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Displacement and the Somatics of Postcolonial Culture

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Displacement of Persons/ Forced Migration/ Ideosomatic Dysregulation

1.1 EMPIRICAL STUDIES

1.1.1 The Dysregulation and Reregulation of Refugee Reality and Identity

The German-born Norwegian psychotherapist Stefi Pedersen (1908–80), herself twice a refugee from Nazi Germany (she fled Berlin to Oslo in 1933 and took Norwegian citizenship, and then fled Nazi-occupied Norway to Sweden in 1943), writes in her 1949 article “Psychopathological Reactions to Extreme Social Displacements ‘(Refugee Neuroses)’” of World War II refugees displaced from various European countries to Sweden:

Psychopathological reactions among refugees, which one has been able to observe especially during the recent world war, assume a middle-position between war-neuroses on the one hand and on the other the mental-hygienic difficulties met by emigrants of earlier times in the new countries to which they came. In common with the war-neuroses are the psychic traumata and the extreme physical exhaustion connection to the flight from the mother country; and the forced adjustment to unknown social relationships and the consequent necessity of finding places in new social

groups of varying patterns of behavior associate the refugees with the emigrants.

In those cases in which the experience of the flight is especially traumatic, it seems as though acute dissociations of consciousness, hallucinations, depersonalization, and amnesia assume a central position among the psycho-pathological reactions. The sudden severance from the mother-country, the flight and the pursuit, appear to arouse so much strong anxiety that the sense of reality is temporarily set out of function, and thus there occur false evaluations and lack of orientation in the new surroundings. (344)

This is where I want to start: the disruptive effects that traumatic displacement is seen to have on refugees' social construction of both identity, through depersonalization and other dissociations, and reality, through hallucinations and amnesia. Their identity, according to these therapeutic constructions, is inwardly split (dissociated) or socially isolated (depersonalized); the group constructions of reality that seemed so real, so solid, and so stable in the bosom of the old community are scrambled (hallucinations) or forgotten (amnesia) in the painful transition to the new.

But by way of getting us started with this material, note Pedersen's specific phrasings: "*the* sense of reality," she writes, "is temporarily set out of function." There is only one sense of reality; and it is a mental mechanism of some sort that either functions properly or goes on the fritz. In the refugee, apparently, at least for a while, it malfunctions, with the result that "there occur false evaluations and lack of orientation in the new surroundings." When "the sense of reality" functions properly, there occur true evaluations; when it malfunctions, there occur false ones. These are problematic formulations, not just because we now come to these issues after nearly a half-century of postmodernist and poststructuralist problematizations of "reality" and "truth" and the stable unity implied by "*the* sense of reality," but because Pedersen's simple mechanical model of "the sense" of reality cannot explain how anxiety might disrupt it. What power can anxiety have over the mechanical functioning of "the sense of reality"? And why is its effect specifically to corrupt and falsify evaluations of reality? Above all, how exactly is "lack of orientation in the new surroundings" another effect of anxiety, and of the malfunctioning of "the sense of reality" it occasions? Surely, at the very simplest level, it's the other way around: the refugee's new surroundings are so radically and disturbingly unfamiliar that the old stable group constructions of reality become inoperable, and the resulting disorientations cause the anxiety?

Let's read on:

These conditions obviously become more difficult when the refugee, immediately after he has come to a foreign country, is forced to find new social contacts, new work, a new place to live, and last but not least, new friends. For most of the refugees, this readjustment meant that they were forced to give up a great deal of the expectations and social ambitions they had had in their mother-country. They had to arrange their affairs under pressing conditions, they were relegated to a lower social position, they had to relinquish much of their influence in social groups (in their professions, at their places of work, in their families), they were looked upon with less respect, and they lost much of their individuality by becoming a number in the grey, anonymous mass of refugees.

I am, therefore, inclined to believe that the situation in which refugees find themselves is severely injurious to their self-assurance and can easily provoke—together with the original traumatic experience—the disturbances of consciousness of personality which the Danish psychiatrist Strömghren (5) considers to be the basis for the development of paranoid reactions.

The most comprehensive definition of consciousness of personality is to be found, remarkably enough, not in the work of Strömghren himself, but in that of Färgeman (2), who describes it as:

“a complex of ideas that a human being has about his own capabilities, powers, and potentialities in every respect; his relationship to other people and to society. Briefly: a set of ideas of a most highly private and intimate nature. All endeavor, all earlier failures and all expectations of social and sexual success and of intellectual and ethical development are permanent constituents of consciousness of personality; and it thus acquires such an intimate nature that it is hardly surprising that most human beings are themselves fully aware of it only at rare moments.”

This theory of Strömghren has a great advantage in that it joins together a broad social element and a special individual element by taking into consideration the social situation that has released an actual neurosis—which, for its own part, is conditioned by the patient’s constitution and his earlier experiences and conflicts. (344–45)

This “broad social element” amounts to a social conditioning of individuality, a sense in which the individual is constituted as such in and by the group. The apparent oxymoron that “consciousness of personality” is in Freudian

terms preconscious—that “most human beings are themselves fully aware of it only at rare moments”—is another function of its social origins: the individual is only rarely aware of his or her individuality because it is a collective rather than an individual or a personal construct. The true oxymoron in that passage is “self-assurance”: the assured “self” that is severely injured by traumatic displacements is a group construct. How the group constructs and “assures” the self, and how the destruction or disruption of the group destroys or disrupts that self-assurance as well, is one of my primary concerns in the First Essay.

Pedersen continues:

A long list of other writers have devoted their attention to this interchange of effect between personal conflict and social catastrophe. It appears in Allers, who describes several cases of psychogenic psychosis among prisoners-of-war in foreign-language environments during the first world war. After the recent war, Gillespie (3), in particular, has called attention to the fact that most cases of amnesia after air-raids did not depend upon the very capability of remembering being itself set out of function by trauma, but rather, in the greater number of cases, the loss of memory evolved about a “defensive amnesia,” in which self-reproach, in regard to the patient’s own behavior during the bombing, gave rise to a suppression of all the memory material.

What is new in this theory of Strömngren is not simply that he points out what a central psychic function this consciousness of personality is and how inseparably it is bound to social surroundings, but above all the importance he gives to the intimate interplay between paranoid reactions and changes or conflicts within the realm of the ego.

I believe, therefore, that it is no mere coincidence that in the treatment of refugees one is almost everywhere dealing with paranoid reactions, which apparently indicates that severe social trauma—in and of itself—has a tendency to release paranoid reactions, regardless of the character structure involved. (345)

Note there the social orientation of self-reproach: the “self” as a group construct is one of the way-stations through which group norms circulate, specifically the group’s normative attitudinalizations of behavior, including reproach. What R. D. Gillespie is suggesting in the 1942 book Pedersen cites is that the amnesia he found after air-raids was not simply a mechanical malfunctioning of memory but a social disruption of memory, the individual pre-emptively foreclosing on memories that would cause the group distress.

But why “*release* paranoid reactions”? This makes it sound as if paranoid reactions were lying in wait, held in storage, but dammed up by normal social relations, which, breaking down, could no longer contain the flood—or, to metaphorize that differently, as if “civilization” based on “consciousness of personality” were a thin veneer stretched flimsily across a great surging abyss of psychopathological response. That Pedersen also thematizes “normal” constructions of reality as “true” and paranoid constructions as “false” suggests that truth is a weak force everywhere besieged by the overwhelming forces of falsehood, and therefore in constant need of reinforcements from normality, from civilized social order, under the leadership of the psychotherapist (“No one, in fact, can be more opposed to war and conditions of social displacement than the psychotherapist” [354]).

1.1.1.1 THE PRIMAL SCENE OF REFUGEE STUDIES

Now let us turn to Pedersen’s first case study:

A woman, 30 years old, who had been in Sweden for several months, complained that she never got the right change back when she made purchases. When she went into a store, all the other customers were waited on ahead of her. One day, she said, a clerk in a large department store had indignantly turned her back upon her when she had asked to buy something. When she looked more closely at her own way of conducting herself, she discovered by herself that it had actually been her own behavior that had resulted in her being treated in the way she was. She stood, uncertain and embarrassed, in the background and let other people go ahead of her. When she was to ask for what she wanted, her voice was so uncertain and indistinct that the very busy department-store clerk had quite simply not understood that she had said anything at all.

This patient felt as though the general attitude toward refugees in Sweden was just as she herself had judged it to be: unjust, degrading, and ostracizing.

The patient completely lacked insight into her difficulties. She first visited me to discuss problems her daughter had been having in school. It became obvious that the daughter had adopted her mother’s paranoid attitude. The child felt that she had been treated badly and neglected by both the other pupils and the teachers. When the mother clearly understood her false evaluation of the real situation, not only her own paranoid attitude

disappeared, but the child's as well—without the need for any further treatment. (346)

Notice especially that “by herself”: certainly no coercion is involved in the client's movement to her therapeutic revelation, probably not even pressure. Completely lacking insight into her difficulties, with no nudging from her therapist, the client somehow magically begins to look more closely at her behavior and discovers that she is herself to blame for her “unfair treatment.” This *true* perception of her relationship with the social situation in Sweden banishes her *false paranoid* perception and cures both her and her daughter. Pedersen, the refugee psychotherapist become refugee theorist, is merely present at the self-healing.

Our typical lack of awareness of “consciousness of personality,” however, is as socially circulated as the consciousness of personality itself—which is to say that we are as little aware of the shaping or guiding effect we have on others as we are on the shaping or guiding effect they have on us. Something like this socially circulated unawareness is at work in Pedersen's approach to her client, I suggest: her own successful assimilation to Swedish society works on her *sub limen* to repress awareness of the guidance she gives this client. Pedersen, the professional or institutional representative of Swedish mental health, the client's exemplar of (refugee adaptation to) Swedish calm, fair, tolerant rationality, is her ideal guide to “true” perception, which is to say, to *Swedish* perception, to the proprioception of the Swedish body politic, or the group norms governing ordinary life in Sweden; and Pedersen's inclination to report the normative therapeutic guidance she has been giving her client as the client's own self-discovery is itself part of this guidance. A tolerant, liberal Swede or fully assimilated foreigner in Sweden would never *pressure* an immigrant into adjusting to Swedish group norms. Swedish group norms require that everyone accept Swedish group norms as *natural*, not as group norms at all but as the natural rational *telos* of right living, as a default state to which all things return at rest, and therefore as something that requires no coercion or pressure, and in fact recoils with ideological disgust and horror from such hostile and alien forces. Swedish group norms, in other words, require that Pedersen be simply the benign *witness* to the woman's transformation—so she is.

I would argue that something like this “therapeutic” encounter between assimilated therapist and unassimilated refugee constitutes the primal scene of refugee studies—this mundane clash between two value systems, one local, the other foreign, one central, the other peripheral, one included, the other excluded, one empowered, the other disempowered, one explaining and healing, the other perceived or portrayed as in need of explanations and a healing

transformation. The scene is at once one of dysregulation, in that collectively organized communication (the circulation of mutually accepted norms) has broken down, and of reregulation, in that the authoritative representative of resettlement, of the new host community, manages to “convert” the refugee to an assimilative ethos that facilitates her inclusion in the community.

What I propose to do in the rest of §1.1.1, then, is to explore the *somaticity* of this scene—or, to run that the other way, to exfoliate the interactive complexities of the scene by way of introducing the key concepts of somatic theory.

1.1.1.2 SOMATIC MIMESIS, THE SOMATIC TRANSFER, AND THE SOMATIC EXCHANGE

Were the Swedes truly kind and open to this woman, and to refugees in general, as Pedersen seems to assume and to want her client to assume, so that the woman’s feeling that she was being treated unfairly and unjustly was “false” and a sign of a “paranoid reaction”? Or was she in fact being treated unfairly and unjustly, and in order to get over her anger and suspicion simply had to adjust to life in Sweden as a refugee, to accept the dual “truth” that Swedes are suspicious and impatient with refugees and yet determined to portray themselves as fair-minded and open? We don’t know, because we never do know. This particular form of uncertainty is unavoidable. That we don’t know the “truth” behind all these constructions may seem like a limitation on the kinds of claims we can make about refugeeism; but of course in a Kantian universe such truth-claims are by definition unavailable to proof or disproof, and therefore they must be made not to matter.

What can matter is the observation that virtually all the truth-claims in this case study, both before and after the woman’s “conversion,” are based on interpretations of body language: Pedersen tells us that the woman felt ignored and neglected in stores because the clerks turned their bodies *to* other customers before her and *away* from her; and once the woman begins to “look more closely at her own way of conducting herself,” she realizes that it was the clerks’ readings of *her* body language that had made them respond to her as they did. She hung back, “uncertain and embarrassed”; she “let other people go ahead of her”; her voice was “uncertain and indistinct.” Whether Pedersen is guiding her to these latter realizations or not, it is clear that before the client’s therapeutic conversion she reads only the clerks’ body language and fails to recognize the ways in which she too is participating in the ideosomatic regulation of the events in question, and after her conversion she reads the

clerks' readings of her body language, thus nudging her interpretations of the events in the direction of what I call the *somatic exchange*.

The somatic exchange, simply put, is the circulation of group norms, values, orientations, and inclinations through the somatic economy of those involved—whether they are physically present to each other or only narratively or otherwise imaginatively projected. It is the definitive channel of ideosomatic regulation, the channel by which regulatory norms are circulated through the group in the form of somatic approval and disapproval responses. More specifically, they are circulated through the group in the form of both *outward body language* and *inward body states*, linked serially by the Carpenter Effect—the fact observed by William B. Carpenter in 1874 that we unconsciously tend to mimic other people's body language in our own bodies, picked up by Howard Friedman's nonverbal communication team in the late 1970s and early 1980s as the channel for the interpersonal transmission of emotional states (see also Hatfield, Cacioppo, and Rapson). In the early 1990s these findings were incorporated by Antonio Damasio's neurological research team at the University of Iowa into somatic theory: Ralph Adolphs headed up a smaller group that began to investigate it, and, beginning in 1994, to publish papers that addressed subjects' ability to recognize somatic states in other people's faces. None of the group's publications in the late 1990s, however, addressed the question of an actual transfer or transmission of evaluative/regulatory social feelings from one person to another; it was not until a medical paper published in 2002 that the subgroup offered a very sketchy neurophysiological model for what I call the *somatic transfer*, suggesting in a scant eight lines that “knowledge of other people's emotions may rely on simulating the observed emotion” (Adolphs 171). But the very next year, in his 2003 book *Looking for Spinoza*, Damasio summarizes that study and expands significantly on Adolphs's team's hints; let me quote at some length:

It also is apparent that the brain can simulate certain emotional body states internally, as happens in the process of turning the emotion sympathy into a feeling of empathy. Think, for example, of being told about a horrible accident in which someone was badly injured. For a moment you may feel a twinge of pain that mirrors in your mind the pain of the person in question. You feel as if you were the victim, and the feeling may be more or less intense depending on the dimension of the accident or on your knowledge of the person involved. The presumed mechanism for producing this sort of feeling is a variety of what I have called the “as-if-body-loop” mechanism. It involves an internal brain simulation that consists of a rapid modification of ongoing body maps. This is achieved when certain brain regions, such as the prefrontal/premotor cortices, directly signal the body-

sensing brain regions. The existence and location of comparable types of neurons has been established recently. Those neurons can represent, in an individual's brain, the movements that very brain sees in another individual, and produce signals toward sensorimotor structures so that the corresponding movements are either "previewed," in simulation mode, or actually executed. These neurons are present in the frontal cortex of monkeys and humans, and are known as "mirror neurons."

The result of direct simulation of body states in body-sensing regions is no different from that of filtering the signals hailing from the body. In both cases the brain momentarily creates a set of body maps that does *not* correspond exactly to the current reality of the body. The brain uses the incoming body signals like clay to sculpt a particular body state in the regions where such a pattern can be constructed, i.e., the body-sensing regions. What one feels then is based on that "false" construction, not on the "real" body state.

A recent study from Ralph Adolphs speaks directly to the issue of simulated body states. The study was aimed at investigating the underpinnings of empathy and involved more than 100 patients with neurological lesions located at varied sites of their cerebral cortex. They were asked to participate in a task that called for the sort of process needed for empathy responses. Each subject was shown photographs of an unknown person exhibiting some emotional expression and the task consisted of indicating what the unknown person was feeling. Researchers asked each subject to place himself or herself in the person's shoes to guess the person's state of mind. The hypothesis being tested was that patients with damage to body-sensing regions of the cerebral cortex would not be capable of performing the task normally.

Most patients performed this task easily, precisely as healthy subjects do, except for two specific groups of patients whose performance was impaired. The first group of impaired patients was quite predictable. It was made up of patients with damage to visual association cortices, especially the right visual cortices of the ventral occipito-temporal region. This sector of the brain is critical for the appreciation of visual configurations. Without its integrity, the facial expressions in the photographs cannot be perceived as a whole, even if the photos can be seen in the general sense of the term.

The other group of patients was the most telling: It consisted of subjects with damage located in the overall region of the *right* somatosensory cortices, namely, in the insula, SII and SI regions of the right cerebral hemisphere. This is the set of regions in which the brain accomplishes the highest level of integrated mapping of body state. In the absence of this region, it is not possible for the brain to simulate other body states effectively. The

brain lacks the playground where variations on the body-state theme can be played. (115–17)

This is the neurophysiological explanation of the “contagion” or “infection” of feelings or somatic states from one body to another, the fact that yawns and moods are so powerfully contagious: through empathy, based on seeing, hearing (about), or reading about external evidence of other people’s body states, we simulate those states. Nor is this a voluntary process undergone by especially sensitive people who deliberately project themselves into other people’s feelings, because they *want* to; it happens to all of us, all the time, except to people with those specific types of brain damage Damasio mentions. It is not just “sensitive” people who yawn, or fight the overwhelming impulse to yawn, when they see other people yawning; it is virtually everyone. I call this *somatic mimesis*: the almost instantaneous mimicking of other people’s body states in our own, which serves to “infect” us with other people’s feelings.¹

For example, in Pedersen’s reconstruction of the somatic exchange in her client’s department-store experience, the client walks in hesitant, holding back, neither casually shopping nor stepping forward properly to attract a clerk’s attention. Her body language is picked up by the clerks, unconsciously mimicked and experienced inwardly as reticence, and ultimately interpreted by them as an unreadiness to shop; politely, not wanting to force themselves on a hesitant customer, they turn their attention to other shoppers. From the clerks’ point of view, which Pedersen supports, their behavior is normal and normative; they have done nothing wrong, and indeed would doubtless be surprised and even shocked to learn that someone (but a *refugee*, of course she would!) had accused them of deviating from standard behavioral norms. This is, of course, not the “truth”; it is the clerks’ ideosomatic point of view as reconstructed by Pedersen, mimetically simulated and so first experienced inwardly by her from the client’s reports, and then built into a therapeutic interpretation.

As I reconstruct the client’s presenting construction of the somatic exchange, based on my own somatomimetic simulation of her body state and interpretations of that body state from Pedersen’s report, she walks into the department store hesitant, timid, her heart pounding, her adrenalin pumping, in a mild form of acute trauma, absolutely convinced in advance that she is not going to be able to handle the upcoming transaction, and hoping desperately that someone will step forward to help her, save her, come more than halfway to walk her through the purchase of a few items in a language of which she does not speak more than a few words. The clerks, seeing that she is not a Swede, that she is poorly dressed, perhaps that her skin and hair are

darker than theirs, perhaps hearing her stammer out some garbled request in words that they hardly even recognize as Swedish, recoil with disgust and indignation. From the woman's point of view, which Pedersen rejects and corrects, her hurt and anger at this rudeness are normal and normative; she has done nothing wrong, has broken no laws, and simply because she is a foreigner, a refugee, has been treated badly by these native Swedes. This is, again, not the "truth" but (my somatomimetic simulation and reinterpretation of) the woman's somatomimetic simulation of their body states in her own, based on her unconscious mimicking of their outward body language (bodily posture—the turning away—and facial expression).

1.1.1.3 SOMATIC MARKERS AND SOMATIC STORAGE

In Pedersen's essay, one of the key features of her client's "paranoid" response to her new life in Sweden is its *persistence*: not only can she not give up her paranoia, but she manages to transfer it to her daughter as well; it is only after she has begun to work consciously back through her own behavior and attitudes that she is able to let it go, and at that point her daughter's paranoia disappears as well. My question is this: where and how is that "paranoia," or what I would prefer to describe as her xenonormative (non-Swedish) ideosomatic regulation, stored? Why is her belief that a clerk turning away from a speaking customer is rude so persistent? Why does her ideosomatic regulation remain active in her behavioral response, even as it is increasingly cut off from group kinesic confirmation and thus depleted of the feel of reality? How is her "paranoid" anger at Swedish behavior transferred to and stored in her daughter?

The persistence of behavioral orientations is one of the phenomena least well explained by other models, and best explained by somatic theory. In *Mimesis and Alterity*, Michael Taussig asks this question insistently: "If life is constructed, how come it appears so immutable? How come culture appears so natural? If things coarse and subtle are constructed, then surely they can be reconstrued as well?" (xvi). If Pedersen's client's non-Swedish response to Swedish department-store clerks is so dysregulatory, and yet is a mere *construction*, why doesn't she simply reconstrue it? Why is it so difficult to change what we believe, and how we act on what we believe? Why do cultural constructs feel so solid, so natural, so biological, even, as to seem to reflect universal human nature? "Try to imagine," Taussig goes on, "what would happen if we didn't in daily practice thus conspire to actively forget what Saussure called 'the arbitrariness of the sign'? Or try the opposite experiment. Try to imagine living in a world whose signs were indeed 'natural'" (xviii). The sign is actually

only arbitrary in an arbitrary universalizing perspective, in a violently abstract perspective that attempts to universalize individual cultural constructs and so forces them to appear in their relativistic guise; within a specific culture, by contrast, every sign feels perfectly natural, feels immutable. To the comparative linguist, the use of the phonetic sequence [kæt] to refer to a furry feline domestic pet is arbitrary, but the monolingual English-speaker is unable to imagine calling a cat anything else—certainly not [ræt] or [bæt]—and while the polyglot knows that the use of that phonetic sequence is globally arbitrary, s/he also feels the *necessity* of each language’s word for cat within the structure of feeling of each language.

