
CRYSTALLINE MEMORIES: ANOTHER CONSCIOUSNESS, ANOTHER SENSIBILITY²

ABSTRACT This essay is an exploratory investigation into the aesthetics of force and sensation, and an experimental “pragmatics of becoming” in *The Beast Trilogy*, a science-fiction graphic novel trilogy of Enki Bilal, a French-Yugoslav artist. The study is, first, inclined to transgress the rigid boundaries of logics of identity in favor of attuning to the processes that unfold new and affirmative approaches to the production of subjectivity—the approaches that consist of the processual dynamics of human and non-human bodies in “coagulation” or assemblage with each other. Next, it explores the graphic novels and Enki Bilal’s art as a pure being of sensation, a body that performs, a material capture, that is, a perception-consciousness formation, in which way contributes to the aesthetics of sensation.

In making a plea for the non-unitary, multiple and complex subject of an intruder and in exploring Bilal’s capturing of the purely passive, receptive force of sensation on the aesthetic plane of composition, this essay embraces the embodied materialism, Irigaray’s sensible transcendental and Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism. In keeping with Deleuze and Guattari’s diagram of the landscape of subjectivity and the particular emphasis on their “affective forces” of materiality, and starting with the perspective informed by contemporary feminist writers, the paper engages with the notions of sensation, difference, time, memories, love, violence and otherness to suggest that his art is the machine of expression that embodies sensation, and extends it beyond, through a process that entails abandoning a dogmatic image of thought for an affective production of intruder assemblages and imperceptible becoming-x that further foster the intruder consciousness reconfigured through corporeality, and thus fabrication of a creative symbiosis of reason and the imagination premised on sensation.

Keywords: sensation, affective forces of materiality, imperceptible becoming-x, corporeality, becoming

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To be too acutely conscious is a disease, a real, honest-to-goodness disease.

Dostoevsky

My brain hums with scraps of poetry and madness.

Virginia Woolf

A swirling cacophony of sensation is spilling over my bleeding body, mixing with fluids of my affective existence as I encounter the aesthetic threads and intrusive touches of Enki Bilal's science-fiction art. To feel the horror of silence in true Conradian style and to dive into this dangerous, fragile, yet delicious journey through the deserts of desire and pleasures is to set oneself free on the horizon of imperceptible becoming. Free, which is nothing but a feeling. This is the art of Enki Bilal, a French-Yugoslav artist, a graphic novelist and a film director. The spaces of Bilal's deterritorializations bring a story of creation and destruction, the two inseparable ones. They are about the art and love of (and for) an intruder and tracing her processual flight away from doxa and towards the creation of something new, the real that is yet to come. To encounter those spaces is also to investigate into the aesthetics of force and of sensation, and an experimental "pragmatics of becoming."³ How is one to write about piercing a soul in the dead zone full of life? How is one to paint the real to come, difference and molecular song of love in becoming? How is one to imagine that the past does not determine the future? These are all questions that persist within Bilal's art of sensation, and in what follows I can only pay homage to one of his empowering and sensual answers: *The Beast Trilogy* and crystalline memories.

Unfolding in the prairie of becoming, singular yet multiple, Bilal's capturing of affective, imperceptible forces, releasing of becoming-x on the plane of composition gives us a slice of politics that cuts and extends beyond the frame of the already perceived, already thought, yet a slice of politics that does not exist "outside the concrete, socio-political assemblages that incarnate it" (Deleuze and Guattari 1986, 48). Deleuze and Guattari remark: "there is no social system that does not leak in all directions, even if it makes its segments

3 Pragmatics as beyond dichotomous thinking and in terms of relational thinking: a process of thinking contingently and relationally.

increasingly rigid in order to seal the lines of flight” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 204). The processes of becoming are our processes, our connecting of particles in everyday life, but it is also our responsibility to relate the particles within a single field without fusing them into an amorphous one. As “desubjectified affects” (Kennedy 2000, 94) that “in-motion-ly” escape the notion of a fixed and unitary subject, as well as any firm subjectivity, becomings are openings of the landscapes for/of non-isomorphic subjects that are “unimaginable from the vantage point of the cyclopean, self-satiated eye of the master subject” (Haraway 1991, 192). To capture a unity in multiplicity is in itself a process that involves attuning to desubjectified affects.

Visual art and language in *The Beast Trilogy: The Dormant Beast, December 32nd* and *Rendezvous in Paris* touches on monsters, deviants, memories, art, fragments, and madness while exploring the paradoxical relation between creation and destruction and thinking through differing points of view. It is possible to draw some of Bilal’s graphic novels toward the “personal” drama, intimate interests in particular subjects, especially the 1992-1995 war in the Balkans (former Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sarajevo), but to solely remain in the “personal drama” would not give an adequate account of his experimental, socio-political and cultural investigation, and particularly his harnessing the forces that actively dismantle forms and doxas, that is, the forces of an oedipal desire that is always in continuum. Impregnated with violence, death, art and brutality, *The Beast Trilogy* narratives unfold becoming-x through sketching and mapping processes of metamorphosis whereby processes get territorialized, stratified to show how these territorializations are in turn susceptible to the deterritorializing flows that transform them again. In other words, Bilal paints and draws violence of sensation, which deterritorializes art and language forms through the intensively penetrating destratification of everything that is molar (territories and monolithic entities) in order to map these processes of deterritorializations and reterritorializations open to further transformations. In this gesture of showing those assemblages have both elements of territorialization and their deterritorializing flows, Bilal is extracting fragments of love and destruction from the virtual chaos of life, that is, capturing the pure forces of life/art/war on the plane of composition. What we experience, feel, are these invisible forces



