing he managed to do was to leave home."⁵⁸ José Luis is Chirbes's most singularly rhizomatic character. He is physically enfeebled but possesses an awareness like few others that his subjectivity results from the indifferent foldings of his life and duration. During a visit with his father in Salamanca before heading to Madrid to begin his university studies, José Luis speculates as to how his life might have developed had he never left his hometown.⁵⁹ He wonders whether his sexual orientation might have turned out differently. However, he refuses to judge himself harshly. Unlike other characters he is also careful not to deterritorialize too quickly, taking care to establish affective security before heading out on further acts of deterritorialization. His unexpected and fierce resistance to the molar systems of control that others attempt to force upon him from both the left and right lead to an affective disturbance in their respective senses of hierarchy. He embarks upon a series of refusals of the advice of false if well-meaning brothers such as Carmelo as well as self-absorbed characters similar to Luis Coronado. These refusals lead to the sort of paralysis, albeit temporarily, in the enforcers of hierarchical order that Melville's Bartleby was able to provoke in his employer's world.⁶⁰

Deleuze and Guattari state in *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, to which we referred at the beginning of this chapter, that no system is immune from the leaking of

⁵⁷ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 358.

⁵⁸ "José miraba aquel pecho, y pensaba en acción y saber, en el cansancio de saber y actuar. Tenía ganas de decirselo: Lo unico que hiciste fue marcharte." Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 359.

desire. Chirbes provides an example of this insight in *La larga marcha* with the character of José Luis's father, Pedro del Moral. Pedro was from the small town of Fuentes, San Sebastian, where he worked as a shepherd. He joined the Falange before the war, a decision that carried additional esteem because it designated him as “un camisa vieja.” After hostilities broke out Pedro of course militated in the ranks of Franco's armies. The “very clean” young officers that he met during the war impressed him. Pedro noted that many of the lieutenants had a “de” or a “del” as part of their surnames.

[...] y había sido durante su estancia en el ejército nacional cuando había aprendido la importancia de poner un “del” antes del apellido. Aquellos jóvenes y limpiísimos tenientes, que procedían de grandes familias [...] nunca se llamaban Castillo a secas, ni Gutiérrez Montes, sino Del Castillo, o Gutiérrez de los Montes.⁶¹

At the conclusion of the war the inspired Pedro Moral decides to add a “del” to his own last name and becomes Pedro del Moral. Clutching his letter of recommendation from the Falange's official in his native village, and dressed in the organization's blue shirt, the newly minted Pedro del Moral boards a bus with his pregnant wife Asunción to Salamanca. In a scene awash in sensation, del Moral is startled to see that the city teems with men just like him, blue-shirted peasants from the provinces armed with recommendations and service medals competing for a very limited number of jobs. Trusting in the power of perseverance, Pedro decides to open a shoe-shining business. Instead of preparing a sign with the simple words, “Pedro del Moral – Bootblack,” he concocts an almost impossible to read placard, “Pedro del Moral – Footware Hygiene and Shining.” Passersby snicker at the haughtiness which remind them of a pharmacy or the

⁵⁹ “[...] se imaginaba lo que hubiese podido ser su vida al lado de su padre, con una bayeta en las manos [...],” Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 266.

⁶⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, p. 76.

house behind a church rectory where prophylactics were sold. In an example of free indirect discourse that makes language tremble, Chirbes's narrator makes reference to arborescent ideals as well as repressed sexual desire. The citation is also collective in nature as it records the reactions of "the people" of Salamanca as they passed by del Moral's stand.

No escribió, como hubiera sido lógico, "Pedro Moral. Limpiabotas," sino "Pedro del Moral. Higiene y abrillantado del calzado." Al principio la gente se reía, no tanto por lo Del Moral, sino por lo de higiene y abrillantado, que sonaba a farmacia, o a una de aquellas casas que había por detrás de la Clerecia y que vendían lo que entonces se llamaban gomas higiénicas [...]⁶²

The narrator mentions the lengthy time that Pedro and his wife had spent in choosing just the right name for their second baby. Pedro felt that a double name sounded lofty and would one day help his son in building a prosperous future. He cites approvingly the example of José Antonio, a popular name for male babies at the time as a way of paying homage to the founder of the Spanish Falange.⁶³ The couple finally decides to give the name "José Luis" to Chirbes's most thoroughly nomadic character. After José Luis is sent to the orphanage, Pedro occasionally sends letters to him. The narrator recreates poorly written letters that are full of formalities and appeals to a transcendent God, "deseo que, al recibo de la presente, te encuentras bien, yo bien, a

⁶¹ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 33.

⁶² Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 33.

⁶³ Chirbes's mentioning Primo de Rivera's name and the consideration of Del Moral and his wife of using the name José Antonio is further evidence of the success of the libidinal investment that the Franco regime made in winning the masses to its side. In *The Politics of Revenge: Fascism and the Military in Twentieth Century Spain*, Paul Preston describes the drawn-out process of transporting Primo de Rivera's body to the Escorial for burial. "In November 1940, for ten days and ten nights, a massively choreographed torch-lit procession escorted the mortal remains of the Falangist leader of José Antonio Primo de Rivera from Alicante to the Escorial, the final resting place of the kings and queens of Spain," p. 42.

D.G.,” y frases así.”⁶⁴ For his part José Luis rarely mentions his father at the orphanage. He visits him after reaching majority and is surprised to discover that a woman lives with him. Pedro tells his son that she has brought him much happiness. When Ángel and José Luis talk in the former’s apartment, José Luis tells his brother that their father has probably abandoned any transcendental beliefs that he still may have had.⁶⁵ The fallen Pedro del Moral presents an example of the ability “to have done with judgment” that Deleuze and Guattari discuss in *Essays Critical and Clinical*. Availing themselves of the example of Jewish mysticism to oppose Christian apocalyptic visions, Deleuze and Guattari note how with Christianity, “Apocalyptic *vision* replaces the prophetic *word*, programming replaces project and action, an entire theatre of phantasms supplants both the action of the prophets and the passion of Christ.”⁶⁶ And unlike the Jewish prophet who waits for something “new and unforeseen” that occurs in this life, the Christian vision is planned down to the minutest detail and extends to the end of time.⁶⁷ In any event, until his attempted suicide, Pedro del Moral is an example of a personage thoroughly ensconced in arborescent moorings. After the loss of his legs, however, he obtains a measure of freedom to the extent that he is able to leave behind such moorings even though this escape has come at tremendous personal cost. He has abandoned his “standard of measure” as Deleuze and Guattari urge in *A Thousand Plateaus*.

La caída de Madrid

All of the events depicted in this novel occur on November 19, 1975, the day before the death of Francisco Franco. The characters, like those in *La larga marcha*, are

⁶⁴ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 183.

⁶⁵ “El no dice nada, no debe creer en muchas cosas.” Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 357.

⁶⁶ Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, p. 41.

⁶⁷ Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, p. 41.

from different economic classes. Their lives, however, intertwine in arresting ways. Olga de Ricart, for example, hosts a small dinner party in honor of her father-in-law José's 75th birthday party. Lurditas who works for the Ricarts, helps to prepare for the party while she occasionally takes phone calls from or even leaves the Ricart home at one point to meet with her boyfriend Lucio. The latter, as we have seen, formed part of the trio attempting to place explosives in the Madrid subway when security forces happened upon them. One of his accomplices, Raúl Muñoz Cortés, was killed at the scene. The other, Enrique Roda, was secreted to a jail where he unknowingly awaits execution. Chirbes shows masterfully in this novel that the event of Franco's death went far beyond the expiring of a particular body. He illustrates numerous flows of desire escaping from the members of Marxist parties opposed to the dictator as well as from the supporters of Franco. Chirbes goes even further in this work to demonstrate Deleuze and Guattari's insight that molar, molecular and full lines of flight are intertwined. Unlike the first novel, however, there are no nomadic characters such as José Luis del Moral who embark on nomadic lines of flight. Most of those attempting a way out remain tied to some extent to molar structures.

We will now consider some examples of characters open to rhizomatic connectivity that appear in *La caída de Madrid*. The industrial José de Ricart, the best friend of the commissar Maximino Arroyo, expresses a keen interest in deciphering the forces behind the changes on the horizon as Franco lays dying, despite his realization that due to his own failing health he himself won't live long enough to fully experience them.⁶⁸ Ricart's focused efforts at securing his financial interests over the years have led

⁶⁸ "Pero no podía resistirse a la fascinación por las nuevas circunstancias que se avecinaban y a las que él ya no se adaptaría." Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 25.

him into contact with two men. The first is Julio Ramírez, a man from an extremely impoverished background who has risen at Ricart's furniture company, Ricartmoble, to become his most trusted confidant. Chirbes's use of free indirect discourse describes Ricart's attitude towards the lower economic class. He states it is a fertile area for producing people "naturally" adept at sensing danger.

Posesía esa agudeza para detectar el peligro y escapar de él que con frecuencia caracteriza a quienes llegan arriba procedentes de las clases inferiores.⁶⁹

Ricart appreciates Ramírez's ability to look at somebody while they are requesting favorable business terms and judge whether or not they will live up to their end of the contract. Ricart also reports being impressed with Taboada, a lawyer who represents the unions that have become stronger in the waning years of Franco's rule. Ramírez has also dealt with Taboada and he, like Ricart is impressed by the lawyer's intelligence and ability to deal with many forces at once. Taboada has contacts with up and coming leftist politicians, as well as industrialists close to the government such as Ricart, and committed Marxist fighters such as Lucio. Ricart approvingly compares him to an alert animal, a lynx. It is worth noting that in Spanish to be a lynx (*ser un lince*) is to be sharp-eyed or shrewd. In the following citation Ricart expresses admiration for Taboada's animalistic ability to hear "whether or not something has come between him and the wind" and to smell "whether or not the forest holds within some new animal."

[...] un lince como Taboada, con el oído sensible para darse cuenta de si se interponía algo entre el viento y él, con la nariz sensible para olfatear si en la espesura del bosque se había colado un animal nuevo.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 21.

⁷⁰ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 25.

Ricart's desire to comprehend the social forces swirling beneath the surface does not lead him very far along a rhizomatic path. His poor health is one factor, but he also expresses fear as well as rank hatred toward the new forces whose arrival he senses and about which he expresses curiosity.⁷¹ He registers disapproval at the insulting communist placard that waves from a bridge above one of the most heavily traveled roads in Madrid. With a few words Chirbes provides us with an insightful depiction of the late Franco era. Although Franco made assurances about having "everything thoroughly tied down" for his successors, no one even bothered to remove the placard.⁷²

Ricart's daughter-in-law Olga provides an excellent example of Deleuze and Guattari's insight about desire's ability to escape even the most rigid social structures, in her case Spain's upper class during the late Franco era. This character is introduced by a reference to her feeling glad that she has a small project to occupy her for the day, even if it is a task as simple as preparing a modest birthday celebration. There are references throughout *La caída de Madrid* to the efforts by privileged women to undermine molar restrictions against their "proper" role, but Olga, despite her personal limitations, goes the farthest in allowing free reign to desire. One of the strategies that she employs is to establish a space of affective security, her own bit of territory, within the Ricart household. A few years after she married Tomás Ricart, Olga created a studio that she referred to as her "cuñita," (little crib)⁷³ and her "parcela de independencia," (parcel of independence).⁷⁴ Despite having two small children that custom dictated that she

⁷¹ "Odiaba a aquellos tipos más de lo que su hijo podía odiarlos," Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 25.

⁷² "[...] alguien se había atrevido a colgar una pancarta roja e insultante que nadie se preocupaba de quitar y seguía allí ondeando sobre el río de coches a las ocho de la mañana cuando él pasó," Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 18.

⁷³ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 254.

⁷⁴ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 254.

personally attend to, Olga insisted on hiring a nanny for the older child Josemari and spending at least two hours in the studio each morning.⁷⁵ In the studio Olga paints, listens to music, reads, and fashions an escape from the patriarchal order waiting outside the door. In the citation that follows she gives one of several indications that the line that she follows remains mired in arborescent thinking. She appreciates that she had found a line of escape, but she also takes credit for her younger son Quini's later developing an appreciation for art, crowing that he inherited her tastes through osmosis during the hours of his infancy when she cared for him in the studio. In any event, Olga recalls a series of diverse flows and affect-producing actions such as music, painting, nursing a baby and rocking a crib.