Taussig’s answer to his own question involves what he calls the “mimetic faculty,” which “carries out its honest labor suturing nature to artifice and bringing sensuousness to sense by means of what was once called sympathetic magic, granting the copy the character and power of the original, the representation the power of the represented” (xviii). The apparent convergence between this notion and somatic theory’s “somatic mimeticism” is striking; but the model Taussig borrows from Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno can’t explain how mimesis “bring[s] sensuousness to sense.” It just sort of happens. Taussig cites Adorno’s praise for Benjamin’s writing “as that in which ‘thought presses close to its object, as if through touching, smelling, tasting, it wanted to transform itself;’ and Susan Buck-Morss indicates how this very sensuousness is indebted to and necessary for what is unforgettable in that writing, its unremitting attempt to create ‘exact fantasies,’ translating objects into words, maintaining the objectness of the object in language” (2). There is in this formulation some sort of powerful mediating experience that bridges the gap between thought and the object, an experience that Adorno specifically identifies as affective; but in Taussig, as in Benjamin and Adorno, that experience remains mysterious, and indeed in Taussig is explicitly associated with magic. Anyone can think a likeness, think a mimesis, mentally assign “the copy the character and power of the original, the representation the power of the represented,” and then feel that power drain out of it. No one can simply *think* that power and make it stick; some deeper magic is required to convert an object into a fetish object. Taussig devotes much of his first chapter to a study of a group of representational wooden figurines carved by the Cuna in the San Blas islands off Panama, figurines with magical curative powers that Taussig associates with their representational nature, with the fact that they are carved to resemble prominent Europeans and Americans, including Douglas MacArthur. The question he neglects to ask, however, is this: why do the figurines not have those magical curative powers for *us*—only for the Cuna? Why can I (or anyone else) not carve a Douglas MacArthur doll and

go around curing people with it? What is the social process that converts the doll into a powerful fetish object? The somatic theory on which I draw here suggests that it is a slow iterative process by which the object is gradually *invested* with power, affectively occupied, cathected, *besetzt wird*, through the projection of exosomatic feelings into it, typically by the group, who circulate amongst themselves the feelings they are projecting into the object so that the object seems to become a part of their somatic exchange. A lone individual can fetishize an object as well, or even an imaginary friend, a figment, a ghost, but slowly, and subrationally—and an object fetishized by a lone individual will possess that fetish power or exosoma only for that individual, not for others. Nor does this exosomatization of objects, mental images, places, and so on necessarily operate through mimesis: the collective granting of exosomatic power to a mountain or a tree or a body of water, to a house or a garden or a path, to a skin color, to a string of beads or an amulet, to an abstraction like “honor” or “diversity” or “family values” is not mimetic at all and yet still empowers the object or the idea or the place for the group.² We will return to the concept of the exosoma below, in connection with the dysregulatory impact of the destruction of exosomatized objects and places in the refugee experience (§1.1.3.1) and the use of exosomatized dolls in an attempt to reregulate and resomatize the dysregulated self (§1.2.2.2).

So how is a cultural construct or fetish object “empowered,” exosomatized, given the force and the feel of permanence and efficacy? One of the mainstays of somatic theory is the *somatic-marker hypothesis* developed in the late 1980s and early 1990s by Damasio’s team to explain the autonomic underpinnings of rational decision-making. Damasio’s model suggests that the ventral-tegmental area of the autonomic nervous system “marks” certain behavioral options “positively” or “negatively,” with tiny subliminal quanta of emotional pleasure or pain that are measurable with a skin-conductance test (like a polygraph), and that when we “feel” these markers—typically way below the level of conscious awareness—we are guided by them in our prerational orientations to the making of a decision:

The key components [in the decision we need to make] unfold in our minds instantly, sketchily, and virtually simultaneously, too fast for the details to be clearly defined. But now, imagine that *before* you apply any kind of cost/benefit analysis to the premises, and before you reason toward the solution of the problem, something quite important happens: When the bad outcome connected with a given response option comes into mind, however fleetingly, you experience an unpleasant gut feeling. Because the feeling is about the body, I gave the phenomenon the technical term *somatic* state

(“soma” is Greek for body); and because it “marks” an image, I called it a *marker*. Note again that I use somatic in the most general sense (that which pertains to the body) and I include both visceral and nonvisceral sensation when I refer to somatic markers.

What does the *somatic marker* achieve? It forces attention on the negative outcome to which a given action may lead, and functions as an automated alarm signal which says: Beware of danger ahead if you choose the option which leads to this outcome. The signal may lead you to reject, *immediately*, the negative course of action and thus make you *choose among other alternatives*. The automated signal protects you against future losses, without further ado, and then allows you to choose from among fewer alternatives. There is still room for using a cost/benefit analysis and proper deductive competence, but only *after* the automated step drastically reduces the number of options. Somatic markers may not be sufficient for normal human decision-making since a subsequent process of reasoning and final selection will still take place in many though not all instances. Somatic markers probably increase the accuracy and efficiency of the decision process. Their absence reduces them. This distinction is important and can easily be missed. The hypothesis does not concern the reasoning steps which follow the action of the somatic marker. In short, *somatic markers are a special instance of feelings generated from secondary emotions*. Those emotions and feelings *have been connected, by learning, to predicted future outcomes of certain scenarios*. When a somatic marker is juxtaposed to a particular future outcome the combination functions as an alarm bell. When a positive somatic marker is juxtaposed instead it becomes a beacon of incentive. (*Descartes' Error* 173–74, emphasis in original)

To test the learning and storage of these somatic markers in specific decision-making contexts, a postdoctoral student in Damasio's program named Antoine Bechara invented a gambling experiment. In the first version of the experiment, subjects were given \$2,000 in play money, placed in front of four decks of cards, labeled A, B, C, and D, and told that the object of the “game” was to end it with the maximum amount of money—to lose as little of the bankroll s/he had been given, and preferably to earn more. The player then picked up a card from any one of the four decks and followed the instructions printed on it—invariably either to take a certain amount of money from the experimenter, to give a certain amount of money to the experimenter, or to both give and take money. The player was not told how many draws s/he would be allowed, or anything else about the future play, including the

differentiation of the decks: decks A and B typically both paid out and collected back higher sums, so that the risks were very high in drawing from them, and decks C and D both paid out and demanded back lower sums, making the risks in drawing from them low. The most a player would ever have to pay in drawing from deck C or D was \$100; the highest payment required on a card in deck A or B was \$1,250. “There is no way for the Player to predict, at the outset,” as Damasio describes this experiment in *Descartes’ Error*, “what will happen, and no way to keep in mind a precise tally of gains and losses as the game proceeds. Just as in life, where much of the knowledge by which we live and by which we construct our adaptive future is doled out bit by bit, as experience accrues, uncertainty reigns” (213).

The “players” or research subjects asked to play this experimental game included both Damasio’s patients with damage to their ventral-tegmental areas and normals. What the experimenters found was that the two different groups played very differently. Typically, the normals would draw randomly from all four decks at first, become briefly attracted by high payoffs from decks A and B, but gradually, “within the first thirty moves” (213), as they were hit by big penalties, begin to shy away from those two decks and to draw more conservatively from decks C and D. As Damasio reports, “self-professed high-risk players may resample decks A and B occasionally, only to return to the apparently more prudent course of action” (213) after a few big hits. The ventral-tegmental patients, on the other hand, would draw systematically from decks A and B, and go bankrupt halfway through the game. One such ventral-tegmental-damaged player, whom Damasio calls Elliott, played this recklessly despite describing himself as a “conservative, low-risk person” (214)—and in fact despite knowing intellectually, by the end of the game, that decks A and B were the “dangerous” ones. “When the experiment was repeated a few months later, with different cards and different labels for the decks, Elliott behaved no differently from how he did in real-life situations, where his errors have persisted” (214). He was, Damasio writes, “engaged in the task, fully attentive, cooperative, and interested in the outcome. In fact, he wanted to win. What made him choose so disastrously?” (215).

Early speculation within the team included the possibility that the frontally damaged subjects had been somehow desensitized to punishment, and could be motivated only by reward; a closer look at their actual play, however, showed that “after making a penalty payment, the patients avoided the deck from which the bad card had come, just as normal subjects did, but then, unlike normals, they returned to the bad deck” (217). Almost certainly the ventral-tegmental patients were still sensitive to punishment, but the *warning* aftereffect of punishment did not last long—it seemed to wear off.

To test this hypothesis, Hanna Damasio developed a follow-up experiment, in which the players' skin-conductance responses were monitored with a polygraph machine. A spike would show that the player was experiencing a somatic marker, either warning the player against a given draw or encouraging one—in other words, the polygraph could not distinguish between positive and negative somatic markers but could indicate the presence of some learned (stored) somatic orientation, and thus could tell the experimenters when the decision was not made randomly.

What they found was that in the seconds following the drawing of a card, both groups, the frontally damaged patients and the normals, generated skin-conductance responses, or somatic markers. Both a high payoff and a high penalty generated these somatic markers—presumably a positive marker for a high payoff and a negative marker for a high penalty. The striking difference between the two groups lay in the fact that, after ten or twenty draws, the normals began showing a skin-conductance spike *before* drawing from one of the two “dangerous” decks, A or B: their autonomic nervous system had learned not only to *respond* negatively to those two decks, but to *predict* negative consequences of drawing from them, and thus to *warn* the subject to avoid them. In the normals, in other words, learned and stored somatic markers served an important anticipatory and cautionary function. In the frontally damaged patients, on the other hand, no such anticipatory somatic markers were ever registered. They would continue responding somatically to big payoffs and big penalties, but they would never feel a somatic marker *warning* them against drawing from deck A or B. Their damaged ventral-tegmental area was either not storing learned patterns or not using stored patterns to warn them against disastrous courses of action—probably, in fact, both.

What this suggests is that the group-sponsored and -supported ideosomatic orientations that we've seen at work both loconormatively (based on Swedish regulation) in Stefi Pedersen and the department-store clerks and xenonormatively (based on non-Swedish regulation) in Pedersen's refugee client are autonomically stored (synapticized through axonal guidance and myelination) and contextually activated collections of somatic markers. So too would be the Cuna Indians' fetishization of representational figurines—their conviction that the figurines could magically cure the sick, a conviction that apparently did frequently cure people. By guiding each minute decision an individual makes along collectively organized lines, these markers allow groups to impose moment-to-moment coherence on its members' reality. Because the learned somatic orientations that generate contextual markers are *stored* in that area—at least in those of us without brain damage in the ventral-

tegmental area—group guidance or ideosomatic regulation possesses sufficient stability to make that imposed moment-to-moment coherence seem like the fabric of reality itself, the “way things are.” That stability is an extremely useful thing in our ordinary lives; without it, we would be overwhelmed by the complexity of life. We could not hold a job or maintain a relationship—Damasio’s ventral-tegmental patients do typically get fired and dumped, because they are unable to organize their reality around job tasks or relationship continuity. Certainly we could not cure the sick with carved wooden figurines, or with placebos.³ But when our ordinary realities collapse, through what I’m calling the ideosomatic dysregulation of forced migration, that stability can also become a liability. As it becomes xenonormative, the somatic markers it generates for us become increasingly “unrealistic”—cut off from the loconormative group construction of reality—and therefore maladaptive. Like Damasio’s patient Elliott, who continued to draw from decks A and B because it *felt right* to do so, the isolated refugee continues to ideosomatize reality xenonormatively, continues to act as it *feels right* to act, even though the new group—all of them strangers speaking a strange language—fails to confirm those feelings, fails to provide the expected somatic support for “right action,” indeed often seems to act in utterly irrational and even insane ways. To the locals, the refugee acts equally irrationally and insanely, and may well be sent to a psychotherapist like Stefi Pedersen for treatment. This perceived irrationality on both sides of the loco-/xenonormative divide is one definitive sign of ideosomatic dysregulation.

1.1.1.4 SOMATIC (DYS)REGULATION AND ALLOSTATIC LOAD

So what is ideosomatic dysregulation? The easy answer is that it is a breakdown in the circulation of regulatory/normative pressures through the somatic exchange; but what breaks it down, and what, behaviorally, attitudinally, and cognitively, is the result? In terms of the questions I asked of Pedersen earlier in the essay, is it really true that anxiety can dysregulate a somatic exchange? Is there a certain allostatic load of anxiety that becomes ideosomatically dysregulatory, or is even a very low level of anxiety minimally dysregulatory? Or is anxiety not dysregulatory at all, but simply one of the byproducts and therefore signs of dysregulation? Or both? If anxiety is both a dysregulatory input and a dysregulated output of the allostatically adjusted somatic exchange, how does that work? And finally, if intense ideosomatic dysregulation entails the kinds of extreme breakdowns in the collective construction of identity and reality that Pedersen found—depersonalization and dissociation, hallucina-

tion and amnesia—how are those breakdowns triggered, or, in Pedersen’s term, “released”?

The great integrator of psychological, psychoanalytical, and psychobiological research on affect regulation in our time is Allan N. Schore, in a series of books entitled *Affect Regulation and the Origin of the Self*, *Affect Regulation and the Repair of the Self*, and *Affect Dysregulation and Disorders of the Self*. In the emerging research model now being developed out of Bowlby’s attachment theory, Kohut’s self-psychology, and Damasio’s somatic-marker hypothesis, affect regulation and dysregulation are products of nonverbal and largely unconscious/preconscious right-brain-to-right-brain communication, and specifically the communicative synchronization of affect through the mirroring of body language. Initially this regulatory communication occurs between the primary caregiver (Schore says simply the mother) and the newborn infant, and then in communicative dyads throughout the rest of the individual’s life, especially the therapist–patient dyad. One of the weaknesses of Schore’s integrative approach from the perspective of somatic theory is that he completely ignores the synchronization of affect in larger groups, despite the attention paid to the mother–father–infant triad by Freud and his most radical followers, including Jacques Lacan and Julia Kristeva, who associate what Schore calls affective right-brain body-based communication with the mother and verbal left-brain symbolic communication with the father; and certainly Freud was increasingly fascinated, toward the end of his life, especially in *Civilization and its Discontents*, with societal regulation of affect (the *Unbehavior* or dysregulation caused by misattuned societal regulation of *Behagen* or pleasure).

Schore writes in *Affect Regulation and the Repair of the Self*:

Mutual gaze interactions increase over the second and third quarters of the first year, and because they occur within the “split second world of the mother and infant” (Stern 1977) are therefore not easily visible. This dialogue is best studied by a frame-by-frame analysis of film, and in such work Beebe and Lachmann (1988a) observed synchronous rapid movements and fast changes in affective expressions within the dyad. . . . This affective mirroring is accomplished by a moment-by-moment matching of affective direction in which both partners increase together their degree of engagement and facially expressed positive affect. The fact that the coordination of responses is so rapid suggests the existence of a bond of unconscious communication. . . .

These mirroring exchanges generate much more than overt facial changes in the dyad; they represent a transformation of inner events. Beebe

and Lachmann (1988a) asserted that as the mother and the infant match each other's temporal and affective patterns, each recreates an inner psychophysiological state similar to the partner's. In synchronized gaze the dyad creates a mutual regulatory system of arousal (Stern 1983) in which they both experience a state transition as they move together from a state of neutral affect and arousal to one of heightened positive emotion and high arousal. (8)

Here “the child is using the output of the mother's right cortex as a template for the imprinting—the hard wiring of circuits in his/her own right cortex that will come to mediate his/her expanding affective capacities. It has been said that in early infancy the mother is the child's ‘auxiliary cortex.’ . . . In these transactions she is ‘downloading programs’ from her brain into the infant's brain” (Schor, *Affect Regulation* 13), so that “in dyadic, ‘symbiotic states’ the infant's ‘open,’ immature, and developing internal homeostatic systems are interactively regulated by the caregiver's more mature and differentiated nervous system. Self-objects are thus external psychobiological regulators (Taylor 1987) that facilitate the regulation of affective experience (Palombo 1992), and they act at nonverbal levels beneath conscious awareness to cocreate states of maximal cohesion and vitalization (Wolf 1988)” (14).

This would be the ideal model of good parenting, based on the regulatory attunement of affective right-brain communication through facial mirroring; but of course it doesn't always work, even in the best parents. “We know that the caregiver is not always attuned,” Schore notes; “indeed, developmental research shows frequent moments of misattunement in the dyad, ruptures of the attachment bond. . . . Reciprocal gaze, in addition to transmitting attunement, can also act to transmit misattunement, as in shame experiences. The misattunement in shame, as in other negative affects, represents a regulatory failure and is phenomenologically experienced as a discontinuity in what Winnicott (1958) called the child's need for ‘going-on-being’” (10–11). Unsurprisingly, then, dyadic attunement regulates, in the sense of modeling for the child a successful and pleasurable affect regulation, and misattunement dysregulates, causing interactive stress and, ultimately, if the stress state continues for too long without reattunement, the building of what Freud called “defense mechanisms” or allostatic reregulations that *block* attunement. “A body of clinical and experimental evidence indicates,” Schore writes, “that all forms of psychopathology have concomitant symptoms of emotional dysregulation, and that defense mechanisms are, in essence, forms of emotional regulation strategies for avoiding, minimizing, or converting affects that are too difficult to tolerate” (Cole, Michel, and O'Donnell 1994 [27–28]). “If attachment is

interactive synchrony,” Schore notes later, “stress is defined as an *asynchrony* in an interactional sequence, and, following this, a period of reestablished *synchrony* allows for stress recovery” (39, emphasis in original).

Schore’s interests lie almost exclusively in the mother–child dyad and its later reparative replications in the therapist–patient dyad; he does not discuss the effects on affect regulation of later severely traumatizing stress, such as we are concerned with here. It should be obvious, however, that brutal violence is not only an extreme form of asynchrony but also a dysregulatory transmission of radical misattunement, so that the victim of violence not only experiences a destructive breach of his or her defenses but also internalizes (somatizes) an affect-image of the victimizer’s brutality, of the brutal disregard for his or her affective regulation. Allostasis makes this violently dysregulatory introject extremely difficult to dislodge—a fact that explains the long persistence of PTSD symptomatology. Refugees propelled into flight by the experience of this sort of violence—especially of course by suffering it in their own bodies, but even by simply viewing or hearing about violence inflicted on neighbors and relatives and friends—will be dealing with ideosomatic dysregulation for years, even decades to come, most, perhaps, for the rest of their lives. As Schore describes these dysregulated states:

Due to the impaired development of the right-cortical preconscious system that decodes emotional stimuli by actual felt emotional responses to stimuli, individuals with poor attachment histories display empathy disorders, the limited capacity to perceive the emotional states of others. An inability to read facial expressions leads to a misattribution of emotional states and a misinterpretation of the intentions of others. Thus, there are impairments in the processing of socioemotional information.

In addition to this deficit in social cognition, the deficit in self-regulation is manifest in a limited capacity to modulate the intensity and duration of affects, especially biologically primitive affects like shame, rage, excitement, elation, disgust, panic-terror, and hopelessness-despair. Under stress such individuals experience not discrete and differentiated affects, but diffuse, undifferentiated, chaotic states accompanied by overwhelming somatic and visceral sensations. The poor capacity for what Fonagy and Target (1997) called “mentalization” leads to a restricted ability to reflect upon one’s emotional states. Right-cortical dysfunction is specifically associated with alterations in body perception and disintegration of self-representation (Weinberg, 2000). Solms also described a mechanism by which disorganization of a damaged or developmentally deficient right hemisphere is associated with a “collapse of internalized representations

of the external world” in which “the patient regresses from whole to part object relationships” (1996, p. 347), a hallmark of early forming personality disorders. (*Affect Regulation* 47)

I would add only two things: first, that the collapse of internalized representations of the external world—what I call the ideosomatic dysregulation of collective reality constructs—is a hallmark of PTSD as well, or *late-forming* personality disorders; and second, because the victim of violence allostatically somatizes the dysregulatory effects of violence, this sort of collapse of empathy, affect regulation, and a stable self tends to be viral, to be transmitted from individual to individual and from group to group, so that the individual disorganized or dysregulated by violence tends to become a perpetrator of violence, and mobs beget mobs. The kinds of chaotic mob violence that in many cases propel whole populations into flight are themselves the viral products of earlier mob violence, and will tend to ensure that a tendency to mob violence is perpetuated.

But what about the ideosomatic dysregulation that ensues not from actual physical violence but simply from the disruption or destruction of the social and/or physical environment? What about the refugees who are traumatized by the scattering of their friends and family and the loss of their homes and other familiar places? Schore’s dyadic approach can easily explain the dysregulatory effects of one-on-one violence, but it is more at a loss with the interactive stress caused by group disintegration and loss of familiar places. Somatic theory’s focus on the group rather than the dyad as the primary channel of affect regulation helps to explain both phenomena by insisting that affect-regulation is transferred to the individual not once, in infancy, by a good enough mother, but constantly, throughout each individual’s life, by the group—rendering the scattering of the group, obviously, profoundly dysregulatory. (The dysregulatory effects of the loss or destruction of familiar things and places are related to this, but in complex ways that I want to return to in a few pages, in the context of Maria Pfister-Ammende’s study of Swiss refugee camps.)