Figure 1: *Scream* (Bilal 2003, 43)

that life and art and life-art detect, flush out and make visible through spilled red of blood, black of “scream” (Figure 1). What is given is a piece of chaos in art, art within chaos, and chaos in oneself—giving rise to life, to sensation, to meaning. To compose precepts and affects entails approaching this *outside* of perceptions and affections, Irigaray’s sensual transcendental. The shape of delirium tattooed on the canvas, preserved as a block of sensations. To create this *monument* is to create a universe, or as Lorraine writes, “the embodiment of an aesthetic possibility drawn from virtual chaos” (Lorraine 1999, 210). In creating the embodiments of sensation, Bilal rethinks the trajectories of love and ways of *how* we experience existence, creation, destruction, violence, *how* we feel, although at a proto-subjective level, within what Kennedy calls “the molecular structures of the autopoietic realms of our being,” our living with the world (Kennedy 2000, 147). An intruder who moves along the periphery of the zone interdite becoming minoritarian (n-1) embodies pure beings of sensation. Pink Panther. *La Linea*.

MEMORIES OF SARAJEVO: DR(E)AMA IN A CRYSTAL IMAGE

Before Being there is politics.

Félix Guattari

In *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature?* Deleuze and Guattari write that the writer, who finds herself in the margins of her fragile community, has further possibility to express another possible community and to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility (Deleuze and Guattari 1986, 17). Walking (on/with) the margins, exploring the peripheries in the non-Oedipal sci-fi landscapes, Bilal utters *political*. Everything is political, yet non-representational. The language of *The Dormant Beast* is political. It becomes multilayered, complex, and vibrating in the attempt to express only the skeleton of sense. The language of sense is traversed by a line of escape “in order to liberate a living and expressive material that speaks for itself and has no need of being put into a form” (ibid., 21). It is to approach Cixous’s *Third Body* and *L’écriture féminine* with the touch of the musicality of “the silence of the blank spaces” (Hoffer 2006, 51). French is dropped for Bosnian, Serbian maybe, even Croatian, while English is intermingling in-between (in-space, in-time), “cracking in” as no/thing but a memory-image (Figure 2). There is a movement from the major language to the minor languages, or to a collective multiplicity, even when this multiplicity is not yet given. No longer arid, this *language* starts vibrating with a new intensity. (Nano-tech-) Flies are occupying the space of political skin-sense. Vibrating words give rise to the unconscious *I* in a palpitating motion. In displacing existing space-time structures and scissor-cutting subjectivity frameworks, Bilal paints rhythmical silence that brutally amalgamates his panels. Within the panels, another world opens; the one in which meanings are found in *connections* with living and nonliving bodies in existential landscapes; the one in which “the unique” is subtracted “from the multiplicity to be constituted,” always written at n-1 (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 6). In the following, I utilize the memory-time lenses to continue exploring molecular fracturing of forms, bodies in a collision with other bodies in the graphic novel, and the graphic novel itself as an *event* of movement and becoming. I am also interested in exploring how these “becomings” connect to powerful molar politics at work



Figure 2: *SarajevoDreamA* (Bilal 2002, 58)

within the novel. In this midst of language torn of sense, there are images—as amalgamations of matter, image and movement, which form sequences of intensive states, and there is a political frame that is effectuated through the elements of art and sensation. After all, what is there not to be intensive in and about Sarajevo, Paris, Syria, Ferguson, today? Jingle bells and iron fences.

Narratively, *The Dormant Beast* follows Nike Hatzfeld, an orphan and an extraordinary *memory-machine* born in war-torn Sarajevo. Within the plot, which swirls around his memories, and particularly the memories of his birth, Nike is on the search for Amir and Leyla – other two children born in Sarajevo’s hospital during the war. Nike is yet an/other intruder figure in Bilal’s art, and “a memory expert with no interest in the past” (Bilal 2002, 7). Situated in the posthuman world of “dividuals”⁴, and masses, samples, data . . . “banks”, Nike’s environment is infused with mind-controlling nanotechnology, trickster-shaped flies, miniature animals, androids, and a mad doctor named Optus Warhole (War-hole; rat-rupa!), a figure and an

4 Cf. Deleuze 1992, 5.

embodiment of madness, art(-ist) and another deterritorialization of language and *art*. In this no-too-far-away future, memory and knowledge are under scrutiny, and a violent attack from the Obscurantis Order, the *Double O*, which is the fundamentalist assemblage of “the three principal monotheistic sectors” (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) in its active becoming the world’s most fearsome terrorist organization. Yet again, there is always an invisible force pushing the limits, experimenting, creating events that open realms for imagining future differently. These events no longer relate to a unified instance, to an autonomous subjectivity, to an expression of already known, that is, to common belief, doxa. In all its peculiarity, this experiment with existential territories in *The Dormant Beast* is about *both/and* connectedness; again “the collective assemblage of enunciation” (Deleuze and Guattari 1986, 18). Bilal is open to everything going on in history today, and he paints and writes an agent that is the author and the character/figural/figuration, the dreamer and the one dreamed of. This *both/and* is the position that never settles into one of the poles of an either/or, a pole that would bring about the destruction of the assemblage. Nike is a refugee in becoming, a war survivor, a cyborg, and always becoming-other of senses. His voyage and investigation are about the present folded back on the past and the future dipping into the past; it is about mapping the fragments of time, memory, and sensation—the process that is done so violently, intensely, across and beyond the molar and into the molecular.