Dejaba al mayor con la criada y ella se llevaba al pequeño, a Quini, en su cuñita, al estudio, y pintaba, escuchaba música, mecía la cuña del niño y, a sus horas, le daba el pecho, y tenía la impresión de que aquél era su mundo, exclusivamente suyo. Muchas veces había pensado si no habría sido en esos meses cuando Quini empezó a parecersele.⁷⁶

Chirbes's portrayal of Olga provides an excellent example of minor writing because her depiction "makes language tremble." While reflecting on the inactivity to which the majority of Spanish women from upper classes were reduced, Olga illustrates how the laws promulgated by Franco's government were inscribed on the very bodies of Spanish women. In a sentence that utilizes few words to recreate the effects of a repressive order, Chirbes deftly cites specific physical consequences - depression and

⁷⁵ "Se encerraba en el estudio un par de horas cada mañana (no le importaba levantarse temprano, a la misma hora que lo hacía su marido, antes de las siete, con tal de conseguir ese tiempo). Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 254.

⁷⁶ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 254.

migraine headaches - that result from an intelligent woman pressured to dedicate almost all of her time exclusively to the care of her home and family.

A Olga, la actividad la hacía sentirse bien. A veces pensaba que su vida hubiera sido distinta, menos migranas, menos momentos de tristeza, si en vez de haberse quedado en casa, se hubiera dedicado a algo, a lo que fuera [...] ⁷⁷

Olga felt gratified when she first married Tomás because she was the center of attention in the Ricart family. This attention became more intense after she gave birth to Josemari. She compares herself to a pampered “reproductive animal” charged with continuing the family line.⁷⁸ The drudgery of domestic life, however, soon overwhelms her. She compares the enforced, exclusive dedication to marriage, motherhood, domestic chores and social obligations to being strapped into a toboggan with no direction except downward. The citation that follows is the moment when Olga realizes that traditional domestic duties were the very essence (“la esencia misma”) of her life.

Hasta ese instante no había advertido que el matrimonio, la maternidad, los quehaceres de la casa, los compromisos sociales no eran sólo un paréntesis en su vida, sino la esencia misma de aquello en lo que se había convertido su vida, que de repente, se le reveló como una especie de tobogán [...] que sólo tenía una dirección posible – hacia abajo – y no admitía marcha atrás [...] ⁷⁹

Despite the suffering that Olga has endured at the hands of the patriarchal order, she appears at times to have completely surrendered to that order. She presents an ultra-feminine appearance to the world. She repeats shibboleths while in the company of other wealthy Spanish women, and even invents a few of her own. For example, Olga argues

⁷⁷ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 246.

⁷⁸ “Le agradó al principio sentirse adí, todo el mundo pendiente de ella, convertida en el animal reproductor del que dependía la continuidad de la familia. Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 248.

⁷⁹ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 251.

passionately that women are by nature vegetarians, while men are born carnivores.⁸⁰ In the citation that follows, Olga issues a string of chestnuts about the supposed universality of certain feminine tastes and habits. Here Chirbes provides another example of the lack of purity of lines and their intertwining that Deleuze and Guattari describe in *A Thousand Plateaus*. The same Olga who by morning carves out a space of affective security is by evening extolling the feminine essence of candies produced in convents by cloistered nuns which is itself a reterritorialization of work done by women under the rubric of the sacred. This is also yet another rendering of what Deleuze and Guattari's refer to as the "triangles" of repression that lie beyond the Oedipal triangle of Mommy, Daddy and me.⁸¹

En cambio, las mujeres se ponían pendientes en los lóbulos de las orejas, usaban faldas, no se enteraban hasta el final de sus vidas de que los zapatos de tacón son incómodos, se estremecían con un escalofrío de sensualidad al contacto con las joyas, sabían que las palabras mejores se dicen a media voz, y comían verduras y dulces [...] golosinas que son tan femeninas que hasta acostumbran a elaborarlas las monjas en los conventos.⁸²

Olga also serves as an illustration of the consequences of not being able to creatively forget the people and incidents that have caused her harm. Before she married Tomás, Olga and her friend Elvira took a trip to Paris, where Olga meets a man, a native of the city, who accompanies the visitors to museums and cafes. On the third night Olga decides to remain in a café after Elvira informed her that she wanted to return to their hotel room. Hours later the man offers to walk with Olga back to the hotel, and on the way forces her into an alley and rapes her. Olga expresses surprise that her assailant did

⁸⁰ "[...] la mujer era vegetariana por naturaleza, mientras que el hombre era carnívoro, devorador de grasas [...]" Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 40.

⁸¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, pp. 11-12.

not even bother to check for cat excrement before pushing her to the pavement. Afraid that she may be pregnant, Olga rushes back to Madrid and maneuvers the ever-pliant Tomás Ricart into proposing marriage to her. She is relieved when the baby that is born nine months later, Josemari, bears a strong resemblance to her husband. Unlike José Luis del Moral, who had also endured a violent sexual episode, Olga proves incapable of putting the rape out of her mind. To the contrary, she regularly returns to Paris, in the company of her husband and their combined fortunes, pathetically attempting to “set a few rules” for Paris and “to educate and discipline Paris,” and “to require respect” from the city.

Eso la hacía reconcilarse con París, o, mejor sería decirlo de otro modo: la hacía educar a París, disciplinarla, enseñarle a la ciudad a ser lo que ella quería que fuese, marcarle unas reglas a la ciudad que la ciudad respetaba.⁸³

Despite Olga’s seemingly blind adherence to patriarchal standards, the affective sensations that she regularly feels are often acted upon in attempts to escape arborescent structures, and to help others to embark on similar lines of escape. For example, she unilaterally decides to limit reproduction to the two children that she has already borne, jokingly referring to this decision as “closing down the Ricart production factory.”⁸⁴ She further defies Catholic dogma, as well as the wishes of her mother-in-law, a woman who appears to have wholly surrendered to molar set-ups despite having endured harrowing suffering because of them, and begins using contraceptives. To the astonishment of her friends Elvira and Sole, and again to the consternation of her mother-in-law,⁸⁵ Olga

⁸² Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 41.

⁸³ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p.263.

⁸⁴ “[...] decidió cerrar la fábrica de producción de Ricart.” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 248.

⁸⁵ “Para gran escándolo de su suegra, decidió acudir a la consulta de un psiquiatra.” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 252.

consults a psychiatrist. The psychiatrist limits himself to parroting the patriarchal mores of Spanish society,⁸⁶ and Olga quickly rejects his attempt to re-Oedipalize her. Chirbes demonstrates an understanding of and agreement with Deleuze and Guattari's dismissal of psychotherapy as being a mere appendage of capitalism's formation of docile subjects.⁸⁷ From the space of affect that is her art studio, Olga undertakes creative assemblages by founding the Fundación Ricart in which she exhibits and advances avant-garde art. She turns her own home into a rhizome. In the first chapter we examined the artistic cooperative known as Equipo Crónico that as a creative team produced paintings that challenged Franco's rule. Olga places one of their works in a hallway of her home. The painting is entitled *Torrijos y 52 más* and protests the execution and imprisonment of numerous prisoners by the Franco regime. The painting includes tiny cards that when viewed closely show themselves to be the police files and photographs of detained prisoners. The fragments resemble anonymous graves. The narrator states that the work had the effect of making all of Franco's Spain appear as if it were an enormous prison or cemetery.⁸⁸

Un paisaje siniestro: España, un inmenso cárcel; casi un inmenso cementerio, porque aquellas fichas en blanco y negro puestos sobre los colores del cuadro tenían también algo de nicho.⁸⁹

The painting shocks and infuriates the sadistic Arroyo. Although he is aware of who placed the painting in the Ricart home, Arroyo does not even to deign to address

⁸⁶ “[...] que le dijo que atravesaba un episodio fóbico, no infrecuente en las primeras etapas de la maternidad.” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 253.

⁸⁷ See, for example, Deleuze's article “Four Propositions on Psychoanalysis,” that appears in his *Two Regimes of Madness*, in which he notes that, “[...] psychoanalysts work in the open pores of society, not only in private practice, but in schools and institutions and every sector of society,” p. 79.

⁸⁸ Chirbes takes his place among several prominent Spanish writers who depict Madrid or Spain itself as an immense cemetery. See, for example, Mariano José de Larra's essay *Día de difuntos de 1836* and Dámaso Alonso's poem *Insomnio*, for other instances of this theme.

Olga. He speaks directly to her father-in-law, calling the work “subversive trash.”⁹⁰ Talking back, Olga informs Arroyo that the work was bought at an “authorized” exhibition, the type of exhibition that through her agency, she herself makes possible. Olga and the gallery owner Ada Dutruel de Bartos, both from well-to-do families, financially support and provide protection to leftist artists during what Olga calls “the omnipresent censorship of Franco.”⁹¹ Olga admits to being busy at work “in the middle,” that is, in the eventual cracks that opened during Franco’s reign.⁹² Deleuze and Guattari discuss the importance of this “in the middle.”

Thresholds are zones “in-between” two municipalities, what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as “zones of proximity,” where the elements of multiplicities enter into, and pass through and between each other.⁹³

Another astonishing connection occurs in *La caída de Madrid*, this time between a performer and her audience when a young woman appears on stage during a literary marathon and begins to sing about Martians being everywhere in Franco’s Spain. There are Martians on the subway, Martians on buses and Martians throughout the universities. Martians even in bowls of soup.⁹⁴ Spectators guffawed as they immediately realized that the Martians referred to in the song were the members of Franco’s security forces. The song, which the narrator reports as being particularly catchy, results in the spectators clapping hands and singing along.⁹⁵ The narrator describes the end of the song as the

⁸⁹ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 244.

⁹⁰ “Ricart,” le dijo, “eso no es arte, es basura subversiva.” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 244.

⁹¹ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 244.

⁹² “[...] un arte comprometido en los resquicios que dejaba la omnipresente censura franquista.” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 195.

⁹³ Patty Sotirin, “Becoming-Woman,” in Charles J. Stivale, (ed.), *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, p. 119.

⁹⁴ “[...] hasta en la sopa, sopa, sopa.” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 107.

⁹⁵ “La gente tarareaba con humor la canción, que era muy pegadiza; y acompañaba la música con las palmas[...].” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 105.

most singular, most intense moment⁹⁶ because the performer suddenly stops and points an accusatory finger at the audience, intoning that she sees Martians there among the spectators. This causes a tumult in the assembly hall as students scream for the governmental informers among them to “get the hell out.”⁹⁷ Precisely at that moment policemen and right-wing toughs enter the hall and break up the marathon. Tear gas is fired into the assembly hall, students are beaten with nightsticks and dozens are carted off to jail. Because of her connections, Margarita Duran, the granddaughter of Franco’s most important financier and Lucas, the impoverished Marxist, are permitted free passage through the violence. Margarita permits the smitten Lucas to run his fingers through her hair in a tavern close to the scene. As we discussed above, it is later that day she opts to tie her future to José María Ricart, who participated in the breaking up of the literary marathon, and probably arranged for her safe passage out of the lecture hall.

Seated at a prudent distance from the teargas emanating from the assembly hall is Quini Ricart. He takes off the ski mask that he wore for the demonstration, and as he empties his pockets of the stones that he had intended to hurl at the police, Quini contemplates his future. He does not feel comfortable in the world of business in which his brother José María thrives. He feels especially uncomfortable with the workers, whose interests he has pledged to defend against the trepidations of his own class.

A él no le gustaban aquellos tipos sebosos o nervudos de ojos huidizos que le hablaban de usted y se reían a carcajadas con los chistes de Josemari, por más que ésa era la clase que él quería que lo salvara de su clase.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ “[...] el momento más intenso.” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 105.

⁹⁷ “Y, en ese instante, el parainfo se vino abajo por el estruendo del público, que gritaba: “Fuera chivatos de la político-social.” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 106.

