



Desire, Nomadism, and Becoming in Carson McCullers' *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*

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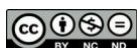
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ABSTRACT

Carson McCullers' *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* has been characterized so far as depicting characters who are trapped in American south and display isolation and alienation. Presumably, her characters include tomboys, false revolutionaries, and outcasts with eccentric worldviews. However, a deep-down analysis of the characters in the novel along with a tinge of skepticism toward McCullers' previous criticism makes it clear that her characters in this novel can be examined through new perspectives. Through a new reading of McCullers' characters, it is argued in this article that McCullers' characters are more or less sites of vitalities as well as new possibilities and this can be made through Gilles Deleuze's philosophy and his concepts including becoming, desire, and nomadism. This new reading to unravel some overlooked aspects of McCullers' first novel and entails that instead of considering McCullers' characters including, Mick Kelly, Jake Blount, and Dr. Copeland as social outcasts, we may deem them as nomads who offer new possibilities of desire to bring some change to their societies and finally set foot on the road toward becoming.

Keywords: Carson McCullers, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, Gilles Deleuze, Desire, Becoming.

1. Introduction

Carson McCullers' *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* seems on the surface to be a pessimistic work which expresses the loneliness and hardships of life in a southern town. As Stacey Reece's remarks: "Alienation, failure to communicate, poverty, and an atmosphere of despair permeate the work." (2). One may supposedly gain this impression when finding in the novel issues, including suicide, escape, retirement to the country, or one's ending as a simple clerk. To be honest however, our characters are looking for some meaning throughout their lives which seem difficult to reach. Homosexual love, struggle for adolescence, and efforts for fulfilling imaginary missions all make it visible that these characters are in pursuit of perfection. It could be argued that while all of the foregoing themes appear to be accurate on the surface, looking deep down we may see the possibility of considering *Heart* as a locale of transformation, growth, and resistance.

The actions of the characters in McCullers' novel display their strivings toward a better life and it is evident that they avoid any adherence to any pre-given formula. In a sense, they attempt to shatter the organizations, especially those of American south and transgress its limits. However, one must be wary not to equate this with indecency as we might attribute it to the demeanor of Mick Kelly. Mick is a girl of about twelve whom "at first glance she was like a very young boy" and urges Biff Brannon that she does not belong to the Girl Scouts. (14) This is also the case with Jake Blount whose both appearance and behavior are quite extrinsic and against the grain.

The fact that no one knows where he is from or that “he was always changing” (13) shows that he does not belong to any territory or organization. Furthermore, we can also mention Dr. Benedict Mady Copeland whose ideals toward his black folks are eccentric and opposed by his community. He is a vegetarian who wears prestigious clothes and a person who “spoke so carefully that each syllable seemed to be filtered through his sullen, heavy lips.” (62) Consequently, these characters are constantly in conflict with their peers regarding their lifestyle and thinking and this makes them stand out in their societies. The present article will attempt to offer a new interpretation of McCullers’ novel with the contention that it can seemingly be explained through Gilles Deleuze’s vitalistic views which regard existence as “energy-based,” and life as “active and changing, not static and eternal” (Lechte 364). With regard to this, one may find the characters of this novel and their perspective of existence as moving positively instead of remaining in a specific position. We may look at them in a new way and get to see how they are dealing with energies, desires, and possibilities.

2. Literature Review

The criticisms of *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* (*Heart* hereafter) range from pessimistic to hopeful. Nils Alfort, examines how the conventional norms form the identity and the early sexual experience of Mick Kelly in *Heart* through Judith Butler’s theory of gender performativity. Alfort argues that after her first sexual experience, though moving toward passivity, the conventional gender norms make Mick accepted as an equal among her peers. Mick reinforces Butler’s idea of performance when she finds comfort in music. However, Alfort concludes that at the end of the novel, social conformity takes its toll on Mick and even music cannot be a solace to her. Drawing on Jean-Paul Sartre’s theory of the look, Clarie Lenviel argues how the characters in *Heart* objectify themselves in the hand of the deaf-mute Singer and how he mirrors their own personalities. Lenviel concludes that the suicide of Singer at the end shatters the mirror which has contributed to the narcissism of those around him, leaving them alienated and frustrated with their own existential angst.