Sarajevo dr(e)am/a is an echo of an unidentified voice. The vertigo of the time we inhabit. This voice or perhaps the deliriousness of brutal silence wrapped into an indecipherable sound is grafted in the body of a great crystal image—composed of many crystal images in the Memento style movement-image of the graphic novel. Each memory-moment in Nike’s remembering of the first 18 days of his life unfolds one of the present yet future events. Throughout the novel, with each broken memory-moment (memory-cracks), Nike is simultaneously looking *forward* to the not-yet and yet-to-come, and back to the past that set the conditions for it. Parallel, there are always already other becomings and events. Day 18, day 17 . . . day 1 brings us to an end to open the beginning, the birth in Sarajevo’s hospital. Both forward and back. Both/and. Reading it with Deleuze, the forking bifurcation point of each

crystal-image is charged with possibilities and at the same time caught in the momentum of time's flow/s, a "point of indiscernibility" between the *actual* of perception and the virtual of recollection.

"Our actual existence, . . . whilst it is unrolled in time, duplicates itself along with a virtual existence. . . . Every moment of our life presents the two aspects, it is actual and virtual, perception on the one side and recollection on the other" (Deleuze 1989, 79).

Each crystal image in *The Dormant Beast* "makes visible" the "hidden ground of time, that is, its differentiation" or "splitting" into "two flows, that of presents which pass and that of pasts which are preserved" (ibid., 78–83, 98). Yet, each crystal is "always in the process of formation, expansion, which makes everything it touches crystallize, and to which its seeds give a capacity for indefinite growth" (ibid., 89). The Dormant Beast crystals are interlaced, or rather "cracked" and "filled" with deep and penetrating pain. One such crystal we find in the Figure 3 when Nike undergoes a doctor's examination after a microchip is installed in his brain and when he receives a drug helmet to prevent the pain. The drug helmet functions to open up a childhood memory of the day 13; the day when the weeping sound of an unknown man cracked the silence in Sarajevo's hospital. The *heaviness* in the encounter with the "memory" helmet that is "preserving the before in the after" (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 212) initiates Nike's contemplation of death and destruction in Sarajevo in 1993 (Figure 2). Molecular red. Memory helmet here is nothing but "the operation of contracting trillions of vibrations onto a receptive surface" (Deleuze, 1988, 74). Sensation. Crystallizing in touching, in this contact between the image and the object, the helmet and the head: the paradoxical drug-head assemblage functions to heal while producing Nike's penetrating pain. Memory helmet gives us melding of mind and body in becoming-other of senses where desire "directly invests the perception and the perceived" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 282). Love and pain connect intimately. Following Bergson, this virtual image is pure recollection; reading with Deleuze, this virtual image is never actualized, but it corresponds to a particular actual image; it exists in time, outside of consciousness and it has nothing to do with dream-images or recollection-images. It is about placing yourself in a memory



Figure 3: *The Dormant Beast* (Bilal 2002, 35)

bank of “purely virtual images which have been constantly preserved through time” (Deleuze 1989, 80). A leap into the past; or Nike is placing himself in the virtual (Deleuze, 1988, 57). Only after this “jump” is made, Deleuze argues, recollection-image is actualized, embodied (ibid., 63), and this is when Nike’s penetrating pain, as the psychological contraction (translation) in recollection of the past, starts unfolding.

The Dormant Beast carries little crystalline seeds, crystal component elements that give birth to the echo of childhood memory; a sound crystal. Some seeds are historical; a history crystal in the process of decomposition. History in *The Dormant Beast* stands on its own and Bilal dedicates astounding images to make its presence. Elliptical and out-of-field in the future, history

of Sarajevo, war, and the Balkans is decomposed—no history is seen; all we know that there was *a* war and that there *is* pure violence that knows no history or memory. In-between peripheral unfolding. “Across death, it was like a ‘beginning of world’” (Deleuze, 1989, 90). The Cellist of Sarajevo is playing Albinoni’s *Adagio*. The visual becomes heard, felt; the felt connection between eyes and ears is felt in the sense of Deleuze’s notion of *haptic*, that is when “sight discovers in itself a ‘function’ of touching that belongs to it alone, and which is independent of its optical function” (Deleuze, 2004b, 155). For Deleuze, *hapticity* is simultaneously optic and tactile, the felt connection between “eye and hand;” or in *The Dormant Beast* between eye and ear. Haptic is each time when “there is no longer strict subordination in one direction or another” (ibid.). And, certainly, there is no subordination of that kind in *The Dormant Beast*.

Parallel to the “splitting” of time, which is political in itself (the ontological unconscious) and extends the (molar) *political* in connecting Nike to the immediacy of acting against the brutality of Double O forces, there is yet another “splitting”—bifurcation of any stable notion of subjectivity. Orphan is an intruder *already* deterritorializing the Oedipal; it begins his journey as an intruder. *The Dormant Beast*, thus, also begins with *otherness* and engages with the autopoietic realms of life. We *already* became posthuman. Bilal goes yet further and deeper with this bifurcation and dismantling of firm boundaries, lines, margins when he installs it between the *originals* and the *copies*, posthu(wo)men and posthu(wo)men in the landscape of *future present*. The original, writes Bilal, is defeated (Bilal 2002, 59). Which one is Nike? Which one is Pamela? Which one is an android? Which one is his “double”? Her “double”? Both/and are productions of difference, becoming-other, both/and composed of carbon-based and silicon-based micro-constituents. How to tell the difference between these modes of becoming-other? Braidotti writes that the “difference engine” of advanced capitalism generates paths of transformations that are “neither straight nor predictable” (Braidotti, 2002, 171). In his drawing and writing, Bilal is zigzagging through these transformations sending out a signal; a political warning that there is a challenge in learning how to disengage difference or otherness from the dialectics of Sameness. Responding to this challenge, he gives some *shape*. *In*

the midst of chaos there was shape. Nike's (Nikes') becoming-other/(s) is never a straight line. The *real* Nike is yet another assemblage. The colonel Cobbea, a voice, an implant in Nike's head, is intensifying (t)his difference and the process of imperceptible metamorphosis; the voice that is partly steering the mission against the fierce forces of Double O. and Optus Warhole. This peripheral navigation cuts across any potentially residual (stable) personality traits. It is a navigation that depersonalizes, deterritorializes the molar bringing forth the molecular of becoming, the multiplicity in becoming that is *a* multiplicity in kind. Yet, showing territorializations susceptible to deterritorializing flows.