⁹⁸ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 287.

Quini considers his decision to study history instead of literature. He chose the former because he felt himself incapable of overcoming the objections of his father and grandfather that surely would have ensued had he announced a desire to study literature. Quini nonetheless reveals real rhizomatic tendencies. As he continues to empty his pockets of rocks that he intended to throw at the police, he realizes that he chose the study of history in part because he himself was convinced of the supposed clarity of the field as opposed to the uncertainty of literature. He confesses to at first feeling that literature was “fluff.”⁹⁹ He is, however, soon disabused of the notion that either literature or history is unchallenging, and with respect to history, Quini states that despite his earlier preconceived notions, he has learned that it offers no irrefutable compass or explanation.¹⁰⁰ Quini begins to consider becoming a novelist. In the citation that follows his insight is remarkably similar to Deleuze and Guattari’s observation that the function of art is to create percepts and affects. It contains a mention of a character that views becoming-animal as a necessary step toward becoming imperceptible. Quini compares the sensations caused by literature to the rapacious bird of prey that fed on Prometheus. In Deleuzian fashion, the sensation described is of one that bypasses the function of cognition.

[...] pico de rapaz, uña de rapaz, porque era ave que caía sobre el corazón de uno, carroñera, y se entretenía un rato ahí, águila en el hígado, en el corazón de Promoteo, águila en el corazón, comiéndote las entrañas.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ “[...] porque estaba convencido de que [...] la literatura [...] era levedad, ala, siempre en el aire [...]” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 279.

¹⁰⁰ “[...] había descubierto que tampoco la historia posesía esa luz cegadora, ni era un refugio,” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 280.

¹⁰¹ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, pp. 278-279.

Quini Ricart, then, is another character from *La caída de Madrid* who appears open to becoming. In the first chapter Chirbes presents him contemplating his personal past and likely future, and imagining that the legacy of Franco literally makes up his physical body. The last image of him in *La caída de Madrid* is of his attempting to break free by way of a thinking otherwise. He remains open to connections with other bodies – both those of other students as well as those in the forms of music, art, literature, and history.

The prostitute Lina is another of the characters open to connection that appear in *La caída de Madrid*. Like the gay student José Luis del Moral in *La larga marcha*, Lina is similar to Melville's Bartleby who upsets an established order by way of a repetition of a simple refusal.¹⁰² She is unmarried and the mother of one son. She has trouble making ends meet after losing her job as an attendant at a sort of photo-mart store, and begins to work as a prostitute. Chirbes utilizes this character to recreate the sensation that poorer women often experienced when they found themselves unemployed. The commentator John Hooper discusses the “logic” behind the widespread existence of female prostitution during the Franco era.

[...] the services of prostitutes [...] were cheap, and the reason that they were cheap was because they were numerous, and that was because their numbers were constantly being replenished by cohorts of unmarried mothers who had themselves been unable to withstand the pressures imposed by the taboo of pre-marital sex.¹⁰³

One night at a bar, Lina catches the eye of Maximino Arroyo. The Commissar invites her to drinks and in the ensuing conversation she tells Arroyo that she would

¹⁰² Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, p. 76.

enjoy sleeping with him. Arroyo takes her to a hotel where he is well known to the male employees whose comments at the expense of women reveal an unwritten agreement among men that cuts across economic classes.¹⁰⁴ In the hotel room Arroyo continues to compete in an unspoken zero-sum contest between Lina and himself that he had begun in the bar when he picked up the tab for the drinks. He mentally awards points based on who holds advantage after each movement in this initial encounter. Arroyo thus gives himself points when they reach the hotel. He “concedes” points to Lina when he ejaculates prematurely. The following morning he feels that he has lost the contest entirely when she refuses to fellate him, a service that he considers to be automatic in his encounters with women. Lina communicates this unspoken refusal through a spontaneous and animalistic sound that causes pain for Arroyo. He refers to this sound as “primary.”

Lina, la había acariciado, apretándola con la mano contra su cara, pero después no había aceptado introducírsele en la boca, negándose con una especie de gruñido que le había dolido, porque había sido una expresión espontánea, primaria, de animal que muestra el desagrado.¹⁰⁵

During their next encounter, Lina again refuses to provide Arroyo with the service that he desires, and with which by now he is obsessed. She again issues her animalistic sound, a sound that could be construed as a stammering. Like Melville’s Bartleby and José Luis del Moral from *La larga marcha*, Lina’s simple rejection of Arroyo’s requests upsets the strong man. The force that she exerts upon him is all the more powerful because of the sound that issues from her “primary” nature. Franco’s chief of internal security, the man charged with dealing with internal “enemies,” is rendered paralyzed by

¹⁰³ John Hooper, *The New Spaniards*, p. 166. Hooper also states that “In the last year of the dictatorship, it was estimated that 500,000 women were working as prostitutes in Spain – one in twenty-seven of the adult female population,” p. 149.

this sound. Moreover, Arroyo is overtaken by the feeling that it is another woman, “una mujer distinta,” that escapes his control, a fleeing that he is not accustomed to, cannot control and which he is incapable of accepting.

[...] y emitía otra vez aquel sonido que resultaba tan desagradable escuchar, y que era como si lo emitiese una mujer distinta que a él no le gustaba. Era un ruido que, a la vez que resultaba desagradable de oír, expresaba desagrado, y que lo paralizó durante unos segundos [...]¹⁰⁶

In what amounts to a strategy session with her friend Cholo about how to escape Arroyo’s clutches, Lina recounts her disgust with the sight of his obese body.¹⁰⁷ The threat that she faces from Arroyo is made credible by his treatment of other women in his circle such as Olga de Ricart and his own wife whom he keeps virtually imprisoned in his household. In a stunning example of making language tremble Chirbes’s narrator depicts the dreariness of this unfortunate woman’s existence by recording that she completes household work as slowly as possible simply to have something to do.¹⁰⁸ His misogyny is also revealed by the comments that he makes to subordinates. For example, he tells Guillermo that, “as soon as a woman leaves her toothbrush in your house, you’re done for.”¹⁰⁹ When the narrative focus is on the revolutionary Lucio, further evidence surfaces with respect to Arroyo’s extremely violent nature, as if his order to murder the prisoner Roda were not enough. We have seen that Lucio had once been beaten to the point of

¹⁰⁴ “[...] El portero en su cabina [...] les decía: “Buenas tardes, don Maximino” y después de una pausa “y la compañía,” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, pp. 179-180.

¹⁰⁵ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 66.

¹⁰⁶ Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 67.

¹⁰⁷ “Quería que ella lo admira con la boca abierta, como si tuviera cuerpo, que no lo tenía, que coño de cuerpo, sesenta y tantos años mal llevados.” Chirbes, *La larga marcha*, p. 179.

¹⁰⁸ “[...] el día se le aparecía como un vacío enorme que había que llenar lentamente, con cuidado para no apurar todas las tareas de una sola vez, porque, sin nada que hacer, el vacío se le volvía insoportable,” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 293.

¹⁰⁹ “En cuanto una mujer se olvida el cepillo de dientes en tu casa, estás perdido,” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 270.

unconsciousness by the commissar during an interrogation. The heiress Elvira also provides testimony about the threat that Arroyo poses for anyone who defies the Franco regime, no matter how well placed he or she might be. The mere suspicion of not being in line with Franco's movement could doom a person with nefarious personal consequences, "[...] los despachos que a veces eran peores, porque bastaba una denuncia de alguien, ni siquiera una denuncia, una sospecha que dejaban caer, y ya estabas perdido."¹¹⁰ Chirbes succeeds in making language tremble because, in revealing the fear that the upper classes felt vis-à-vis Franco's authoritarian regime (including the daughter of his chief financier), the plight of citizens from lower economic classes is made even more manifest.

Considering Arroyo's position, it is all the more astounding that it is the seemingly powerless Lina who succeeds at fighting back against his threats and blustering. She accomplishes this simply with a look of disgust, an animal-like noise of rejection, and through a series of simple refusals. In this way Lina deflects power through a thoroughly Deleuzian stuttering. In the hotel room on the night of their first encounter, Arroyo calls her a liar and a whore after he discovers that she did not tell him the complete truth about her living arrangements. Arroyo, still mentally engaged in his points system, immediately regrets his harsh words, because he realizes that Lina does not adhere to his authoritarian logic.¹¹¹ Growing desperate, the commissar insists on accompanying her to her apartment so that he knows for certain where she lives. He refers to her working-class neighborhood of Vallecas, as "Red-infested."¹¹² He continues a process of intimidation in a vain attempt to bend her to his will. Lina continues to deny

¹¹⁰ *La caída de Madrid*, p. 136.

¹¹¹ "[...] pero en cuanto dijo estas palabras, que eran su baza, se dio cuenta de que la siguiente mano iba a volver a perderla y deseó no haberlas pronunciado nunca, porque hasta entonces todo había sido como la primera vez [...]." Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*.

him the sexual favor that he desires from her. She continues to work as a prostitute despite the commissar's objections. He begins to call her incessantly and peppers her with questions about her activities. He arranges for her to move into an apartment near the ministry in an effort to control her. She complains to her friend Chelo about his biting her and shows her the teeth marks that he leaves behind.¹¹³ Arroyo demands to see Lina's young son and, taking the boy by the chin, states menacingly that by simply looking at the boy he will be able to recognize the father.¹¹⁴ He takes to calling Lina a "little rat,"¹¹⁵ and warns her that she has bewitched him, and that the only way that he will be free of her spell would be to kill her.¹¹⁶ In a bizarre attempt to intimidate her, Arroyo arranges for Lina to watch as he engages in intercourse with a younger prostitute. This effort backfires when the turned on Lina requests to join in their tryst.¹¹⁷

On occasion Arroyo pulls strings for Lina that result in significant improvements in her life as well as in the lives of those closest to her. For example, the commissar arranges for her mother, a woman showing signs of dementia, to be moved to the head of the line for placement in governmental housing. When the narration focuses on Lina, her desire to connect with a sincere and caring male partner is clearly expressed. This desire, however, is linked to the requirement that genuine friendship exist in the relationship.¹¹⁸

¹¹² "En tu barrio sois todos rojas." Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, pp. 180-181.

¹¹³ "[...] mira, mira la marca de los dientes ahí, en la teta, y perdona, pero mira cómo me pone las nalgas." Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 180.

¹¹⁴ "Viendo al niño tengo ya grabada la cara del padre y me la sé de memoria, y sé que, si lo veo por la calle, lo voy a reconocer." Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 181.

¹¹⁵ "[...] ratita, me llama en los momentos dulces [...]." Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 179.

¹¹⁶ "Le decía: 'Me tienes loco,' y que, para quedarse tranquilo, no iba a tener más remedio que matarla. Para librarse de ella." Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 178.

¹¹⁷ "Un día obligó a Lina a que lo viera follar con una nueva que había llegado al club, y que era muy joven, y Lina lo vio, y hasta tendió el brazo en dirección a la pareja, como queriendo participar en aquello [...]." Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 64.

¹¹⁸ "Ella sí que tenía a su hijo, ella sí que tendría que buscarle un padre a su hijo, y buscarse un amigo, un marido, alguien que los quisiera al niño y a ella de verdad [...]." Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 180.

As is the case with Gloria Sisner from *La larga marcha* and Arroyo's wife, (the only unnamed character in Chirbes's trilogy), Lina at least for a time casts blame upon herself for a powerful man's outrages.¹¹⁹ The last view of Lina in *La caída de Madrid* is her attempting to decide whether she can continue with her line of flight, or, if eventually she must surrender to Arroyo's trepidations. Her admission that she has come to feel a bit guilty about Arroyo's violent behavior suggests the latter¹²⁰ In the character of Lina, Chirbes provides a compelling illustration of the dangers involved in deterritorializing, as her life is clearly in danger. Nevertheless, Lina presents an example of a socially marginalized person who is able to upset a powerful enforcer of rules through a series of simple refusals. As Franco lies dying, his guarantor of internal discipline remains obsessed by the noncompliance of a prostitute refusing to follow him in his authoritarian logic.