Attempting to diagnose the incongruity of south and its manifestation in McCullers’ first novel, Emily C. Page argues that *Heart* laments the social injustice and prejudices of south and celebrates individuality and diverse community. Page believes that these characters are marked as grotesque or freak as a result of exclusion and misunderstanding. Another critic, Wilson Kaiser, notes how the characters in *Heart* deal with fascism through the quotidian experiences. Kaiser argues that while these characters, especially Blount and Copeland, express their commitment to different social visions, they create a site replete with fears, hopes, and desires which are the results of fascism itself. Sarah Gleeson-White can also be considered as one of the influential McCullers’ critics who has examined the overlooked aspects of McCullers’ oeuvre. Attributing the adjective “unfinished” to McCullers’ works, Gleeson-White looks at McCullers’ major works, including *Heart*, through the lenses of Bakhtin’s ideas of grotesque. Generally, she believes that the very fluctuation of Mick Kelly between boyishness and girlishness engage her readers with the contemporary issues of sexuality and gender and bear witness to McCullers’ depiction of emancipation and possibility.

3. Methodology

The philosophy of Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) gives us a new outlook toward life which is more or less under the influence of philosophers such as Hume, Spinoza, Leibniz, Nietzsche and Bergson. (Colebrook 5) Each of the aforementioned philosophers have their own shares within Deleuzian realm. By reading Spinoza’s idea of Monism or his equation of God and Nature or Nietzsche’s idea of Will to Power, Deleuze finds that life is a scene in which different forces bide, interact, and clash, resulting in a new relation between individual and his milieu. As Robert Hurley remarks, in Deleuzian realm, “the environment is not just a reservoir of information whose circuits await mapping, but also a field of forces whose actions await experiencing.” (*Preface to Spinoza* ii) Therefore, the concept of experience becomes significant here. During our lives, we encounter and interact with various things which directly or indirectly influence us. This mode of thought asks us can we think the way wolf, a wasp or a mountain or anything we encounter does? Can we feel their motivations and think with them and become them? And finally, can we feel the whole world and become everything? Our understanding of this way of thinking requires our getting to know what Deleuze terms as “becoming.”

Becoming is basically the main concept within Deleuzian philosophy and as Holland claims, its roots can be found in his suggestion that why should we always give the priority to being and identity instead of becoming and difference? (2) The world of identity and being requires labeling which promote representing since every signifier is the representation of a specific signified. Clearly, this way of thinking equates white skin with rationality and black skin with savageness and brutality. Conversely, Deleuze’s maverick thought reconsiders this one-sided thought by elaborating on matters of becoming and difference. By means of this, Deleuze believes that every event is a “unique instant of production in a continual flow of changes evident in the cosmos.” (Stagoll 22) Thus, things in the universe are constantly changing and flowing and they should not be considered as stable and essential. Deleuzian philosophy states that an individual is never stable, but a constantly changing “assemblage of forces” which constantly affects

others and is affected in different milieus. It should be also mentioned that creation of this assemblage of forces is a result of influences which are issued by the language, organizations, laws, etc.

As we see, Deleuze highlights the way things connect rather than what their essences are. Since he focuses upon the ways things connect, he does not see them as substances, but as assemblages or "multiplicities.". Based on Lorraine, Deleuze classifies these lines in three categories including "molar lines," "molecular lines" and "flight lines." Molar lines are rigid lines which uphold the ideology of State, mostly create segments, organizations and hierarchies while they are marked by "reterritorialization." Conversely, the molecular supple lines tend to get away from the stream and majority, but they are still segmented. The lines of flight tend to rupture the two previous lines, "deterritorialize" any segments, and move toward becoming. (145) It should also be mentioned that the molecular lines are a compromise between the reterritorialization of molar lines and deterritorialization of the lines of flight (*A Thousand Plateaus* 205). Moreover, Holland believes that becomings are always movements from majoritarian molar lines towards minoritarian molecular lines and finally absolute deterritorialization. (107) These movements which get away from what oppresses toward what is oppressed have their starting point in becoming-woman. Becoming-woman, becoming-animal, becoming-black or becoming-child do not refer to any act of imitation or pretension. Instead, they refer to getting away from their history, their past and future and whatever which limits them in order to produce new vital possibilities (*Dialogues* 5). Women themselves are not excluded from the process of becoming-woman and Deleuze believes that even women should shatter the internalized ideology of binary machines and become women, who aside from having no past and future, have no memory and finally become "indiscernible." (*Plateaus* 275)