Stefi Pedersen’s first case study of the woman in the department store reminds us also that the dysregulatory effects of refugee trauma are generated not just by the destruction of the old group, at home, but also by the fraught transition to the formation of a new group, in the new host community. The divergence between Pedersen’s client’s early construction of the somatic exchange as signaling the unfair treatment of refugees in Sweden and Pedersen’s “therapeutic” construction of it as signaling her client’s maladaptation to Swedish group norms, for example, is a clear sign of ideosomatic dysregulation: because the client and the therapist do not share the same culture,

have not been socialized into the same ideosomatic norms, their normative constructions of the somatic exchange in the same situation are centrifugal. Pedersen's normatology, successfully adapted to local Swedish ideosomatic regulation, is loconormative; her client's, still largely shaped by the foreign culture from which she came, is xenonormative. A radical unconscious clash between loco- and xenonormative regulation renders the group organization of behavior difficult or impossible and social interaction—and thus both identity and reality as socially regulated—potentially chaotic, which is to say, ideosomatically dysregulatory. The fact that Pedersen's client manages to impose *some* sort of regulatory interpretation on the department-store interaction—takes it to signal Swedes' unfair treatment of refugees—suggests that ideosomatic regulation has not broken down for her entirely, that she is not truly plunged into dysregulatory identity- and reality-threatening chaos and trauma; but the chronic stress that her repeated feeling of being treated unfairly generates in her constitutes an allostatic overload that dysregulates both her own life and her daughter's.⁴

A large part of the woman's problem stems from the fact that the normative tendency of ideosomatic regulation to normativize itself not as normative at all but simply as *natural*, as human nature, remains functional only so long as it is loconormative. As it is separated in space or time from the group that maintains it—as it becomes nonhegemonically xenonormative, or what we may call “subaltern xenonormativity”—it becomes an ideosomatic orphan, still active in the individual's behavioral response but no longer collectively supported, and therefore increasingly depleted of the (collectivized) feel of reality. For the isolated refugee, cut off from the home ethnos (“own” people, places, and things), subaltern xenonormativity is an internalized civilization parked over the abyss. It is a neurotechnology for making sense of things, for organizing sense-impressions, for imposing a coherent reality on the random bits and pieces flung at us by the world, that now labors on without those constant confirmatory pressures of the ideosomatic exchange—group body language, circulated iteronormatively through each individual—that made it seem truly functional, truly able to create a meaningful world.

The other part of the problem is that the normal functioning of ideosomatic regulation normatively suppresses this sort of analysis—this *awareness* that the group exists to organize reality and identity for us, to create and stabilize and naturalize a world for us, and that any extended absence from group pressures will therefore tend to decrease, destabilize, and denaturalize our world. The “background” functioning of homeostatic self-regulation, the fact that we do not need to be aware every moment of collective guidance in order

to be guided by it, has practical benefits—*Hamlet* is in some sense a play about the failure of that background functioning, the complex intellectual dithering that ensues when we must make ethical decisions consciously, rationally, analytically—but those benefits collapse with the group that supports them. The normative naturalization of ideosomatic normativity therefore tends to render the individual ill-prepared for any breakdown in the group-normative construction of world.

And indeed Pedersen's client is severely handicapped by her inability to analyze her refugee situation relativistically, as a move from one normative organization of the world to another. Because she unconsciously (ideosomatically) universalizes her subaltern xenonormative orientation to social relations, she doesn't even realize that it has broken down, become inoperative, become an orphan technology; she believes that there is only one right way to behave, and she is conforming to that norm and the Swedes are not. She is conscious neither of the somatic exchange (bodily interactivity) nor of its divergent and therefore dysregulatory effects in her interactions with Swedes (loco-/xenonormative centrifugality). Pedersen's therapeutic intervention involves making her aware of both: teaching her both that she is sending somatic signals to Swedes too, not just passively receiving signals from them, and that she must now begin to reorganize her identity and reality around loconormative ideosomatic regulation.

But Pedersen would almost certainly regard my description of her "therapeutic intervention" as tendentious, given that she herself presents it as something that her client did for herself, with Pedersen as neutral observer. My description, as I say, emerges out of my somatomimetic simulation of Pedersen's body states, based on her report: I *feel* that she is not telling the whole truth about how she interacted with this refugee woman, that she is idealizing her somatic contribution to her client's cure. In my reconstruction, Pedersen thematizes her client's discovery of the somatic exchange so as to exculpate the Swedish clerks and blame the refugee woman not just for the clerks' behavior but for the misinterpretation of that behavior, suggesting that Pedersen is not the disinterested outside observer she would like us to think she is but a member of the local group, an ideosomatically invested participant in the normative circulation of Swedish social values. And in fact my reconstructive mimesis of Pedersen's body language and simulation of her body states suggest that she is guiding her client to her therapeutic discovery at least as powerfully with her body language as with her verbal guidance: a smile, a friendly but almost imperceptible inclination of the head, a slight relaxation of posture whenever the client "discovers" some further evidence of her para-

noid misconstructions of the Swedish clerks' benevolence; a thoughtful frown, a raised eyebrow, a twisting of her upper body to quarter view whenever the client insists on her blamelessness, her helpless victimization by these Swedish xenophobes.

What, though, is the hermeneutical status of my claim to be able to reconstruct Pedersen's participation in the somatic exchange with her client, based only on Pedersen's written words? Does this mean I'm guessing? In somatic theory, somatomimetic simulation of body states is possible through both sensory *and* verbal channels—both when we see, hear, and sense someone feeling something and when we read or are told a story about someone feeling something. This is, in fact, intuitively correct: we are as powerfully moved by a scene in a movie or a novel as we are by a scene in real life, indeed often more moved by the artistic effect than by its real-life model, because in the artwork extraneous real-world elements that distract us from the simulation have been radically pared back. We have plenty of ordinary experiences of such comparisons as well: when we either see someone fall off a bicycle in shorts and a t-shirt, and watch bare skin slide along the asphalt, or hear or read the story of that happening, we cringe and shudder in sympathetic somatic response. Because the brain does not primarily distinguish between “real” and “narrated” events, between “current” and “remembered” events, between things that happen to others and things that happen to us—those distinctions are secondary analytical constructs that we impose on somatic response after the fact—it doesn't really matter whether I am Pedersen, or am present at her sessions with this refugee woman, or simply read her report more than half a century later: I am still going to respond somatomimetically to it, am still going to simulate her body states in my own.

This does not mean, of course, that my simulations of her body states are necessarily *accurate*—any more than her simulations of the clerks' and her client's body states were necessarily accurate, or the clerks' and refugee woman's simulations of each other's body states were necessarily accurate. Somatic theory is not about objectivity; it's about competing constructions, and the ideosomatic pressure brought to bear by the group on its members to unify those constructions artificially, to impose a political conformity on them. All I am claiming about my reconstructions of Pedersen's body language and body states in the somatic exchange with this refugee client is that they feel persuasive to me—or, rather, I am using my claim that they feel persuasive to *me* as part of my attempt to make them persuasive to *you*, to set up my somatic exchange with you in such a way as to make you agree that I'm right about Pedersen.

1.1.1.5 SUMMARY

We might encapsulate this reading of what I'm calling the primal scene of refugee studies, then, by suggesting that refugeeism channels two distinct kinds of ideosomatic dysregulation, two distinct ruptures in the fabric of collective normativity: one for the refugees themselves (displacement as the breakdown of the group), the other for us as sedentary observers (displacement as the contamination of the group). For the displaced, refugeeness is a subtraction of ideosomatic regulation, the traumatic destruction of regulatory contexts; for us as observers, it is an addition to ideosomatic regulation, the unsettling introduction of an excess that disrupts regulatory contexts—as Liisa Malkki puts it, “in the national order of things, refugeeness is itself an aberration of categories, a zone of pollution” (7). Refugees find themselves thrust into situations that make no sense to them, because they have been expelled from the group contexts that impose order (reality and identity) on the world; for the sedentary, refugees are the senseless, the nonsensical, the unreal-because-excluded somehow treacherously (re)included within reality, the “beyond the pale” (outside the paling fence that demarcates “home,” the familiar, the defined, the meaningful) somehow disturbingly discovered inside the pale. Refugeeism as a social phenomenon is the awkward encounter between these two dysregulations: the displaced find their way into a new regulatory group context, typically by adjusting their old ideosomatics to the regulatory norms of the undisplaced with whom they are resettled, who must somehow find room in their collective sense-making apparatuses for the inexplicable, the inscrutable. It is not surprising, then, that sociological refugee studies are by and large assimilation studies, since assimilation is the definitive contact zone between the two groups—or that psychological refugee studies consist almost exclusively of mental-health diagnoses designed to identify and fix what is wrong with refugees, preparatory to their assimilation.

1.1.2 The Reregulation of the Dysregulatory Refugee

The advantage of an imagined primal scene, obviously, is focus: it constitutes a kind of ideal model from which all real-life messiness has been removed. Now it is time to introduce some messes. What I propose to do here in §1.1.2 is to take three closer looks at the reregulatory response to the refugee as dysregulatory force, as marshaled by the “therapist” side of the assimilative encounter, the first (§1.1.2.1) in a refugee camp, where the reregulators are the outsiders,

the xenonormative group; the second (§1.1.2.2) in the resettlement community, where the reregulators (like Pedersen) are the loconormative group; the third (§1.1.2.3) in a comparison of the two. Then, in §1.1.3, I will return to the refugee's experience of dysregulatory displacement.

1.1.2.1 XENONORMATIVE REREGULATION

In an important article from 1981, "Framing Refugees as Clients," Dorsh Marie de Voe writes of the 85,000 Tibetans who followed the Dalai Lama in 1959 in his flight out of the path of Chinese aggression into the neighboring countries of Nepal and India, from which some later moved on to Bhutan, Sikkim, Switzerland, Canada, the United States, and other countries. What makes the Tibetan refugees an interesting case study is that for the half-century after their uprooting they have continued consistently to refuse offers of citizenship and chosen to retain refugee status, and as a result continue to receive considerable refugee aid from Western organizations. What interests de Voe is the "structure of thought" or "psychotopology"—Magorah Maruyama's term, which de Voe borrows for what I would call "ideosomatic regulation"—governing the group construction of specific travelers as either refugees or non-refugees, and thereby also the group organization of not just their living conditions but also their eventual social practices and orientations as well. She notes, for example, the "effective arbitrariness of who 'becomes' refugees" (91n7), citing the Indian government's division of the Tibetan travelers into Buddhist "refugees" and Muslim "citizens":

When the Indian Government was confronted with flood of Tibetans in 1959, the refugees who were Muslim were detained. There has been, historically, a rather small community of Tibetan Muslims in Lhasa, Tibet, called by Tibetans "Lhasa-kachi" or, Lhasa Muslims. India would not let the Muslims in under the same category as the Buddhists, even though they were both of the same experience necessitating, in their minds, flight. In 1960, the Indian Government agreed to allow the Lhasa-kachis exile. However, they were not allowed to enter as "refugees" but rather as Indian citizens. This group of about 1,000 people was sent to Srinagar, Kashmir, in northern India, and the center of Muslim activity. There, on the outskirts of the city, the Lhasa-kachi are nearly-forgotten people. Without refugee status, they were "unknown" to helping agencies—even in the initial resettlement, and they were excluded from any rehabilitation schemes which were organized for a host of other Tibetan refugees. The Partition was not

so far in the past, and anti-Muslim sentiments combined with an historical distaste for Asian-looking people made India's decision to accept Tibetan Muslims extremely difficult. (91n7)

This is part of a lengthy footnote to her general point about the large group of Buddhists who were quickly designated and remain today "Tibetan refugees," namely, that

The professional initially frames the refugee as "client" through an agreed upon set of criteria. This initial prejudicial judgment establishes the need hierarchy which is then matched to the services and expectations offered by the agency. In this sense, experts take custody of the refugees by taking custody of what they, the experts, have identified as the refugee's "problem." Refugees cannot effect their own release from the situation; only others can.

Like other people who are clients, refugees are categorized with an impersonal quality, like property. Then, institutions interested in absorbing or rehabilitating refugees impose an organization of relevant facts, needs and goals in a way that the institutional structures can handle them. Even the absorption of immigrants depends on the outcome of an interplay between their desires and expectations and the extent to which they can meet the demands of the organizations controlling them. (90–91)

What I find initially interesting here for a study of the ideosomatic regulation of refugeeism is that the Western aid organizations that define a group of people as refugees in terms of specific needs that can be met by their organizational structures and resources are *xenonormative*, but now *hegemonically xenonormative*: they bring to the refugee groups their own foreign norms and values and the ideosomatic pressures that can regiment refugee experience in accordance with them and, unlike Pedersen's timidly xenonormative client in the Swedish department store, are able to make their group construction of reality stick, make it *become* reality. The refugees are initially xenonormative too, but they do not assimilate to the local culture; instead as time goes on, they iterate their xenonormativity as new loconormative cultures (most notably in Dharamsala, India, where the Dalai Lama settled), in much larger numbers—the tens of thousands—than Pedersen's client and her daughter. But as de Voe's research shows, the numbers don't really matter; they are still not large enough or powerful enough a group to take charge of the ideosomatic regulation of the aid-giving encounter, unable to import *hegemonic* xenonormativity into the new context:

Dependence begins when the refugees try to develop behaviors they perceive as expected of them as clients in order to continue the flow of rewards or aid. This form of self-estrangement contributes to the refugee's sense of powerlessness. There is the constant fear of being "summoned before a bar," found guilty or inadequate. Indeed, the victim gets blamed for having the problem and not collaborating to solve it. So, the Tibetans, for instance, have learned to ask for sponsorship, to "see" their problem in the same way the helpers define it, and to seek the same solutions. After twenty years of such a relationship, Tibetans who do not "adapt" to the way things work in exile express a fear of personal failure in the new terms. Their young continually compete for the attention of aid organizations. To be connected with westerners has become a kind of status in itself, despite resentment of the foreignness it brings to the heart of the community. (93)

Here again we have a loco-/xenonormative clash, and again one that is more or less stably resolved in favor of the more powerful group, the group with the superior financial and iterosomatic resources, the aid-givers. While in the Pedersen case the aid-givers were loconormative and the refugee xenonormative, however, in this case the aid-givers are (hegemonically) xenonormative and the refugees are (nonhegemonically) loconormative. As in the colonial situation, in fact—the topic properly of the Second Essay—the hegemonic xenonormative regime comes from Europe and the United States, and imposes an ideosomatic *counterregulation*, a new "corrective" ideosomatic exchange, on the Tibetan refugees from the outside, and so engenders in them not just willing and even eager conformity but "resentment of the foreignness it brings to the heart of the community." Still, all the signs of successful ideosomatic regulation are here: the attempt to conform behavior and self-understanding to group expectations, the definition of high status in the group in terms of successful conformity, the fear that failed conformity will bring unwanted consequences, and above all the circulation of somatic markers of approval ("the attention of aid organizations," "a kind of status") and disapproval ("found guilty or inadequate," "get blamed," "fear of personal failure") as channels of normative reality-construction.

1.1.2.2 XENONORMATIVE-BECOMING-LOCONORMATIVE REREGULATION

A more recent and explicitly Foucauldian study of this reregulatory construction of internees as "certified" refugees by Western aid organizations, immigration officials, and mental health care providers is offered by Aihwa Ong

in her 1995 article “Making the Biopolitical Subject,” reprinted as chapter 4 of her 2003 book *Buddha is Hiding* (I will follow along with the argument of the article, but will mostly quote from the book). “From the beginning,” she writes, “American service agencies, church groups, and immigration officials working with the refugees tended to view them as threats, both ideological and medical, to the American body politic where many were to be settled. The goals of refugee recruitment, processing, and resettlement programs were to socialize refugees to a category of newcomers defined as contagious to and dependent upon the civil society” (*Buddha* 93)—or, in my terms, to reregulate refugees perceived as ideosomatically dysregulatory.

Although there was overwhelming evidence that only a tiny percentage of refugees at KID [the Khao-I-Dang camp in Thailand] were Khmer Rouge members, a “Khmer Rouge screening process” rejected thousands on unsubstantiated suspicion that they participated in Khmer Rouge brutality or were affiliated with them. Stephen Golub has reported that the most circumstantial evidence, such as working involuntarily under the Angkar authorities or recounting stories that did not fit an assumed pattern of life in Khmer Rouge collective farms, was used to reject applicants. Translation problems and social differences such as the refugees’ body language—smiling even under stress, reporting the deaths of relatives with a dispassionate face—made them Khmer Rouge suspects in the eyes of INS officers. (*Buddha* 58)

Those chosen for resettlement in the US were then given “orientation” training designed to socialize them to life in America, much of it, Ong shows, aimed at sanitizing the foreignness of bodies and foods: washing themselves daily to prevent body odor, ventilating their kitchens to prevent cooking smells from bothering neighbors, not spitting or urinating in public,

because “Americans prefer clean public places.” (This statement does not take into account that most poor refugees were resettled in low-cost, garbage-strewn neighborhoods.) They are also warned about sexually transmitted diseases.

The prominence of desensory and sanitary measures drove home the “cleanliness is next to godliness” message of cultural citizenship—good hygiene as a sign of democratic sensibility. Refugees have to erase the smells of their humanity, submitting to a civilizing process that can be measured out in daily mouthwashes and showers. I remember being greeted at a poor Cambodian home with a woman spraying scent from an aerosol can.

When I inquired why she was doing it, she said she had just been cooking Cambodian food, which, she had learned, “smelled bad to Americans.” (*Buddha* 97)

Ong also deals at length with the reregulatory construction of refugee mental health by care providers:

Thus, although the health providers are well-meaning and sympathetic, the pressure to “do something” with patients often means in practice that “cultural sensitivity” is used in a limited, strategic fashion to win patients’ cooperation, facilitate diagnosis and buttress the doctors’ authority, rather than to give equal time or relativize biomedical knowledge [33]. Such health workers are often unable to take a critical view of their own professional role when clinic discourse defines them as ideal care providers for Asian immigrants. Indeed, stereotypical cultural concepts are deployed to construct an intersubjective reality that seeks to manipulate, incorporate and supplant Khmer notions of healing, body-care and knowledge. A main argument of this essay is that Khmer patients themselves learn to manipulate these expectations for their own ends. (“Making” 1248)

A main argument of this book is that both sides of assimilative encounter as analyzed by Ong here, both the care providers’ blindness to their own ideosomatic manipulations and the patients’ manipulative adaptations to the ideosomatics of the host community, are perfectly ordinary functions of the ideosomatic regulation of reality and identity. These are the normative somatic pressures humans use to create and maintain group conformity and cohesion. The tonal indignation that lurks just behind the surface of Ong’s rhetoric (in the article; it is edited out of the book) is partly a function, I suggest, of her unmasking strategies, her somewhat impatient demystifications of the idealized faces that members of these groups put on what they are doing and why—demystificatory strategies that seem to me to take individuals’ submission to the ideosomatic regulation of knowledge, especially the knowledge of how knowledge is ideosomatically regulated, to be some kind of failing or weakness.

Partly also, though, I think, there is a kind of vestigial identity essentialism at work in Ong’s approach, a belief that people should be and remain who they are, and not become something they’re not in response to a new regulatory ideosomatic. Thus “Khmer patients themselves learn to manipulate these expectations for their own ends” becomes an accusation, directed primarily, perhaps, against the mystified care providers who think they are encounter-

ing “real” people shaped by a “real” culture but are in fact only encountering phantoms of their own normative group pressures. From the standpoint of somatic theory, encountering such phantoms is at once a symptom of, and a regulatory response to, ideosomatic dysregulation: both a reflection of the frustration the mental health care providers feel at not being able to organize the normative circulation of biomedical authority through these recalcitrant foreign bodies (because the bodies do not respond properly, do not show somatic signs of responding conformatively to local group pressures), and a renewed attempt to effect that circulation.

1.1.2.3 PANICKED LOCONORMATIVITY AND COSMOPOLITAN METANORMATIVITY

In her book-length study of Hutu refugees in Tanzania, the Finnish anthropologist Liisa H. Malkki reads “refugeeness” as a subversion of “the categorical quality of the national order of things” (6), as a liminal phenomenon that is by definition “unclassified/unclassifiable” (7), so that refugees become an anthropological anomaly, “at once no longer classified and not yet classified. They are no longer unproblematically citizens or native informants. They can no longer satisfy as ‘representatives’ of a particular local culture. One might say they have lost a kind of imagined cultural authority to stand for ‘their kind’ or for the imagined ‘whole’ of which they are or were a part” (7). “At this level,” she adds, “they represent an *attack* on the categorical order of nations which so often ends up being perceived as natural and, therefore, as inherently legitimate” (8, emphasis added). In response to this perceived threat to the naturalization of the nation-state as the primary political emblem of categorical order, and thus to the universalization of hegemonic loconormativity, refugee studies tend, she argues, both to *interiorize* the anomaly as a problem “within the bodies and minds of people classified as refugees” (8), as a psychopathology, and to *exteriorize* “the refugee from the national (and, one might say, cosmological) order of things” (9).

Similarly, Giorgio Agamben writes in *Homo Sacer*:

If refugees (whose number has continued to grow in our century, to the point of including a significant part of humanity today) represent such a disquieting element in the order of the modern nation-state, this is above all because by breaking the continuity between man and citizen, *nativity* and *nationality*, they put the originary fiction of modern sovereignty in crisis. Bringing to light the difference between birth and nation, the refu-

gee causes the secret presupposition of the political domain—bare life—to appear for an instant within that domain. (131, emphasis in original)

This “crisis” might, I suggest, be thematized along lines mapped out by Judith Butler, as a form of “panicked loconormativity,” a desperate attempt to protect and police the ideal naturalization of loconormative ideosomatics through the analytical containment of the refugee—or, to quote Butler out of context, as “an incessant and *panicked* imitation of its own naturalized idealization” (“Imitation” 23, emphasis in original). Reading Butler through somatic theory, I would emend that formulation slightly to read “an incessant and panicked *homeostatic circulation of somatic mimeses* of its own naturalized idealization”—a somatic clarification of imitation as not just the production of mimetic images but also the circulatory dissemination through the group of loconormativizing somatomimetic *pressures* intended to stabilize the collective construction of identity and reality homeostatically. To the extent that the figure of the refugee introduces panic into this homeostatic group regulation, then, it might be seen as *allostatic panic*, a stress response to (perceived) destabilizing change in the sociopolitical environment.