The Marxist revolutionary Lucio and his girlfriend Lurditas, a domestic laborer within the Ricart household, are the last rhizomatic figures from *La caída de Madrid* that we will consider. Lucio moved from militating with the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) to the more secretive and violent Revolutionary Vanguard (Vanguardia Revolucionario). He decided on this change after receiving instruction from his cellmate, the lawyer Jesús Taboada, after being imprisoned for leading a strike of subway workers. At the beginning of the novel the narrator notes, as we have discussed, that Taboada counts the conservative José Ricart as one of his clients. Ricart's trusted confidant, Julio, a talented man from a humble background, tells Ricart that a comfortable future awaits the talented

¹¹⁹ “[...] Lina, pensaba que eso era lo que decía él, que, por ella, por la forma de ser de ella, se había vuelto loco aquel hombre, y, cuando le daba por pensar así, hasta se sentía un poco culpable.” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 182.

Taboada.¹²¹ This is borne out because the character reappears in *Los viejos amigos* as a well-heeled lawyer with strong connections to the Spanish Socialist Party. In any event, Taboada and Lucio share a prison cell for several months. The reason for Taboada's imprisonment is not given. Other prisoners warn Lucio to be wary of the lawyer because he may be a government plant.¹²² Lucio disregards this advice in part because of the force of Taboada's arguments, and in part because he remains angry with fellow subway workers who went back to work immediately after he and other union leaders were jailed.

In prison, Taboada preaches a direct and violent confrontation with authorities. He also utilizes mockery as a pedagogical technique. He reveals that he has become involved in revolutionary activity simply because of hatred. The lawyer claims that he hates his own class of "Philistines" even more than he hates the "ignorant" proletariat.¹²³ He dismisses any connection between mercy, compassion or even happiness and communism. Displaying a strictly molar approach to Marxism, Taboada focuses on Marx's supposed insistence on coherency.¹²⁴ Furthermore, he argues for the whipping of the working classes into frenzied action against the ruling elite.

A la clase hay que putearla, cercarla, cerrarle el camino de vuelta atrás. Convencerla de que es carne de cañón de verdad, de que no vale nada, para que salte y muerda.¹²⁵

¹²⁰ "[...] pensaba que [...] por la forma de ser de ella, se había vuelto loco aquel hombre, y cuando le daba por pensar así, hasta se sentía un poco culpable," Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 182.

¹²¹ "Es listo. Este carbon es listo. Tragará." Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 25.

¹²² "[...] y los camaradas le decían: 'Ten cuidado con ése, que es confidente [...].'" Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p.149.

¹²³ "Seguramente porque os odio, os ayudo a que os odiéis vosotros mismos, porque más que a vuestra clase de ignorantes, odio a la mía de filisteos." Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 152.

¹²⁴ "Marx no buscó nunca hacer felices a ese ejército de brutos a los que defendió. Buscó ser coherente con su pensamiento. Cogió un hilo, tiró de él, y devanó la madeja hasta el final. Eso es todo. El sentimentalismo lo habéis puesto vosotros, los revisionistas, y muchos de estos de aquí abajo [...]." Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 152.

¹²⁵ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 152.

Lucio asks Taboada what he thinks that the lawyer's role will be during the revolution and its aftermath, and the lawyer replies that he and others like him will provide the intellectual framework. He ridicules Lucio's contention that the working classes can speak for themselves. Providing a prescient view of how the Spanish Socialist Party would actually behave once in power, Taboada states that specialists in Marxism like himself would be the ones that would speak for the masses. They, and not Franco, would interrupt the speech of the masses and to mold it to their needs whenever and however they chose.

¿Qué sabes tú de Lenin? Nada. Ese día hablarán los especialistas [...] y ya no será Franco el que te callará. Serán ellos.¹²⁶

Once Lucio is released from prison, Taboada is outside waiting to meet him. He drives him to a safehouse and introduces him to Raúl Muñoz Cortés, "El Viejo," who is the companion shot to death later at the subway. For his part Lucio brings Enrique Roda, a fellow subway worker, into *Vanguardia Revolucionaria*. As we have seen, Roda is the suspect captured by police and whom Arroyo orders murdered. Activists from the Basque country join the group as well. Taboada meets with all of them on a weekly basis and exhorts them to violent action. In these meetings the lawyer hides his lack of respect for the working class.

Allá sólo hablaban de conciencia de clase, de estrategias para llegar al poder, de la insurrección que debía sacar del pozo al país y que tenía que estar dirigida por una vanguardia armada.¹²⁷

In presenting the relationship between the lawyer Taboada and the construction worker Lucio, Chirbes performs as a skillful symptomologist in diagnosing what short-

¹²⁶ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 153.

circuits creative assemblages within Spanish life. In *La caída de Madrid*, Taboada is an opportunistic intellectual who travels in the same circles as up and coming Socialist politicians. He exhorts subordinates to carry out violent assignments while he cozies up to the Franco regime for personal gain. In *Los viejos amigos* he is identified as the lawyer who assisted in securing the release of the imprisoned cell members. In that later work, Taboada enjoys close relations with the top echelons of the Spanish Socialist Party and he of course is in attendance at Pedrito's reunion dinner, an affair of zero-intensity.

In *La caída de Madrid*, Taboada orders the group to plant explosives in the metro. Some time after the failed mission, however, the lawyer and Lucio encounter one another on the street. The lawyer informs Lucio that he is quitting the revolution and returning to his class.¹²⁸ He tries to justify this decision by stating that he will be able to do more for the revolution by working within the system. He claims that he lacks the stomach for violent action although he still maintains the necessity for it.¹²⁹ Taboada repeats the many expressions of friendship that he had made to Lucio in the past, calling him his best friend. As Lucio attempts to evade the police, he remembers those promises and decides to seek temporary refuge in Taboada's office. However, when he reaches the posh neighborhood where the lawyer works, he immediately feels out of place.¹³⁰ He reads the fear and uneasiness of people in the shops as he walks by. Chirbes again makes language tremble when his narrator notes that the residents of this section of Madrid do not differentiate between a beggar, a criminal or a laborer because none of them are supposed

¹²⁷ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 156.

¹²⁸ "Lo siento. Abandono. A lo mejor es que vuelvo a mi clase." Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 160.

¹²⁹ "He encontrado trabajo en un despacho de abogados y, no sé, me parece que es mi forma de participar en la revolución. Creo en la violencia, pero no sirvo para ejercerla." Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 160.

¹³⁰ "[...] un individuo situado en un lugar impropio [...]." Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 305.

to be there at that hour.¹³¹ As Lucio draws near to Taboada's office he recalls the few occasions when he encountered his former mentor on the streets of Madrid and the latter appeared to look the other way. He ponders rumors that Taboada associates with rising politicians as well as members of the Franco regime that speak about the "politics of the possible," and intellectuals who reject the hopelessly utopian politics that Marxism, on their account, represents. Standing in the upscale district of Madrid, Lucio suddenly and fully realizes that Taboada and the people with whom he meets are determined to cut off any chance at effectuating real changes.¹³² The depiction of Taboada is an affective example of a molecular or rhizomatic movement becoming molar. As the desperate Lucio draws nearer to Taboada's office, he becomes more apprehensive, wondering which Taboada he will encounter. Chirbes again drills holes into language by Lucio's thought that the lawyer is not one Taboada, or four or even forty, but rather four hundred.¹³³ This fear becomes so palpable that he is unable to light a cigarette. Lucio decides to head to the working class neighborhood of Entrevías, a neighborhood whose name appropriately means "Between the Tracks," where he and Lurditas share a small house. The mere thought of the neighborhood provides affective security for Lucio because he knows that he will not stand out. In the following citation Chirbes present an example of a "swarm" or "pack" that does not foster the emergence of individualities so much as singularites.

De momento, salir de aquel barrio, coger un metro, un autobús y dirigirse a barrios en los que todo el mundo vestía como él, llevaba bolsas como la suya colgadas al

¹³¹ "[...] los dependientes de las tiendas que desconfiaban de aquel tipo, obrero, o mendigo o delincuente, ellos no distinguían bien las diferencias entre esas categorías [...]" Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 305.

¹³² "[...] mantenían reuniones con gente que venía del régimen, o muy cerca a él, y hablaban de la política utópica, que era de los comunistas, a quienes había que cerrarles el paso, y de la política posible. que era la de los socialdemócratas. Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 161.

¹³³ "[...] quién va a llegar, qué él, cuál de ellos, el camarada Tabo, Jesús, don Jesús, el señor Taboada, cuál de los cuatro, cuál de los cuatrocientos, porque seguramente hay otros," Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 311.

hombro, y los habitantes y los que frecuentaban sus calles eran albañiles, fontaneros, mecánicos, y él era en aquellos barrios uno más [...] ¹³⁴

As mentioned, Taboada also appears in *Los amigos viejos*. In that work, whose events take place more than a quarter of a century after those depicted in *La caída de Madrid*, Taboada has made good on his statements to Lucio that he would take his and other workers' personal histories and appropriate them to his life story in order to further his own interests.¹³⁵ Lucio compares Taboada's brutal psychological belittling of him in prison to the vicious physical assault that he endured years earlier at the hands of Arroyo. In neither case, however, was Lucio's opponent able to meld his trajectory to their will. In the following citation, the seemingly defeated Lucio ridicules the molar figures of Arroyo on the right and Taboada on the left for their inability to fully dictate his lines of flight. He places Taboada's verbal slipperiness and haughtiness on the same level with the physical torture administered by Arroyo.

¿Ves? Me tienes entero, pero no sabes ni una palabra de quien soy yo. [...] También Taboada a lo mejor había pateado su cabeza, su voluntad, pero no había aprendido ni una palabra de lo que era tener algo o no tener nada, porque eso sólo se aprendía desde dentro.¹³⁶

Lucio considers the magnitude of the unrelenting forces pressing down upon him. At this point he images them connected in their entirety to Marxist revolution. Lucio's ponderings, however, lead him to believe that the intensity that provokes difference exceeds any particular manifestation or actor. He dismisses Taboada's bowing out of the struggle as inconsequential in the long run because the forces behind change are

¹³⁴ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 304.

¹³⁵ "Tu pasado me lo inventaré yo a la medida de mis necesidades. Tu lucha será una medalla que me ponder en mi solapa. Tu hambre, tus chuscos de pan, tus meses de cárcel [...] formarán parte de mi biografía [...].} Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 155.

¹³⁶ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 316.

ultimately unstoppable. In the words that follow Taboada expresses his insight that force or desire, referred to here by the word ‘revolution,’ would not beg (suplicar) or be confined (arrestar), but that it would demand (exigir), threaten (amenazar), but above all else, continue (continuar).

Taboada había aprovechada el descanso para quedarse en el vestuario, pero la revolución seguía su curso y la revolución no debía mendigar, tenía que exigir lo que se debía, no la mendigaba, no suplicaba, no se arrestaba, no, se erguía y amenazaba.¹³⁷

Lucio eventually looks beyond the dogma that he learned from Taboada and Vanguardia Revolucionaria. As he continues to evade Franco’s security force he recalls the affective security that he shares in his home with Lurditas. A string of personal defeats enters his mind: the loss of a job, imprisonment, the betrayal of his fellow workers who reported back to work while he endured torture, Taboada’s turning his back on him as well as a real threat of his physical liquidation convince Lucio that he has risked too much too soon. He regrets not telling Taboada and his superiors to go straight to hell¹³⁸ Retreating from Taboada’s office, he opts to return home, aware that police might well find him there, but that before they take him away he will at least be able to gather strength from the warmth that Lurdita’s body left in the mattress.¹³⁹ Lucio has begun to looker farther afield than orthodox Marxism in order to come to grips with the forces that he senses about and within him. The losses that he has suffered make him realize that he has deterritorialized too recklessly. In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari provide the example of an animal forced, like Lucio, to flee “when the

¹³⁷ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 316.