One of the notable classifications related to discussions of majority and minority discussed by Deleuze in *Plateaus* is related to the ideas of "pack" and "mass." Though Deleuze borrows this classification from Elias Canetti's *Crowds and Power* (1963), he largely elaborates on it. As it is explained, "The pack, even on its own turf, is constituted by a line of flight or of deterritorialization that is a component part of it, and to which it accredits a high positive value, whereas masses only integrate these lines in order to segment them, obstruct them, ascribe them a negative sign." (33) Deleuze also asserts, "Canetti notes that in a pack each member is alone even in the company of others (for example, wolves on the hunt); each takes care of himself at the same time as participating in the band." (33) Hence, the members in a pack are never stable and they constantly change their positions from center to periphery and vice versa. This is quite different from the mass whose members act as subjects who try to identify through a hierarchy with the group and the leader. While caring about themselves, the members of a pack stand hand in hand in contrast to the members of a mass who stand based on their positions and the power they hold. To be clear, there is no hierarchy in a pack while a mass requires divisions which range from lowest to the center.

Along with the ideas of pack and mass, Deleuze introduces the notion of "nomadism" which is of great significance within his philosophy. This idea does not necessarily refer to an act of physical movement as Deleuze proposes in *Dialogues*: "To make thought a nomadic power is not necessarily to move, but it is to shake the model of the state apparatus, the idol or image which weighs down thought, the monster squatting on it." (32) As Deleuze elaborates, there are some nomad groups which constantly move their habitat and never surrender to any foreign principles. In addition, De Bolle in her book *Deleuze and Psychoanalysis* (2010) explains: "During his travels, the nomad has to create his identity over and over again. The nomad breaks out of the given orders, the institutional settings, and so forth. He carries his roots on his back. He has no origin, no native country." (154). Keeping this in our minds, "nomadology" can also take the form of nomadic thought which along with liberating us from fixed judgements or view-points, "allows thought to wander, to move beyond any recognized ground or home, to create new territories." (*Understanding Deleuze* xxviii) As understood from the notes above, nomads are bare of any particularities which constrain them to any specific territory, time, or space. Deleuze affirms this in *Dialogues* that nomads "are always in the middle. The steppe always grows from the middle, it is between the great forests and the great empires. The steppe, the grass and the nomads are the same thing. The nomads have neither past nor future, they have only becomings." (31)

Another notable notion discussed by Deleuze is the idea of "affect." As Deleuze explains in *Dialogues*, whatever is done in the universe is an encounter which calls for the presence of bodies. (7) Affect is the result of "change, or variation that occurs when bodies collide or come into contact." (Colman 11) Thus what we see, feel, hear, or respond to in different situations is called affect as well. All of these encounters, actions, and reactions can be considered as creation of new events as Deleuze remarks: "affects are becomings." (*Plateaus* 256) Consequently, in a Deleuzian analysis of a literary work, we may not care about what a body consists of; what matters is the actions and the encounters they create. The actions of our characters and specially their utterances constantly create events, reactions, multiplicities, and lines which are significant to our analysis. The way our characters are attracted to each other or repelled, their motivations, mindsets and responses are all influenced by affects and they should be examined in order to discover how the lines within a multiplicity clash to create territories and structures or deterritorialize toward open-ended horizons.

So close to Deleuzian idea of affect is his discussion of “desire” which gives us a novel and iconoclastic view built upon the tenets of psychoanalysis. The first thing which crosses our mind when we hear of desire is that it shows one’s excessive lustfulness or lechery. However, Deleuzian definition of desire is quite different and in a way positive and constructive. Deleuzian desire is more or less understood in its opposition to that of psychoanalysis. Here it should be mentioned that Deleuze does not reject psychoanalysis altogether. In a chapter titled “Dead Psychoanalysis” in *Dialogues*, he objects to psychoanalytic view of unconscious and desire as lack and perverseness. For him, the psychoanalytic interpretation seems not to solve any problem “And when we move from interpretation to significance, from the search for the signified to the great discovery of the signifier, the situation does not seem to have changed much.” (77) He also adds that we should reverse the Freudian formula that our unconscious influences our behaviors; instead, it is our experiences that create our unconscious: “The unconscious is a substance to be manufactured, to get flowing a social and political space to be conquered.” (78) With Deleuzian statement which urges us “to produce the unconscious, and with it new statements, different desires,” (*Plateaus* 18) we find that production of unconscious which is a flowing social force results in production of desire and this production of desire brings about new flows of energy.