If panicked loconormativity is quintessentially a sedentary phenomenon, normally found among the therapists and researchers and other authorities of refugees’ resettlement communities, it can also be found, as Malkki’s fieldwork with Hutu refugees suggests, among the displaced. She cites Paul Gilroy’s concept of “ethnic absolutism,” “a reductive, essentialist understanding of ethnic and national difference which operates through *an absolute sense of culture so powerful* that it is capable of separating people off from each other and diverting them into social and historical locations that are understood to be mutually impermeable and incommensurable” (Gilroy 115, quoted in Malkki 14–15, emphasis in original). Gilroy is primarily concerned with the expulsive operation of ethnic absolutism in sedentary loconormative contexts, for example the “contemporary politics of racial exclusion” (Gilroy 114, quoted in Malkki 15) that drives the British to exclude dark-skinned citizens from “the national body”—this would be a theorization of the impulse to ethnic cleansing that drives populations into refugee flight. But Malkki notes that “not all displaced people are led to challenge ethnic absolutism—on the contrary, I will argue that *some* circumstances of exile may positively *produce* it” (15, emphasis in original):

The most unusual and prominent social fact about the camp [the Mishamo Refugee Settlement in western Tanzania] was that its inhabitants were

continually engaged in an impassioned construction and reconstruction of their history as “a people.” The narrative production of this history ranged from descriptions of the “autochthonous” origins of Burundi as a “nation” and of the primordial social harmony that prevailed among the originary inhabitants (the Twa and the Hutu), to the coming of the pastoral Tutsi “foreigners from the north,” to the Tutsi theft of power from the “natives” (Hutu and Twa) by ruse and trickery, and, finally, to the culminating mass killings of Hutu by Tutsi in 1972. These narratives, ubiquitous in the camp, formed an overarching historical trajectory that was fundamentally also a national story about the “rightful natives” of Burundi. The camp refugees saw themselves as a nation in exile, and defined exile, in turn, as a moral trajectory of trials and tribulations that would ultimately empower them to reclaim (or create anew) the “homeland” in Burundi. (2)

Since the Hutu refugees in Tanzania have been driven out of that idealized homeland, their constructions of national unity constitute a kind of panicked *xenonormativity* that suppresses panic by reconstituting itself as loconormativity—“ironically,” as Malkki notes, “people there deployed their very refugeness in an effort to achieve this!” (4), which is to say, they deployed their panicked xenonormativity in an effort to achieve the ideosomatized effect of serene loconormativity.

Those Hutu refugees resettled in the small Kigoma township took a different approach:

In contrast, the town refugees had not constructed such a categorically distinct, collective identity. Rather than defining themselves collectively as “the Hutu refugees” (or even just as “the Hutu”), they tended to seek ways of assimilating and of inhabiting multiple, shifting identities—identities derived or “borrowed” from the social context of the township. Here, identities were like “porous sieves” (Tambiah 1986:6) to move in and out of, and assimilation was always intricately situational. In the course of the everyday, those in town were creating not a heroized national identity, but rather a lively cosmopolitanism—a worldliness that led the camp refugees to see them as an impure, problematic element in the “total community” of the Hutu refugees heroized as a people in exile. (2)

This is roughly the assimilative encounter that I have identified as the primal scene of refugee studies, but Malkki here insists that what the Hutu in town assimilate to is not local Tanzanian ideosomatic regulation but a situ-

ationally disaggregated identity, a kind of identity versatility that ideosomatizes not panicked loconormativity but what we might call *metanormativity*, the ability to perform multiple shifting normativities. Metanormativity might be seen as the equivalent in the refugee encounter of Judith Butler’s “camp” identities, another kind of camp, the “parodic or imitative effect of gay identities” (“Imitation” 21)—for while the Hutu in the township do not exactly *parody* the Tanzanians, their metanormative assimilation to Tanzanian identities some of the time serves the same mimetic function of undermining the panicked loconormativity that would naturalize and universalize itself as “pure national identity.” Because it is a performative act, a kind of “lively” cosmopolitan playacting, it undermines essentialist constructions of identity; but because that performativity is also ideosomatized, circulated somatically through the group as an approved construction of identity, it produces a collective calm that stands in significant contrast to panicked loconormativity. (At least this is how Malkki presents it, perhaps romanticizingly: as “a sweeping refusal to be categorized, a refusal to be fixed within one and only one national or categorical identity, and one and only one historical trajectory” [4], which sounds to me like it might be a heroized postmodern/postcolonial construct, one that deliberately obscures the dysregulatory pain and resulting panic of assimilation. But then, I wasn’t there.)

1.1.3 Types of Refugee Dysregulation

In refugee studies, Malkki notes, refugees “are constituted . . . as an anomaly requiring specialized correctives and therapeutic interventions. It is striking how often the abundant literature claiming refugees as its object of study locates ‘the problem’ not first in the political oppression or violence that produces massive territorial displacements of people, but within the bodies and minds of people classified as refugees” (8). This therapeutic orientation, which we’ve seen Malkki calling “interiorization,” is a product of what I have been identifying as the assimilative primal scene of refugee studies. What I want to do here in §1.1.3 is to problematize that broad generalization with two examples of refugee studies that partly do and partly do not fit Malkki’s characterization—Maria Pfister-Ammende’s taxonomy of refugee pathologies in “The Problem of Uprooting” and Mia Flores-Borquez’s tracing of her own trajectory through the four stages of refugee dysregulation in “A Journey to Regain My Identity”—followed by some reflections on the implications of these empirical findings for postcolonial studies.

1.1.3.1 TYPES OF REFUGEE ROOTEDNESS AND UPROOTEDNESS IN A SWISS REFUGEE CAMP, 1944

Maria Pfister-Ammende was a Swiss Freudian psychoanalyst; her study of refugee dysregulation should be read as part of the collective “therapeutic” effort by the Swiss government to reregulate the refugee hordes that had fled Nazi Germany into the safety of neutral Switzerland, via a massive research project (of which she was the director) funded by the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences in 1944 to study “the psychological aspects of the refugee *problem* in Switzerland” (7, emphasis added). Her analysis, she tells us, is “based on the records of psychological interviews of 300 ‘normal’ refugees, 700 case histories of refugees and Swiss repatriates suffering from mental disturbances as well as on socio-psychological observations among about 2000 Soviet-Russian refugees” (7).

And yet, surprisingly, perhaps, given the general therapeutic tendency to pathologize the refugee, according to Pfister-Ammende “the overwhelming majority of the persons interviewed retained a sense of inner security and appeared to be rooted. They were held by: Natural, tangible *ties to their real, still existing country of origin* and to the relatives that remained there. These people regarded themselves as being away from home only temporarily. Their country was still a living reality, a social area of activity and spiritual shelter. Although the ties to their world had been cut outwardly, they were unimpaired within” (9, emphasis in original). I assume what she means there by “natural” is “unforced, organic,” what I would describe with Derrida’s term “iterative,” so that what she calls “natural” ties would be ones formed slowly over time through group interaction; by “tangible” I assume she means “felt,” which is to say somatic, so that tangible ties would be indices of the somatic exchange. The ties these refugees seem to feel to their home country and relatives, then—their “roots”—are iterosomatic impulses that they continue to circulate with remaining members of those original groups, or, if they are now completely cut off from those groups, circulate imaginatively, based on memory-images of the regulatory somatic exchange. Although that somatic exchange has now become xenonormative, they are—at least as viewed from without—still sustained by it, and “unimpaired within.”

In other interviewees, these ties are more problematic. She describes the Zionists as sustained inwardly by ties to Israel, which they have never visited, to which they are simply hoping to emigrate—imaginary ties, in a way, in some sense just as imaginary as the remembered xenonormativity of those still rooted in a lost home, but somatically speaking the iterosomatic impulses

that both groups circulate, whether of a lost past home or of a desired future one, are equally tangible and equally sustaining. And she describes the nostalgic, whose continued rootedness in the lost home country tends to overwhelm all their present experiences and future plans with melancholy and bitterness, and thus to destabilize their group identities. For them, the felt chasm between past rooted loconormativity and present uprooted xenonormativity, between the living feel of the circulation of iterosomatized values and norms through people, places, and things in an organic community and the waning regulatory efficacy of memory images of that somatic circulation in a refugee camp, is too painful to be ignored. Religious faith, too, seems to be easy for some refugees to sustain, despite the scattering of the faithful from the iterosomatized ritual practices and spaces, from the organic community that makes gods and spirits and other imagined supernatural forces and processes feel real and present by circulating the body language and body states of belief in them, while for others their uprooting from that community and those spaces has the effect of rendering the iterosomatic basis of religion empty and inefficacious, and the religion itself therefore a sham.

Significantly, Pfister-Ammende notes that “an *intimate relationship with others present*, whether friends or relatives, did not constitute as firm a hold as one would expect because the free flow of affection and the feeling of security in such ties suffered from the mental and emotional strain due to circumstances and the uncertain future” (10, emphasis in original). Even when some significant segment of the organic community survives intact, in other words—especially a couple, or a family, nuclear or extended—the regulatory circulation of ideosomatic cohesiveness and security is disrupted by the loss of iterosomatized group associations with persons, places, and things in the past and the inability of the remaining group to impose reassuring ideosomatic regulation on an “uncertain future.”

And here let us return to the question of the exosomatization of places and things that I raised in my discussion of the application of Allan Schore’s affect regulation theory to the refugee experience—the equally dysregulatory and traumatizing effects of scattering either familiar *people* (the regulatory group) or familiar *places and things*, suggesting a counterintuitive parallel between people (who can feel) and places and things (which cannot). I began to address this parallel in §1.1.1.3, in connection with Michael Taussig’s discussion of the magical curative powers of carved wooden fetish objects; but Pfister-Ammende’s vague references to “rootedness” seem to require a more thorough theorization of the group somatization of “home,” of familiar spaces and objects. Since somatic response is a function of the mammalian nervous system, the somatic exchange is primarily a circulation of regulatory body

language and body states through human groups—though it is also possible for humans to enter into a somatic exchange with other mammals, and people often do with their pets. It is also possible, however, for humans to exosomatize (put somatic roots down into) objects and spaces by circulating regulatory somatic responses to them through the human group: the way an object is touched or held or looked at, the way a space is walked through or paused in, the postural and gestural and other kinesic orientations to a thing or a place that a group circulates in the sense of picking them up from others mimetically and modeling them in turn for others' mimetic appropriation, all make it seem to the group as if somatic response (the "exosoma") were actually *growing out* of the objects and spaces in question. In the process, sense impressions—sights, sounds, smells, feels, tastes—are somatized as well, indeed often fetishized as the media through which exosomatic response is channeled between humans and objects and spaces (see Appadurai).

When Pfister-Ammende talks about "roots," therefore, and refers vaguely to "home" and the "existing country of origin," or, more specifically, to "familiar surroundings" or the "given environment" or a "maternal soil," she is, I think, getting at something like this exosomatization of places and things: the sense of being at home in a specific dwelling and a specific neighborhood because you and the other members of your group live in them and work in them and walk through them and stop to talk in them, and have been doing so for years; the sense of being at home with certain objects, cooking utensils, books, photos, pieces of furniture, because you and other members of your group handle them, use them. We know that it feels difficult to move from one house or apartment to another, even when we take our things with us, because at first everything feels different, feels alien, and it takes months, sometimes years, to exosomatize the new spaces so that they come to feel like our own, and to resomatize our old things in spatial realignment with the new spaces. The refugee is typically bereft of the old exosomatized places *and* the old exosomatized things, as well as the human group that originally helped exosomatize those places and things as familiar, as "own," as real.⁵ And while some, especially the children, do begin quickly to exosomatize the new places and things, and to feel the group of refugees in a camp or other resettlement as the new relevant exosomatizing group, others, especially the older ones, take much longer to shift their somatic allegiances and alliances to the new group and the new places and things, and some never adjust at all.⁶

Pfister-Ammende classifies the "uprooted" (or ideosomatically dysregulated) individuals she found in the Swiss refugee camps into seven types: "[1] isolated individuals from groups needing, but lacking leadership; [2] persons with roots but suffering from severe trauma; [3] those identifying with

a social or professional class” (12); [4] drifters and escapist, who “have been drifting all their lives and have never entered into a genuine relationship,” and who “generally get along well in life, also as emigrants” (12); [5] neurotics, who may be temporarily liberated from their old fixationally somatized conflicts or may simply transfer “the object of their projections” (12) to the new surroundings; [6] egotists who take pleasure but “cannot give love or accept responsibility” (13); and [7] what she calls, in German, *Problematiker*, people who are “forever driven to deep and serious thinking about problematical questions” (13; bracketed numbering added). Pfister-Ammende says of types (4–7) that they are “rootless regardless of emigration,” and indeed “some of them chose emigration unconsciously because they preferred this form of life to the demands and obligations of an organized society” (14)—so I propose to set them aside as not dysregulated by sociopolitical upheavals that might be described as (post)colonial.

The first group of ideosomatically dysregulated refugees are those whose at-homeness in ideosomatic regulation requires leadership—those for whom the kind of imperceptible somatic exchange that is typically found in a group of friends or other equals, where everyone acts unconsciously as both leader and led, where everyone circulates both authoritative and submissive somatic orientations, will not do. Pfister-Ammende finds this form of dysregulation “particularly in those individuals who had the chance to live in camps conducted by competent leaders. If the leadership failed, however, because a good leader was replaced by an incapable one, dramatic anxiety and flight psychoses of the entire group occurred” (10). She distinguishes between passive and active subtypes of this dysregulatory response:

The passively reacting individual freezes: either he will become ill and wither away like a wounded animal, or he remains outwardly adjusted to his environment, hiding his total inner upset (“Innere Totalirritation”) behind a perfect front. The inner chaos of such people is often masked by a semblance of indifference or amiability—their dreams or a Rorschach-test will reveal their true mental and emotional state. The actively reacting person may show frank antisocial tendencies. Withdrawn from his social environment through lack of libidinous ties, he lives in a state of irritation, disarray and alienation. It is difficult to establish real contact with these people and to restore their inner calm. (10–11)

The second group is so deeply traumatized as to be unable to marshal either xenonormative orientations (“people who have roots, but whose suffering has been so great that they cannot go on despite good will and great effort”

[11]) or new group membership (“the isolated individual who is unable to live outside his group” [11]—“his” group meaning the old group, now lost) as a regulatory foundation for a new life. “Such people frequently do not react at all and continue to exist in a state of living death . . . they were not in a state of inner upset but rather in one of silent hopeless surrender” (11).

Perhaps the most interesting of Pfister-Ammende’s three dysregulated refugee types is the third, in whom the group affiliation destroyed by flight and resettlement is what Benedict Anderson calls an “imagined community,” or what Kurt Vonnegut in *Cat’s Cradle* calls a “granfalloon,” a group formed not “naturally” (in Pfister-Ammende’s term) or iterosomatically (in mine), through repeated iterations of a formative somatic exchange, but mentally, based on an unsomatized *wish* for connection. The imagined community is to the ideosomatically organized group as the Douglas MacArthur doll for the isolated Western artist is to the wooden carved Douglas MacArthur fetish object for the San Blas Cuna: an unsomatized simulacrum. Vonnegut’s examples of granfalloons include “the Communist Party, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the General Electric Company, the International Order of Odd Fellows—and any nation, anytime, anywhere” (82), reminding us that the nation is Anderson’s exemplary case of the imagined community, formed, he argues, around “national print-languages,” standardized and thus “universalized” (nationalized) dialects that artificially unite speakers of regional dialects, sociolects, genderlects, and so on. The fact that the loss of their nation can be profoundly dysregulative for these refugees suggests that they were previously regulated not so much by ideosomatic group pressures as by the unsomatized *idea* of such pressures.⁷ Pfister-Ammende also gives examples of “those who *identified themselves with their social class or profession* which had come to mean everything to them” (11, emphasis in original), and of middle-aged women who drew all their emotional resources from a stereotyped idea or image of themselves as mothers and wives:

Not infrequently this type is unable to change or adjust, not for lacking activity but rather the ability for individual development and the creation of a life of her own. I have seen such women inaudibly break down after loss of home and husband. However they did continue to keep up appearances and the front they presented to the outside world appeared intact. They adjusted and even clung to their given environment, the camp, for instance. Although possessing strong feelings they were passive by nature; the vitality deriving from their environment had vanished and they had succumbed to the forces sweeping away their social milieu; security and stability were gone along with their social environment. We are here deal-

ing with a pseudo-rootedness (“Pseudoverwurzelung”) because identification with and adherence to a social level have nothing in common with real security springing from a maternal soil, or with the vitality of those sustained by a universal idea for the common good. (11–12)

I would emend two of Pfister-Ammende’s formulations there: first, by noting that a woman’s “ability for individual development and the creation of a life of her own” is not a purely individual phenomenon; in order to feel right, to feel real, to feel authenticated or ontologized or even sociobiologized, “individual development” and “a life of her own” must be circulated through the group, must receive group approval and support, must in the end be *defined* as those things via somatic exchange within the group. This suggests that “this type is unable to change or adjust” not so much for lack of “the ability for individual development and the creation of a life of her own” but rather for lack of an ideosomatized group life of her own, a sense that she is somatically valued as an individual by a group. Her unsomatized stereotypes are not enough to sustain her. And second, “a universal idea for the common good” can quite obviously be just another unsomatized mentation that generates a granfalloon or a “pseudo-rootedness”: that sort of idea will sustain identity through upheavals only if it has been, and continues to be, in flight and resettlement, iterosomatized through significant interaction with a group.

1.1.3.2 THE FOUR STAGES OF REFUGEE DYSREGULATION

Refugee dysregulation can also be organized into chronological phases or stages (based loosely on Stein, and Vega, Kolody, and Valle):

1. dysregulation at home (invasion, ethnic cleansing, civil war, ruthless dictator, natural disaster);
2. dysregulation in flight (loss of home and community, hiding, marching, refugee camps);
3. dysregulation of initial contact with new host community (pre-assimilation);
4. dysregulation of continued contact with new host community, despite assimilation, due to traumatic memories.

We have already seen some of these in the essay so far: Pfister-Ammende’s study of the Swiss refugee camps gives us part of (2), and her first section, “Flight,” gives us the other part;⁸ Stefi Pedersen’s first case study, the woman

in the department store, gives us a single example of (3); and Dorsh Marie de Voe's study of Tibetan refugees, Aihwa Ong's study of Cambodian refugees, and Liisa Malkki's study of Hutu refugees all situate us roughly in the time frame of (4). Very few refugee studies focus on dysregulation of the home situation or dysregulation during flight, not just because clinicians and researchers are typically found either in stable host communities (like Pedersen and Ong) or in refugee camps (like Pfister-Ammende and Malkki), not in the midst of civil wars or ethnic genocides or on long forced marches, but also because, as I suggested above, the assimilative encounter between refugees and their new hosts (including the researcher) is the organizing moment of refugee studies. Some researchers, like Ong in the first two chapters of *Buddha*, do provide accounts told them by the refugees they study of their traumatic experiences before, during, and after their departure from their homes; but these tend to be background material, early stages in the chronological sequences that lead up to their main focus, internment and (especially) assimilation.⁹

Rather than theorize each stage in turn, I propose to take a quick look at a single first-person scholarly account that covers all four, a self-analytical refugee "memoir" entitled "A Journey to Regain My Identity" by Mia Flores-Borquez, who as a teenager in 1976 fled from Pinochet's Chile with her mother. As the daughter of a prominent leftist activist (the mother), Flores-Borquez was actively involved at a very early age in the election of Salvador Allende to the presidency in 1970, and, after his election, in various political activities in the new regime: "During this time I became a student union leader and fought for the rights of indigenous Mapuche Indian students who were the subject of much discrimination. I also politicized the farmers close to the college where I lived, and in a highly right-wing community, I was forgiven for my political actions because I was also developing cultural activities that had not previously reached the locality" (96).

The CIA-backed military coup in September 1973, then, which assassinated Allende and installed Pinochet in his place, was for her the dysregulatory event in (1), the home situation. Mother and daughter were placed under surveillance, and their house was repeatedly searched; the mother was fired from her teaching job and became unemployable, and the daughter lost her scholarship and, in order to continue her schooling, was forced to move to Santiago and live with her father. Under cover of cultural activities, both mother and daughter continued to struggle clandestinely against the military government, until the mother was captured by the secret service and tortured, drugged, and brainwashed; finally she managed to escape her captors and, with the help of others in the underground, abducted Flores-Borquez and took her into hiding, where for six months—the dysregulation in (2), flight—

fearing every moment for her life, the daughter cared for her mother and four other escaped torture victims, all of whom were severely traumatized. After many maneuverings, involving visas to four separate countries, they finally arrived in Britain, where she “experienced ignorance, rejection, hostility, violence, prejudice, and discrimination” (102)—the dysregulation in (3), initial contact.

Still, Flores-Borquez’s intelligence and political activism helped her assimilate—as Maria Pfister-Ammende noted in the Swiss refugee camps, political convictions and activities help refugees remain rooted. She also attributes some of her assimilation to opportunism: “I have observed that in order to gain access to scarce resources, refugees with a political background internalize (Rycroft 1968) the values of the host community. This means that they are absorbed into the cultural orientation of ‘economic’ refugees. In order to survive (physically, socially, and psychologically) it would appear that refugees have to conform to the normative expectations of the culture that provides refuge. This is something that puts them in conflict with their own identity” (103)—their old identities, obviously, the ones shaped ideosomatically in the cultures they have left behind. This notion that an identity is a stable thing that is threatened by assimilation to another culture seems like it must have been one of the individualistic notions she picked up in the course of assimilating to British culture. She seems to want to portray her submission to British ideosomatic regulation as a refugee dysregulation; it is actually only an allostatic reregulation. She was well enough assimilated to attend Oxford, where she studied counseling; later worked at Oxford as a lecturer and research associate; and then became a research consultant at Oxford Brookes University, where she has been involved in international projects on forced migration, trauma, and refugee resettlement. Flores-Borquez is also the founder and director of Justicia, a charity organization dedicated to providing support for victims of human rights violations.