¹³⁸ “Y Lucio había pensado que ahora aquel tipo conocía su cara [...] Podía haber dicho: ‘Éste es éste,’ y todo [...] por no haberle dicho a Tabo: ‘Que se vaya a la mierda.’” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 160.

associated milieu is rocked by blows from the exterior, forcing the animal to abandon it and strike up an association with new portions of exteriority, this time leaning on its interior milieus like fragile crutches.”¹⁴⁰

The connection between Lurditas and Lucio is itself an excellent example of a rhizomatic assemblage. They met during mass at a Catholic church in a working class neighborhood of Madrid. The priest eschews much of the formal clerical garb as well as a large portion of the Catholic missal. Congregants partake of an informal communion consisting of bits of bread instead of the standard-issue liturgical hosts. Lurditas compares this ceremony favorably with the exaggerated care that other priests took with a consecrated host.¹⁴¹ When they first talk after the conclusion of the service, Lurditas is shocked to learn that Lucio has no religious faith whatsoever. He declares that he only believes in “justice, and that there is no justice.”¹⁴² On their first date she warns the amorous Lucio that he is moving too fast. He replies that such limits are mere bourgeois sentimentality and that people either like each other or they do not and that there should be no morality mixed into their mutual attraction or repulsion. Lurditas accepts this explanation and the two move into together a month later. A mutual strengthening of their respective powers for change and connectivity ensues. Lurditas expresses a fear of the raised fists as well as the hammer and sickles that appear on the covers of the pamphlets and the books that Lucio shares with her. He explains that she should not fear these symbols because the people who created them are on her side. He begins to

¹³⁹ “Imaginó que entraban en la habitación [...] en una cama que tendría guardado el calor que había desprendido Lurditas. Y que él, antes de acompañarlos, acariciaba el hueco que había dejado el cuerpo de ella impreso en el colchón.” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 318.

¹⁴⁰ *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 55.

¹⁴¹ “[...] y no pasaba como en la iglesia del pueblo de Lurditas, donde si alguna vez se le había caído al cura un pedazo de hostia había sido casi una tragedia, el cura de rodillas, limpiando el suelo [...]”

consider himself, with some justification, to be a dedicated teacher to Lurditas and her to be a devoted student, much as he considered himself to be a pupil of Taboada. Indeed, although he comes to suspect that he has sacrificed too much in a reckless fashion, Lucio still resists quitting Vanguardia Revolucionaria precisely because of his capacity as mentor to Lurditas.¹⁴³ He does not want for her to see him, like Taboada, quitting the revolution. Their discussions extend to sexual equality when Lurditas refers to herself as belonging to him, as being “his woman.” Lucio explains that under Marxism people do not belong to one another. She finds it unusual that he refers to her as his comrade or his companion, but eventually comes to appreciate his using these non-hierarchical titles. In the citation that follows the narrator describes this rhizomatic assemblage between Lucio and Lurditas. Her increasing ability to think “otherwise” is voiced and supported by the progressive priest from the chapel where they attend mass.¹⁴⁴

Decía ella: “Soy tu mujer,” y él le respondía que no, que las personas no eran propiedad de nadie. A ella no le importaba ser propiedad de él, pero también le parecía bien que le dijera que los dos eran iguales, no propiedad el uno del otro, sino iguales, compañero y compañera, y eso lo decía también el padre Llanos: “Las mujeres son vuestras compañeras” [...].¹⁴⁵

Lurditas herself is freighted with arborescent lessons. Her name was given to her when, as an adolescent (her given name was María Antonia), she suffered a fall that

¹⁴² “No, Lurditas, no, yo no creo en Dios, creo en la justicia, vamos en que no hay justicia [...]” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 86.

¹⁴³ “[...] hubo un momento en el que hubiera querido [...] decirle a Taboada: “Que se vaya todo a la mierda. vete tú a la mierda [...] y Marx y Lenin, todo a la mierda [...] pero no lo hizo, porque ella era a la vez que su compañera, su discípula.” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, pp. 147-148.

¹⁴⁴ After he is released from prison Lucio expresses admiration for the ex-priests who opted to stay in prison because they and others did not agree with the conditions of release offered to them by the Franco regime. “[...] pensaba que los que estaban aún en la cárcel, revionistas, ex curas de oerreté, etarras mantenían una verdad y un odio que se le habían desvanecido en parte a él [...]” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 154.

¹⁴⁵ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 88.

rendered her unconscious for several days. When medical approaches failed, an elderly neighbor pinned a medallion of the Virgen of Lourdes on her blouse. María Antonia soon recovered and the girl's mother and neighbor credited supernatural forces for her return to good health and began to call her Lurditas. When the bishop confirmed her a year later he ordered her to use that name. After Lucio hears the story he begins to call his lover and student "María Antonia," but relents because she has freely accepted the other name.¹⁴⁶ Besides her religious faith, which she never abandons completely, Lurditas also believes unquestionably in the need for continuous work as the basis on which to build a life. She thus proffers a testimony for the cause of imposed lack and endless accumulation as opposed to glorious expenditure by deeming one's work to be the foundation upon which to build a life.

Y es que Lucio se comportaba siempre como si el trabajo no fuera lo principal que una persona tiene, porque es sobre lo que se edifica todo lo demás. "La comida, el vestido, la casa, los hijos, todos se levanta con trabajo y, cuando el trabajo falla, todo se viene abajo [...]"¹⁴⁷

The assemblage between Lucio and Lurditas leads to the forming of a "space of affect" between them, especially within their home. Lucio succeeds at interrupting the hierarchical lessons that Lurditas absorbs. For her part she has proven to be a reliable confidant for Lucio. The narrator reveals that she understands and complies with the rules regarding secrecy that he must follow.¹⁴⁸ She readily abandons her responsibilities within the Ricart household on the night before Franco's death, "a day when everybody's nerves

¹⁴⁶ "Que más da, al fin y al cabo es un nombre que tú has elegido libremente," y aceptó llamarla Lurdes [...]." Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 88.

¹⁴⁷ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 81.

¹⁴⁸ Lurditas conocía perfectamente las normas de seguridad a las que Lucio tenía que someterse [...]." Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 142.

are on edge,”¹⁴⁹ in order to attend to Lucio. For these reasons Lucio returns home to await the police when he realizes that he has nowhere else to hide. Charles J. Stivale makes an observation about the particular force that occurs in a space of affect that applies to the relationship that sustains Lucio and Lurditas. Stivale writes, “The hecceity’s combination [...] corresponds here to a precipitation of the gift of knowledge as a result of both sacrifices made and concomitant resistances maintained [...].”¹⁵⁰

Chirbes’s skillful manipulation of time reveals that the police did not pursue Lucio after Franco’s death. He accomplishes this by having the narration depict Lucio encountering the opportunistic Taboada, (it is not beyond consideration to suspect that Taboada tipped off authorities about the attack on the subway), several weeks after the arrest and probable murder of Enrique Roda as well as the summary execution of Muñoz Cortés. During the course of this encounter, the attorney smugly explains why he abruptly abandoned *Vanguardia Revolucionaria*, “Seguramente mi mente es más de izquierdas que mi sensibilidad. Qué le vamos a hacer.”¹⁵¹

In this scene between Taboada and Lucio, Chirbes provides another example of why Chirbes’s literature is a minor literature. It shows the summary nature of police operations under Franco. The tumult surrounding the caudillo’s death provides an opportunity for Arroyo to order the execution of a political dissident. The lawyer who worked both sides of the fence, and may have tipped off police about the operation leading to his arrest, is richly rewarded and is later seen to have thrived under the Spanish socialist and conservative governments. Taboada provides an opportunity for an affective depiction of Chirbes’s belief that little has changed under the Spanish Socialist Party

¹⁴⁹ “[...] en un día de nervios como aquél, nadie podía distraerse [...].” Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 80.

¹⁵⁰ Charles J. Stivale, “Pursuing a Two-Fold Thought,” in Ian Buchanan, *A Deleuzian Century*, p. 139.

because operators like Taboada from the left and the right orchestrated the much-vaulted transition to democracy.

Nos lo enseñó la transición, que no fue un pacto sino la aplicación de una nueva estrategia en esa guerra de dominio de los menos sobre los más, y donde si hubo poca crueldad fue porque, por entonces, los menos eran fuertes y débiles los más.¹⁵²

Los viejos amigos

A noticeably reduced number of schizos, rhizomes or nomads appears in *Los viejos amigos*. In the citation that we just quoted we discern the reason. Chirbes states that if the transition featured less directly applied violence than the Franco era, it was because by that time the few in power were much stronger and organized than the masses of Spaniards that they ruled. Chirbes intimates that the control of individuals under advanced capital is so ubiquitous that overt violence is rarely necessary. As we have seen, *Los viejos amigos* is, in its entirety, a chilling depiction of what Deleuze designated as “the society of control,” which amounts to a continuous shaping or “modulation” to the dictates of capitalism.”¹⁵³ Very few characters in this last work of the trilogy escape the clutches of the neo-liberal order, or even bother to try.¹⁵⁴ Most have long surrendered to the demand for ostentatious accumulation and expenditure. Those who have embarked on lines of escape are Carlos, Rita and two minor characters, the deceased militant Mauricio and Magda the lesbian owner of the bar where members of the cell used to congregate. Mauricio has died without having been able to reunite with any of his former companions despite having expressed a keen interest in visiting with them before his death. Magda

¹⁵¹ Chirbes, *La caída de Madrid*, p. 160.

¹⁵² Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, p. 108.

¹⁵³ Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations 1972-1990*, p. 179.

has cut off relations with members of the cell, due in part perhaps to the reductionist attitudes of many of them towards gays and lesbians. Rita and Carlos, however, are central characters in *Los viejos amigos* who provide examples of rhizomatic or nomadic movement, and it is their lines of flight that we will now consider.

Rita refuses to attend the dinner ostensibly because of Carlos' presence. She correctly believes that the dinner will be an affair of zero intensity cooked up by Pedrito, who throughout *Los viejos amigos* shows himself incapable of forming life-enhancing connections.¹⁵⁵ Like most of the other characters, Rita left the small town of Denia, located on the Mediterranean Sea, to move to Madrid. Once in the capital Rita worked hard to further Marxism by passing out pamphlets outside the gates of factories. She also labored for hours on end as a seamstress in order to support Carlos, herself and the three children that they have together. Twenty-five years later she continues to feel intense pain in her back due to this period of intense physical labor.¹⁵⁶ For his part Carlos spent most of his time in a vain attempt to become a celebrated writer. He often ignored his wife and children in order to write.¹⁵⁷ At other times he stood everybody to drinks in misguided acts of generosity that put his family in worse financial straits. His inattention to their eldest son Pau leads to the latter's death from an overdose of drugs. As we have seen, government security forces savagely beat the pregnant Rita while she participated in a

¹⁵⁴ See Francisco Javier Higuero's "Horizonte nihilista en *Los viejos amigos* de Rafael Chirbes," en *Castilla* 28-29 - 2003-2004, p.142.

¹⁵⁵ ¿Qué se les habrá perdido por aquí. Si putas mejores y más baratas tiene que haberlas ahora mismo en Denia, y eso ha sido lo que le ha gustado toda la vida a Pedrito, armar barullo, hablar sin ton ni son, manipular a unos y a otros, emborracharse, follarse lo que caiga y, si no cae nada, irse de putas." Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 49.

¹⁵⁶ "[...] me duele la espalda, me dolía la espalda de tantas horas sentada cosiendo [...]." Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 151.

¹⁵⁷ "[...] Carlos, que siempre estaba atormentado [...] ahora me sale, me está saliendo, así que no me molestéis, largaos los niños y tú por ahí unos días, o estaos quietos en la cocina, lo que sea, pero dejadme solo." Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 52.

Mayday political rally. Rita now finds herself working in advertising for a specialty wines magazine. Deleuze and Guattari specifically mention marketing and advertising and their role of creating a sense of lack in the midst of plenty, as an example of the waste spawned by the anti-production of global capital.¹⁵⁸ As in the case of the characters Amalia and Lucio discussed previously, Rita presents an illustration of what Deleuze and Guattari advise against – deterritorializing too quickly. The narration records Rita’s reflections on the not inconsiderable losses that she has endured in what she now considers to be a mostly fruitless service to orthodox Marxism.¹⁵⁹

This character unfavorably compares her situation with that of the millions of Spaniards who, like her, endured the years of late Francoism, but who did not militate as openly against the regime. She states that this collectivity of millions was the true future of the country and not the handful of Spaniards who, like many in her former cell, played at revolutionary activity or who deterritorialized in a careless fashion.¹⁶⁰ In the following citation Rita recalls the words of an elderly laborer from Denia who told her before she moved to Madrid that she and the others were simply “sellers of air.” Rita has come to agree with this appraisal to some extent and believes that it certainly applies to her present employment as an advertising salesperson.