Nike's body is a field (BwO) for the production of the processes of desire that is political. On this plane of consistency, the plane of immanence, Nike's body is a complex assemblage of fluid and mutable elements, never stable, always ready to de- and re-compose/constitute through becoming. Becoming-cyborg, becoming-fly, becoming-Cobbea is about processes of immanence, a mapping of a processual experience of the affect as opposed to the subject. Nike functions as a figural in terms of bringing together a set of movements, colors, tones, resonances across the canvas, the panels. These sets, motion, speed, and flows of intensity operate outside subjectivity through affect, through the material of "the corporeal logic and conceptual logic," body and brain, and through the plane of consistency (immanence). Bains' subjectless subjectivities. Nike is about the unthought felt as intensity, as becoming in a molecular connection (Kennedy 2000, 99). He is about developing a conception of sensibility open to that which defies doxa perception, and thus about promoting both a transformation in perspective about our experiences and transformation in those experiences. In the opening to this transforming process, Nike is a reminder that it is only in challenging these boundaries between mind and body that we open them onto multiple connections with the world.

32 DECEMBER VIRTUAL FORCES: RESIDUAL SUBJECT IN ART

All identities are only simulated, produced as an optical 'effect' by the more profound game of difference and repetition.

Deleuze

Art takes a bit of chaos in a frame in order to form a composed chaos that becomes sensory, or from which it extracts a chaotic sensation as variety.

Deleuze and Guattari

In pursuing connections that defy common sense and permitting libidinal investments in an extended range of an oedipal identification, Bilal's mapping of "a residual subject of the machine" (Deleuze and Guattari 1983, 21) continues through *32 December* and *Rendezvous in Paris* in a vertigo style spin. The residual subject, Lorraine argues, "can attach various labels from the social field of language to the states through which he passes as an embodied subject" (Lorraine 1999, 144). In the light of Nietzschean philosophy, a residual subject is she that flows from point to point experiencing and living in the fullness of a movement that knows no lack. In her experimental, rhizomatic connectivity, she submits herself to the forces of encounters. Following Irigaray, this subject appropriates the creativity of the other in order to ensure a form of subjectivity that is continually open to creative interaction with another. When intruder puts his personal identity at risk, she does so in order to experience the instabilities of life that are always in the process of becoming-other. It is only through sensible encounters and continuous transformation brought on by these contacts with what is other that she continues to reform and refigure in direct confrontation with her own limits (ibid., 102). In *32 December*, there are multiple nonhuman encounters that map confrontation with gaps in psychic coherence and bodily integrity through which, as Lorraine argues, is possible "to engage in the creative labor of harmonizing corporeal and conceptual logics" (ibid.). Irigaray's sensible transcendental is about this encounter with the other; the encounter crucial for our existence because it is through this process that we become engendered by two. It is a step toward moving beyond the history of exclusion. It is a step toward breaking the iron fence and embracing whoever is behind it, so together we can invent new possibilities for existence, new existential territories, from within the life itself.

In keeping with Deleuze and Guattari's conceptual plan and aesthetics of sensation, *32 December* is another event of processual material-force relationship and vibrating multiplicity that confronts a virtual chaos; the chaos that eludes conventional forms of perception and affection, deterritorialize perceptions and affections by pursuing movements of sensory becomings. While exploring the paradoxical *destruction-creation* assemblage, and continuing to experiment with the difference that entails a radical shift in one's experience of time and space, *32 December* also begins with humanity that has already perished. As from Butler's pen, "there is a certain departure from the human that takes place in order to start the process of remaking the human" (Butler 2004, 3–4). Bilal is not only interested in remaking *the human*, but in exploring and experimenting with forces, affects, that run and shape the processes of posthu(wo)man we have already become in the post-industrial techno-landscape we inhabit. He is interested in art that "leaves the domain of representational in order to become 'experience', transcendental empiricism or science of sensible" (Deleuze 2004a, 56), and the world of becoming within which we create our existential territories. In other words, Bilal is interested in the dynamics of forces-in-movement and movements that arise in the space of *in-between* in art and life . . . so we can "replace humanity with something better" (Bilal 2000, 154). In this sense, apart from (thematically and on the plane of organization) following Nike's voyage and telling a story about the posthuman artist and her capacity for "harmonizing corporeal and conceptual logics" (Lorraine 1999, 7), *32 December* continues to paint and capture the imperceptible forces that produce movements affecting the mind outside of all representation, and thinks the relationship between forces of destruction and creation. This thinking/creating fosters a path that ultimately leads to a transformation of consciousness and discovery of new lands and people yet to come.