Alison Ross notes that “for Deleuze desire is defined as a process of experimentation on a plane of immanence... Whereas in psychoanalytic theory, desire is located within the individual as an impotent force.” (63) Ross’s argument makes it clear that desire is not only a matter of experience, but also a force which creates connections among bodies. In Deleuzian sense, everything in the world is a manifestation of desire; all of our actions, reactions, behaviors, mindsets and identities are results of the flow of desires. Therefore, whatever we do is the production of flows of desire which are new and positive. Related to the desire felt among human beings, Colebrook postulates that “one produces one’s sexuality through desire.” (xv) Therefore, we produce our sexuality based on what we desire toward ourselves and others and in this way, we invent and become new. Regardless of their gender, one may desire to become an animal, a woman, a cat or anything else, “For the two sexes imply a multiplicity of molecular combinations bringing into play not only the man in the woman and the woman in the man, but the relation of each to the animal, the plant, etc.: a thousand tiny sexes.” (*Plateaus* 213). Accordingly, we can argue that our actions, be they proper or perverse, are desiring for continuation and production. In order to practice free desire and to become “indiscernible,” one should not think in terms of subjectivity, for “by the time we have come to think in terms of ‘persons,’ desire has already been repressed.” (Colebrook 103). That being so, one can create lines of flight through not being subject to any pre-given system which binds their free flow of desire, and eventually set foot on the way toward deterritorialization and becoming.

4. Discussion

4.1. Mick Kelly as a Creature of Pre-personal Desire

Deleuze’s idea of desire is absolutely important and helpful in our understanding of the relationships between the characters in *Heart*. As discussed above, it is not unconscious which forms our experiences and actions; instead in Deleuzian sense, we form our unconscious based on our relationships and experiences. As Deleuze says in *Dialogues*, whatever which is experienced is called desire. (95) Consequently, we understand that it is the flows of desire which affects the relations of our characters in *Heart*. The relationship of Mick and her boyfriend, Harry Minowitz is quite appealing because as we see, Harry and Mick have a long-lived friendship which consists of great lines of desire, but as they grow older, they experience new forms of desire. On the way to go swimming in a pool in the country, they start to deal with new forms of desires which are productions of affects. McCullers has deftly depicted the calls of authority which resides within Mick and Harry. As they stop by to drink beer, still some prohibiting forces within urge them that “it’s a sin for anybody under twenty to drink beer;” (231) but in fact their act is a new experience in order to reach higher intensities and progress toward more experiences.

Affects are created when two bodies come into contact; that is why Mick and Harry feel embarrassed and tense when they discuss swimming together or when she sees the half-naked Harry in the pool. What McCullers has depicted here might seem a simple scene in which a boy and a girl are involved in a childish attraction, but looking deep down at the underlying forces, one finds it a great locale of de- and re-territorialization. We see the shame and dare altogether when they undress back-to-back and suddenly the reterritorializing forces start to warn them “we better get dressed.” (234) However, when they sit to eat, their connectedness comes to a climax and as we see, “they both turned at the same time.” (235) Soon after the orgasmic desire which they experience, we see that some forces return to take their toll on them as Harry starts:

“It was all my fault. Adultery is a terrible sin any way you look at it. And you were two years younger than me and just a kid.

No, I wasn’t. I wasn’t any kid. But now I wish I was, though.

Listen here. If you think we ought to we can get married— secretly or any other way.” (235-236)

It is the voice of the authority which makes Harry believe that the only solution remained is the marriage, but Mick by saying “I wasn’t any kid” proves herself as much stronger on the road of becoming as she is used to. This proves that although she is a little uneasy, Mick considers this experience as a movement toward birth and growth:

"she was a grown person now, whether she wanted to be or not." (236). In the same vein, Harry who is heavily under the influence of his parents and the transcendental systems, decides to escape home. This escape however, is not considered a positive one for by fleeing Harry is actually cutting the line of flight and leaving his responsibilities in order to get rid of the pressure his mother puts on him. It should be mentioned that leaving the responsibilities is not considered as creation of flight lines as Message explains that one, creating of lines of flight "exists within stratified fields of organization at the same time as it offers an alternative mode of being or experience." (33) Another factor which leads to Mick's uneasiness and Harry's panic might be their experience of "orgasmic pleasure" which in Holland's view "is one of the major obstacles to maintaining high-intensity desire." (97) This does not mean that the means for persecuting desire is totally obstructed by reaching orgasmic pleasure; rather it means that by reaching this mode, the intensities and desires on higher levels which were experienced previously are forgotten and fall into reterritorialization.