“Vendéis la nada, vendéis el aire,” decía el viejo albañil. Sí.
Qué le voy a hacer. Me enamoré de un vendedor de aire,

¹⁵⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 28. See also Deleuze’s “Postscript on Control Societies” in his *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, p. 181.

¹⁵⁹ “Había abandonado mis clase de matemáticas en Denia, los baños en la escollera a principios de septiembre, la luz narcotizante, para venirme a Madrid, a trabajar en un taller de costura [...] estaba embarazada. Pau, antes de nacer, ya notó el frío de las madrugadas a la puerta de las fábricas, repartiendo panfletos. Y eso fue todo.” Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 151.

¹⁶⁰ “Ellos, y no nosotros eran el futuro, ellos eran la punta de lanza de lo que llegó después, llevaban la vida de nuevos habitantes de las ciudades que acabaría siendo la vida normal y, en sus vidas los recuerdos cobran un sentido, porque se han ordenado para llegar a donde hemos llegado.” Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 150.

Carlos, y, mira por dónde, al final es lo que yo he acabado vendiendo. Aire.¹⁶¹

This penchant for self-honesty, among other actions and characteristics, marks Rita as an individual able to take stock and to continue securing a space from which to set out anew. Deleuze and Guattari state, “That this involves an activity of selection, elimination and extraction, in order to prevent the interior forces of the earth from being submerged, to enable them to resist [...]”¹⁶² Moreover, Chirbes, with Rita, provides a depiction of Deleuze and Guattari’s admonition that lines are intercrossed and that progressive forces can fall back into moar lines, or worse.¹⁶³ As mentioned Rita works in advertising. She reveals that she has perforce accepted, unhappily, the parameters of global capital. She also believes at times that the ability to maneuver and to effectuate change is strictly limited by the extent of one’s access to money. The activities that she thinks about participating in if she had sufficient resources could be defined in strictly molar or normative politics because they do nothing to effectuate real economic change. To the contrary, she imagines opening museums, starting foundations and sponsoring musical festivals.

Todos seríamos buenas si tuviéramos tiempo, y, claro está, *dinero*. En ese caso, ¿cómo no dedicar parte de ese tiempo, de ese dinero a hacer el bien? [...] Abrir museos, inaugurar fundaciones, patrocinar festivales de música.¹⁶⁴

Despite her limitations, Rita regularly demonstrates real rhizomatic movement. She engages in reminiscing, but not obsessively. Her gaze is oriented mostly toward the present and the future. Like José Luis del Moral in *La larga marcha*, she utilizes the past

¹⁶¹ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 58.

¹⁶² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 311.

¹⁶³ *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 229.

¹⁶⁴ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 45.

in order to avoid missteps as she continues to deterritorialize, and it is for this reason that she avoids the reunion dinner. Rita has established a “space of affect” with her second husband Juan. At 56 years of age, Rita is determined to enjoy the rest of her life to the fullest extent possible without further compromising her desire to see a more equitable Spain. She resents that her former colleagues have haughtily dismissed Juan as a simpleton for not being sufficiently conversant in Marx.¹⁶⁵ Juan, who disdains politicians on both the right and left as craven opportunists, certainly knows how to enjoy life, a fact that Rita has come to appreciate. The following citation reveals an example of the affective security that the couple has built together.

No esperar grandes cosas. Vivir tranquilamente, sin más. Con Juan eso puedo permitírmelo. Dice: “Rita, vamos a la playa, vamos a comer a la playa, vamos a esquiar a Andorra o a La Molina este fin de semana.” Y vamos, alquilamos unos esquís y pasamos el fin de semana resbalando en la nieve, o metidos en la habitación.¹⁶⁶

Juan and the other Spaniards to whom Rita referred to above as the truly effective vehicles of change, despite their lack of overt adherence to orthodox Marxism, are what Jussi Vähämäki and Akseli Virtanen refer to as indestructible “cockroaches” and “paper-clips,” who exist not in space but in duration and are manifested in multiplicity.¹⁶⁷ Vähämäki and Virtanen state that they “pop up at the most unexpected moments producing all manner of noise, harm and joy.”¹⁶⁸ Rita’s reflections indicate that has learned not to privilege abstract ideals over the concrete. For example, she recalls the cold manner in which her ex-husband Carlos depicted human lovemaking in his first

¹⁶⁵ “Estoy convencida de que a ellos Juan les parece un bruto.” Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 54.

¹⁶⁶ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 145.

¹⁶⁷ Jussi Vähämäki and Akseli Virtanen, “Deleuze, Change, History,” in Martin Fuglsang and Bent Meier Sørensen, *Deleuze and the Social*, pp. 210-211.

¹⁶⁸ Jussi Vähämäki and Akseli Virtanen, “Deleuze, Change, History,” in Martin Fuglsang and Bent Meier Sørensen, *Deleuze and the Social*, pp. 210-211.

novels.¹⁶⁹ She recoils at the memory of his mentioning the smell of urine in homes for the elderly. This recollection intermingles with her focus on the troubles that she and Juan are experiencing, despite their relationship being for the most part mutually supportive.¹⁷⁰ Juan starts to absent himself from their home due to his failing to connect with her adolescent son Josian.¹⁷¹ The couple is also under financial stress.¹⁷² Despite these challenges, Rita is resolved that even if she and Juan were to split up, or if she were one day stuck in a nursing home, she would find another man and continue to enjoy life and make connections. Male companionship remains important to Rita, but she will not allow anyone to dictate which possibilities are open to her. In the citation that follows, Rita refuses to classify old age and death as evil or fearsome. She manages to “extract the youth” out of her present age, an ability that stands in contrast with Pedrito’s consuming dread of old age and death.

Estaré con algún viejo, y entre ellos, entre viejos, no se distinguen el olor, que es verdad que lo tienen, como a piel macerada y a orín y a caca mal lavada [...] pero ahora hacen deporte, caminan, hacen footing casi hasta los ochenta años [...] corren, dan saltos en las playas guiados por un monitor, se visten con ropas de colores, pero la vejez no se la quita nadie.¹⁷³

Chirbes also utilizes this character to insert a diagram into the pages of his novel, somewhat akin to the splotchy bits of paint that Francis Bacon applied to his paintings in the attempt to interrupt fixed narrations from settling on the canvas. In the chapter in which Rita is introduced she reports feeling vexed at the sight of a homeless person

¹⁶⁹ “[...] porque en sus libros, el amor era ‘un intercambio de líquidos, un lubricante.’ ” Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 53,

¹⁷⁰ “Yo creo que el día menos pensado Juan nos mandará a los dos a tomar por el culo y se largará.” Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 51.

¹⁷¹ “No quedarse a solas con Josian parece su último objetivo.” Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 56.

¹⁷² “La casa de Juan es esta casa [...] por la que trabajamos los dos como mulos.” Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 56.

pushing a shopping cart filled with his belongings.¹⁷⁴ As we have demonstrated several times throughout the course of the present study, *Los viejos amigos* includes a collection of characters that have quietly surrendered to the capitalistic order that reigns in today's Spain. The introduction of a beggar, however, offers a different tack. Thomas Bay studied a possible function of such a person in the works of Samuel Beckett, Emily Dickinson and other writers. These persons operate outside the accumulative or taking logic of capitalism. They provoke an awareness of a potential for an exchange of giving and becoming-other, which is completely beyond the comprehension of the current economic regime as it is currently understood.¹⁷⁵ Bay writes that, "We might learn to see in the face of a beggar the expression of a possible economic world – where giving rather than having is the primary mode of being."¹⁷⁶

Carlos is the other character in *Los viejos amigos* who attempts to break free of the limitations of global capital. Chirbes's narrator makes clear, both when the narration focuses on this character and when it considers the other characters' opinions of him, that he has squandered numerous opportunities for glorious expenditure by slavishly pursuing fame as a novelist. This effort has resulted in the break-up of his family; Rita has left him and his son Pau has died from an overdose due in large part to Carlos' inability to face facts.¹⁷⁷ He is mostly estranged from his remaining children, especially his youngest son

¹⁷³ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, pp. 57-58.

¹⁷⁴ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, pp. 57-58.

¹⁷⁵ Thomas Bay, "I Knew there were Kisses in the Air," in Martin Fuglsang and Bent Meier Sørensen, (eds.), *Deleuze and the Social*, pp. 107-111.

¹⁷⁶ Thomas Bay, "I Knew there were Kisses in the Air," in Martin Fuglsang and Bent Meier Sørensen, (eds.), *Deleuze and the Social*, p. 109.

¹⁷⁷ " 'Sí, Carlos, pero es que tu hijo es yonqui, o es que no te has enterado?' Y él 'vaya, vaya, vaya, joder, joder,' y de ahí no lo sacabas." Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 50.

Josian.¹⁷⁸ Having failed as a novelist, Carlos has joined Pedrito in selling condominiums to foreigners, although with much less gusto and success. He dreads the lost opportunities for expenditure that have marked his life even more than the threat presented by the possibly cancerous mole that has appeared on his back.¹⁷⁹ He reveals, however, that even at this late date he is capable of embarking on a line of flight. Indeed, it is arguable that it is Carlos alone, despite his faults, who has most resisted the voracious grip of global capital. María Teresa Ibañez Ehrlich notes that Carlos is the only character from *Los viejos amigos* who remains in love with the revolution. Having accepted the fact that to date he has failed to produce works of either artistic or commercial merit, he decides to attempt another book. This time he will eschew abstract ideas and base the work on his brother Andreu, a man who like Pedrito has become rich from the construction boom in Spain.¹⁸⁰ Andreu, however, is an exceptionally tolerant person who has for years lovingly supported his brother's efforts to find success in the literary world.¹⁸¹ Carlos has also determined to reach out to his two surviving children and spend time with them during the following months.¹⁸² Unlike the painter Demetrio that we considered in depth in the last chapter, Carlos has abandoned the ambition of gaining posthumous fame. Moving toward becoming-imperceptible, he merely desires to connect with other bodies in rhizomatic fashion and to enjoy the singularity of the creative act. He recognizes the fact

¹⁷⁸ “[...] que apenas te das cuenta de que es hijo tuyo, hijo de Rita, sí, ¿pero tuyo?, ni siquiera te consultó el nombre que quería ponerle, y apenas lo ves, y cuando os veis, os tratáis como extraños, nada que contaros, nada que compartir.” Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 201.

¹⁷⁹ Deciding not to call a glass repairman, Carlos states, “Para qué vas a llamarlo, si ya tienes la mancha, el melanoma fatídico, si ya son las dos de la mañana y no hay esperanza?” Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 202.

¹⁸⁰ “Trabajar un personaje así y escribir una novela con él. Lo he pensado. Trabajarlo a fondo. Escribir su historia como parte de mi propia vida: una novela. Pulirlo. Estilizarlo. Llenarlo de matices.” Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 190.

¹⁸¹ “Andreu sé que está orgulloso de mí. Lo dice con admiración. Me presenta así a los clientes [...] mi hermano que es escritor.” Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 194.

that to date he has not succeeded, in terms of either pecuniary or reputation, at becoming a writer, but he does not accept his “old friends” branding of him as a failure. In the following citation Chirbes playfully employs the use of the verb *perder*, (to lose). Carlos states, “I have lost,” in a manner that, because of the use of the reflexive pronoun *-se* can be translated as, “I have lost myself.” This expression of becoming-imperceptible is joined by recognition of his progress in deterritorializing. He notes his expanded capacity for tolerance (*ahora ...lo soporto todo*), and the knowledge that the rules that he now follows arise from within and his circumstances by stating, “I am now in another place [...]”