In the futuristic landscape of *32 December*, I am interested in exploring Bilal's speculative cartography of the artist Holeraw. I argue that Holeraw as an intruder *par excellence* is the/an other who confronts gaps in psychic coherence and bodily integrity and completely sinks into the realm of the sensible. With his posthuman *modus operandi*, and his becomings that are referred to the horizon of (in)initely extended sensible continuity, Holeraw is about art that "wants to create the finite that restores the infinite" (Deleuze and Guattari

1994, 197). Yet, Bilal's cartography, as I have been arguing, also extends beyond the panels and connects the molar with the molecularity of becoming through immanence and an aesthetic of sensation, putting everything and everybody, including myself, into becoming-imperceptible and into the world of sensation. In this sense, I see Holeraw as a figural, a mirror-image that represents a movement of world and bodies in life and art, and as "a veritable *theater* of metamorphoses and permutations" (Deleuze 2004a, 56). In composing of an artistic *body* that is composing an artistic body, Bilal is creating a mysterious (double) synthesis in a posthuman world where anything can happen and already is. Holeraw's sensuous body of percepts and affects is always open for further transformations and creative intensities. His body is an autonomous composition of sensation itself. Each component of this creative *machinic assemblage* (of self) is a depersonalized movement of destruction, murder, and hallucinatory perception of death. Bilal opens each with hues of amalgamated red-oxygen on the stark white surface making everything faceless. In-between of becoming-artist, becoming-minor, each explores self-transformations that exceed the bare life and "bare requirements of existence" (Grosz 2008, 16). This "brutal," violent figure of *32 December* is the sensible form itself; the sensible unfolding my own becoming. As Deleuze writes: "At one and the same time I *become* in the sensation and something *happens* through the sensation, one through the other, one in the other" (Deleuze 2004b, 35). But, as a residual subject, a *figuration*, as I will shortly illustrate, Holeraw is also an embodiment of an intruder co-creator who explores attitude and perception toward life and art as those that are attentively aware of the painful, delusional, disorienting aspects of life and art, and yet affirmatively creative. The cartographic experimentation that Bilal attends to in *32 December*, and after all, most of his machine of expression, is an act of precluding recognition of what is truly *other* to one's creative power. It is an affirmation of becoming-active, full participation in art and life with the acceptance of any outcome. Holeraw's *art* is about deeply felt resonances of becoming, which is beyond the sense of self-other dichotomy, and within the intensities of a processuality. His art and art, after all, is about co-existing with the other and creating with the other.

In order to fully grasp *how* Bilal engages with *sensible* of (and) a residual subject in *32 December* let me briefly turn to and expand on Deleuze's notion of forces,

which also provide a useful way of distinguishing different types of memory. In “Postscript on the Societies of Control” Deleuze writes that every organization or system has two types of forces that confront one another: the “liberating forces” and the “enslaving forces” (Deleuze 1992, 2). The confrontation of these two types of forces within a system points to the inconsistencies (produced by the colliding forces) and consequently, the dynamics that mark possibilities for different arrangements of that, or any other, system/entity. Following Deleuze, forces are liberated from the form, they are bare matter, and stratified relations tend to capture and shape the forces, which further persist and insist. Now after introducing two different types of forces, it is important to make a distinction between the forces that enslave and respond to the reactive consciousness, and those that are liberating and respond to the intruder posthuman consciousness of a residual subject. In *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Deleuze writes that a reactive (enslaving) force, which separates the active (liberating) forces from what they can do and is separated from what it can do, produces effects without affecting itself in the process (Deleuze 1983, 42–43). Active, Deleuze argues, is plastic and dominating, goes to its limits and affirms its difference (ibid., 42). These forces are dominating, and they impose forms on other forces (Ibid.), but they also, Ronald Bogue writes, “change form themselves; they are forces of metamorphosis and transformation which shape other forces and simultaneously becoming other themselves” (Bogue 1989, 32). The power of transformation, Deleuze writes, is the primary definition of activity (Deleuze 1983, 42). The intruder or posthuman consciousness of Jill Bioskop has no traces of the past, which enables her to travel light and affirms the process of metamorphosis she is undergoing. Human consciousness, which according to Deleuze is the expression of certain reactive forces of the subject to the active forces that dominate (ibid., 41), tends to cling to the formations that are already in the past. Active forces mutate too quickly to come to the conscious awareness, so in order to produce perceptible representations of them, active forces need to be separated from their true nature and power (ibid.). This creates a tendency for the human to burden her life with essences of “unquestionable value” (Grosz 1995, 47). The consciousness of an intruder is experimental and responds actively to life, and this is so because her receptiveness to present stimuli is not a response/reaction to traces in the past but “becomes a reaction to the present excitation or to the direct image of the object” (Deleuze 1983, 112–113). In other

words, intruder's responses to the world and her becoming do not rely on past perceptions and conceptions, which often constrain the human from escaping a "repetition of the past" (Lorraine 1999, 154), but are active, creatively productive and affirmative. Following Nietzsche and Deleuze, this is possible because: first, the reactive forces constitute a second system that enables consciousness to be receptive to fresh excitations (*ibid.*, 152), and second, the active force or what Nietzsche calls "faculty of forgetting" separates the two systems of reactive forces preventing the past traces from invading consciousness (Deleuze 1983, 113). Elsewhere I discussed the faculty of forgetting in more depth, and here I just want to note that it is the force that enables one to deterritorialize from the habitual patterns and come freely into contact with new and fresh excitations of the present. What follows then this line of thought, and what concerns us in the instance of Holeraw is that the memory of an intruder cannot come in the form of oedipalized "snapshots" as such memory recollects only images that confirm the already-known, already-perceived, but as a block of becoming, which

"is not the reactive contemplation of a self that one no longer is, but the release of molecular becomings from habitual configurations of corporeal and conceptual patterning which leads to revitalized action in the present" (Lorraine 1999, 175).