Desire felt between Harry and Mick and what happens on the picnic in Colebrook's view is regarded as "pre-personal" desire. (102). With this regard, what brings Harry and Mick close to one another is not seeking personal satisfaction, but it could be argued that they are trying to subvert the pre-made rules which tend to oppress free floating of desire. What they do is breaking any personality and subjectivity toward creation of instantaneous acts. With their attraction and finally their intercourse, they are creating lines of flight, and thus through their desire they are seeking new productions and finally experience moments of becoming.

4.2. *Alone Members in the Company of Others*

As it is evident, McCullers has provided her readers with five major characters who are distinct from each other; the deaf-mute Singer, the revolutionary Blount, the tomboy Mick, and the black Copeland. Accordingly, it is clear that these characters represent a variety of social, racial, and sexual communities. As we see, each one of them has their multiplicity of desires which moves around in search for more fertility. These characters mostly find the deaf-mute Singer as a resort for solace and confidence. Proehl proposes: "They communicate with Singer in a way that *they* can understand, but they seem unconcerned about whether he understands them." (151) At times they also need Singer to confirm them and then they follow their own motives. It is significant that each of these characters revolving around Singer tries to express themselves without any sense of identification with the center. All of these characters have accepted Singer as a leader who listens and solely confirms their concerns and they move around him in order to pursue their own wishes.

Here Deleuze's discussion of "pack" and "mass" which he borrows from Elias Canetti becomes important. What brings the characters of *Heart* close to the traits of a pack is that "each takes care of himself at the same time as participating in the band." (*Plateaus* p 33) This is exactly the case with Blount who cares about his life while he periodically meets Singer, or Mick' following of her own interests while trying to find consolation and support with Singer. Copeland also cares about the health of his patients and asks Singer to aid him with his deaf patients. What matters for us is that the relationship of the members in Singer's pack is not that of hierarchical and the members are in an equal and reciprocal relationship, even if they are poles apart in their beliefs. In a letter to Antonopoulos, Singer describes his four friends this way: "They all have something they love more than eating or sleeping or wine or friendly company." (183) This implies that each member of the pack is minding their own desires and benefits, and at the same time playing a part in their pack which is a site for transportation of ideas.

Deleuze explains further that in a pack "each member is alone even in the company of others," (*Plateaus* 33) and this is absolutely in line with our characters' social interactions. The statements regarding Singer, "in all the crowd he seemed the only one alone," (179) or Mick, "She could be in the middle of a house full of people and still feel like she was locked up by herself" (139) all bear witness to this fact. We can extend McCullers' description of Singer and Antonopoulos as "very different" (3) to other characters whose ideals are unique and not accepted by anyone else. These characters are located within a pack and follow their own ideals while they live together and have sympathies for one another. With this view, one may find the title of the novel so ingeniously chosen by McCullers since she has offered some characters who might be apparently alone, but not lonely hunters in their milieu. The very word hunter can also designate the adroitness on the part of these characters in order to move skillfully on the road of becoming and creation of lines of flight.

4.3. *To Become the Production of a Thousand Sexes*

As for the issue of sexuality and gender, *Heart* is replete with creative explorations and innovations presented by McCullers. One may find Mick as the most notable character whose ideals regarding gender is of significance and can be a surrogate for McCullers herself. Mick's behavior cannot fit into the structure and beliefs of a southern American town. Her response to her sister's denigration, "It makes me sick to see you in those silly boy's clothes," is "I'd rather be a boy any day." (35) As Braidotti has argued "The fact that the female body can change shape so drastically is troublesome in the eyes of the logocentric economy." (80) Accordingly, Mick's appearance is constantly questioned and criticized in her milieu. The trouble which Braidotti talks about can be materialized in the form of the criticism of Mick's sister or the mysterious attraction which Biff feels when he watches her.

McCullers has created an exceptionally ambivalent character whose identity is highly difficult to be specified. The narrator's statement that, "by nature all people are of both sexes," (112) shows that McCullers' view is to a great length in line with Deleuze's ideas regarding gender and identity. Deleuze believes that sexuality is "the production of a thousand sexes, which are so many uncontrollable becomings." (*Plateaus* 278) Accordingly, what we witness in our characters regarding their sexuality shows that they possess a great number of views on sexuality. Now we may focus on Mick Kelly who in Binad's view: "is many things; contradiction is one of her most striking features." Besides, she states that "Mick skirts the worlds of childhood and adulthood but belongs to neither." (18) We see that by wearing boyish clothes, or being a prestigious lady in her party, or going on a date with Harry, Mick tries to be ambivalent and ambiguous. Hence, Gleeson-White's statement seems sensible that Mick has reached the status of becoming "revolutionary." (12) Mick is in fact resisting the view which requires an entering-adolescence girl to act properly and based on etiquette. Moreover, it can be said that Mick is creating an open road of creativity throughout her life and setting the ground for becoming-indiscernible.