And yet despite her assimilation and professional success, throughout the nineteen years from her flight to her writing of this article in 1995 Flores-Borquez was plagued by a PTSD symptomatology including “weepiness, crying for no apparent reason, sleep disturbance, nightmares, loss of appetite, uncontrolled weight gain, cognitive impairment, anxiety, fear, suicidal thoughts, and social withdrawal” (98), or what she calls, quoting Walter Benjamin, a “state of emergency” (104)—the dysregulation in (4), continued contact. She herself did not associate these symptoms with her refugee experience until 1994, when widespread media coverage of “the plight of detained asylum seekers in the United Kingdom who, failing in their attempts to obtain political asylum, were faced with deportation” (97), produced in her a series

of flashbacks from her previous experience, charged with intense identificatory traumata. Television images of “resolute men and women inside a high security fenced compound” and of “video cameras, uniformed guards, and barbed wire . . . evoked my own feelings of helplessness, as well as of anger, at my own involuntary captivity with the group of escaped severely tortured political prisoners prior to leaving Chile” (98).

In working through the impact that the 1994 media images of the detained asylum seekers had on her, Flores-Borquez realized that the most severely traumatizing moment in her past was her abduction by her mother—the dysregulation of (2), flight—and in fact that the trauma was worse because her abductor was her mother than it would have been had it been the secret service: “Summerfield (1993) points out that individuals with a political background who have experienced the trauma of repression and persecution, can come to terms with their experience better when they view it as the consequence of their political activities. As I recall now, I realize the feelings that I experienced then were that I had been abducted not by the secret service because of my activities in the underground resistance movement, but by my mother because of her activities” (99). “Thus,” she notes, “at that crucial moment my deep political sense of duty was denied and my own identity demolished” (100). (This same identity that at the moment of abduction is “demolished” later “comes into conflict” with British assimilative pressures, suggesting that perhaps “demolished” is too strong a descriptive term; that she is radically dysregulated, however, is clear.) Her mother’s assurances that she (Flores-Borquez) would sooner or later have been abducted as well did not help, especially since (a) her mother was convinced that the daughter would have been abducted as a way of putting pressure on the mother, and “even if I was raped and tortured in front of her, she would not reveal any information in order to save me” (100); and (b) she never felt loved by her mother, who was always more of a comrade than a nurturing mother. What’s more:

From the moment that I went into hiding, I became the voice of my mother. Due to the severity of the torture inflicted upon her, she lost the ability to walk and, once she had told me the details of her story, lost her ability to speak. I experienced, through her, the horrific nightmares that she suffered as well as witnessing by day her terror at any sound or movement, fearing that the secret service were trying to reabduct her. My world for six months was one in which people—my mother and the other four escapees—spoke of torture, exhibited horrific physical evidence of torture, and at night relived in their dreams the atrocities that they had experienced and observed done to others. (100)

Through the somatic exchange, in other words, Flores-Borquez not only assumes the voice but simulates the body of her mother, not only talks but walks and feels for and with her, experiencing in her own body, through the circulatory power of somatic mimeticism, her mother's pain and trauma and terror. Living in a somatic simulacrum of her mother's tortured body, at the same time as she was living in the pain and powerlessness she felt at being abducted and spirited out of her life into hiding by her mother, created an extreme ideosomatic dysregulation (2) in her, a breakdown in the normal functioning of her physioemotional body; but what kept her weeping irrationally, sleeping badly, eating little but gaining weight, living with constant anxieties, fears, and thoughts of suicide, and pulling away from other people for nineteen years was not so much that ideosomatic dysregulation but her allostatic *adaptation* to it, the building of her allostasis into a new (re)regulatory regime, the sublimation of trauma as a (new) normal state (4). This form of allostatic overload normalizes the adaptation to ideosomatic dysregulation into a kind of idiosomatic regulation, a "normality" that no one else around her experiences; but it is also an example of paleosomatic regulation, the survival of an old regulatory allostasis long after the era of its adaptiveness is past—the topic of the Third Essay.

The fact that the dysregulations of home (1) and of initial contact (3) seem to have had very little traumatizing effect on Flores-Borquez does not, of course, mean that they are invariably minor factors in the dysregulatory refugee experience: this is just one story, and there are tens of millions. Empirical studies (like Jensen or Vega, Kolody, and Valle) of refugee allostatic overload that attempt to establish which group is the most stressed, those dysregulated by (1) and (4), those regulated by (2) and (4), or those regulated by (3) and (4), are by their very nature inescapably inconclusive because no one could possibly study every refugee in the world, and no random sample could ever accurately represent an entire population.

1.1.3.3 ON THE SOMATIC EXCHANGE IN ACADEMIC AND LITERARY DISCOURSE

The somatic exchange consists of the *viral* circulation of somatic response, not just through the members of a given group but also from group to group. In this case, Flores-Borquez's mother and her fellow escapees form a group that shares the traumatizing experience of torture and imprisonment at least through the body language of physical pain, and probably also through somatized spoken words. Their somatic exchange is communicated through body

language and spoken words to Flores-Borquez, somatically exchanged with her, primarily through the mother's words ("once she had told me the details of her story"), but also through visual and perhaps tactile impressions of body language ("witnessing by day her terror at any sound or movement") and bodily signs ("exhibited horrific physical evidence of torture"), so that she becomes a kind of outside member of the group herself, but more important so that mother and daughter constitute a new group, "infected" virally by the old. Flores-Borquez then becomes the new "carrier" who communicates that mother-daughter exchange through the medium of the written word, somatically exchanging it with potentially thousands of readers, including me, so that now Flores-Borquez and (at least) I form a new somatic exchange virally infected with the somatic responses of the mother-daughter exchange. Finally I become the carrier that communicates it to you, again through the written word, creating a new somatic exchange and a new viral infection. Each new group, by simulating in their own individual bodies the circulated body states of the carrier, and circulating also those individual simulations, experiences (feels, senses) a somatomimetic construct of what the old group felt, and feels the anti-torture ideosomatic pressures brought to bear in and by each group in turn. (The viral circulation of somatic orientations is my model for inter-generational trauma, the topic of the Third Essay.)

To the extent that this somatomimetic virus is carried by words, the somatics of language comes into play—the ways in which verbal language arises out of body language and never entirely detaches from it, the ways in which words are saturated with bodily orientations, inclinations, tonalizations, and other performances. If, as Shoshana Felman suggests, a speech act is "an enigmatic and problematic production of the *speaking body*, [it] destroys from its inception the metaphysical dichotomy between the domain of the 'mental' and the domain of the 'physical,' breaks down the opposition between body and spirit, between matter and language" (65, emphasis in original). The "enigmatic and problematic production" of Flores-Borquez's mother's speaking body in hiding, just barely able to produce a verbalization of pain before losing the capacity for speech altogether, is a powerful example of the somatics of language; as Flores-Borquez makes clear, the fully embodied speech acts her battered mother performs before falling silent are the primary carrier of her pain into her daughter's body.¹⁰ In §1.2, §2.1.3.3, §2.2.2.4, and §3.2, I offer readings of postcolonial literary texts in terms of precisely this infectious power, this viral contagion of somatic response.

But what of academic discourse? In the somatic exchange Flores-Borquez sets up with her academic readers, including me (and through me, you), the medium of somatomimetic response is the academic written word, which

reduces sensory and emotional detail and so retards and obstructs the somatic transfer, in order to give the somatic impression of a desomatized mind at work purely intellectually on a problem. Because the events she is describing actually happened to her, however, and because—I'm guessing—she assumes that her reader's understanding of her intellectual argument will depend to a certain degree on a felt sympathetic response to political victimization, she refuses to abstract her account as far as, say, Pfister-Ammende, down to nameless numbered typologies. She not only tells her own story in the first person, a narrative strategy whose somatic power is familiar to us from both conversational and literary storytelling; she constructs emotionally charged scenes that might in some academic contexts be considered inflammatory, because they so flagrantly invite emotional identification (“even if I was raped and tortured in front of her, she would not reveal any information in order to save me”). At the same time, she works hard to minimize the sensory and emotional specificity of her descriptions, for the most part reducing experiences to events, events to event-types, event-types to lists, and wherever possible inserting parenthetical indices of the out-of-body distancing effects of scholarly authorities: “Thus, according to a psychoanalytic explanation, it is because of the relationship I had with my mother—lack of a sufficiently nurturing environment—that I sublimated (Rycroft 1968) my own needs and shaped my identity by attempting to help and do things for others” (100).

No matter how rigorously it reduces felt experience to mental abstraction, however, academic discourse cannot completely obstruct the somatic transfer, because that transfer is never initiated by the “sender” (s/he does not send anything) and so cannot be controlled by the “sender” either. The somatic transfer is a mimetic body response built in and by the body of the listener or viewer, based on that body's sympathetic *projection* of feeling into the other person's words—or, for that matter, into anything else in the world, including the swaying of trees or the staccato buzz of a jackhammer or the blinking of a cursor on a computer screen. Anything we see or hear may seem to us to have feelings that it wants to share with us, because we have been socialized to construct meaningful communication by entering into somatic exchanges with humans, with pets, with computers, with cars, with Douglas MacArthur figurines, with anything at all, even if that means doing all the work ourselves. (The thing is, in mimicking other people's body language and simulating their body states we typically don't feel ourselves doing any work at all: it's mostly unconscious. So it seems like no problem to us to construct a somatic exchange with a cloud or a tree. We scarcely notice ourselves doing that either.)

Still, it does make a difference how we as writers and speakers build verbal edifices as media for readers' and listeners' somatomimetic response. The

writer or speaker of verbal discourse may not be able to control the somatic exchange that ensues from it, but s/he can shape it. The six women whose written words we have been reading in this essay thus far have all used more or less the same academic discourse, some (Pedersen, Flores-Borquez) more personally, others (de Voe, Ong, Malkki, Pfister-Ammende) more impersonally, but all offering their readers abstract images of refugees designed to bring those readers into the somatic vicinity of the refugee encounter but not too close—not as close as, say, Edwidge Danticat does in the literary accounts of Haitian refugees that we'll be reading next in §1.2.

1.2 LITERARY REPRESENTATIONS: EDWIDGE DANTICAT LEAVING HAITI

Edwidge Danticat was born in Haiti in 1969. When she was four, her parents Rose and André Danticat, fleeing Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier’s terror by immigrating to the United States, left her and her little brother Eliab André in the care of relatives in Port-au-Prince and could not bring them to America until Edwidge was twelve, by which time she had two new brothers, Karl and Kelly. Danticat incorporated the rough outlines of this childhood refugee story into her first novel, *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, which she submitted as her M.F.A. thesis at Brown and then, in 1994, published with Random House/Vintage: in the novel, Sophie Caco is left with her mother’s sister Tante Atie virtually at birth, because her sixteen-year-old mother Martine has been severely traumatized by the rape in which Sophie was conceived, and Martine flees to the U.S. when Sophie is four and brings Sophie to live with her in Brooklyn when she is twelve. Like the viral somaticity of the mother–daughter relation in Mia Flores-Borquez’s story, Martine’s rape trauma soon “infects” Sophie as well, and the novel tells the story of both women’s painful and frightening attempts to deal with the dysregulatory aftermath of sexual violence.

This first novel of Danticat’s, then, covers roughly the third and fourth stages of the schematized “refugee experience” that I outlined in §1.1.3.2: the dysregulatory impact of initial contact with the foreign (new host) culture, the twelve-year-old Sophie in America, and the continuing dysregulatory effects of earlier trauma, suffered in stage (1), at home in Haiti, on later assimilation.

Danticat’s second book, *Krik? Krak!* (1995), is a story collection; the first story in it is “Children of the Sea,” an alternating series of letters between two teenaged lovers in the early 1990s, a boy who is fleeing the terror of the “new president” (Raoul Cedras) in a boat to Miami and a girl who is left behind

with her parents, trying to escape Port-au-Prince and the savagery of the Tonton Macoutes, the militia (named for the Haitian bogeyman) that Baby Doc's father Papa Doc (François Duvalier) created to terrorize the Haitian populace into submission.¹¹ This story covers stages (1) and (2) of the schema, dysregulation at home and in flight; what I propose to do in this section is to read first the story as a fictional exploration of the ideosomatic dysregulation at home (1) that drives people into flight (2), and then the novel as a fictional exploration of the ideosomatic dysregulation that awaits them at the end of their flight (3) and that they carry with them into their new homes (4).

Danticat is also the author of *The Farming of Bones* (1998), about the 1937 genocide of Haitians in the Dominican Republic, and of *The Dew Breaker* (2005), about a Tonton Macoute who has moved to the United States and tried to put his own criminal past behind him, but who finds himself driven to confess to his American-born daughter what he did—but I will be referring to those books only in passing.

1.2.1 Home (1) and Flight (2): “Children of the Sea”

Let me begin with three remarks that Danticat has made in interviews about how she writes, for whom, and with what models:

My models were oral, were storytellers. Like my grandmothers and my aunts. It's true, a lot of people in my life were not literate in a formal sense, but they were storytellers. So I had this experience of just watching somebody spin a tale off the top of her head. I loved that. She would engage an audience, and she would read people's faces to see if what she was saying was captivating them. If it was boring, she would speed up, and if it was too fast, she would slow down. So that whole interaction between the storyteller and the listeners had a very powerful influence on me. (Barsamian 33)

I have always been fascinated by history, but the kind of history that's told by ordinary people; that to me is the biggest story of history/herstory—the personal narrative. That's why I wanted to recreate an event through one voice [in *The Farming of Bones*]. For example, I remember in high school reading *The Diary of Anne Frank* and feeling that through that one young woman's voice, we grasp the horror and the fear of her experience so strongly because we're not only getting a report of what's happening, but individual reactions to it. I've always been fascinated by these individual

voices in history and the fact that one person's voice adds to another and that creates a chorus. (Anglesey 36)

I have this mental split because I wonder, am I the one to write this story [*The Farming of Bones*]? Maybe someone who went through it should write it. In some ways I feel presumptuous, as though I were taking their place, but in some ways to be able to write it, you have to feel as though someone is lending you their voice, their story, and you're the mediator. (Shea 50)

Storytelling is not a solo art; it is a group performance, grounded in the somatic interaction between teller and listeners ("engage," "captivating," "boring," "speed up," "slow down"). Stories are told by a succession of such group performances, a series of single voices telling personal stories to listeners, and the series of "reports" and "reactions" themselves form a kind of iterative group or "chorus." And stories are "lent" from one teller to another, retold, so that each successive teller mediates the story to a new audience, a new group.

If we take this collective conception of storytelling to be Danticat's utopian ideal, the narrative situation in "Children of the Sea" signals the dystopian disruption of that ideal: the boy in the boat and the girl in Port-au-Prince tell their stories to each other in the form of letters that their respective addressees will never see:

Your father will probably marry you off now, since I am gone. Whatever you do, please don't marry a soldier. They're almost not human. (4)

i don't sketch butterflies anymore because i don't even like seeing the sun. besides, manman says that butterflies can bring news. the bright ones bring happy news and the black ones warn us of deaths. we have our whole lives ahead of us. you used to say that, remember? but then again things were so very different then. (5)

In that sense, in fact, the story's narrative structure reperforms the refugee tale it tells: if group storytelling in Danticat's utopian model is both the ideal image and the verbal channel of ideosomatic regulation, the destruction of the storytelling group becomes not only a powerful poetic image of but the ideal narrative strategy for ideosomatic dysregulation. The book's title, *Krik? Krak!*, alludes to the utopian ideal, but in this very first story in the collection Danticat specifically contextualizes the traditional Haitian storytelling exchange in terms of its collapse, its inability to reregulate the refugees on the boat as a cohesive group: "We spent most of yesterday telling stories. Someone says,

Krik? You answer, Krak! And they say, I have many stories I could tell you, and then they go on and tell these stories to you, but mostly to themselves” (14). The boy’s ideal addressee, the girl he loves and has had to leave behind in order to flee Duvalier’s repression—he has been involved in a radio show that opposed the dictator—is physically absent, making it impossible for him to tell her his stories; the other people on the boat are physically present and therefore potential story-listeners, but their fear and despondency prevents even their stories from reaching the others, so that they end up telling them “mostly to themselves.” Their fear and despondency are born not just from the very real danger that their boat will sink and they will all drown—this does in fact happen—but from their social and political isolation, their awareness that they have been banished from the human community:

I feel like we are sailing for Africa. Maybe we will go to Guinin, to live with the spirits, to be with everyone who has come and has died before us. They would probably turn us away from there too. Someone has a transistor and sometimes we listen to radio from the Bahamas. They treat Haitians like dogs in the Bahamas, a woman says. To them, we are not human. Even though their music sounds like ours. Their people look like ours. Even though we had the same African fathers who probably crossed these same seas together. (14)

Social isolation breeds social isolation: because they know they are unlikely to be granted asylum anywhere they happen to land, they find it difficult to bond together in the boat. The dysregulatory somatic exchange of refugee flight is viral. Its virality is not unstoppable—as Pfister-Ammende’s research showed, some refugee groups do manage to resist the dysregulatory impulse—but fighting it requires massive ideosomatic resources that traumatized groups typically cannot marshal.

But the virality of a dysregulatory somatic exchange does not stop at the peripheries of a refugee group, at the gunwales of a leaky boat, at the shifting boundaries of the “Third World.” One of the reasons that we non-refugees typically put up defenses against refugee stories is that we are all too uncomfortably aware of their power to infect and dysregulate us as well. In this case, as Angelia Poon notes, “Since this exchange of letters cannot occur, only the reader is in a privileged position to read both sides of the correspondence” (par. 10). Each letter-writer writes to “you,” the boy to the girl, the girl to the boy, but the only “you” who is actually “there” to receive the letters and hear the stories is the reader, who thus becomes the mediatory third party in their group, not only the mail carrier but the somatic go-between, the channel by

which each one's love should make its way to the other. This places a heavy burden on the reader's shoulders: s/he is shaped somatically by the group (of three, the boy, the girl, and the reader, or of four, including Danticat herself) not simply to *desire* their happy reunion but to *effect* it. That becomes our job in the story: to bring the two lovers back together, to plug the leaks in the boat, to melt the hearts of the Bahamian or Miamian authorities so the boy and his fellow boat people will be allowed into the country, to keep the Tonton Macoutes from killing or raping or otherwise traumatizing the girl, to help her escape Port-au-Prince and ultimately Haiti itself, across the Caribbean to the United States. But of course we can't do it. We aren't up to it.

they start to pound at her. you can hear it. you can hear the guns coming down on her head. it sounds like they are cracking all the bones in her body. manman whispers to papa, you can't just let them kill her. go and give them some money like you gave them for your daughter. papa says, the only money I have left is to get us out of here tomorrow. manman whispers, we cannot just stay here and let them kill her. manman starts moving like she is going out the door. papa grabs her neck and pins her in the latrine wall. tomorrow we are going to ville rose, he says. you will not spoil that for the family. you will not put us in that situation. you will not get us killed. going out there will be like trying to raise the dead. she is not dead yet, manman says, maybe we can help her. i will make you stay if i have to, he says to her. my mother buries her face in the latrine wall. she starts to cry. you can here madan roger screaming. they are beating her, pounding on her until you don't hear anything else. manman tells papa, you cannot let them kill somebody just because you are afraid. papa says, oh yes, you *can* let them kill somebody because you are afraid. they are the law. it is their right. we are just being good citizens, following the law of the land. it has happened before all over this country and tonight it will happen again and there is nothing we can do. (16-17)

Célianne is lying with her head against the side of the boat. The baby still will not cry. They both look very peaceful in all this chaos. Célianne is holding her baby tight against her chest. She just cannot seem to let herself throw it in the ocean. I asked her about the baby's father. She keeps repeating the story now with her eyes closed, her lips barely moving.

She was home one night with her mother and brother Lionel when some ten or twelve soldiers burst into the house. The soldiers held a gun to Lionel's head and ordered him to lie down and become intimate with his mother. Lionel refused. Their mother told him to go ahead and obey the

soldiers because she was afraid that they would kill Lionel on the spot if he put up more of a fight. Lionel did as his mother told him, crying as the soldiers laughed at him, pressing the gun barrels farther and farther into his neck.

Afterwards, the soldiers tied up Lionel and their mother, then they each took turns raping Célianne. When they were done, they arrested Lionel, accusing him of moral crimes. After that night, Célianne never heard from Lionel again.

The same night, Célianne cut her face with a razor so that no one would know who she was. Then as facial scars were healing, she started throwing up and getting rashes. Next thing she knew, she was getting big. She found out about the boat and got on. She is fifteen. (23–24)

Want it as we might, we find ourselves powerless to save the two, to protect them from harm. As the story progresses, they get farther and farther apart, the reader's somatic mediation is stretched thinner and thinner as the boy's situation becomes more and more desperate and the girl's stories of Macoute brutality become more and more traumatizing, until the boy is dying and the girl is seeing black butterflies, and it's the reader's fault, the reader is the one who can't stop the violence of the Tonton Macoutes, can't keep the boat seaworthy, can't prevent the boy from throwing his notebook overboard, can't protect these two young lovers, can't make a safe haven for love. The characters exosomatize objects in a last-ditch effort to save something from destruction, but their exosomata too are destroyed, lost, the boy's notebook, Célianne's dead baby (and her own tormented fifteen-year-old body), and the butterflies:

i am getting used to ville rose. there are butterflies here, tons of butterflies. so far none has landed on my hand, which means they have no news for me. i cannot always bathe in the stream near the house because the water is freezing cold. the only time it feels just right as at noon, and then there are a dozen eyes who might see me bathing. i solved that by getting a bucket of water in the morning and leaving it in the sun and then bathing myself once it is night under the banyan tree. the banyan tree is now my most trusted friend. they say banyans can last hundreds of years. even the branches that lean down from them become like trees themselves. a banyan could become a forest, manman says, if it were given a chance. from the spot where I stand under the banyan, i see the mountains, and behind those are more mountains still. so many mountains that are bare

like rocks. i feel like all those mountains are pushing me farther and farther away from you. (25–26)

She threw it overboard. I watched her face knot up like a thread, and then she let go. It fell in a splash, floated for a while, and then sank. And quickly after that she jumped in too. And just as the baby's head sank, so did hers. They went together like two bottles beneath a waterfall. The shock only lasts so long. There was no time to even try and save her. There was no question of it. The sea in that spot is like the sharks that live there. It has no mercy.