The imperceptible, active forces of the intruder consciousness continually mutate in a self-transforming process, producing effects that additionally influence further transformation. By affirming, saying yes, to such a memory, an intruder affirms "the memory of the future" that allows subjects to pledge themselves to shared projects of cultural becoming (*ibid.*, 153). And, to affirm the memory of the future, an intruder has to attend to a constant participation in it, and "bring that experience into living contact with a full range of connections in the present that will lead to further transformations beyond whatever happened in the past" (*ibid.*, 175). This way, we may argue that an intruder has "given life a new and extremely direct power of laughter" (Deleuze 2004b, 62).

The above detour helps us situate Holeraw as the sensible residual subject capable of a (re) production of diversity based on the principle of repetition of difference. I already noted that Holeraw is an artist, but he is also a killing

machine, *l'entrager*, intruder, the threshold, and the borderline. He functions as force, affect, movement-image, as a veritable figural across the panels. Holeraw is the posthuman image of locomotion that captures a theater of violence in which we experience the perpetual vertigo of active forces that manifest all of which they are capable without holding anything back. Following Nietzsche, with Holeraw's blocks of becoming we encounter art as a "stimulant of the will to power" (Nietzsche quoted in Deleuze 1983, 102). Art is what excites the affectivity in becoming-artist. The "red on white canvas"

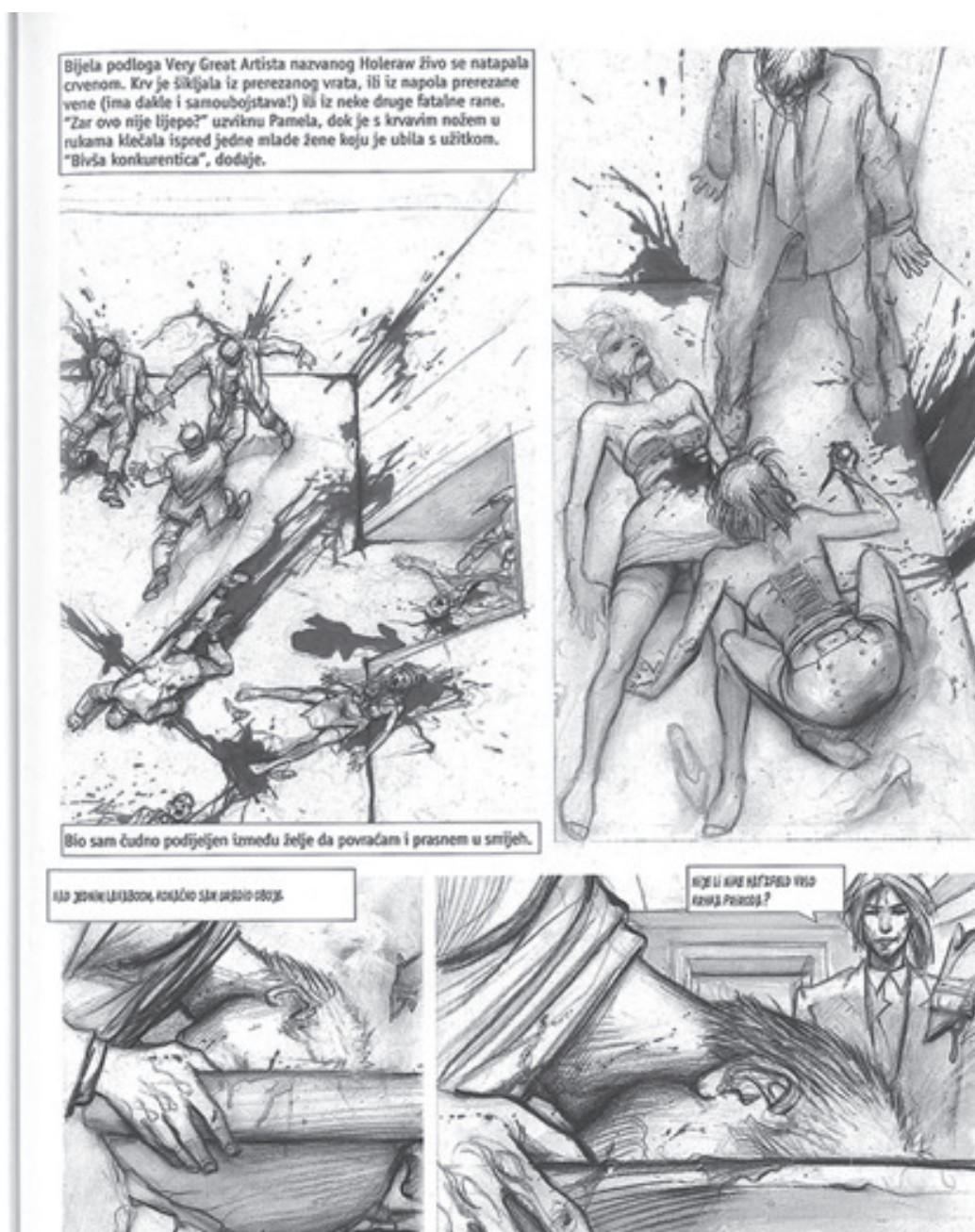


Figure 4: *The red on white canvas* (Bilal 2003, 27)

sequence (Figure 4) or multi-panel passage unfolds both becoming-artist and becoming-minor through an act of repetition of affects that open onto the panels, and the unlimited body of an artist . . . affecting, in return, the cosmos in multiple ways. Where is desire, there is power. Desire is power (Deleuze and Guattari 1986, 56). Desire in this sequence is captured within an unfinished assemblage of artist's body, *madman*—still in stitches, fragmented, and released through the panels and all the bodies, assemblages, on the stark white surface, the molecular horizon, “expressing the singularity of percepts which contract the landscape to produce an internal coherence” (Zagala 2002, 33). The capturing and releasing of desire across assemblages are two coexistent movements, “each caught up in the other” (Deleuze and Guattari 1986, 60), opening a field of immanence that functions as the dismantling of social currents, and cultural and political forces of the late capitalist “difference machine.” Such expression, Deleuze and Guattari write, “must break forms, encourage raptures and new sproutings” (*ibid.*, 28).