One may find Mick's exposure at the end of the novel as pessimistic or non-productive. As we see, due to financial problems of her family, the tomboy Mick is obliged to work as a Woolworth clerk. Now against the flow of her desires, she has to submit to rules and codes set by the society. As it was explained above, life itself is a locale of de- and re-territorializations and Mick is no exception. Deleuze posits that because we are afraid of our security, "we cling to, the binary machines that give us a well-defined status, the resonances we enter into, the system of over-coding that dominates us." (*Plateaus* 277) Now Mick has to surrender to a series of pre-defined orders and be a "regular lady" (270) in order to survive. The capitalist society obliges her to observe the rules and codes at work by wearing "green silk dress and green hat and high-heeled pumps with silk stocking" with "rouge and lipstick." (273) With Mick's getting hired as a Woolworth clerk, in fact the possibilities for the free movements of desire are obstructed and reterritorialized. Now Mick is not allowed to maintain her natural gesture and posture at the store and as they urge her to "keep on your toes and smile." (299) This indicates how capitalism ascribes codes on bodies through signification and labeling and limits its subjects to its own territory while obstructing the process of becoming.

4.4. To Carry Your Roots on Your Back: The Case of Jake Blount

Throughout her oeuvre, Carson McCullers has created characters whose ideals are not subject to one specific norm or ideology. In this sense, she has created "nomadic subjects" as Braidotti titled her 1994 book. The examples regarding her major fiction includes Mick Kelly, Dr. Copeland and Jake Blount in *Heart*, Cousin Lymon and Marvin Macy in *Ballad of the Sad Café* (1951) and Frankie Addams in *Member of the Wedding* (1946). As we know, these characters are replete with worldviews which run against the grain and are considered mysterious. Nomad brings to our minds the concepts of physical movement as well as a mode of thought which is unfixed. As for Blount, he deals with both physical movement and a fluid thought. Aside from his very peculiar appearance, Blount is a person who almost has no control over what he talks about and no one understands what he says. His overconsumption and the fact that "he went from one thing to another without any reason behind it" (14) compels Biff to speak the word of authority: "you're not fit to walk around amongst people." (16) Here, we find Biff as being quite different from Blount in that he is deeply merged in the ideology which binds people to limited structures; structures which categorizes them in various groups ranging from well-behaved to uncivilized. The following dialogue is significant regarding the difference between these two characters and their mindsets:

"He was like a person who had been somewhere that other people are not likely to go or had done something that others are not apt to do.

Biff cocked his head to one side and said, 'Where are you from?'

"Nowhere."

Now, you have to be born somewhere. North Carolina — Tennessee Alabama—some place." (17)

The dialogue mentioned above brings to our mind De Bolle's statement that a nomad "carries his roots on his back. He has no origin, no native country." (8) As we see, Blount denies belonging to any place of origin while Biff's mindset requires that one must at least belong to some place. The fact that "the man [Blount] was a puzzle. He was always changing," (194) shows the internal conflict which he deals with and also the fact that he has tendencies which are far greater and more important than his origin or his welfare, rendering him not to care about where he lives, where he goes or how he feels. What matters for him is to find some supporters for his mission and he does his best in order to awaken the people around him.

Samuel Bluefarb allocates a whole chapter to Jake Blount and his final escape in his book *The Escape Motif in American Literature* (1973) and his argument aids us to better understand Blount's motives. Bluefarb describes Blount as a person with "little or no affiliations with a community, even the radical community where he would presumably feel more at home." (116) This shows that Blount draws on various ways of thinking instead of accepting them completely. Blount is a real nomad for whom it does not matter where he goes and as Bluefarb says: "Jake is a habitual escaper." (120) It could be inferred from Deleuzian perspectives that nomadism acquires one to constantly get away from their conditions as he insists that: "if human beings have a destiny, it is rather to escape the face, to dismantle

the face and facializations." (*Plateaus* 171) This is exactly the case with Blount whose itinerancy, drunkenness and restlessness totally disrupt his internal beliefs and it is in this way that others cannot make out his inner purposes.