They say I have to throw my notebook out. The old man has to throw out his hat and his pipe. The water is rising again and they are scooping it out. I asked for a few seconds to write this last page and then promised that I would let it go. I know you will probably never see this, but it was nice imagining that I had you here to talk to. (26–27)

Both letter-writers speak of magic, the boy of the Protestants who “are hoping something will plunge down from the sky and part the sea for us” (7), the girl, a few lines later, “if I knew some good *wanga* magic, I could wipe them off the face of the earth” (7), meaning the Tonton Macoutes. The reader feels these as indirect speech acts, indirect requests to wield that kind of performative magic on behalf of these two young lovers, speak the words and the sea will be parted and the Tonton Macoutes will be killed and the two lovers will be reunited in Miami.¹² But it doesn't happen, because the reader isn't as powerful as s/he wants to be, doesn't have that performative magic. By this point in the story Danticat is circulating both impossible hopes and a crushing hopelessness through the group that includes the two storytellers and the reader, letting the boy and the girl put desperate somatic pressures on the reader to help that only underscore the reader's (like their own) helplessness. The notebook as the magic talisman or fetish object that, by storing story, will unite the lovers created by story; the butterflies exosomatized as messengers from him to her, wordless story-tellers who will tell her that he is all right, he has survived, he is in Miami waiting for her: these exosomata are offered the reader too as tools of redemption, but they don't work. Like the girl's mother in the latrine, prevented by her husband and by her own terrible knowledge that he is right, that nothing they could do would save Madan Roger, and they would die horrible deaths as well or be raped and brutalized, the reader too is caught up in collective emotional currents that cannot issue forth into action, that can only keep generating frustration and desperation

and desolation, and can ultimately be released only in tears. As Bob Corbett reports in his online review of *Krik? Krak!*, when he read the story out loud to a group of university students, “there wasn’t a dry eye in the room when I finished, including mine.” Personally, I don’t know how he finished. I can’t even whisper the story to myself without choking up and becoming unable to go on.

now there are always butterflies around me, black ones that i refuse to let find my hand. i throw big rocks at them, but they are always too fast. last night on the radio, i heard that another boat sank off the coast of the bahamas. i can’t think about you being in there in the waves. my hair shivers. from here, i cannot even see the sea. behind these mountains are more mountains and more black butterflies and a sea that is endless like my love for you. (28–29)

1.2.2 Doubled Assimilation (3/4): *Breath, Eyes, Memory*

1.2.2.1 OUTWARD DISPLACEMENT

In *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, Danticat also creates a group identification that includes the reader, but a far more problematic one, one that tends first toward the exclusion of others and the suppression and outward displacement of shared feelings, and only gradually opens up as the novel proceeds. When Tante Atie tells Sophie that her mother has sent for her, has arranged for a plane ticket so Sophie can fly to New York and live with her in Brooklyn, she is desolate, as Tante Atie is the only mother she has ever known: “I only knew my mother from the picture on the night table by Tante Atie’s pillow” (8). But Tante Atie convinces her not to cry:

She squeezed my hand and whispered, “Remember that we are going to be like mountains and mountains don’t cry.”

“Unless it rains,” I said.

“When it rains, it is the sky that is crying.” (28)

The socially acceptable way to deal with painful emotions is simply not to feel them—to become as unfeeling as a mountain. Tante Atie gives Sophie another object lesson in how to feel when you feel bad about something: fake it.

I picked up the spoon and began to eat. Tante Atie’s lips spread into a little

grin as she watched me. Her laughter prefaced the start of what was going to be a funny story.

There were many stories that Tante Atie liked to tell. There were mostly sad stories, but every once in a while, there was a funny one. . . .

Whether something was funny or not depended on the way Tante Atie told it. That morning, she could not bring the laughter out of me like she had in the past. It was even hard for her to force it out of herself. (19)

Don't feel the bad things; only feel the good things. If you feel like crying, be a mountain, but a laughing mountain. At the airport, Tante Atie can't help herself—she cries—but Sophie has already learned her lesson, and is stoic, calm, because depersonalized. When she lands in New York and her mother is thrilled to see her, she is still a mountain, for many months. Her depersonalization is the allostatic overload with which she adapts to her radically transformed situation: new country, new language, new mother (see also Braziel, N'Zengou-Tayo).

What is interesting about Danticat's literary portrayal of Sophie's depersonalization, though, is that her allostatic response to geographical displacement is imaged through Freudian displacement. For example, Sophie is almost late for her plane because, as the cab takes her and Tante Atie through Port-au-Prince to the airport, riots break out all around them: the inner turmoil she is suppressing is displaced onto the social scene.

We stopped in front of the main entrance. The smoke had been coming from across the street. Army trucks surrounded a car in flames. A group of students were standing on top of a hill, throwing rocks at the burning car. They scurried to avoid the tear gas and the round of bullets that the soldiers shot back at them.

Some of the students fell and rolled down the hill. They screamed at the soldiers that they were once again betraying the people. One girl rushed down the hill and grabbed one of the soldiers by the arm. He raised his pistol and pounded it on top of her head. She fell to the ground, her face covered with her own blood.

Tante Atie grabbed my shoulder and shoved me quickly inside the airport gate.

"Do you see what you are leaving?" she said.

"I know I am leaving you." (34)

No hysterics: just the facts, just the bare knowledge of whom she is leaving. She doesn't need hysterics, because hysteria has exploded all around her.

On the plane, she remains calm as a woman brings a little boy in, “crying and stomping his feet, trying to wiggle out of her grasp. She cornered him against the seats and pressed him into the chair. She held him down with both her hands. He stopped fighting, slid upward in the seat, raised his head, and spat in her face” (36–37). Sophie reaches out a hand to him:

He grabbed my hand and dug his teeth into my fingers. I hit his arm and tried to get him to release my fingers. He bit even harder. I smacked his shoulder. He let go of my fingers and began to scream.

The woman rushed over. She pulled him from the seat, raised him up to her chest, and rocked him in her arms. He clung to her body for a moment then pulled away, digging his fingers into her neck. She stumbled backwards and nearly fell. He slipped out of her arms and ran out of her reach. She dashed down the aisle after him. (37)

It turns out that the boy’s father, a corrupt government official, has just been killed in the rioting, and the boy is being flown to New York to live with relatives—into the unknown, just like Sophie. Sophie, who does not want to go either, could have resisted her displacement with the same kind of desperate emotional violence as the boy displays, but doesn’t, perhaps because she doesn’t need to: he expresses her suppressed feelings for her.

What am I suggesting, here—that Sophie has the *power* to displace her feelings onto other people? That *she* makes Port-au-Prince explode in riots, *she* inserts her suppressed resistance into the boy’s unruly body? No. Danticat does it, of course. But Danticat does it not merely to “symbolize” Sophie’s suppressed emotions, but rather to draw her readers into those emotions, to enable us to share Sophie’s feelings, to circulate through us not only Sophie’s dysregulatory trauma at being torn away from her home but also her expulsive reregulation of that trauma as well. She is able to displace Sophie’s feelings onto other people because, of course, she is creating the group that feels those feelings, Sophie, Tante Atie, the boy, the rioters, and us as her own imaginary other, and can circulate whatever feelings she likes through that group, by whatever route—by obstructing or damming up feelings of angry resistance in Sophie, for example, and rerouting them through the rioters and the little boy to us. That way Sophie can detach herself, dissociate from her pain, and (as it were) bond with us as the witnesses and certifiers of her calm, create with us an everything’s-fine-nothing-bad-is-happening-here somatic exchange, as if to say, “See? Over there’s the problem; not in here.”

I say “as it were” because Sophie is of course not a living, breathing subject but a somatomimetic projection that we generate in our own bodies; but

such is the power of somatic mimeticism that we seem to feel her feelings as powerfully as we do the body states we simulate in somatic exchanges with flesh-and-blood friends, with “real people.” Our friends’ feelings too are a somatomimetic projection that we generate in our own bodies: there is no significant phenomenological difference for us between the imagined “reality” of a friend’s feelings and the imagined “reality” of a literary character’s feelings. Both are simulations that, because they are channeled through our limbic system and therefore map real emotions that our bodies are experiencing, *feel real*.

1.2.2.2 DOLLS

When Sophie arrives at her mother’s apartment in Brooklyn she finds an odd thing: her mother has a doll that she cares for like a daughter.

“If you don’t like the room,” my mother said, “we can always change it.”

She glanced at the picture as she picked up a small brush and combed the doll’s hair into a ponytail.

“I like the room fine,” I stuttered.

She tied a rubber band around the doll’s ponytail, then reached under the bed for a small trunk.

She unbuttoned the back of the doll’s dress and changed her into a pajama set.

“You won’t resent sharing your room, will you?” She stroked the doll’s back. “She is like a friend to me. She kept me company while we were apart. It seems crazy, I know. A grown woman like me with a doll. I am giving her to you now. You take good care of her.” (45)

It does seem a bit crazy—it is the first somewhat disturbing discovery Sophie makes about her mother—but in an important sense the displacement of Sophie’s feelings onto surrogates in her departure from Haiti has prepared us for it. The doll is (at least) Martine’s Sophie-surrogate, just as the rioters and the angry little boy were Sophie’s Sophie-surrogates. “She kept me company while we were apart,” Martine says: we don’t know yet why they were apart, but we now know that for eight years Martine has replaced her absent daughter with a doll, a thing, a fetish object, perhaps, a thing somatized as a real little girl who could keep her company. The significant point to note here is not simply that Martine’s Sophie-surrogate is an inanimate object, a thing without subjectivity or agency, but that it is an inanimate object that feels to her like a

living person, feels like a friend, someone who can keep her company. Martine now surrenders the doll to Sophie, and that is the last we hear of it: another interesting fact.

In *The Second Sex* Simone de Beauvoir famously theorizes that the doll to the little girl serves more or less the same identity-organizational function as the penis does to the little boy:

But even if the young girl has no serious penis envy, the absence of the organ will certainly play an important role in her destiny. The major benefit obtained from it by the boy is that, having an organ that can be seen and grasped, he can at least partially identify himself with it. He projects the mystery of his body, its threats, outside of himself, which enables him to keep them at a distance. True enough, he does scent danger in connection with his penis, he fears its being cut off; but this is a fright easier to overcome than the diffuse apprehension felt by the little girl in regard to her 'insides,' an apprehension that will often be retained for life. She is extremely concerned about everything that happens inside her, she is from the start much more opaque to her own eyes, more profoundly immersed in the obscure mystery of life, than is the male. . . . [T]he little girl cannot incarnate herself in any part of herself. To compensate for this and to serve her as *alter ego*, she is given a foreign object: a doll. It should be noted that in French the word *poupée* (doll) is also applied to the bandage around a wounded finger: a dressed-up finger, distinguished from the others, is regarded with amusement and a kind of pride, the child shows signs of the process of identification by his talk to it. But it is a statuette with a human face—or, that lacking, an ear of corn, even a piece of wood—which will most satisfyingly serve the girl as substitute for that double, that natural plaything: the penis. (278)¹³

This analysis suggests that Martine's doll is not just a Sophie-surrogate but a Martine-surrogate as well: that what mother is handing to daughter is not just the objectified daughter but the objectified mother, not just inanimate other but inanimate self. Like the bandaged finger, like Célianne's self in "Children of the Sea," Martine's self is wounded, dysregulated; the doll is the reregulatory deanimation of that wounded self, a projection of the wounded self outwards onto a safely unfeeling thing, which is then imaginatively *reanimated* as safely unfeeling self/other. (This reregulation does not work for Célianne: having thrown her dead baby into the sea—having drowned her deanimated doll—she cannot but jump in after it and drown herself.)

A few pages later, in a Haitian store, Sophie sees “small statues of the beautiful *mulâtresse*, the goddess and loa Erzulie” (52), a powerful vodou figure based on an actual African slave named Erzulie Danto who, according to the folklore, was mutilated by her own people during the Haitian slave revolution in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century: the other slaves cut out her tongue to prevent her from divulging dangerous secrets. As Donette A. Francis notes in her excellent reading of the novel’s sexual violence, “Erzulie Danto is mute and must speak through body language” (87), which connects her implicitly with Sophie, who at this point in the novel is hardly communicating at all, verbally *or* kinesically, except through the mute written word with the reader (see also Braziel, *Journey*). But Sophie tells us that Erzulie was her childhood image of her absent and silent mother:

As a child, the mother I had imagined for myself was like Erzulie, the lavish Virgin Mother. She was the healer of all women and the desire of all men. She had gorgeous dresses in satin, silk, and lace, necklaces, pendants, earrings, bracelets, anklets, and lots and lots of French perfume. She never had to work for anything because the rainbow and the stars did her work for her. Even though she was far away, she was always with me. I could always count on her, like one counts on the sun coming out at dawn. (59)

The beautiful and glamorous but absent mother is depicted as virgin and healer, but above all as *imaginary*, a projection of desire as spirit. Sophie’s grandmother will later give her a statue of Erzulie, as consolation “for the pain we have caused you” (157), and Sophie will let the mountain cry: “I held the statue against my chest as I cried in the night. I thought I heard my grandmother crying too, but it was the rain slowing down to a mere drizzle, tapping on the roof” (157). At the end, when Martine dies, Sophie dresses her for her funeral in a bright red dress, so “she would look like a Jezebel, hot-blooded Erzulie who feared no men, but rather made them her slaves, raped *them*, and killed *them*” (227, emphasis in original). Like Martine dressing the Sophie-doll, Sophie here dresses the Martine-doll, an inanimate object that she somatizes as alive, as powerful, as a comfort, as healing. It is not, in other words, just that Erzulie is a strong spiritual *image* of woman that can be used analogically to attribute greater but still imaginary power to a weak (or in this case dead) woman, as Francis suggests in her reading of this scene: “In calling on Erzulie, a symbol of bodily survival and resistance and the protector of women who are suffering from abuse, Sophie conjures these defiant characteristics for her own mother” (87). It is also that Erzulie is a doll, a dead object,

now the dead body of her mother, which the living can somatize or fetishize as superalive, magically alive, more living than the living. To put it in the terms I offered in §1.1.3.1, the living can circulate among themselves powerfully somatized images of the object-as-alive, of life-embedded-in-the-object, until the object seems to be circulating those somatomimetic impulses as well, seems to be a living member of the somatic exchange.

Shortly after Sophie tells us that she used to imagine her absent mother as Erzulie, back when she was twelve, Martine tells her a dissociated version of the story of her conception: at sixteen Martine was grabbed by a man, probably a Tonton Macoute, dragged into the cane field, and brutally beaten and raped. “She did not sound hurt or angry,” Sophie tells us, “just like someone who was stating a fact. Like naming a color or calling a name. Something that already existed and could not be changed” (61). Flat affect, like a mountain or a doll: the ultimate somatic defense against (or allostatic response to) severe trauma. We later learn that Martine did not dissociate immediately: she lived in terror for months, “terrified that he [the faceless Macoute who raped her] would come and tear out the child growing inside her. At night, she tore her sheets and bit off pieces of her own flesh when she had nightmares” (139). Dissociation from the dysregulatory pain of that rape is for Martine a hard-won victory, an allostatic adaptation—but as allostasis it is also a surrender to the dysregulation, a surrender not only of control but of consciousness as well to the dysregulatory somatomimesis of the violence that “she” (or some inchoate mapping function in her nervous system) internalized in the rape. By dissociating from it, she lets it run and ruin not only her life but also her daughter’s: “It took me twelve years to piece together my mother’s entire story,” Sophie tells us. “By then, it was already too late” (61). Like Mia Flores-Borquez, Sophie has already internalized her mother, the raped mother, the suffering mother, the dissociated mother: “Some nights I woke up in a cold sweat wondering if my mother’s anxiety was somehow hereditary or if it was something that I had ‘caught’ from living with her. Her nightmares had somehow become my own, so much so that I would wake up some mornings wondering if we hadn’t both spent the night dreaming about the same thing: a man with no face, pounding a life into a helpless young girl” (193). The displacement of unsafe feelings onto a safely external object, like a doll or a daughter’s body, like a riot or an unruly child, like a religious object or a dead mother, brings relief from the trauma that dysregulates the dissociated body, but it also circulates that displacement to others, and so perpetuates the violence.

Sophie was once an internal part of Martine, a living simulacrum of the violent act, man, and penis that put her there and therefore a dysregulatory

being, something that Martine had first to expel from her body and then distance from her life, leave behind in Haiti when she fled to America. Both childbirth and refugee flight were acts of dissociation, depersonalization, and desomatization for Martine. Having installed the newborn child with her sister in Haiti and her own body in America, Martine found a new object as a further repository for her dysregulatory feelings, the doll. As de Beauvoir writes, “The main difference [between the penis and the doll] is that, on the one hand, the doll represents the whole body, and, on the other, it is a passive object. On this account the little girl will be led to identify her whole person and to regard this as an inert given object” (306). De Beauvoir’s analysis moves from here to the socialization of the (untraumatized) little girl as *like* a doll, pretty and passive; but her symbol of the process, the doll, works equally well as a symbol of Martine’s dissociative response to rape. When Martine has finally projected enough of her inner dysregulation out onto the world, and so achieved a deadened simulacrum of inner regulation, she brings Sophie to New York and gives her the doll—and the circle is complete. The story is over. Or so Martine evidently hopes. As it turns out, of course, she’s dead wrong.

1.2.2.3 DOUBLING

Six years later, at eighteen, Sophie tells Martine that she is in love with a man, and Martine begins “testing” her, inserting a finger into her vagina weekly to feel for her hymen. “Testing,” which Sophie describes as part of a Haitian virginity cult (154), is passed on from mother to daughter: her grandmother did it to her mother and Tante Atie; her mother does it to her. All of them hate it; so far, all of them have passed the pain and the humiliation of the practice on to the next generation.

In her discussion of the practice, Francis writes: “Even after the death of Atie and Martine’s father, the women of the Caco family still desired this patriarchal romance, which would confer legitimacy and respectability. Once this romance became unrealizable for Martine because of her rape, and unrealizable for Atie because she did not have the proper level of education, they transferred this desire onto Sophie” (82). But I wonder: what does Atie’s level of education have to do with it? And why does Francis assume that “this romance” can only be vested in a single female offspring at a time? Viewed somatically, the quest for purity isn’t a single “desire” that is “transferred” from one female family member to another; in this ideosomatic regime *all* unmarried women’s bodies are fetishized by the group as pure or corrupt, virgin or whore, marriageable or unmarriageable. This is a process akin to

the fetishization of dolls or statues or carved wooden figurines as possessing magical healing powers: the girl's intersubjective power to circulate group somatic response, feelings and thoughts, is collectively suppressed so that her body might be objectified as an inert thing, as a telltale collection of physical signs, the tightness or looseness of the vaginal opening ("She would put her finger in our very private parts and see if it would go inside" [60]) or the thinness or thickness of a stream of urine ("If you pee loud, it means you've got big spaces between your legs" [136–37]). This suppression and this objectification and the proper physical signs and the purity that they establish are circulated ideosomatically through the group as intensely positive feelings; any discovery of signs pointing either to pollution or to the girl's somaticity, her disturbing ability to feel and circulate pain, shame, humiliation (Tante Atie, for example, "used to scream like a pig in a slaughterhouse" [60]), is powerfully dysregulatory, and thus smothered under an overwhelming iterosomatics of disapproval.

To facilitate this objectification and thus to avoid disapproval—to escape both *feeling* the physical pain and the emotional humiliation of "testing" and *causing* the dysregulatory effects on her mother of her own somatic response—the girl dissociates, vacates her body, a psychic strategy that Danticat associates explicitly with the vodou act of "doubling," splitting the body into physical and spiritual doubles and leaving the physical body behind in order to travel in the spirit world¹⁴: "I had learned to *double* while being *tested*. I would close my eyes and imagine all the pleasant things that I had known. The lukewarm noon breeze blowing over a field of daffodils" (155, emphasis in original). "After my marriage," she adds, "whenever Joseph and I were together, I *doubled*" (156). Somatically speaking, what she is doing is depersonalizing the body, desomatizing it—withdrawing somatization from the body as iterosomatically identified and realized by the group, splitting somatic response off from the collectivized fetish object of the virginity cult, and thus from the ideosomatic exchange that is inflicting these wounds on her, so that the wounds are inflicted not on "her" but on a split-off thing, the doll of her own objectified body. As I say, the danger in this doubling is that it facilitates the objectification not only of the girl's and later the woman's own body, but in time of her daughter's as well: dissociation dynasticizes the violation. The traumatization inflicted on the physical body persists as a body memory, an ideosomatized muscle memory that continues to impel action not only despite but through desomatization, through the failure of idiosomatic response to identify and realize the circulatory power of the trauma, and block it, at least, perhaps even to rechannel it, so that it does not issue forth into traumatization of the next generation.

1.2.2.4 SELF-RAPE, SELF-ABORTION

The weekly vaginal tests that Martine inflicts on Sophie are intended, obviously, to identify the watershed moment at which Sophie moves from virginity to whoredom, from purity to impurity. As Sophie comes to understand the testing dynamic, however, the tests become a mere obstruction, a barrier to her future happiness with Joseph, her older boyfriend, a black Creole from Louisiana who loves her and wants to marry her and is willing to wait to have sex with her until Sophie is ready. More than that: they objectify the vagina as that obstruction. This introduces an important twist on de Beauvoir's theorization of penises and dolls: in her quasi-Freudian reading, girls identify with dolls because they lack an easily objectifiable sexual organ that might be somatized as a symbol of the self. For Sophie, Martine's testing performs something like this genital objectification, somatizes the vagina as a sexual synecdoche for her whole person, for the person who wants to marry and have sex with Joseph. After testing commences, Sophie no longer needs dolls, external projections of self: she has her own vagina, as a boy has his penis. But where boys are taught to somatize their penises as self-projections of "autonomy, of transcendence, of power" (de Beauvoir 306), Sophie is taught by virginity testing to somatize her vagina as blockage, as an obstruction to the flows of her power, as negation.