Holeraw's *becoming-artist* on Bilal's canvas encapsulates both art and an embodied (political) subject as multiple phenomena composed of a plurality of complex forces. The intensity of the *becoming-artist* sequence is translated into the very concept of force, a virtual dimension of force in self-forming activity. Following Deleuze and Guattari, Bilal embodies the force of creation, the vital process of creation that entails the actualization of virtual. In the sequence of becoming an artist, Holeraw is constantly altering his body, which is pointing to a dynamic process of individuation involving active bodily forces, but within this process, there is also always something immanent. For Deleuze and Guattari, as previously noted, this immanent is the virtual bounding through the process of contracting, self-preserving sensation (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 212; Bouge 2003, 183–184). Holeraw is yet another embodied virtual event, ‘haeccity,’ “always still to come and has always already happened” (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 158): Bilal's embodiment of the immanent within the active forces of bodies in formation. To put it differently, it is the embodiment of a passive force of the virtual. The connections through which Holeraw *formation* grows thus presuppose a passive synthesis, “a retentive contraction of a past into present,” a contraction that is *sensation* itself (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 212). Deleuze and Guattari write:

“Contraction is not an action but a pure passion, a contemplation that preserves the before in the after. Sensation, then, is on a plane that is different from mechanisms, dynamisms, and finalities: is on a plane of composition where sensation is formed by contracting that which composes it, and by composing itself with other sensations that contract it in turn. Sensation is pure contemplation, for it is through contemplation that one contracts, contemplating oneself to the extent that one contemplates the elements from which one originates. Contemplating is creating, the mystery of passive creation, sensation. Sensation fills out the plane of composition and is filled with itself by filling itself with what it contemplates: it is ‘enjoyment’ and ‘self-enjoyment’. It is a subject, or rather an inject” (ibid.).

Thus, every self-forming form is also a sensing form, because in its self-forming activity presupposes sensation, and every sensation is a brain achievement (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 211–212; Bains 2002, 108). The brain (soul or force) that says *I-feel*; “I is an other” (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 211). Each constituent, a virtual murder (of the reactive?), each a piece of art, in Holeraw’s process of creating a *mosaic* is an embodiment of a passive force of the virtual, but it is also a disposal of “snapshot memories” of too-perceptible, too-much-perceptible. Much/ness is eliminated; becoming-imperceptible is unfolded in a faceless image of no/thing/ness. The whiteness of the landscape, of the canvas on the panels, enables the connection of pure intensities in this very paradoxical performance of Holeraw’s creation of himself as *Monument*; again “the ‘I-feel’ of the brain as art” (ibid.). “Grasping of real unity of feeling,” as Bains writes (Bains 2002, 103). The performance of *becoming artist* itself, this composing (of oneself as an artist and subject in life) through destructing, eliminating “all-too-human”, requires transformations at the corporeal level of bodily habit “in response to the novelty of the present as well as transformations at the conceptual level of the psychic self in creative reappropriation of one’s past” (Lorraine 1999, 175–176). Mobile, flexible, schizophrenic and nomadic in nature, Holeraw’s posthuman consciousness of an intruder artist responds actively to such transformations as it is already premised upon active and fluid configurations of bodies. Crafted within webs of power from which it extracts energy, forces, the consciousness of an intruder is adept of not only deforming and denaturing doxa and the traditional categories but of proposing that metamorphosis is needed and possible.

Following Grosz, art is capable of destruction and deformation that destroys territories and enables them to revert to the chaos from which they were wrenched (Grosz 2008, 19). This is what Hole-raw is doing. Digging the *hole*, extracting the *raw* material/bodies and composing his body/mind with their particles, *remains of the day*. Frankenstein. In this unfolding, Holeraw is revealing the creative points of destabilization in both conventional subjectivity and artistic experience and throwing a plane of composition over (virtual) chaos. He populates his canvas with singularities, raw materials, dead nonhuman bodies in rhizomatic connecting, and abounds the canvas with multiplicities of possible actions, monologs, and improvisations that can spring up creatively further onto the canvas, and beyond it. Having no fear of his residual subjectless subjectivity of already posthuman, he eagerly attends to playing the game of life and creatively affirms the experimental in life and art, this life that is forever in transformation. Art, for Holeraw, is about “invent[ing] new forms of life rather than separating life from what it can do” (Deleuze quoted in Lorraine 1999, 149). When he faces his canvas and erases all of his faces, he creates an immanent field of desire: releases non-lacking desire to actively pursue the intensities of corporeal and conceptual flow. At the same time, in becoming-minor, a residual subject, Holeraw dissolves all possible identities, and through the synthetic moment of bringing together multiple becomings attends to creating a model of subjectivity capable of affirming the unity of multiplicity, a *unitas multiplex*, and the being of becoming. Warhole affirms life, multiple becomings in one’s life, nonhuman and human becomings, and thoughts of which none is representational. All the (nameless, selfless) fragments that make up this new model are affirmed at once fostering creative sensual response to a future that never repeats. “If repetition is possible,” argues Deleuze, “it is due to miracle rather than the law” (Deleuze 2004a, 38).