Another characteristic of Blount's which makes him a mysterious and unpredictable character is his visions and hallucinations. As Bluefarb posits, "If Blount is not psychotic, he verges on it." (119) Likewise, De Bolle considers "incoherence of speech, incoherence of acting, the predominance of an interior life in which one is dedicated to the production of fantasies, an insane activity that is more or less explicit and that is chaotic and unstructured" (19) as the common characteristics of psychosis. Blount almost possesses all of these traits; his sprouting habit, his delusions about "me and Jesus would sit across the table," (122) or his paranoia: "always he thought someone was laughing at him" (243) all prove that he comes close to schizophrenia or at least has its symptoms. Similar to the case of the Mariner in Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Blount believes that he has a mission to awaken people. Likewise, his statement: "I got the Gospel in me... I want to tell it to somebody," (56) or "This is the truth! You bastards don't know anything. You don't know. You don't know!" (244) do not prove that Blount is a schizophrenic who has no sense of reality, but we can say that to some extent he is bordering on psychosis.

It is so interesting to see that through his nomadic thought, movement and behavior, Blount draws upon matters of psychosis and consequently becomes difficult to discern; that is why the narrator describes him as: "There were many things about the fellow that seemed contrary." (12) What Blount is and what he does is highly praised by Deleuze whom in De Bolle's words believes that "delusions and hallucinations are a product of a desiring machine." (21) Thus, what Blount does is a result of his nomadic desire which is spontaneous, not pre-shaped. Now we may object to Bluefarb's reading that "Blount seems to remain what he was before he escapes." (121) The fact is that along with caring about his daily activities, Blount is producing a new form of nomadic desire which is not bound to common sense. What he does is a process of creation, production, and vitality and with this, not only is he "put[ting] a system to flight," (*Dialogues* 36) but also he is leaving behind traces which can influence others. We should also bear in mind that Blount's escape, like that of George Jackson's "I may be running, but I'm looking for a gun as I go" (*Plateaus* 204) might seem as not bringing the nomad Blount any regenerations, but in fact it is a movement which entails spiritual generation as well as production of lines of flight.

4.5. *To Become Music, Nigger, and Black*

Many of the characters in McCullers' novel like Blount, Mick, or Dr. Copeland set foot on threshold of becoming which is the result of their destroying the already-made values. These becomings range from becoming-music, to becoming everybody, becoming-nigger, becoming black. Starting with Mick we see that she is a tremendous site for appearance of potentials and energies. One of the crucial potentialities of Mick's is her affiliation with music about which she is extremely passionate. She always has in her mind the dream of buying a piano and a violin and "all the time there was some kind of piano piece or other music going on in the back of her mind." (29) Music plays an important role in her life and endows her with hope. The following scene shows how Mick is affected by listening to Beethoven:

The outside of her was suddenly froze and only that first part of the music was hot inside her heart. She could not even hear what sounded after, but she sat there waiting and froze, with her fists tight... This music was her—the real plain her. She could not listen good enough to hear it all. The music boiled inside her. (100)

The music grows in Mick and while listening to music, she becomes an entity other than herself in the sense that she becomes an event and finally becomes music. For Mick, music is a kind of intensity which takes her far away from the biases of everyday concerns and her financial problems which reminds us of what Deleuze says: "Music has always sent out lines of flight, like so many transformational multiplicities." (*Plateaus* 11)

Another character who, aside from being nomad, is in the process of becoming is Blount whose nomadic actions put him within a whirlwind of constant change and becoming new. When Blount takes Dr. Copeland to Biff's restaurant, one of the people objects that he is not allowed to bring a nigger to a place where white men drink. At this warning, Blount's response is significant: "I'm part nigger myself." Then he continues: "And I'm Dutch and Turkish and Japanese and American." (18) This shows that not only is Blount sharing intensities with niggers in becoming-nigger, but he is shattering the territories and borders. He is able to feel the world from the perspective of a nigger, a Dutch, a Turkish, a Japanese or an American. Blount's becoming-nigger is not an imitation of nigger behavior or culture, but feeling them regardless of their past and future and the false ideology about them. In this way Blount has been successful at what Deleuze counts in his *Essays Critical and Clinical* (1998) as "inventing a people who are missing." (4)