And so, when it becomes clear to her that she cannot simply marry Joseph and have "legal" sex with him—he is older, Martine's age, sixteen years older than Sophie, and not Haitian, and what Martine calls a "vagabond" (78), a musician, and therefore from Martine's traditional Haitian point of view not an appropriate husband for her daughter—she smashes the obstruction, the negative symbol of her whole person. She takes the pestle from the kitchen and breaks her own hymen with it. In this way she frees herself from the virginity cult, violates it, transgresses it, performs herself as "impure" and therefore beyond testing, beyond the reach of the ideosomatic regulation that controls virgin girls; but she also severely damages her vaginal opening and the part of her somatized self that was identified with her vagina. Her mother, hurt and angry at her "betrayal" ("You would leave me for an old man who you didn't know the year before" [85]), releases her: "You just go to him and see what he can do for you" (88). But as a result Martine cuts Sophie out of her life completely for several years, even after Sophie is married to Joseph and gives birth to a little girl, Brigitte: the first loss. The second is sexual pleasure: she tears her vagina badly, has to have stitches, and comes to think of sex as intrinsically not only painful but evil (123). "Joseph," Sophie tells us, "could never understand why I had done something so horrible to myself. I could

not explain to him that it was like breaking manacles, an act of freedom” (130).

Joseph, who is not the daughter of a rape victim, presumably wonders why she didn’t just elope with him, or, if she felt she had to break her hymen in order to be free of the virginity cult, let him do it with his penis. There is no way he can understand that her self-rape with the pestle frees Sophie to be like her mother, another rape victim, sexually brutalized by an inanimate object. Just as Martine somatized the doll as both her child and her dissociated self, just as Sophie somatized first the Erzulie statue as her mother and then her mother’s dead body as Erzulie, and just as Sophie, tested by Martine, somatized her vagina as her dissociated self, so too does Sophie here somatize the pestle as alive, as “a man with no face, pounding a life into a helpless young girl” (193). Four weeks later, Sophie and Joseph are married, and Sophie—feeling “it was my duty as a wife” (130)—lets him have intercourse with her, despite intense pain. “That first very painful time gave us the child” (130)—just as “that first very painful time” with the Tonton Macoute gave Martine Sophie.

After a couple of years of marriage, Sophie flees Joseph to Haiti—fleeing not so much Joseph, who is a good man, but her own pain in the marriage, in life—and Martine comes also, to bring her back. After they return to New York, Martine tells her that she is pregnant—shamefacedly admitting that she has been having sex out of wedlock with her Haitian lover Marc. Marc wants to marry her, wants her to have the baby, but Martine can’t stand the idea, wants to abort it: “The nightmares. I thought they would fade with age, but no, it’s like getting raped every night. I can’t keep this baby” (190). Sophie tries to talk her into getting therapy, but Martine refuses: “I am afraid it will become even more real if I see a psychiatrist and he starts telling me to face it. God help me, what if they want to hypnotize me and take me back to that day? I’ll kill myself” (190). As Donette Francis writes, “Martine’s relationship to her sexuality is shaped during this violent scene of subjection [the rape]. In addition to breaking her will to speak, this perpetrator engenders a traumatic body memory so that Martine subsequently equates the sex act with pain and violation. Paradoxically, while her silence probably saved her life, in the final analysis, Martine’s inability to speak this trauma results in her death. Martine literally becomes subsumed by the traumatic after-effects of her rape because she never confronts nor revises the trauma. Instead she attempts to live as if the trauma has not irrevocably altered her subjectivity—her mind and body” (81–82).

Sophie also tries to get her mother to compare this pregnancy, two decades after the rape, the father a man she loves, with the one that brought her into

the world: “It must have been harder then but you kept me,” but her mother is adamant: “When I was pregnant with you, *Manman* made me drink all kinds of herbs, vervain, quinine, and verbena, baby poisons. I tried beating my stomach with wooden spoons. I tried to destroy you, but you wouldn’t go away” (190). Just as Sophie penetrates her vagina with a pestle, Martine pounds her pregnant belly with wooden spoons, inanimate cooking utensils as implements of rape and murder—not just to *free* the two women from their “manacles” but to *repeat* the traumatic effect of those manacles, to recirculate the internalized somatomimesis of the rapist’s violence. Because this mimetic violence reenacts the initial violation desomatizingly, dissociatively, however, rather than resomatizingly, it just keeps circulating the old somatic response, and thus “frees” the women only to the minimal control over trauma that Freud identifies as the death drive, the desire to deanimate the traumatized body slowly, repetitively, on their own terms.¹⁵

Martine’s self-directed violence becomes ever harsher when she begins to hear the fetus talking in the rapist’s voice:

“Yes, I am sure, it spoke to me. It has a man’s voice, so now I know it’s not a girl. I am going to get it out of me. I am going to get it out of me, as the stars are my witness.”

“Don’t do anything rash.”

“Everywhere I go, I hear it. I hear him saying things to me. You *tintin, malpròp*. He calls me a filthy whore. I never want to see this child’s face. Your child looks like *Manman*. This child, I will never look into its face.”

“But it’s Marc’s child.”

“What if there is something left in me and when the child comes out it has that other face?”

“You mean what if it looks like me?”

“No, that is not what I mean.” (217)

Sophie has never looked like her mother; Martine believes that that is because “a child out of wedlock always looks like its father” (61). Since the rapist’s face was covered, Martine does not know what he looked like, but takes Sophie’s face to be a genetic representation of it. Now, though, she is afraid that the new baby (also conceived out of wedlock) will look not like its father but like the rapist—that “there is something left in me,” some genetic material that will reproduce the rapist one more time. And in a sense she’s right, though the material that keeps reproducing the rapist in her and for her and through her is not genetic but somatic: her somatomimetic reproduction of the rape, which her dissociation has left to its own devices. Here it reproduces the

rapist's voice, which, coming from inside her body, must to Martine's mind be the voice of the fetus; surely it will reproduce the rapist's face as well, perhaps his whole body, like an evil clone, an avatar. Martine has spent her entire adult life trying to escape this man; now, she thinks, he has been reborn inside her.

So she stabs herself in the belly, seventeen times, with an "old rusty knife" (224), and dies of a massive hemorrhage. Her self-abortion kills the rapist-somatomimesis by killing the body that is its host: she aborts her self, the self that she could never quite dissociate from the body that could never stop remembering the rape.

The complete dysregulatory cycle experienced by Martine and Sophie, then, begins with the rape in the cane field, in Haiti, in the home situation (1), and continues in Martine's flight from that rape (2), first through wild, frantic attempts to abort the fetus while in hiding from the Tonton Macoutes, then, in migration to America (3), through dissociation, desomatization, the displacement of somatic response onto safe inanimate objects, like the Sophie doll. In a sense, America is another Sophie doll, another safely inanimate object or collection of objects and spaces onto which Martine can displace her Haitian somatic dysregulation. Bringing Sophie to America is the next step in this desomatizing process, as Martine is then able to displace her trauma onto Sophie as a living-but-desomatized doll, through "testing" (4). From Sophie's point of view, and thus for the novel's narrative, (1-3) here is backstory, prehistory, her attempt to understand what has happened to her own feelings by tracking their origins in her mother's life; her own (1-3) is a byproduct of Martine's (4). Sophie is uprooted from the only home and the only mother she has ever known (1-2) in order to live in America with a traumatized stranger who happens to be her birth mother. Like her mother, she responds to the traumatic effects of uprootal through dissociation, desomatization, displacement of somatic response onto external objects and events (3), which facilitates the internalization of Martine's dysregulatory somatomimeses of the rape, through the mimetic contagion of nightmares and "testing"; these somatomimeses continue to impel Sophie too into mimetic violence (4), especially the self-rape with the pestle. As Sophie begins to work back through the dysregulation therapeutically, attempting in a sexual phobia group and in one-on-one therapy to resomatize her trauma, Martine gets pregnant and finds herself unable to deal with the antidissociative resurgence of somatic mimeses of the rape, especially the apparent emanation of the rapist's voice from her fetus, so she brings the repetitive mimetic cycle to a close by violently deanimating both the fetus and her own body, finishing the job that the rapist started.

1.2.2.5 RESOMATIZATION

Sophie's narrative has a pugilistic, largely pessimistic feel to it, because for most of the novel both women's primary response to somatic dysregulation is desomatization, trying not to feel the pain, which only repeats the dysregulation thanatotically, in Freud's sense. Indeed it may not be too much to say that the novel mostly seems mired in hopelessness because it is steeped in Freud's death drive, the "Nirvana principle" whose "aim is to conduct the restlessness of life into the stability of the inorganic state" ("Masochism" 160)—and, perhaps, because it is steeped inchoately in Freudian psychoanalytical models in general, whose only alternatives to the repetition-compulsions of the death drive are the infantile pleasure principle and the jaded adaptations of pleasure to the reality principle.

Toward the end of the novel, however, Danticat begins to introduce new therapeutic pressures on Sophie, through her sexual phobia group in Chapter 31 and one-on-one therapy in Chapter 32. Both are explicitly somatic, based on therapeutic resomatization, the reliving or replaying of traumatic scenes from the past in a transformative group context that circulates new and life-affirming somatomimeses through the sufferer's body response. Sophie's sexual phobia group consists of just three women, herself and Buki, an Ethiopian woman dealing with the trauma of clitoridectomy, and Davina, a Chicana incest survivor; their group rituals seek to rechannel the negative thanatotic repetition-compulsions that have been blighting their lives in positive ways:

"I am a beautiful woman with a strong body," Davina led the affirmations.

"We are beautiful women with strong bodies." We echoed her uncertain voice.

"Because of my distress, I am able to understand when others are in deep pain."

"Because of our distress, we are able to understand when others are in deep pain."

I heard my voice rise above the others.

"Since I have survived this, I can survive anything." (202)

They write letters to their abusers and read them aloud. They write and burn the names of their abusers. Sophie tells us that "I felt broken at the end of the meeting, but a little closer to being free" (203)—but her optimism rings a bit hollow, as if the group's resomatization exercises were just another panacea

that could not possibly transform how she actually felt. And indeed she earlier responds to her husband's encouraging noises about how much therapy is helping that it isn't, really (185). We cannot simply begin to feel differently about ourselves and others and things and places—cannot simply resomatize reality and identity—because the somatic markers our autonomic nervous systems create to remind us of what we've learned are actually “soft-wired” into our brains. They travel along whole networks of myelinated axons and dedicated synapses that have been generated specifically to send us these learned signals. They are designed *permanently* to protect us from harm, *persistently* to remind us not to do the things that have endangered us in the past. They are so firmly entrenched in our somatic orientations to word and deed that they typically seem to us to be not somatic constructs at all but “personality,” even “human nature”: they constantly tempt us to essentialize somatic phenomenology as ontology. Groups are powerful resomatizing forces in our lives, and in many ways Sophie is in the right place, circulating somatic affirmations with other sexually traumatized women; but the group that chants “We are beautiful women with strong bodies,” much as they really want and need to believe it, is ultimately powerless against trauma.

Sophie's therapy session with Rena, the “initiated Santeria priestess” (206), in the next chapter explains why the group affirmations aren't working: she has to relive the original trauma, the rape. She has to resomatize not just her own body, but her father:

“I would rather not call him my father.”

“We will have to address him soon. When we do address him, I'll have to ask you to confront your feelings about him in some way, give him a face.”

“It's hard enough to deal with, without giving him a face.”

“Your mother never gave him a face. That's why he's a shadow. That's why he can control her. I'm not surprised she's having nightmares. This pregnancy is bringing feelings to the surface that she had never completely dealt with. You will never be able to connect with your husband until you say good-bye to your father.” (209)

The process of first saying hello to the father, to the father's face, and then goodbye to that face, is intended to resomatize the rape: to bring Sophie's violent origins to consciousness, not as an abstraction but as a physical face in a physical place, so that the traumatic feelings of pain and humiliation and loss can be refelt, somatically reprocessed.

“During your visit [to Haiti], did you go to the spot where your mother was raped?” Rena asked. “In the thick of the cane field. Did you go to the spot?”

“No, not really.”

“What does that mean?”

“I ran past it.”

“You and your mother should both go there again and see that you can walk away from it. Even if you can never face the man who is your father, there are things that you can say to the spot where it happened. I think you’ll be free once you have your confrontation. There will be no more ghosts.” (210–11)

And in a sense Sophie does do this with her mother; as the others are throwing dirt on her mother’s coffin she tears herself away and runs down to the cane field:

There were only a few men working in the cane fields. I ran through the field, attacking the cane. I took off my shoes and began to beat a cane stalk. I pounded it until it began to lean over. I pushed over the cane stalk. It snapped back, striking my shoulder. I pulled at it, yanking it from the ground. My palm was bleeding.

The cane cutters stared at me as though I was possessed. The funeral crowd was now standing between the stalks, watching me beat and pound the cane. My grandmother held back the priest as he tried to come for me.

From where she was standing, my grandmother shouted like the women from the market place, “*Ou libéré?*” Are you free?

Tante Atie echoed her cry, her voice quivering with her sobs.

“*Ou libéré!*” (233)

Sophie’s attack on the cane field is again mimetic violence, but this time directed outward, not against her own body, and against an inanimate surrogate for her rapist-father, a thing, a phallic doll that, because it fights back, can be somatized as alive, superalive, as a magical avatar of the original perpetrator of the violence. “Importantly here, however,” as Donette Francis writes, “the violence is enacted on the canefields rather than on her own physical body. In this way, she frees herself from the debilitating subjection implicit in the previous scenes. Sophie’s actions here must be understood as her willful re-remembering of devastations enacted upon the bodies of her family members” (87). But note that the cane stalk is not a *random* surrogate for the rapist-father, chosen just because it happens to spring back at her when she pushes

it over: it is part of the scene of the original rape of Sophie's mother, the scene of Sophie's violent conception, part of a place in fact that for the Caco women was somatized with terror even before the rape. Sophie's grandfather died of heatstroke while working in that same field. Every time Sophie goes near it, she is given some reminder of death and mutilation: "The hammering echoed in my head until I reached the cane fields. The men were singing about a woman who flew without her skin at night, and when she came back home, she found her skin peppered and could not put it back on. Her husband had done it to teach her a lesson. He ended up killing her" (150). Flying without your skin is called doubling. Later, while Joseph is pounding away at her in sex, Sophie doubles and imagines herself flying in the spirit to her mother: "I would visit her every night in my doubling and, from my place as a shadow on the wall, I would look after her and wake her up as soon as the nightmares started, just like I did when I was home" (200). At the cane field it seems even that flight from pain is denied her. At the cane field, doubling would get her killed.

By fighting the cane stalk, therefore, Sophie not only does somatic battle with her rapist father: she reengages the dysregulatory ideosomatic regime that keeps her in thrall. By uprooting the cane stalk Sophie resomatizes her own traumatic uprooting—from Haiti, from her own body—and is free.

1.3 THEORETICAL SPINS: METAPHORICAL MIGRANTS

When Sophie is eighteen and first getting to know her next-door neighbor in Brooklyn, the older black Creole musician from New Orleans who becomes her husband, Joseph, she tells him that she is going to college in the fall, and he asks what she is going to study. She doesn't know, but says medicine, because her mother wants her to be a doctor; but she says it with a hesitant body language that Joseph understands immediately as signaling an unvoiced tension that she feels between the positivity of family plans and the negativity of her own dreams ("I had never really dared to dream on my own" [72]). He suggests cautiously that it's important to have a passion for what you do and to stay open to experience, but Sophie counters with the ideology of family loyalty, of doing what the family decides is best:

"It is okay not to have your future on a map," he said. "That way you can flow wherever life takes you."

"That is not Haitian," I said. "That's very American."

“What is?”

“Being a wanderer. The very idea.” (72)

Sophie herself has “wandered” from Haiti to New York, but she is not a wanderer. Haitians in New York are called “boat people” by the Americans, but they are not wanderers. What prevents them from becoming wanderers is their attachment to the group, to the ideosomatic organization of lives, of selves, of individualities by families and communities. She here identifies the individualistic idealization of isolation from the group, the transformation of the inevitable disjunctures in ideosomatic identities into a new idiosomatic principle, a *freedom* from group determination, as a “very American” idea—one that is still alien to her.

In a sense what Sophie is doing here is refusing to metaphorize her experience of geographical displacement as a kind of anti-road-map road map of postcolonial identity, a blanket *carte blanche* to a romantically becoming-displaced future. This “very American” idea, though, is one that has caught the imaginations of postcolonialist and other radical theorists since the publication of *L'Anti-Oedipe* in 1972: metaphorical readings of migrancy, of nomadism, of the refugee, readings of people on the move as tropes for a fragmented postmodern postcoloniality, or for the counterhegemonic intellectual as a shadowy mystical hero hip-deep in pomo/poco fragments and fractals but supremely undaunted by them. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari write of “nomad thought,” Rosi Braidotti of “nomadic subjectivities”; Homi Bhabha writes of “migratory identities,” Carole Boyce Davies of “migratory subjectivities”; Edward Said suggests somewhat more cautiously in *Culture and Imperialism* that, “while it would be the rankest Panglossian dishonesty to say that the bravura performances of the intellectual exile and the miseries of the displaced person or refugee are the same, it is possible, I think, to regard the intellectual as first distilling then articulating the predicaments that disfigure modernity—mass deportation, imprisonment, population transfer, collective dispossession, and forced immigrations” (333)—or, more accurately, as first distilling, then *idealizing*, then metaphorizing those predicaments. Not that postcolonial idealizations of the migrant or the refugee are conventionally idealized, which is to say, *patently* Panglossian; they are often quite dark. But a romanticizing impulse can nevertheless typically be found at work in them just beneath the surface, a determination to assign utopian value to any metaphor that infects sedentary order with disorder, stasis with movement, collective conventions with iconoclasm, ideosomatic regulation with idiosomatic deregulation.

1.3.1 Schizzes and Flows: Nomad Thought

The *Anti-Oedipus* of Deleuze and Guattari precedes Said's *Orientalism* (1978), considered by many to be the founding text of postcolonial theory, by six years; their third part there, "Savages, Barbarians, Civilized Men," begins with the notion that "to code desire—and the fear, the anguish of decoded flows—is the business of the socius" (139), and rings the changes in that model through a series of epochal "machines." The first is what they call the "primitive territorial machine," in which "the great nomad hunter follows the flows, exhausts them in place, and moves on with them to another place" (148):

Such are the two characteristics of the hunter, the great paranoiac of the bush or the forest: real displacement with the flows and direct filiation with the god. It has to do with the nature of nomadic space, where the full body of the socius is as if adjacent to production; it has not yet brought production under its sway. The space of the encampment remains adjacent to that of the forest; it is constantly reproduced in the process of production, but has not yet appropriated this process. The apparent objective movement of inscription has not suppressed the real movement of nomadism. But a pure nomad does not exist; there is always and already an encampment where it is a matter of stocking—however little—and where it is a matter of inscribing and allocating, of marrying, and of feeding oneself. (148)

But the nomad is still a largely empirical figure for them here: not yet a metaphor. Three chapters later, they analyze colonization as oedipalization, or oedipalization as a kind of colonization, looking at a "cure among the Ndembu" (167) as reported by Victor Turner as only *seemingly* Oedipal, to *us*, who are "conditioned to say Oedipus every time someone speaks to us of father, mother, grandfather":

In fact, the Ndembu analysis was never Oedipal: it was directly plugged into social organization and disorganization; sexuality itself, through the women and the marriages, was just such an investment of desire; the parents played the role of stimuli in it, and not the role of group organizers (or disorganizers)—the role held by the chief and his personages. Rather than everything being reduced to the name of the father, or that of the maternal grandfather, the latter opened onto all the names of history. Instead of everything being projected onto a grotesque hiatus of castration, everything was scattered in the thousand breaks-flows of the chieftanships, the

lineages, the relations of colonization. The whole interplay of races, clans, alliances, and filiations, this entire historical and collective drift: exactly the opposite of the Oedipal analysis, when it stubbornly crushes the content of a delirium, when it stuffs it with all its might into “the symbolic void of the father.” Or rather, if it is true that the analysis doesn’t even begin as Oedipal, except to our way of seeing, doesn’t it become Oedipal nevertheless, in a certain way—and in what way? Yes, it becomes Oedipal in part, under the effect of colonization. . . . Both are true: the colonized resists oedipalization, and oedipalization tends to close around him again. (168–69)

“The thousand breaks-flows”: there is no attempt here, as there will be in *A Thousand Plateaus* eight years later, to metaphorize these complex filiational turbulences as intrinsically *nomadic*. “It would seem,” Deleuze and Guattari write in that latter book, “that a whole nomad science develops eccentrically, one that is very different from the royal or imperial sciences. Furthermore, this nomad science is continually ‘barred,’ inhibited, or banned by the demands and conditions of State science. . . . The fact is that the two kinds of science have different modes of formalization, and State science continually imposes its form of sovereignty on the inventions of nomad science” (362). “The great State mathematicians did their best to improve its status, but precisely on the condition that all the dynamic, nomadic notions—such as becoming, heterogeneity, infinitesimal, passage to the limit, continuous variation—be eliminated and civil, static, and ordinal rules be imposed upon it” (363). Nomad thought in *A Thousand Plateaus* is a hydraulic science of turbulence in flows, one that “produc[es] a movement that holds space and simultaneously affects all of its points, instead of being held by space in a local movement from one specified point to another” (363).