Ahora ya lo soporto todo, porque no soy un perdedor, sino que me he perdido y estoy en otro sitio en el que no se corre, o en el que no se corre la carrera que corro yo.¹⁸³

Carlos is the one attendee who has succeeded at making a rhizomatic connection at Pedrito’s absurd dinner. He kindly listens to and encourages Juanjo, the taciturn son of the garrulous Guzmán who quietly confesses to him that he also wants to be a writer.¹⁸⁴ Carlos stands out as the character most critical of the PSOE, and in particular of the government of Felipe González. He calls the Socialists “tacky and hypocritical right-wingers.”¹⁸⁵ This character, the one in the opinion of the critic María-Teresa Ibañez Ehrlich most stands in for Chirbes himself,¹⁸⁶ wryly listens as Guzmán (who worked for Felipe González) criticizes José Aznar and the conservative Partido Popular. He notes

¹⁸² “[...] me digo que tengo que decirle a Rita que me deje llevarme a Josian a Denia las próximas vacaciones de Navidad y tengo que llamar a Irene, invitarla a que venga, que se esté conmigo en Denia [...]” Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 202.

¹⁸³ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 193.

¹⁸⁴ “Muchachito [...] En el mejor de los casos [...] acabarás vendiendo pisos como yo [...] Lo digo como si lo dijera en broma y él de ríe de carcajadas.” Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 208.

¹⁸⁵ “Durante la comida yo le había dicho que la socialdemocracia era la derecha cursi e hipócrita.” Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 203.

with bitterness that González's socialist government was itself more of a continuance of Franco's policies than a repudiation. Carlos refers particularly to the harsh treatment that immigrants endured because of laws introduced by the PSOE.

No digo que los socialistas no hicieron ley de extranjería, sino de policía, no digo lo de la patada en la puerta del ministro Corcuera, ni los chistes de cuando gobernaban los amigos de Guzmán: un emigrante sin papeles es como un delincuente que se te mete en el comedor de casa [...]¹⁸⁷

In *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, Deleuze discusses the debilitating results that come from “destroying or decomposing our own parts and those of others.”¹⁸⁸ The theme of betrayal or the destroying of the “essential part” of others is a constant in *Los viejos amigos*. Ibañez Ehrlich points out that the title of the novel is ironic given the hatred and indifference that is characteristic of many of their relationships.¹⁸⁹ This indifference is especially evident in the attitudes of most of the characters toward Carlos. Pedro, for example, makes comments when he picks Carlos up before they begin their drive to Madrid that reveal that he had never visited his home despite their having been childhood friends and having lived in the same city for some time.¹⁹⁰ When the narration focuses on Carlos it becomes evident that only Demetrio bothered to express concern when he was hospitalized for several days due to a cardiac episode.¹⁹¹ The worst slight, however, is that other members of the cell ridiculed his efforts to create literature before he really even began.

¹⁸⁶ María-Teresa Ibañez Ehrlich, “Memoria y revolución: el desengaño de una quimera,” en Ibañez Ehrlich, *Ensayos sobre Rafael Chirbes*, p. 72.

¹⁸⁷ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 195.

¹⁸⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 41.

¹⁸⁹ “En cuanto al sustantivo “amigo,” es evidente su carácter irónico cuando lo referimos a los lazos amargos, de odio y desamor distintivos de sus relaciones.” Ibañez Ehrlich, “Memoria y revolución: el desengaño de una quimera,” p. 59.

¹⁹⁰ “Es verdad que la casa es pequeña pero tienes una vista grande.” Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 7.

A gentes como Elisa, como Ana o como Narciso a lo mejor lo que no les perdoné fue que me dieron como caballo perdedor antes de que concluyese la primera vuelta de la carrera. Elisa me animaba como se anima a un minusválido a practicar determinados ejercicios, para darle una razón para existir, a sabiendas de que, en cualquier caso, esa existencia dará poco de sí.¹⁹²

The sense of betrayal and indifference among the “old friends” portrayed in *Los viejos amigos* work contrasts with the importance that Deleuze and Guattari place on friendship. In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari quote D.H. Lawrence who said, “A truly perfect relationship is one in which each party leaves great tracts unknown in the other party.”¹⁹³ The characters in *Los viejos amigos* are far from discerning charm in Carlos. Nor have they left much in the way of leaving sizeable tracts within him. Instead they have held up measures for him, measures which have eliminated the potential for a mutual becoming-other.

Charles J. Stivale has written about the role of friendship in becoming-other as well as the importance of sympathy in the generation of “flashes” of creativity.¹⁹⁴ Carlos has been deprived of this sort of sympathy and its attendant benefits by the old friends of his youth, but these benefits are nonetheless sparked by his own attentiveness to Guzmán’s son during the reunion. For their part, Deleuze and Guattari discussed the sort of relationship between people riven through by segmentarity as, “A whole interplay of well-determined, well-planned territories.”¹⁹⁵ Yet it is Carlos, the most defeated of the ex-cell members, the most bitter about Spain’s surrender to the neo-liberal order, who reveals himself to be the most open to experimentation and the most capable of putting

¹⁹¹ “[...] y me tuvieron diez días haciéndome pruebas en una cama del hospital, y él fue el único que vino a verme [...]. Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 199.

¹⁹² Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 193.

¹⁹³ *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 189.

behind what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as the “dreadful concatenation of sad passions.”¹⁹⁶ Although he may be suffering from a threatening illness and has endured failure on many levels, Carlos, in reaching out to his children and to Juanjo, receives a spark to begin writing a novel based on the concrete connectedness between himself and a generous and beloved elder brother who, unlike himself, has not wasted opportunities for glorious expenditures, demonstrates an understanding of the Spinozian concept that “the more adequate ideas and active joys that we have, the greater is “the part that remains and the greater the part that is not touched by bad effects.”¹⁹⁷ Carlos puts deterritorializing plans into action through his own space of affect, which is his house in Denia.¹⁹⁸ The novel opens with his wistful desire to be back there instead of in Madrid, where the weather is frigidly cold in late November. The first chapter of *Los viejos amigos* closes with a comparison between the “desolated” and “enormous” Madrid and Carlos’ sighting of his home in the rearview mirror of Pedro’s sports car.

Desde la autopista he podido ver por el retrovisor, allá arriba, en la ladera de la montaña, mi casa. Ha sido sólo un instante. Ha aparecido y enseguida ha vuelto a perderse de vista detrás de la mancha verdosa de un grupo de pinos.¹⁹⁹

Carlos makes several references to his home throughout *Los viejos amigos*. It is from this space of affective security that he has embarked on the rhizomatic actions discussed above. Chirbes provides an example of the deterritorialization of language when he has Carlos call the day of the reunion dinner “esta mañana de casa.” In Spanish,

¹⁹⁴ Charles J. Stivale, *Gilles Deleuze’s ABCs: The Fold of Friendship*, p. 39.

¹⁹⁵ *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 195.

¹⁹⁶ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 26.

¹⁹⁷ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 43.

¹⁹⁸ “Pienso que mientras que, aquí, los dedos del frío nos esperan a la salida del restaurante para pellizcarnos, siguen creciendo las plantas y se abren las flores delante de mi adosado en Denia a pesar de lo avanzado de la estación.” Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 7.

¹⁹⁹ Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 20.

“de casa” means ordinary and the ordinariness of the reunion dinner stands in stark contrast to the steps toward becoming-imperceptible that Carlos makes from his modest home on the Mediterranean. The upscale restaurant where the dinner occurs is a place where Amalia, Demetrio, Guzmán, Narciso, Taboada and especially Pedrito attempt to build up their personal subjectivities, and are frustrated by their failure to do so.²⁰⁰ Having abandoned such a pointless venture, Carlos alone increases his power to form affirmative connections through his active and sincere participation in the affair.

In this chapter we have considered the Chirbean characters that move in rhizomatic fashion toward connections that undermine arborescent hierarchical structures of authority. These characters combat the restrictions that attempt to stifle the forces of desire that are actualized within them. They discover strategies that allow them to overturn strictures, even if only to a small degree or temporarily, against gay and other forms of desire, the uninhibited movement of women or the nefarious trepidations of capitalistic reterritorialization. Chirbes’s rendering of characters that are more or less successful in experimenting with creative lines of flight is consistent with the insight of Deleuze and Guattari that we are all involved in becoming to a greater or lesser degree. Several of his characters secure a measure of freedom through their efforts at deterritorialization as we have demonstrated in this chapter. Chirbes succeeds through his literature in presenting small steps toward a way out of repressive structures. In doing so he joins with philosophers, painters, scientists and other thinkers, in an attempt to encourage a “thinking otherwise” that will, despite the lack of any guarantees, lead to

²⁰⁰ An example of this frustration for having attended the dinner is provided by Demetrio who says to himself, “qué hago yo aquí?, ¿qué pinto yo aquí? ¿por qué como, hablo, río con esta gente? Ahora no me perdono haber venido,” Chirbes, *Los viejos amigos*, p. 45.

the consideration of untried alternatives that generate unforeseen becomings “at the level of individual and collective assemblages.”²⁰¹

²⁰¹ Paul Patton, *Deleuze and the Political*, p. 87.

Conclusion

To date Rafael Chirbes has produced an impressive number of fictional works that focus on Spanish history and the changing cultures within Spain. He considers how forces inside the country and those from without have impacted daily life and the choices one may consider when deciding how to live one's life.¹ Deleuze and Guattari wrote of Kafka's power to warn about "diabolical forces knocking at the door." Chirbes's narrative trains an indignant eye on those repressive forces now that they have made their way past the door. That he considers them to be cynical and almost overwhelmingly powerful there can be no doubt. To the burden of the anti-production that keeps the citizens and inhabitants of a Western society in the grip of an infinite debt, and which Chirbes affectively depicts in his novel, he directs attention to the *differend* that linger in Spain as a result of the Civil War and the nearly forty years of authoritarian rule under Francisco Franco.² As we have noted, Chirbes argues in his essays that no sense of normalcy can return to Spain until that event and its ramifications are fully addressed. He buttresses his arguments with affective fictional writing.

Forces that seek to limit desire have taken root in in Spain life during the last seventy-five years, consolidating themselves into arborescent or molar power arrangements as we have demonstrated in this study. Chirbes's narrative pierces them and exposes the desire that flowed, and continues to move, within them. It demonstrates that they, like any other unifying system, are not without leaks and he artfully creates several

¹ Todd May considers this question, "How might I live?" in a Deleuzian context in his *Gilles Deleuze: An Introduction*, pp. 1-25.

² See Emilio Silva's account of the attempt to exhume the body of his grandfather, murdered in 1936, from an unmarked grave in *Las fosas de Franco*. Essays such as Silva appear regularly in Spain, which attests to the lingering *differend* that Chirbes focuses on in his fiction.

of these means of escape. The possibility of “finding a way out,” however, appears to grow more difficult as Chirbes’s trilogy of *La larga marcha*, *La caída de Madrid*, and *Los viejos amigos* progresses. The first two volumes look at the civil war and life in Spain during the Franco years. Creating spaces of affective security from which to deterritorialize and to create assemblages appears to have been somewhat easier when Spaniards from all walks of life, including some from the heart of the Franco regime itself, worked together to undermine the government. Collective efforts stalled during and after the transition to democracy as Spain became more fully enfolded within global capital. Many critics have noted that *Los viejos amigos* features a group of former Marxist revolutionaries and pseudo-revolutionaries that long for the solidarity of their youth, but Chirbes’s bigger point may be the lack of rhizomatic connection today between Spaniards of the left and Spanish society as a whole in the presence of a ubiquitous global capital which Deleuze and Guattari refer to as “a motley painting of everything that has ever been believed.” It is perhaps for this reason that the Carlos of *Los viejos amigos* finds himself operating in an even more reduced space than the schizos, rhizomes and nomads of Chirbes’s earlier novels. Carlos nonetheless provides an example of a body unwilling to surrender completely to the demands of global capital. Despite his nearly sixty years of age and having failed as both a writer and as a businessman, Carlos remains engaged in a process of becoming. Like Cézanne and his ability to put on canvas the “greening” of an apple, Chirbes through the creation of schizos, rhizomes and nomads and the use of sensation manages to show potential ways out from under the grip of the forces that attempt to quell desire’s creative power and connectivity. These characters, as Deleuze and Guattari mention with regard to actualized

existence, indicate possibly viable alternatives to advanced capitalism, without regard to how temporarily or how successfully these alternatives might prove to be, because, “Everything is played in uncertain games [...]”³ In *A Thousand Plateaus* they write that once a rhizome has come into being, its power can never be completely eradicated and it is capable of cropping up again in unexpected ways.⁴ Characters such as José Luis del Moral from *La larga marcha*, Lina from *La caída de Madrid* and Carlos from *Los viejos amigos* provide affective examples of resisting hierarchical structures of power that are not easily forgotten.