One of the most important discussions regarding literature which has been proposed by Deleuze is related to the concept of "majoritarian and minoritarian" which he discusses in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (1986) with collaboration of Felix Guattari (1930-1992). It is understood from their arguments that aside from its major usage, each language has some minor elements which, to some extent, depend on the major usage. The minor usage has the ability to create more variations by using the major language. It is in this way that minor usage creates lines of flight and fluctuation. (Conley 164) Regarding *Heart*, with the exception of Dr. Copeland and her daughter Portia, all of the

characters make use of the major language. As mentioned above, Copeland is a doctor for whom hardworking and his “strong, true purpose” (60) are of priority. The fact is that he is different from other people of his black race. In Portia’s words, he is “not like other colored mens... my father all the time studying by hisself. And a long time ago he taken up all these notions about how a fambly ought to be. He bossed over ever little thing in the house and at night he tried to teach us children lessons.” (41)

Copeland’s desired destiny for the future of the colored people is quite different from that of his people’s. He believes in his people’s pride and prestige, but this is not accepted by his people. Portia complains about the way her father speaks: “none of us ever cares to talk like you. Us talk like our own Mama and her peoples and their peoples before them.” (67) As we see, the way Portia speaks is itself a minor variation of the major standard American English and this is also affirmed by Deleuze: “the more a language has or acquires the characteristics of a major language, the more it is affected by continuous variations that transpose it into a ‘minor’ language.” (Plateaus 102) But the question is that why Copeland who is a colored man and is obsessed with the welfare of negro people makes use of the majoritarian language? It could be suggested that as a black man who has received his education under the American educational system and is affected by their principles, Copeland witnesses that colored people in their communities are more inclined to maintain black power and independence which in Copeland’s view is dangerous. When Copeland is chosen to judge the essays in a Christmas party regarding the subject “My Ambition: How I Can Better the Position of the Negro Race in Society,” he wonders how to give award to Lancy Davis who is “a boy with such wild notions.” (156) What Copeland has in mind is black strength and integrity as opposed to Lancy’s which is black revolt and power.

Meanwhile, we find Portia arguing with Copeland over his repetitive use of the word negro instead of colored. It irritates Copeland to see that his people are trying to change their own ideals in order to be in opposition to white people. Copeland’s ideology deals with change, but not a change which entails opposition. This is also in line with what Colebrook notes that Deleuze’s “approach suggests that we focus on the pre-political investments that produce persons.” (181) Now we can make use of Colebrook’s idea about feminism (104) and extend it to the circumstances of the black community. The black who says, ‘Yes, that’s me, I am black and fully human’, has subjected his/her desire to an image. The black who says, ‘No, I am not one of your kind’, keeps desire open. This is absolutely what Copeland believes in and it could be the result of his readings of Spinoza’s idea of “monism.” It could be understood that Copeland’s use of standard English “so carefully that each syllable seemed to be filtered through his sullen, heavy lips” (62) is an act of deterritorializing what black community is turning into a structured system. In this way, what Copeland does is itself an innovation within black community which in Deleuze’s view is considered “To be a foreigner, but in one’s own tongue” (Plateaus 98) Copeland’s very act of using standard English is an act of putting American English and mindset into flight because he is a one-man minority who aside from urging his community to find the real black strength, deviates from the model they define in order to become minoritarian and become black.

5. Conclusion

Having Deleuzian philosophy in mind, it has been argued in this article that the actions and strivings of the characters in Carson McCullers’s *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* exemplify the extent of their desire to change and create a better society. Instead of looking at their isolation and loneliness, we may take their against-the-grain actions as showing dynamism of change and new possibilities. The very positivity of desire is seen through Mick Kelly’s actions, especially her physical encounter with Harry Minowitz which entails positive desire and emergence of affects.

Regarding the eccentric actions of Jake Blount, it was shown that aside from being a nomadic subject who is not bound to any system or structure, he is a one-man organization who through his unconventional actions, verges on borders of psychosis. His delusions, hallucinations and his belief that he has to transmit some idea to people around himself are so similar to the Mariner in Coleridge’s *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. These behaviors bring Blount so close to the symptoms of schizophrenia which are highly praised in Deleuzian realm as creating of new possibilities and becomings.

Eventually, it was argued the three characters, Mick Kelly, Jake Blount and Dr. Copeland experience becoming through their actions and desires. Through listening to music, Mick enters a new world and it is through music that she experiences new affects which bring her hope and vitality. Through his reterritorializing of the false ideas about nigger people and his sympathizing with them, Blount experiences a becoming-nigger. Dr. Copeland also has eccentric ideals regarding the black community which celebrate finding their true integrity instead of defining themselves by opposing to the white power. His making use of the prestigious major language also is an act of deterritorialization which he pursues in order to resist the oppressions of white power. In this way, Copeland aims to be a real black man and this leads to his experience of becoming-black

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