As Caren Kaplan notes about a parallel binary in *Thousand Plateaus*, however, major and minor language (“For the majority, insofar as it is analytically included in the abstract standard, is never anybody, is always Nobody—Ulysses—whereas the minority is the becoming of everybody, one’s potential becoming to the extent that one deviates from the model” [*Thousand* 105]), becoming-minor, like becoming-nomad, is a *choice*. While it is by definition something that *happens* to minorities, foreigners, nomads, migrants, and refugees, for the First-World artist or intellectual, living in the colonial center—Deleuze and Guattari in Paris, Sophie’s Joseph in New York—it is an alternative lifestyle. “For example,” Kaplan writes, “I would have to pay attention to whether or not it is possible for me to *choose* deterritorialization or whether deterritorialization has chosen me”:

For if I choose deterritorialization, I go into literary/linguistic exile with all my cultural baggage intact. If deterritorialization has chosen me—that is, if I have been cast out of home or language without forethought or permission, then my point of view will be more complicated. Both positions are constructed by the world system but they are not equal. Of course, Deleuze and Guattari are suggesting that we are all deterritorialized on some level in the process of language itself and that this is a point of contact between “us all.”¹⁶ Yet we have different privileges and different compensations for our positions in the field of power relations. My caution is against a form of theoretical tourism on the part of the first world critic, where the margin becomes a linguistic or critical vacation, a new poetics of the exotic. One can also read Deleuze and Guattari’s resistance to this romantic trope in their refusal to recognize a point of origin. Theirs is a poetics of travel where there is no return ticket and we all meet, therefore, *en train*. Reteritorialization without imperialism? Can language provide a model of this process? Who dares let go of their respective representations and systems of meaning, their identity politics and theoretical homes, when it is, as Kafka rightly noted, “a matter of life and death here?” (“Deterritorializations” 191)¹⁷

This is an important corrective to Deleuze and Guattari’s mystique of the nomad. There is a significant difference between the traumatized refugee, involuntarily cast out of home and community, fleeing dysregulatory violence at home into the dysregulations of long marches (hunger, physical exhaustion, loss of familiar social and physical structures), internment (forced inactivity and helplessness, rape, theft, and other predations), and assimilation into a new culture (the waning power of xenonormativity), and the oppositional intellectual sitting in his or her study at home, surrounded by familiar books and other objects, the spouse and kids in the next room, imagining and idealizing the refugee’s drift away from xenonormativity as a trope of oppositional thought.

But note that Kaplan’s corrective is itself no less problematic, no less a form of “theoretical tourism on the part of the first world critic,” no less a “poetics of the exotic.” Kaplan imagines and idealizes the refugee too, simply in a dystopian rather than utopian direction. She too sits in her study (as I do in mine), surrounded by her familiar books and other objects, imagining herself having “been cast out of home or language without forethought or permission.” She fails to note that the tidy binary she sets up between the sedentary First World intellectual (choice, stable home and language, power) and the refugee (no choice, destabilized living conditions, powerlessness) is a binary between

the Me and the Not-Me, between self and other, between “what I have” and others defined in terms of a lack of “what I have,” an abstract mathematical subtraction of my possessions (choice, stability, home, friends, work, books, power) that renders the refugee a kind of negative image of Me, an othered and peripheralized negation of sedentary intellectual life here in the center. (I too, for that matter, binarize ideosomatic regulation here at home and ideosomatic dysregulation in the refugee experience, so that refugeeness becomes a deviation from and thus theoretical limitation on my somatic norm.)

But, then, what is a scholar to do? It’s not just that we’re trapped in our own skins; we’re also trapped in our own groups, in the limitations our iterosomatic histories with certain specific groups tend to place on our knowing and saying and doing. For humanities scholars, those limitations tend to include not only a sedentary lifestyle but a heavy reliance on the printed word—we are not anthropologists, ethnologists, or sociologists expected to do fieldwork (say, in a refugee camp, like Pfister-Ammende, or in an immigrant community, like Ong); we read books and articles. Deleuze and Guattari were never nomads, or Ndembu, or actually met any member of either group: they read about them. Kaplan has never been a refugee, and most likely has never met one either: she’s read about them. We read, and construct ideosomatically regulated images of otherness, ideosomatically regulated relationships between self and other: we objectify (we do what Deleuze and Guattari call “State science,” reduce the other to inert facts, numbers, structures, and categories taken to be ideally distant and different from ourselves); we identify, we project (we do what Deleuze and Guattari and Kaplan all do in imagining themselves mobile, organize thought around an imagined affinity between self and other).

But in fact Deleuze and Guattari push hard on this subject–object binary, this conventionally regulatory notion that we can either isolate subject and object or build bridges between them, in their articulation of a radically collectivist theory of human being-in-the-world: “The social machine, in contrast, has men for its parts, even if we view them *with* their machines, and integrate them, internalize them in an institutional model at every stage of action, transmission, and motricity. Hence the social machine fashions a memory without which there would be no synergy of man and his (technical) machines” (*Anti-Oedipus* 141). Motricity is motor operations; the motricity of the social machine would include such shared motor activities as dancing, singing, cheering, applauding, marching, parading, drumming, having sex, exercising, and playing team sports. What is transmitted through shared motricity is regulatory feeling or homeostatic synergy, which is circulated not just through humans but through the human-machine (or cyborg) inter-

face as well, and, as I've been suggesting, through the group–place interface that exosomatizes places and things as “home,” “holy,” “powerful,” and so on. The “memory” that Deleuze and Guattari describe as fashioned by the social machine—what I call iterosomatics—is borrowed from Nietzsche (“A thing is branded on the memory to make it stay there; only what goes on hurting will stick” [*Genealogy* II.3]), and thus from protosomatic theory: “Cruelty,” they write, “has nothing to do with some ill-defined or natural violence that might be commissioned to explain the history of mankind; cruelty is the movement of culture that is realized in bodies and inscribed on them, belaboring them” (145). Cruelty as *the* movement of culture through bodies is a Nietzschean (anti)idealization, of course: it is really only *a* movement of culture through bodies. But it is a powerful one, one that transmits both regulatory and dysregulatory synergies, the internalization of mastery both for conformity to group norms (as in Nietzsche’s Germans) and for the viral spread of disruptive violence (as in Danticat’s Haitian Tonton Macoutes).

Their incipient somatics of language is also implicitly Nietzschean: “And if one wants to call this inscription in naked flesh ‘writing,’ then it must be said that speech in fact presupposes writing, and that it is this cruel system of inscribed signs that renders man capable of language, and gives him a memory of the spoken word” (145)—a *somatic* memory, clearly: a felt memory, felt by the individual as a part of the social machine, which circulates the synergistic flows of desire (including cruelty) through “men or their organs” (145).¹⁸

In this somatic conception of “machinic” social regulation, any stray impulse that cannot be harnessed to normative group synergy will be felt as idiosomatic, divergent, deviant, individualizing in a collectivist regime and therefore, perhaps, “nomadic” in a sedentary regime. To theorize such stray idiosomatic impulses as “nomad thought” or “nomad science” is to imagine a counterregime, a deregulatory regime that intensively and extensively minoritizes the major, reassembles the systematic, sends turbulences through dammed and locked waters.

To the extent that deregulation becomes a group norm, of course, it too circulates *regulatory* pressures that organize the thoughts and words and beliefs and actions of, say, postmodern/postcolonial thinkers. In this new “deregulatory” group, it becomes possible to be perceived as “not nomadic enough,” not deregulatory enough, too sedentary, too traditional, too regressively attached to the old ideosomatic paradigms, stable binary realities and identities, stable analytical categories and typologies. Idiosomatic deregulation is only idiosomatic and only deregulatory as a moment of perceived resistance to or deviation from ideosomatic regulation; as soon as a new group begins to form around a new normativity associated with that resistance, resistance becomes

ideosomatically regulatory, and lingering traces of the *ancien régime* in each group member's somatic response come to be perceived as the new idiosomatic deregulation. The postmodern/postcolonial thinker then feels pressure to police his or her inner and outer life for stray idiosomatic impulses toward reactionary analytical order, and weed them out before they become visible to other members of the "nomadic" group. Only the fully regulated group member will be perceived as properly nomadic.

That the historical nomad, migrant, and refugee are only allegorical figures of this counterregime, exemplary cases chosen by the sedentary deregulatory theorist to focus and organize resistance metaphorically, may make this idiosomatic deregulation seem callous or opportunistic or even exploitative to members of other groups, especially, perhaps, First World intellectual groups whose (de)regulatory strategies involve the pious objectification or subjectification of the refugee as traumatized and suffering. But then the assumption that it is possible to avoid reducing others to constructs—that anyone ever apprehends anyone else as more than a somatized construct—is just more piety.

1.3.2 Migrancy and Identity

The somatic tensions that this postmodern/postcolonial normativization of metaphorical "nomadism" or "migrancy" generates in members of the group might be explored by reading along for a page or two with Iain Chambers in the opening pages of his 1994 book *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*: "For recent apertures in critical thought instigated by certain internal displacements in the hearth of the West (feminism, deconstructionism, psychoanalysis, post-metaphysical thought)," Chambers writes, "have been increasingly augmented by the persistent question of a presence that no longer lies elsewhere: the return of the repressed, the subordinate and the forgotten in 'Third World' musics, literatures, poverties and populations as they come to occupy the economies, cities, institutions, media and leisure time of the First World" (3). This is a nice image: the stable sedentary "hearth of the West" undergoes "internal displacements" and out of those displacements generates various differential discourses that bring about a return of the repressed, so that the "Third World," initially a ghost of our own Western repressions, turns out to be very real, and to occupy "subordinate and forgotten" spaces within the "First World." This is the transformation of various idiosomatic/deregulatory pressures within the old "hearth of the West" ideosomatic regulation into a new (re-/counter-) regulatory regime based on the metaphorical return of the refugee repressed,

the normativization of the previously excluded periphery as the allegorical core, the symbolic center.

Note, though, that in Chambers's formulations this transformation is effected not by the group, somatically, but abstractly, discursively, by "differential discourses," and specifically by the act of discursive displacement, which increasingly becomes a kind of romantic hero in the passages that follow, a stand-in for the social machine that iterosomatizes (memorializes) utopian theorizations of migrancy: "The belief in the transparency of truth and the power of origins to define the finality of our passage," Chambers writes, "is dispersed by this perpetual movement of transmutation and transformation. History is harvested and collected, to be assembled, made to speak, re-membered, re-read and rewritten, and language comes alive in transit, in interpretation" (3)—harvested, collected, assembled, made to speak, and so on by differential discourse, by *discursive* transmutation and transformation. And: "For the nomadic experience of language, wandering without a fixed home, dwelling at the crossroads of the world, bearing our sense of being and difference, is no longer the expression of a unique tradition or history, even if it pretends to carry a single name. Thought wanders. It migrates, requires translation. Here reason runs the risk of opening out on to the world, of finding itself in a passage without a reassuring foundation or finality: a passage open to the changing skies of existence and terrestrial illumination" (4). Language, thought, and reason are the definitive nomads here, the wanderers, the migrants. "This inevitably means another sense of 'home,' of being in the world. It means to conceive of dwelling as a mobile habitat, as a mode of inhabiting time and space not as though they were fixed and closed structures, but as providing the critical provocation of an opening whose questioning presence reverberates in the movement of the languages that constitute our sense of identity, place and belonging. There is no one place, language or tradition that can claim this role" (4). This does not mean, I'm guessing, another material *way* of living in the world; it is just another subliminal *sense* of being in the world. It does not mean giving up our sedentary lifestyles and actually becoming displaced persons; "it means to *conceive* of dwelling as a mobile habitat," as a mode of inhabiting the *concepts* "time" and "space" as "providing the critical provocation of an opening whose questioning presence reverberates in the movement of the languages that constitute our sense of identity, place and belonging." As the keywords in that wonderfully pomo/poco clause suggest, it's all discursive: critical, provocation, opening, questioning, presence, reverberates, movement of languages, constitute, *sense* of identity, place, and belonging.

This is not (just) obfuscation on Chambers's part; in assigning agency to

abstract differential discourse rather than the somatic synergy of the social machine he is conforming his own discursive behavior to felt collective (post-structuralist) norms that privilege thought and deprive feeling, privilege verbal language and deprive body language, and above all enforce these binaries as mystifications of group pressures to conform. He is obeying the rules. He is doing what he knows (*feels*) he must do not merely in order to get published but also to win group approval.

The telling regulatory/mystificatory moment in these early pages of Chambers's book is telling. He first warns us:

The accumulated diasporas of modernity, set in train by “modernisation,” the growing global economy, and the induced, often brutally enforced, migrations of individuals and whole populations from the “peripheries” towards Euro-American metropolises and “Third World” cities, are of a magnitude and intensity that dramatically dwarf any direct comparison with the secondary and largely metaphorical journeys of intellectual thought. Analogy is risky. There is always the obvious allure of the romantic domestication and intellectual homecoming that the poetic figures of travel and exile promise. (5–6)

This is the standard cautionary note, signaling the acute *pomo/poco* awareness that human beings are suffering out there, in contradistinction to our own comfortable lives. But then Chambers adds: “Still, it is a risk to be run. For the modern migrations of thought and people are phenomena that are deeply implicated in each other’s trajectories and futures” (6). This seems to suggest that we have to go ahead and theorize migrancy anyway, whatever the risks, because refugees and other migrants are as deeply implicated in the trajectories of our theorizations of migrancy as we are in the refugee experience and other real-world forms of migrancy. Problematic as that notion is—implicated how, exactly?—the deeper problem I find in Chambers’s formulation has to do with the elided agents behind his passive verbs. Even if we allow him the questionable notion that there is some sort of mutuality between migrants and theorists of migrancy, who exactly is implicating us in the refugee experience? Who exactly is implicating refugees in *poco* theory? That seems like an impertinent question, somehow—as if there isn’t, and doesn’t need to be, any individual or group desire fueling this implication; as if “implicated” is a simple impersonal ontological claim (don’t think *depersonalized*: think the static objectivism of impersonality), a participial passive whose absented agent is the universe, the omnipresent *Ontos* itself. But isn’t that precisely the kind of question a theorist should be asking of his own formulations?

Something like this same mystifying grammar is at work in “it is a risk to be run” as well: it’s not that *I* want to run this risk, or that I feel impelled to run it by pressures from my group; the risk is simply there to be run. The pressure to run the risk comes somehow impersonally from the risk itself, from its thereness. And what is the risk that is to be run? The risk of analogy, of comparing the migrancy of poststructuralist thought with the migratory plight of millions. But why is that risky? It just is. No specific risk: just risky. Chambers’s explanation of that risk is another grammatical mystification: “There is always the obvious allure of the romantic domestication and intellectual homecoming that the poetic figures of travel and exile promise.” Figurative language *promises* things, alluring things, the allure of home, the allure of the romantic *nostos*. But why is this a risk? Given that “the allure” has an impersonal promiser and no grammatical promisee at all, it can’t be a risk to *people*; it’s just a risk. Tellingly, in fact, the only people in that quotation are the millions of refugees to whose suffering Chambers is paying passing lip service: the “migrations of individuals and whole populations.” Note that those migrations are “set in train” not by specific Western modernizers but by “modernisation”; that “induced” and “brutally enforced” are more participial passives with absent agents as well; and that it is the migrations themselves that “dwarf any direct comparison,” not the migrants or the Western intellectuals invoking the migrations in order to facilitate their direct comparisons.

A cynical translation of Chambers’s mystificatory rhetoric here into somatic terms would be that he is under ideosomatic pressure from Western poststructuralist intellectuals since Deleuze and Guattari simultaneously to romanticize language, thought, culture, and identity by analogy with forced migration—to find a way to feel “forced” by the sociopolitical and economic facts of the displacement of millions to cut his mental images of language, thought, culture, and identity loose from the sedentary habits of two millennia of stabilizing Western objectivism—and to avoid trivializing forced migration and the suffering of the refugee as mere fodder for postmodern/poststructuralist/postcolonial tropes. Because the new regulatory discourse figures the refugee as both the return of the *repressed* and the *return* of the repressed, as both something alien and distant and half-forgotten and as something present and unforgettably pressing, normative figurations of the refugee must (will inevitably) partake of both what Kaplan calls “theoretical tourism” and the stern condemnation of theoretical tourism, both the casual Western exploitation of the refugee experience as a trope for oppositional thought and pious expressions of sympathy and solidarity for refugee suffering. And if this pair of polarized pressures corresponds to the first two opposed commands of Gregory Bateson’s theorization of the double-bind—(1) romanticize/trivialize the refugee,

(2) sympathize with the refugee—the third command traps the thinker in the bind by mystifying it as no bind at all, as no one's commands, as not really happening. Hence the depersonalizing rhetoric, which situates agency in some abstract parallax realm for which Chambers need not take responsibility.

This translation would recontextualize all of Chambers's null-context claims in terms of two group regulations, both virtual but with real consequences for Chambers's professional and perhaps even emotional life: the group of Western postcolonialist intellectuals who attend conferences and write and read books and articles on migrancy, culture, and identity, and the group of actual refugees whose cultures and identities are at risk of migratory dysregulation. Both groups are virtual in the context of Chambers's writing because they are not physically present as he writes: they have to be imagined, their ideosomatic pressures (approval, disapproval) imaginatively prefelt or transfelt. The former group is made up of a loose conglomeration of people he has met at conferences and guest lecturing gigs and people he has corresponded with (especially perhaps Stuart Hall's group at the University of Birmingham, where he did his doctoral work), as well as anonymous readers of his books and articles either for presses and journals or, like me, as part of the circulation of *pomo/poco* images and ideas and tonalizations and attitudinalizations through the group. It is essential to yield to this group's pressures in order to get published, invited to deliver guest lectures, and appointed to university posts (Chambers is Professor in the History of English Culture at the Istituto Universitario Orientale in Naples); professional success in that group also circulates respect, admiration, and self-esteem. The latter group, the migrants, is unlikely ever to read Chambers's work, but they have powerful proxies in and around the former group, who frown on (express ideosomatic disapproval of) the trivialization of Third World suffering in order to score points with Western intellectuals.

But of course the cynicism of this translation is manifestly unfair, especially insofar as I seem hypocritically to be exempting myself from my own critique. We are all ideosomatically regulated to conform to our own group's norms, and the relevant group for both Chambers and me is Western intellectuals of a certain stripe, nourished on poststructuralist and postmodern discourses, interested more in language, culture, and identity than in the brute material facts of geographical displacement, economic exploitation, political persecution, internment, the distribution of foodstuffs, and the like. Because our group has of late grown increasingly interested in those brute facts, we have had to find ways to shift our thematizations of our linguistic and cultural interests so as to seem to include "the refugee experience" in them—and this book is no more exempt from that analysis than Chambers's is. And while I do

think that Chambers's depersonalizing rhetoric is mystificatory, and that he is conditioned ideosomatically to those rhetorical mystifications by the post-structuralist postcolonialists in the group, I also recognize that Chambers is struggling to problematize and personalize those mystifications, for example in passages like this one:

Does this all mean I have nothing to say, that every gesture that begins in the West is inherently imperialist, merely the latest move in the extension of my power regarding the others? It is perhaps here that the political and ethical implications of the arguments advanced in this book can be most clearly grasped as an attempt to fracture the vicious circle between speakers and the spoken for. For, in breaking into my own body of speech, opening up the gaps and listening to the silences in my own inheritance, I perhaps learn to tread lightly along the limits of where I am speaking from. I begin to comprehend that where there are limits there also exist other voices, bodies, worlds, on the other side, beyond my particular boundaries. In the pursuit of my desires across such frontiers I am paradoxically forced to face my confines, together with that excess that seeks to sustain the dialogues across them. Transported some way into this border country, I look into a potentially further space: the possibility of another place, another world, another future. (5)

What Chambers is saying here is that his book is basically about Western discourses of otherness, Western discourses of "other voices, bodies, worlds," of "the possibility of another place, another world, another future." In other words, he is writing about *us*, about *our* interactions with non-Western others—which is, I suggest, the only honest way to write anything: to admit frankly that we cannot step outside of our own skins and the groups that give those skins socioemotional and political definition.

Still, let me note the Whitmanesque grandiosity of Chambers's "I"-rhetoric there: "in breaking into my own body of speech, opening up the gaps and listening to the silences in my own inheritance, I perhaps learn to tread lightly along the limits of where I am speaking from. I begin to comprehend that where there are limits there also exist other voices," and so on. Chambers stands alone, a *kosmos*, containing not only his "own body of speech" but his "own inheritance" as well, presumably the voices of those who have shaped him, but they aren't other voices to him, they're simply his inheritance, that which has accrued to *him* over the years of his life, his listening and speaking, his reading and writing. He has a place from which he speaks: it is his alone. And in interrogating it, "opening up the gaps and listening to the silences"

in that place, that inheritance, he discovers its limits, and begins to “comprehend”—read: to “imagine”—that “other voices, bodies, worlds” exist in the interstices of those limits, in the “excess that seeks to sustain the dialogues across them.” Somewhere outside Chambers’s song of himself there are other people, but his “I” is so large a *kosmos* that he can only imagine them as an “excess” to his own peripheries and a concomitant *potential* for dialogue, an abstract *seeking to sustain* dialogue.

What he is forgetting, then, is the group construction of the self: the extent to which his “I” has been shaped collectively by the many groups to which he has belonged in his life—the extent to which other people are not just a depersonalized (past) “inheritance” or (future) “excess” but the enabling condition of his social being. In this ideosomatic conception, Chambers does not have a “body of speech” all on his own; he is a part of, and is dynamically and shiftingly shaped by, a dialogue within each of the groups to which he belongs, a dialogue charged with regulatory impulses that circulate normative pressures through him. The sum total of those dialogues and those pressures constitutes not only his “body of speech” but also his world, the world as seen and spoken through his eyes and lips, from within his skin; and it is that body, that collectivizing/individualizing body, that he needs to “break into,” open up gaps in, in the sense of entering into dialogues with “other voices, bodies, worlds,” not so much “on the other side” (since there is no one “this” side or “that” side but numerous fictitious sides constituted collectively as part of in-group/out-group policing) but instead from outside *all* the current dialogues that shape him.