Throughout their works Deleuze and Guattari make frequent references to creative people who have worked in numerous fields. They find encouragement, inspiration and companionship in the labor of painters, musicians, mathematicians, scientists, writers, and philosophers, to name but a few creative pursuits. Nowhere does it appear that they privilege one contribution over another in the moving toward becoming-other, as Daniel W. Smith notes in *Essays Critical and Clinical*.⁵ It has often been repeated that Deleuze and Guattari are interested in what a work *does*. They are interested in what multiplicities it engenders, what lines of flight it helps facilitate. In their view the artist capable of producing literature has his focus on something beside his individual subjectivity. In *Essays Critical and Clinical* Deleuze writes that “we do not write with memories, unless it is to make them the origin and collective destination of a people to come still ensconced in its betrayals and repudiations.”⁶ In the essays included in *El novelista perplejo* and *El viajero sedentario* Chirbes also manifests an enthusiasm for

³ Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 147.

⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 9.

⁵ Daniel W. Smith, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, p. xii.

⁶ Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, p. 4.

innovators from multiple fields, and for writing for a people who are missing. His essay about the painting of Francis Bacon is merely one example among many others.⁷ He extols incontrovertibly great Spanish writers, among them Marsé, Galdós, Cervantes and Martín Gaité, as much for their generosity as for their literary mastery. Like Deleuze and Guattari, Chirbes sees heterogeneous entities at work within a supposed totality, hence his delight in the “schizophrenic duality” of the city of Copenhagen that he describes in one of his essays.⁸ He, like Deleuze and Guattari, fails to appreciate when a person takes to writing simply for the prestige of having written a novel. And in terms that correlate very well with what Deleuze writes in *Essays Critical and Clinical* concerning a skilled author not knowing how to answer the question, “What is a writer?,”⁹ Chirbes states that he can only answer such a question while he is in the act of writing itself. On all other occasions he declares himself unable to formulate a response, assaulted as he is by a repetition of “worn formulas” until something, perhaps the vision of a new cinematographer or a voice in a book from the distant past provokes a desire in him to again hazard to explain what is going on in our world and, more importantly, what is being omitted in newspaper columns, books, television shows, etc.¹⁰ The novel, on Chirbes’s account, is connective in nature and has the power of altering the way of looking at the world. The creation of percepts and affects is his contribution to the realization that the universe is always much more than what is experienced or momentarily esteemed by the actualized world.

⁷ See for example Chirbes’s essay “Rouen. La puerta del Sena” in which he describes the architect Louis Arretche’s work and its effect on the manner of viewing that city, an essay included in *El viajero sedentario*, p. 179-184.

⁸ Chirbes, *El viajero sedentario*, p. 126.

⁹ Deleuze quotes from Virginia Woolf who stated that, “To whom are you speaking about writing? The writer does not speak about it, but is concerned with something else,” p. 6.

¹⁰ Chirbes, *El novelista perplejo*, pp. 69-70.

Chirbes's literary production connects with the thought of other Spanish intellectuals with respect to deterritorializing global capital, to bringing into being new ways in which to utilize the creative potential of capitalism without reterritorializing each and every body through its single axiomatic. Chirbes would be in accord with the journalist César Alonso de los Ríos who states that while in power under Felipe González, the PSOE, due to its profound conservatism, had been a disaster and that the approach of progressive Spaniards should always be to rebel against whatever is considered to be the approved topics or the ultimate truth.¹¹ Like Deleuze and Guattari, Chirbes nowhere calls for a complete separation from Marxism. To the contrary he declares himself to be deeply influenced by Walter Benjamin. His characters most open to connectivity such as José Luis del Moral and Carlos remain firmly committed to far-reaching change with Carlos being the sole character from *Los viejos amigos*, "still in love with the revolution" as well as the one that most resembles Chirbes himself, according to María-Teresa Ibañez Ehrlich, the editor of the sole collection of essays dedicated to Chirbes's fiction. It is interesting to note that the most doctrinaire as well as one of the most rhizomatic of Chirbes's characters are both named Carlos. The doctrinaire "Carlos" of *La larga marcha*, the merciless enforcer of rules, chooses the name in honor of Marx while the Carlos of *Los viejos amigos*, born with the name, is positively engaged in the pursuit of becoming-imperceptible. Like Deleuze and Guattari, Chirbes eschews an overt allegiance to a particular identity politics. His work nevertheless is "one of several" effective tools for unleashing the force of gay desire and overturning repressive structures that affect women and immigrants and that deny

¹¹ "Como ves, yo tengo una idea de izquierda que tiene que ver con la rebelion contra los tópicos, contra las verdades instaladas," César Alonso de los Ríos, cited in Julia Navarro and Raimundo's *La izquierda que*

opportunities for becoming-other for all Spaniards. Deleuze writes that it is precisely while we are working with these “Big Questions” that becomings are “silently at work” and that we should be attentive to them.¹² Chirbes provides several examples of just such becomings that occur in the midst of organizational movements of both the left and right as we have endeavored to demonstrate in this study.

Chirbes shares with Deleuze and Guattari an understanding of the force of art to bypass the observer’s or the reader’s habitual recurrence to cognition or what is accepted as common sense. The writer and the philosopher both have an interest in the work of Francis Bacon and have each written about the artist’s ability to undermine hierarchical power structures. Chirbes has clearly indicated that Bacon’s influence on him has found its way into his narrative work. His fiction can also be characterized as a minor literature. He includes a limited number of instances of the deterritorialization of language in his novels, but his works certainly connect to a political immediacy. They are profoundly political as they clearly are an attack on the neo-liberal order of global capitalism in which Spain now finds itself enfolded. Most importantly, Chirbes’s fictional writing serves as a “collective assemblage of enunciation.” He is perhaps the *only* Spanish novelist who refuses to turn his attention away from either the trepidations of global capital or the lingering *differends* emanating from the decades of Franco’s rule. Other intellectuals, however, continue to write about these themes in essay form as Silva’s book demonstrates. Chirbes and others believe that much of the transition to democracy and the governing of Spain after Franco were carried out by members of the old regime itself or by opportunists quite cozy with it. The aforementioned themes receive affective

viene, pp. 307-308.

¹² Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 2.

consideration in his novels and Chirbes creates multiple scenes that reveal the effects of invisible forces working upon bodies.

To date critics have for the most part focused on the apparent hopelessness of Chirbes's characters. They have considered the presence of fear or lost opportunities in the face of Francoism or the march of global capital. There is no doubt that the Valencian author does present numerous characters enmeshed in onerous situations, but a careful reading indicates that like Deleuze and Guattari, Chirbes believes that even in harrowingly difficult circumstances it is possible to fashion creative lines of flight from fascist or repressive power structures. To date there have been few studies that focus on the liberating flights taken by such Chirbean characters as José Luis del Moral, Carmelo Amado, Gregorio Pulido, Lina or the Carlos of *Los viejos amigos*. A Deleuzian approach to Chirbes's work facilitates the consideration of such characters and the examples they provide for a thinking otherwise.

Chirbes shares with Deleuze and Guattari a lack of credence in any transcendental values. One searches his novels or essays in vain for a belief in any ideal being or manner of existence. To the contrary his rhizomatic characters reject any deep structures linked to transcendental belief. They remain "surface dwellers" that flee from idealistic notions. They express an interest solely in what Deleuze referred to as "pure immanence." His rhizomatic characters are intelligent throwers of the dice in that they do not insist on a particular outcome. They accept their lives as these existences have unfolded and work with what they have at hand toward a positive series of becomings. In this way Chirbes demonstrates an affiliation with Deleuze and Guattari through his creation of characters open to the relentless unfolding of difference. He remains a positive writer in as much as

his works are replete with illustrations of arborescent systems utterly incapable of containing desire. There is connectivity everywhere within the pages of his novels, often among disparate elements of Spanish society. As we have seen, in each work there are changeable bodies moving together without forming a totalizing One. Like the wolf described in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Chirbes's novels allow us to appreciate being at the edge of a pack, spending time in the middle, and then getting back to the edge as we partake of additions, become comfortable with the logic of "And...and then," that comes from the unfolding of difference emanating from a churning Outside.

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ABSTRACT**Deleuzian Mappings with Rafael Chirbes's "Little Machines"**

by

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This dissertation considers three novels, often considered as a trilogy, by the Spanish (Valencian) novelist Rafael Chirbes, and how this narrative production coincides with several of the philosophical concepts of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari included in works that they co-authored or in those written individually by Deleuze. The novels considered in this study are *La larga marcha* (1996), *La caída de Madrid* (2000) and *Los viejos amigos* (2003). The chronological period depicted in the trilogy is restricted for the most part to the years immediately preceding the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) and extending until the beginning of the Twenty-First Century. Portraying the intensive time of *aion*, or time that escapes chronological measure is, however, an essential feature of Chirbes's narration. Working with this second sense of time, Chirbes explores "hidden" events that escape official history and that lead individuals and societies to experiment with unplanned and untried alternatives for bringing about what Deleuze and Guattari would refer to as a "thinking otherwise" or a "calling forth" of a new people.

Other concepts include a “Minor Literature,” that is a literature that “deterritorializes” language, a literature in which everything in it is immediately political, and a literature wherein everything takes on a collective value;” the “molar” or the “arborescent,” which are concepts that can be described as lines of thought or states of affairs that stifle innovative or experimental approaches to life; and the “Schizos,” “Rhizomes” and “Nomads” which are the bodies or assembled connections that in various ways act to evade the molar and arborescent. Each of these concepts and their connections to Chirbes’s three novels are examined.

Deleuze and Chirbes shared an interest in the Irish painter Francis Bacon whose paintings, as described by both the novelist and the philosopher, succeed at portraying the a-personal forces acting upon a body. They both note as well the frequent displays of meat and flesh in Bacon’s paintings. Chirbes wrote that Bacon’s work influenced his narrative production, and an examination of that influence is undertaken in the present study.

Other fundamental concepts elaborated by Deleuze and Guattari such as “deterritorialization,” “reterritorialization,” and “becoming,” find resonance in Chirbes’s novels, especially within the context of advanced capitalism. Capitalism, on Deleuze and Guattari’s account, has the advantage of liberating people from debilitating social structures only to reterritorialize them later within an even more distressing economic and governmental system. They call for ways to evade this impasse and one suggestion is through a becoming-other that circumvents, wholly or partially, the meek subject that advanced capitalism requires in order to sustain itself and to continuously push back its limits. Becoming other, such as a becoming-mineral or becoming-animal, consists in

entering into a “zone of proximity” between one body or force and another, a merging that results in the emergence of a new entity, force or body that is better equipped to escape global capitalism’s incessant demands. Chirbes’s schizoids, rhizomes and nomads consistently attempt just this sort of becoming-other.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Daniel O'Dunne was born in Detroit, MI. He graduated from the University of Arizona in 1983 with a degree in Political Science and a minor in Spanish. Daniel completed a Master's Degree in Spanish at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan in 1999, with a concentration in Caribbean literature.

From 2000 until 2010, Mr. O'Dunne taught Spanish at the University of Detroit Jesuit High School where for three years he served as the Foreign Language Department Chair. At U of D Jesuit, Daniel was a founding member of the school's Diversity Action Committee. He has presented papers at literary conferences, and currently teaches at the University of Detroit Mercy.