Deleuze argues that this affirming ethics is inherently dynamic (Deleuze 1983, 39–72). It entails, as we have seen in Holeraw’s case, the self-destruction of that which is reactive (cf. *ibid.*, 70), thus reactive consciousness, or bits and pieces of the “parasitical” (Nietzsche quoted in Deleuze 1983, 175) remains of “recognizable” on Holeraw’s canvas, which is a gesture of becoming-active (of forces) according to cosmic rhythms, and the affirmation of becoming-active, becoming-minor, becoming-artist. Further following Deleuze, to affirm

becoming-active is to affirm a being of becoming (Deleuze 1983, 70–71). The mode of double affirmation that both Nietzsche and Deleuze explore, and Grosz following Deleuze, entails the affirmation of chance, which is to embrace any improvisation out of the multiplicity of possible ones, and the affirmation of outcome, with which every return brings a newly modified (transmuted) value. Holeraw's formation is inherently open to changes, altered with every encounter, and its difference affirmed regardless of the outcome. Since difference, for Deleuze, is affirmation itself, the affirmation of outcome becomes an affirmation of difference and multiplicity (Deleuze 2004a, 52–55). To say that Holeraw affirms the chance and the outcome of his "veritable *theater* of metamorphosis" is to say that he participates in a (re) production of diversity based on the principle of repetition of difference. Only through this mode of double affirmation, Deleuze argues, can we escape the repetition of the past and the nihilism that has prevailed in human history (Deleuze 1983, 174). Only by affirming life, intruder's artwork in becoming, which continuously repeats the production of difference and multiplicity, shall we be able to move beyond the representational theater of reactive forces and, consequently, the economy of sameness. Always in the game of n-1.

The violence of sensation and life in becoming, all the imperceptible encounters: beyond representational, beyond cliché and into the whispering winds composing a third body, the body of an intruder, in a lasting and fluctuating way. These are the sounds, affective tones of Enki Bilal's song: the intruder song that can only be sensed, the composing of the affectual assemblages. As I have tried to show in Bilal's *The Beast Trilogy*, this involves touching the bodily, corporeal and conceptual of the perceivable and touching of the sensual, Irigaray's sensual transcendental, in our fleshly encounters – that which thwarts the comfortable routine patterns of life. In this short investigation into one segment of Bilal's aesthetics of force and sensation, and his experimental science-fiction "pragmatics of becoming," I argued that this art machine, its vibrational song of molecules, and its embodiment of molecular becomings, becoming-other of the senses, through composing of affective productions and (a-conceptual) events on the plane of immanence function precisely to dissolve any notions of "comfortably recognizable and comprehensible" (Bogue 2003, 175). I also want to acknowledge that it requires

“a blind trust in the movement of deterritorialization at work” (Guattari quoted in Zepke 2005, 157). It is at the dawn of the world, in-between night and day, in the misty outskirts of intrusion zones, where Bilal’s post-apocalyptic story of creation and destruction composes existential harmonies and rhythms through the process of deterritorializing, always opening itself to attract and compose new sensations, blocks of sensations. In unfolding his molecular song, molecular becoming-beast, Bilal, an intruder artist, is simply unfolding a sensation, an ongoing expression of life that restores our constitutive infinity by creating the world anew, introducing new possibilities, possibilities beyond the cryogenic pod of orthodoxies of reason, knowledge, and truth.

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Kristalna sećanja: druga svest, druga senzibilnost

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Ovaj esej predstavlja istraživački osvrt na estetiku moći i osećanja, kao i uvid u eksperimentalnu pragmatiku *postajanja* u naučno-fantastičnoj grafičkoj noveli *Trilogija zveri*, francusko-jugoslovenskog umetnika Enkija Bilala. Rad je prvenstveno usmeren ka prevazilaženju (transgresiji) rigidnih granica logike identiteta, sa idejom osluškivanja procesa koji otvaraju nove i afirmativne poglede i uvide u produkciju subjektiviteta – uvide koji uključuju procesualne dinamike ljudskih i ne-ljudskih tela u spajanju jednih s drugima. Analizom grafičkih novela, rad se bavi umetnošću Enkija Bilala kao čistim bićem osećanja (*being of sensation*), dakle telom koje je performans, materijalni obuhvat, tačnije percepcijsko-svesna formacija. Time rad teži da doprinese polju estetike osećanja.

U zagovaranju ne-unitarnog, mnoštvenog i kompleksnog subjekta kao što je tzv. uljez ili intruder, i u otkrivanju Bilalovog zapisa čiste pasivne, receptivne sile osećanja na estetičkom polju same kompozicije, ovaj esej polazi od prihvatanja otelovljenog i utelovljenog materijalizma, senzibilne transcendencije Lis Irigare i Delezovog transcendentnog empirizma. Oslanjajući se na mapu Delezovog i Gatarijevog polja subjektiviteta, sa posebnim naglaskom na njihove „afektivne sile” materijalnosti, i polazeći iz perspektive savremene feminističke misli, ovaj rad se bavi pojmovima osećanja, razlike, vremena, sećanja, nasilja i drugosti, kako bi istakao da je Bilalova umetnost tzv. *ekspresivna mašina* koja otelovljava i utelovljava osećaj, i otvara ga prema spoljašnjosti kroz proces koji obuhvata prekid sa dogmativnom slikom misli, kako bi se otvorio prostor za afektivnu produkciju spajanja telesnog i netelesnog, afektivnu proizvodnju mnoštvenosti i asemblaža uljeza, i neprimetno postajanje-x koje dalje podstiče svest otpadnika ili uljeza, drugoga – svest koja je sada rekonstruisana kroz korporealitet, a samim tim daje i osnovu stvaranju kreativne simbioze razloga i mašte zasnovane na osećanju.

Ključne reči: osećanje, afektivne sile materijalnosti, neprimetno postajanje-x, utelovljenje, korporealnost, postajanje